Motion 2014-6, Changes to Downtown Design Guidelines

Revise provisions in the Downtown Design Guidelines to allow higher residential density for conditional only residential districts (R-VS, SRN, CMF)

Background/Issue
In 2013, Matthews adopted the new Downtown Master Plan that updated and replaced the prior plan from 1997. The original plan also contained a set of design guidelines for downtown that serve as the basis for the Downtown Overlay District. The original Downtown Design Guidelines is still an adopted document that is still in use. It has come to our attention that we cannot accomplish the densities called for in the R-VS, SRN and CMF Districts due to conflicts with these guidelines.

Currently, the document calls for development in each of the three precincts to have maximum building sizes of 15,000 square feet for multifamily buildings and density not to exceed 18 dwelling units per acre.

Proposal/Solution
Staff proposes to add language that would exempt the conditional only residential districts, R-VS, SRN, and CMF, from these regulations. The entire document is anticipated to be updated within the year.

Financial Impact
None

Related Town Goal(s) and/or Strategies:
Quality of Life: #1 To implement plans, updating each as appropriate, and ensure they coordinate with and fulfill the goals of each other
Economic Development/Land Use Planning #25 To implement the UDO and establish up-front development standards.

Recommended Motion/Action:
Schedule a public hearing for June 9, 2014 to begin the text amendment procedure.
Motion 2014-6
Text Change in Downtown Design Guidelines Which are Incorporated into the UDO by Reference

Currently, the Downtown Master Plan has been updated as of January 2013. Two supplemental documents to the Downtown Master Plan also need revision, scheduled for 2014. One of these is the Downtown Design Guidelines, which provide some specific dimensional, color, material, landscaping, and similar standards for consistency in appearance and ambiance within the three Precincts created with the 1997 Master Plan.

Planning and Development Department staff have discorded that certain elements within these design guidelines are not consistent with some of the new growth policies of the 2012 Matthews Land Use Plan which encourage higher densities and more urban character in selected situation, particularly within the downtown. One specific issue is that the design guidelines limit the maximum potential density of residential uses in the downtown. A single additional statement can be added at three locations to resolve the conflict between older guidelines and new zoning categories, as follows:

In Precinct 1:
Current Design Guideline standards for “Attached Residential, Building Intensity” state:
  - Density: 18 dwelling units per acre
  - Building height: 35 feet maximum to match general zoning district limits
  - Building Size: Single-family attached: 25,000 sf max, per structure
   Multi-family attached: 15,000 sf max, per structure
  - Yard Requirements: Per Downtown Area Design Guidelines, including build-to line
  - Off-Street Parking Required:
    - Single Family Attached: 2 spaces/unit
    - Multi-family Attached: same as required for multi-family districts, based on size of individual units

In Precinct 2:
Current Design Guidelines standards for “Attached Residential, Building Intensity” state:
  - Density: not to exceed 18 dwelling units per acre
  - Building Height: 24 feet maximum to match general zoning districts
  - Building Size: Single family attached: 25,000 sf per structure
   Multi-family attached: 15,000 sf per structure
  - Yard Requirements: per Downtown Design Guidelines
  - Off-Street Parking Required:
    - Single family attached: 2 spaces/unit
    - Multi-family attached: same as required in multi-family districts, based on size of units

In Precinct 3:
Current Design Guidelines standards for “Residential” state:
  - Residential density not to exceed 3 dwelling units per acre.
  - Yard Requirements: Per underlying zoning district.

In each section of text referenced above, the following statement is proposed to be added:

“The listed standards listed immediately above for residential uses shall not apply to parcels zoned R-VS, SRN, or C-MF. These shall follow the criteria for their respective zoning category, including density, building height and size, yards, and parking.”

Mot 2014-6 res den dntn
MOTION # 2014-6

MOTION TO CHANGE:  

- [X] TEXT
- [ ] DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

(IF A CHANGE IN DISTRICT BOUNDARIES, LIST PARCEL(S) AFFECTED)

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PUBLIC HEARING DATE 6-9-14

PROPOSED ACTION

Revise Downtown Design Guideline limits on building size/density for 3 Residential Districts, the R-VS, SRN, and C-MF categories

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AFFECTED AND/OR ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNERS NOTIFIED n.a.

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ATTACHMENTS INCLUDE proposed text

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PROTEST PETITION FILED?  

- [ ] YES (IF YES, DATE)
- [X] NO

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OTHER COMMENTS: Now that the Downtown Master Plan has been updated and adopted, the related Design Guidelines and Streetscape Improvements elements also require revision. The Town has received preliminary notice of grant approval for design of all downtown street cross sections. All other design related elements will be coordinated with this grant project so all design criteria are reviewed together as a comprehensive document.