

VIENNA Voice

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Town greenlights transportation study of Maple Avenue corridor

The Town of Vienna is commissioning a Multimodal Transportation and Land Use Study of the Maple Avenue corridor that not only is taking a look at what's happening along the asphalt, but also at active transportation needs as well as how development might impact mobility.

The Town has contracted with Kimley-Horn, a transportation, planning, and engineering consulting firm with offices around the country, to lead the study, which is expected to wrap up by early fall. Community engagement opportunities are being built into the study process.

"We're taking a step back to take a careful look at the transportation and mobility needs of the Maple Avenue corridor," says Kimley-Horn Project Manager David Samba. "We'll be looking at current and future needs as well as potential solutions that will improve mobility along Maple Avenue. A key question we'll keep coming back to is: How can we consider the needs of all corridor users while enhancing the safety, access, and character of Maple Avenue?"

In addition to looking at Maple Avenue from James Madison Drive to Follin Lane, the study area includes Church Street from Lawyers Road to East Street as well as Courthouse Road and Locust Street.

"We're looking at transportation along Maple Avenue in the context of the Town's vision for the corridor to be more vibrant and pedestrian-oriented," says Planning and Zoning Director Cindy Petkac. "We're trying to create a place for people to gather – outside of their cars."

The study is really about the importance of transportation in placemaking, Petkac says.

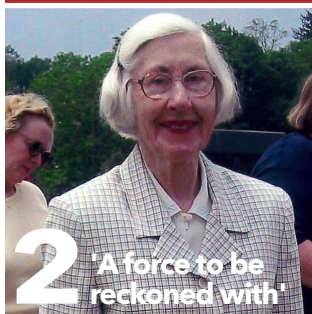
A 2017 travel patterns study found that 38% of traffic on Maple Avenue is pass-through and another 38% represents those traveling to Vienna from outside the Town and then leaving. Only 24% of Maple Avenue traffic starts and finishes internally to Town.



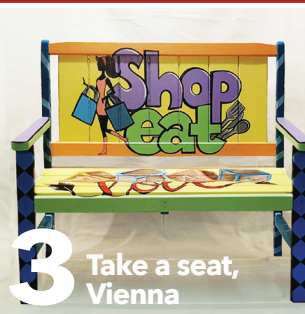
Photo by Adam Kincaid

see **Transportation Study** page 3

IN THIS ISSUE



'A force to be reckoned with'



Take a seat, Vienna



Stroll through spring

Town Council Election - May 7

Get to know the
candidates, find election
information on page 8



Take a Seat, Vienna

A new benchmark for public art in Vienna

Taking a seat in Vienna has never been so colorful as it will be this spring and summer when 42 custom-painted benches pop up all around Town. In celebration of its 50th anniversary, the Vienna Arts Society (VAS) is hosting a public art/fundraising program entitled Take a Seat, Vienna.

Benches painted with pianos, cars, children, tropical birds, beautiful flowers, and more as well as baseball and patriotic themes will be placed in front of sponsoring businesses and in several public locations from April until sometime in October. The event's official kick-off will take place at the April 13 Old-Fashioned Egg Roll at the Freeman Store and Museum.

"The benches are breathtaking," says VAS Executive Director Lu Cousins, noting that they were created by VAS members who donated their times, supplies, and talents. Each bench, on average, took 60-80 hours to create.

"Not only is this a fun, neat public art project in and of itself," adds artist Deborah Kennedy. "It also encourages people to focus on the positives of the community. Rather than noticing any deficiencies, people's attention will be drawn to all of the things that are right in the community."

Public locations that will feature benches include the Town Green, Glyndon Park, and the dog park near Nottoway Park. Several benches will be located at businesses on Church Street with additional benches placed on Maple Avenue, Mill Street, Center Street, and other various sponsor locations throughout Town. Brochures with a map of bench locations will be

see *Take a Seat* page 4



Enginuity by Ken Britz



Sit Down with Birds All Around by Ruth Ensley



Unlock the Cosmos by Dore Skidmore

Transportation Study from page 1

"The corridor currently functions as more of a thoroughfare than we want and not necessarily as a main street or destination," Petkac says.

The first step in the current study's process is to conduct an analysis of existing conditions, says Samba. Among other things, Kimley-Horn will be looking at vehicle operations (travel times, queueing, intersection conditions), pedestrian and bicycle counts, transit availability, and crash data.

After that, the firm will consider what impact reasonably anticipated development over the next 10 years – both under the voluntary Maple Avenue Commercial (MAC) zone and other by-right development – will have on corridor mobility. "We also need to factor in what's happening regionally, such as in Tysons and with changes to I-66," Samba says.

Finally, Kimley-Horn will draft recommendations and next steps. Public engagement events will be scheduled as each phase of the study is completed. The first community meeting will be at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 4, at Town Hall.

"We're looking to be creative about solutions particularly related to active transportation modes," says Public Works Director Michael Gallagher, "so that we can achieve the vision of Maple Avenue as Vienna's main street. Results of this study will help inform the Town as we plan for future projects and identify transportation grant opportunities." 📍

Maple Avenue Corridor Multimodal Transportation and Land Use Study

COMMUNITY MEETING

7 pm • Thursday, April 4
Town Hall

Take a Seat from page 3

available at sponsor businesses and on the VAS website, ViennaArtsSociety.org.

On November 2, VAS will host a live auction at the Vienna Community Center at which all of the benches will be available to the highest bidder.

The idea for Take a Seat, Vienna germinated about three years ago when VAS member Mary Ellen Larkins saw a television program about a painted bench public art program in Purcellville. “The next day,” says Cousins, “we were in the car on our way to Purcellville.”

After mulling it around for a while, the VAS decided that its 50th anniversary was the perfect time to host a similar program. Members have been working on the project for more than a year, soliciting sponsors, purchasing and transporting benches, and priming, painting, and varnishing benches.

Painting a bench, says VAS President and abstract artist Hayden Luczka, is “not like painting on canvas – nothing at all.” The brush strokes are different, and the surface is harder and larger and multidimensional. “You have to stand the benches on end, get underneath and on the sides. They’re big, bulky, and heavy.”

“It was a great experience,” says artist Susan Scanlon, “but I think I’m one and done. It was exhausting, but I was thrilled with the opportunity to paint a bench.

“Putting that first brush stroke down was so intimidating to me,” she adds. “And knowing that it will be on the street for months is intimidating, too. I hope that people like it.”

“It’s really a commitment to the community,” Luzka says of the bench-painting experience. “We want them to love it and to bid on it.”

Community support for the program has been enthusiastic. Kennedy, who created two benches, spearheaded the sponsorship effort, locking down businesses willing to cover the cost of the benches, which were hand-built by an Amish furniture-maker in Pennsylvania, in exchange for having them displayed outside of their business for about six months.

“We gave ourselves five weeks to get sponsors,” she says. “We sold out in 12 days. The businesses are so excited to be part of the program. It’s such an amazing project because the businesses can see how it will support the arts and help increase interest in their business as well.”

“I was really excited to hear about this project,” says Cindy DiMeglio, owner of Birdwatchers Seed and Supply Company, the first business to sign on as a Take a Seat, Vienna sponsor. “I’ve seen similar projects in other towns and noticed how much a splash of art can add to the environment. I’m pleased to support the Vienna Arts Society and participate in something that will add to the wonderful sense of community here in Vienna.”

To help the event go viral, the VAS is hosting a Scavenger Hunt, through which anyone who posts on social media photos of themselves on each of the 42 benches will receive a prize. Find more information at ViennaArtsSociety.org. Begun in 1969, VAS now has about 175 members. 📍

