



# Maple Avenue Commercial (MAC) Zone FAQ

---

The Maple Avenue Vision has evolved over the past decade with significant input from Town of Vienna residents. It ensures that the corridor will continue to maintain and promote Vienna's small-town character while supporting the viability of surrounding residential neighborhoods. The new Maple Avenue Commercial (MAC) zone reinforces the role of Maple Avenue East and West as the Town's Main Street. It simply encourages a higher quality hometown experience for residents, visitors and businesses by using a balanced, community-oriented, collaborative approach.

The MAC establishes the vision and the framework for progress by encouraging compact, pedestrian-oriented development and high-quality, eclectic architecture that is consistent with Vienna's small-town identity. It promotes improved environmental quality and sustainable building practices along the corridor, and supports the Town's economic vitality in the face of change and competition by providing opportunities for our local businesses to expand and prosper while maintaining the community culture and livability that makes Vienna unique. Further, it aims to incorporate those elements currently lacking along Maple Avenue, including parks, bicycle facilities, public art and housing. These are essential to cultivating the high quality of life and harmony that we appreciate in the Town of Vienna.

## **What is the "MAC"?**

The Maple Avenue Commercial (MAC) zoning district is located only in the existing commercially-zoned section of the street that is between East Street and the western Town boundary. The MAC promotes a more pedestrian-friendly environment, mixed-use development (including retail, office and residential uses) and enhanced architectural quality. The new zone is optional, which means a property owner must choose to opt in to the district. Business and property owners may choose to continue operating under their current zoning with no change or impact. The MAC is specifically designed to maintain our small-town integrity while allowing us to effectively navigate our future.

## **How was the MAC developed?**

The MAC was born from requests by residents for future planning along the Maple Avenue Commercial Corridor. It is the culmination of more than 10 years of community discussion, dialogue and review. In 2012, a 17-member Steering Committee was established by the Mayor Jane Seeman. It was composed of residents, property owners, business owners and members from the Town's boards and commission to solidify the Maple Avenue Vision and create a tool for implementation. A consultant team also was hired to provide analysis and recommendations. More than twenty meetings were held, including those with the Steering Committee, Planning Commission, Town Council and others. Town Council adopted the MAC zoning regulations on October 20, 2014. Several amendments to the regulations were adopted by Town Council on January 9, 2017.

### **What is the process for implementing the MAC?**

Simply implementing the MAC zone does not approve any new development. In fact, the MAC establishes a much more rigorous review process for any proposed development. The current process requires Town staff review and site plan approval for projects that meet the Town regulations. Under the MAC, new projects also must be reviewed and endorsed by the Planning Commission, Board of Architectural Review and the Town Council. The MAC institutes a multi-step process with increased public engagement and quality control. This enhances the opportunity for community involvement and a collaborative spirit in shaping the long-term character and resiliency of Maple Avenue and our beautiful town.

### **Will the MAC cause more traffic on Maple Avenue?**

Actually, the intent of the MAC is to improve traffic flow and address some of the issues related to transportation along the corridor. The MAC promotes the closure of curb cuts which cause significant delays on Maple Avenue due to left and right turns. It also promotes consolidated parking, which means you can park once and walk to several businesses. This reduces the number of vehicular trips one has to take. Further, the MAC institutes, for the first time, requirements for bicycle parking and storage which helps people get out of their cars. Incentives for enhanced transit facilities also are included.

### **How will building heights change?**

Current zoning allows 35 feet in height or three stories. The MAC allows for one additional story, up to four stories and 54 feet in height. The reason for the additional height is to allow for modern technology in buildings, and the larger floor heights that are now required to attract and maintain top-quality retail and office development within the Town. It also incentivizes the things we want to see on the corridor, including transportation improvements, parks, public art and better protections for our neighborhoods. The MAC also limits the building height of MAC projects and requires compatible architecture within so many feet of single-family detached residential neighborhoods.

### **How long will it be before we see change?**

The MAC only sets forth the vision for the future of Maple Avenue East and West. It will be up to Vienna property owners and businesses to implement their individual plans for development. As such, the MAC will take several years to implement and perhaps several decades for more comprehensive change. Just as Maple Avenue has evolved from a two lane road in 1958 to a thriving commercial corridor today, it will continue to change into the future.

### **Why do we need the MAC?**

In the absence of a long-term vision for the Maple Avenue corridor, the Town and its residents will not have the tools to guide the change that is inevitable over the next 20 years. Protecting our small- town character is of the utmost importance, and the MAC provides tools for doing so, where they do not currently exist. Our current zoning regulations date back to 1969. Further, the MAC provides a mechanism for our local businesses to grow and provide new opportunities and experiences. The MAC allows for the creation of housing that may be attractive to both young professionals and retirees who want to stay a part of this community. And the MAC allows for the creation of parks and open spaces where our Town residents can gather and celebrate. All of these elements are necessary as we plan for Maple Avenue to remain an integral part of Vienna's future.