



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Chairman Gelb and Members of the Planning Commission

**FROM:** Cindy Petkac, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning

**WORK SESSION**

**DATE:** February 13, 2019

**RE:** Update on Process to Develop Design Guidelines and Amendments to the Maple Avenue Commercial (MAC) Zone Regulations

The purpose of this memo is provide an update on the process to develop design guidelines and amendments to the Maple Avenue Commercial (MAC) Zone Regulations in preparation for the Planning Commission work session on February 20, 2019. Staff began work on the design guidelines last summer by conducting research and determining the appropriate process and means for soliciting community input. Staff determined that a visual preference survey was the best way to fully engage the Vienna community in the process and help shape a vision for Maple Avenue. A visual preference survey is a widely accepted engagement method used by planning professionals to determine which components of a plan or project environment contribute positively to a community's overall image of features.

Staff worked with the Chair of the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) to gather images for the visual preference survey that demonstrated a range of characteristics, including placemaking and building and site design. After several meetings, the draft images and survey were then discussed and refined with the full BAR. The survey officially went "live" on October 10 and was open to residents, business and property owners until November 12, 2018.

The visual preference survey was advertised in the October and November issues of the *Vienna Voice*. Staff distributed informational flyers with a link to the survey at the Halloween Parade and had a booth and laptop at the Farmers Market on October 20 and 27 for residents to take the survey. Computers were also set-up at Town Hall for residents who needed assistance or didn't have access to a computer. Staff is quite pleased that over one thousand Vienna residents and

business owners participated in the survey (1,064 verified responses). The full results of the survey are available on the Town's website at <https://www.viennava.gov/index.aspx?NID=865>.

Of the 41 images in the survey, ten were found to be highly rated by citizens. Using these highly rated images as a guide, staff researched and developed design guidelines and then working with the BAR Chair, Vice-Chair, Mayor and Town Manager, created the preliminary draft design guidelines. This is a first draft and is a work in progress with anticipated changes and improvements. In addition, staff began looking at the proportion and scale of Church Street to see how it could be applied to Maple Avenue.

The next step in the process is for the full BAR to discuss and refine the design guidelines based on their purview in Chapter 4 - Architectural Design Control of the Town Code, and for the Planning Commission to discuss and make recommendations on any potential amendments to Article 13.1 - Maple Avenue Commercial (MAC) Zone Regulations of Chapter 18 per Article 24 - Rezoning and Amendments of the Town Code.

The preliminary draft design guidelines will be discussed with the BAR at a work session on February 15. They may schedule an additional work session(s) to further discuss. A special Planning Commission meeting/work session is scheduled for February 20 for the Commission to fully discuss proposed amendments to the MAC. An additional work session(s) may be scheduled to further discuss.

Following on these work sessions, staff has proposed that a joint work session be scheduled on March 6 with the Town Council, Planning Commission and BAR before re-engaging with the community. Staff is proposing an interactive engagement effort in the form of a community workshop. The purpose of the design guidelines workshop will be to get the community's input on the "big ideas" coming out of the survey, specifically those related to open space, sidewalk zones, building breaks and roof lines.

Staff is planning on having two community workshops (Friday, March 29 from 6-8 pm and Saturday, March 30 from 11 am -1 pm) at the Community Center at which we'll explain how the preferred images from the visual preference survey equate to design guidance and proposed changes to the MAC. The workshops will include a mock-up of a sidewalk section with moveable parts to show how the proposed new sidewalk zones relate to and improve on what is currently required with the existing MAC standards. We'll also have large size, building blocks to show proposed changes to building setbacks, stepbacks and roof lines.

Please find attached a more detailed timeline of the process to develop the design guidelines and amendments to the MAC. Also attached is the preliminary draft design guidelines, which will be reviewed and discussed with the Board of Architectural Review on February 15, 2019. The proposed draft amendments to the MAC, related to the draft design guidelines, along with other amendments previously recommended by the Planning Commission and amendments recommended by the MAC ad hoc committee and staff, will be provided in advance of the February 20 work session.