

THE CITY OF AURORA

FOXWALK DESIGN GUIDELINES

December 19, 2023



FORWARD

Forward to the Revised Edition, 2023

Beginning in 1974, the City of Aurora, in collaboration with a succession of expert consultants, set out to draft a series of plans and regulations to guide the redevelopment of downtown Aurora. These documents laid the foundation for efforts that have been implemented over the past 30+ years, including:

- The creation of the FoxWalk Overlay District, encompassing the DC: Downtown Core and DF: Downtown Fringe zoning districts;
- Design guidelines for the restoration of existing structures;
- Principles to inform the architecture of new buildings; and
- Specifications for the Riverwalk, a two-tiered walkway to be built around Stolp Island and along the east and west banks of the Fox River, named “the FoxWalk” in 1992 by local schoolchildren.

The first volunteers were appointed to the Riverwalk Commission (1989) and the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee (1993) by Mayor David L. Pierce to oversee construction of the public walkway system along the Fox River and development within the DC and DF zoning districts.

Looking backward from our current vantage point, it is clear that these plans and the people who helped formulate them served the redevelopment of downtown Aurora well. At the time of the 2008 revision of the design guidelines, construction permits valued at over \$103 million have been issued within the boundaries of the FoxWalk District between 1993 and 2008, with a \$135 million of additional value in construction permits between 2008 and June 2023.

Substantial sections of the Riverwalk have been built, which are described in Section 9 of this document. While there are still opportunities to connect gaps in the Riverwalk system, significant progress has been made to realize the vision outlined in the 2007 Revised FoxWalk/Riverwalk Master Plan and follow the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Guidelines. This includes trails on Stolp Island, trails along the east and west banks of the Fox River, and connections to the Fox River Trail and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge to RiverEdge Park.

During 2006 and 2007, the City Council approved a number of documents and actions intended to direct future development of the Fox River corridor, both within the FoxWalk Overlay District and extending to the “bookends” of downtown, i.e., Illinois Avenue to the north and North Avenue to the south:

- Adoption of the Seize the Future Master Plan (June, 2006)
- Adoption of the Aurora Riverfront Vision Plan (June, 2006)
- Adoption of the Revised FoxWalk/Riverwalk Master Plan (September, 2007)
- Adoption of the Master Plan for RiverEdge Park (September, 2007)
- Demolition of an entire city block (14 buildings) bounded by Downer Place, River Street, and Galena Boulevard to accommodate a new downtown campus for Waubensee Community College (September, 2007)
- 2013 Downtown Parking Management Report and Recommendations
- 2017 Downtown Master Plan
- 2023 Downtown Parking Study

In keeping with the spirit of what has been accomplished already and what is envisioned for the future, it is appropriate that we revisit our architectural design guidelines and implementation strategies. The first revised edition of the FoxWalk Design Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures in 2008 was based on our collective experience since the design guidelines were first prepared in 1993. Another fifteen years later in 2023, this current edition of the FoxWalk Guidelines included revisions to provide clarification, respond to significant changes to certain sites and roadways, be more equitable to people of all abilities and transportation choice, add new guidelines for emerging best practices in urban planning, preservation, building technology and design, and continue to support sensitive redevelopment of downtown Aurora. It is our hope that collaboration among developers, citizen volunteers, elected officials, and staff will result in restoration projects and new development that reflect the highest standards of design and execution – and in which current and future Aurorans will take great pride.



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SECTION 1

General Information

1.1: Title

The title of this overlay district is hereby established as the "FoxWalk Overlay District."

1.2: Resolutions and Ordinances

The table on the next page summarizes the resolutions and ordinances related to the FoxWalk Overlay District. The adoption date and intent of each resolution or ordinance are also provided.

1.3: Maps

- A. FoxWalk District Boundaries Map
- B. Existing Zoning Map
- C. District Map by Blocks
- D. Topography Map
- E. Floodplain Map
- F. FoxWalk/Riverwalk Map



1.4: Legal Description

The FoxWalk Overlay District shall be described as follows:

That part of Section 22, township 38 north, range 8 east of the third principal meridian in the City of Aurora, Kane County, Illinois, described as follows: Beginning at the southeasterly corner of Lincoln Avenue and Benton Street; thence northwesterly along the southerly line of Benton Street to the southeasterly corner of Lot F of Library Subdivision; thence westerly along the southerly lines of Lots F, E and D in said subdivision and westerly, northerly and northeasterly along the southerly and westerly lot line of Lot C in said subdivision to the northwesterly corner of said Lot C; thence northwesterly along the southerly line of Benton Street to the southwesterly corner of Lake Street and Benton Street; thence northeasterly along the westerly line of Lake Street to the northwest corner of Lake Street and New York Street; thence southeasterly along the northerly line of New York Street to the northeasterly corner of River Street and New York Street; thence northeasterly along the easterly line of River Street to the northeasterly corner of River Street and Pinney Street; thence southeasterly along the northerly line of Pinney Street to the westerly bank of the Fox River; thence easterly to the northwest corner of Lot 3 in Block 29 of the original Town of Aurora; thence southerly along the west lines of Lots 3 and 4 of said original Town of Aurora to the southerly line of said Lot 4; thence southeasterly along said southerly line and northerly line of Spring Street to the northeasterly corner of Spring Street and Lincoln Avenue; thence southwesterly along the easterly line of Lincoln Avenue to the point of beginning.



Figure 1: Ordinances and Resolutions

Ordinance/ Resolution #	Date of Adoption	Title
R86-3284	12/2/86	Recommending the Establishment of a Downtown Core Zoning District
R87-3423	5/5/87	Resolution to Initiate the Process to Create a Downtown Fringe Zoning District
R87-3536	8/4/87	Adopting Administrative Review Procedures for Downtown Redevelopment Proposals
O87-5641	3/17/87	Establishing the Aurora Riverwalk Commission
R89-234	8/15/89	Approving and Accepting the FoxWalk Final Conceptual Design
R-92-390	10/6/92	Approving and Accepting the FoxWalk District Design Guidelines
R92-254	6/16/92	Approving and Accepting the FoxWalk West Bank Plan
R92-477	11/17/92	Conceptual Plan for the South Point of Stolp Island
R92-504	12/1/92	Approving and Accepting the Downtown Street and Sidewalk Comprehensive Plan
R93-426	11/23/93	Adopting the FoxWalk Overlay District Intent, Rules, and Regulations
R93-427	11/23/93	Establishing the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee
O93-99	11/23/93	Establishing the FoxWalk Overlay District
O94-46	5/17/94	Amending the Riverwalk Commission ordinance
R95-567	12/5/95	Approving an Amendment to FoxWalk Overlay District Intent, Rules, and Regulations
R99-464	11/23/99	Amending the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee
R00-256	6/13/00	Guidelines for Replacing Downtown Sidewalks
R00-557	12/12/00	Approving an Amendment to the FoxWalk Overlay District Intent, Rules, and Regulations
R07-475	9/25/07	Adopting the Revised FoxWalk/Riverwalk Master Plan
R08-168	4/22/08	Adopting the Revised FoxWalk Overlay District Design Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures
R16-207	6/28/16	Adopting Section 8.4 “Murals” to the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures
R18-082	10/23/18	Re-Establishing the Foxwalk Overlay District Design Review Committee
R18-275	10/23/18	Establishing the Aurora FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee By-Laws



1.5: Zoning Classification and Information

- 1.5-1: Parcel Applicability.** The provisions of the Aurora Zoning Ordinance shall apply to the FoxWalk Overlay District, except as set out in this document. The various development standards outlined in this document shall apply to all parcels within the FoxWalk Overlay District, unless specifically superseded herein. Where provisions of this document and the Preservation Guidelines for the Near Eastside Historic District conflict, the provisions of the Historic Districts and Landmarks Guidelines shall prevail.
- All of the FoxWalk Overlay District is located within the DC: Downtown Core and DF: Downtown Fringe zoning districts, as defined by the Aurora Zoning Ordinance. Uses allowed within the underlying zoning of DC and DF shall be permitted within the FoxWalk Overlay District.
- 1.5-2: Preservation.** The preservation of certain historic and/or architecturally significant buildings and civic improvements is essential to give the FoxWalk Overlay District a sense of place and history. The term “preservation” as used in this document shall mean that these buildings shall be restored, adapted, or maintained according to accepted preservation standards and the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures, but also that new construction shall respect the urban fabric defined by the existing architecture.
- 1.5-3: Zoning Administrator.** The Zoning Administrator shall be charged with the administration of the FoxWalk Overlay District. The Review Authority shall have regulatory power over all exterior work undertaken on buildings located within the FoxWalk Overlay District, as defined in this document, as well as any changes in use.
- 1.5-4: Nonconforming Buildings and Uses.** Zoning standards regarding nonconforming buildings and uses, as defined in the Aurora Zoning Ordinance, shall apply to the FoxWalk Overlay District.
- 1.5-5: Conditional Uses.** Provisions of the Aurora Zoning Ordinance shall apply to the FoxWalk Overlay District except as herein modified:
- 1.5-5.1: Conditional Uses.** The FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee shall, in all cases, retain review authority over building elevations and Riverwalk projects.
 - 1.5-5.2: Public Access.** Any use that restricts access by the general public in any way is hereby required to obtain approval by the City.
- 1.5-6: Accessory Buildings and Uses.** No accessory buildings shall be permitted within the Downtown Core Zoning District. Any accessory use in the Downtown Fringe Zoning District must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness pursuant to this document.
- 1.5-7: Bulk Restrictions.**
- 1.5-7.1: Lot Area Coverage.** There shall be no maximum lot area coverage.
 - 1.5-7.2: Lot Size and Width.** There shall be no lot size and width restrictions.
 - 1.5-7.3: Required Yards.** Buildings shall be located at the sidewalk line along the street, to maintain a coherent “streetwall.” Private surface parking, utility yards, trash storage areas etc. are not permitted adjacent to public sidewalks, the Riverwalk, the future Riverwalk, or the Fox River, unless proposed plans are reviewed by the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee and proper approvals are obtained from the City.
 - 1.5-7.4: Permitted Obstructions in Required Yard Areas.** Those elements specified as design elements shall constitute permitted obstructions.
- 1.5-8: Streetscape and Riverscape.** No public or private streetscape or riverscape improvement project is permitted without a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- 1.5-9: Parking and Loading.** Parking requirements shall be subject to provisions of the Aurora Zoning Ordinance, except that parking shall not be established as the sole use of a property. Any parking structures constructed within the FoxWalk Overlay District shall provide for pedestrian-oriented uses on the river and first-floor levels.



1.6: Definitions

The definitions delineated in the Aurora Zoning Ordinance shall apply to the DC: Downtown Core and DF: Downtown Fringe Zoning Districts, also known as the FoxWalk Overlay District, except as herein modified:

ADAPTIVE USE: Rehabilitation of a structure for use other than its original use such as a residence converted into offices.

ART DISPLAYS: Any work of art that is visible by members of the general public without entering a building or privately-owned outdoor space. This includes but not limited to sculptures, paintings, and 2d artwork.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS (COA): The required written approval for exterior work which indicates the improvements are consistent with the intent of these guidelines, regulations, and procedures contained herein.

DECORATIVE ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS: Including, but not limited to, arches, brackets, columns, cornices, lintels, pilasters, pillars, sills, transoms, and window heads.

DECORATIVE EXTERIOR MATERIAL: Original concrete, stone, glazed brick, face brick, terra cotta, tile, cast iron, and specialty glass.

DEMOLITION: Any act or process which destroys or removes, in whole or in part, buildings, structures, or decorative architectural details.

DOWNTOWN CORE: The area described as the Downtown Core in the Aurora Zoning Ordinance.

DOWNTOWN FRINGE: The area described as the Downtown Fringe in the Aurora Zoning Ordinance.

ERECT: To build, construct, attach, hang, place, suspend, affix or paint.

EXTERIOR WORK: Improvements, repair, replacement or removal of existing building elements or structures. Also includes new construction and site modifications/improvements.

FAÇADE (or building façade): The exterior wall of a building, from the ground to the roof line. For the purposes of this document, a roof varying no more than forty-five (45) degrees from the vertical plane shall be considered part of the façade.

FAÇADE, BLANK: A façade which is opaque, translucent, or transmits less than fifty (50) percent of the light that falls upon it, so that objects on the other side cannot be seen, or cannot be clearly distinguished.

FAÇADE, DECORATIVE: A façade which includes either a public entrance, display windows, decorative architectural details, or decorative exterior materials.

FAÇADE, NON-DECORATIVE: A façade or portion of such which does not include a public entrance or display windows, is lacking in decorative architectural details, is lacking in decorative exterior materials, but may include

unadorned windows and service doors. Such a façade may be on the same plane as a decorative facade if architectural details define a vertical boundary between the two.

FRONTAGE: The length of the property line of one (1) use along each public or private right of-way or along the Fox River.

GUIDELINE COMPONENTS: Statements within the guidelines which specify the requirements and recommendations for the preservation of the characteristic relationships of the various historic features which are significant to the appearance of the FoxWalk Overlay District.

LINTEL: A horizontal crosspiece carrying the weight of the structure above it.

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES: Theaters, Gaming Facilities where gaming is the primary use, Music venues where live music is the primary use.

PRESERVATION: Stabilization and maintenance of a structure or site in its existing form to prevent further change or deterioration.

PRIMARY FAÇADE: Any side of a building which faces a public street, or riverfront.

PUBLIC ART: Art that is visible to the public.

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE: An area that is easily accessible for and designed to physically accommodate public use during normal business hours.

REHABILITATION: The act or process of applying measures to maintain and restore the form, integrity, and materials of a building, structure, or site.

REHABILITATION WORK: Maintaining the existing character of the structure, and whenever possible, returning it to its original condition. Rehabilitation would not require the removal of all non-original materials, but would encourage the removal of all such materials which are incompatible with the character of the district. The design of new construction or additions would not require the duplication of the original design and construction, but should be compatible with existing structures and the character of the district. The use of original materials or construction techniques is strongly encouraged, but contemporary methods and materials would also be acceptable when compatible.

RESTORATION: Maintaining the original or unimpaired character of a structure as it was at the time of construction. Authenticity of a restoration would require the removal of incompatible exterior elements and the replacement of all damaged or deteriorated original elements with replicas of the same design and materials.

REVIEW AUTHORITY: The entity which is empowered to issue Certificates of Appropriateness (i.e., Zoning Administrator and/or the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee.)



RIVERSCAPE: A group of structures whose primary facades front the river and as such, collectively reflect a unified visual statement. A “riverscape” can include one or more banks of the river.

ROOFLINE: The boundary line between the roof and the wall directly above the wall surface to which the sign is attached. Any surface 45 degrees or less from the vertical is considered a wall. Any surface greater than 45 degrees from the vertical is considered a roof.

SEASONAL DECORATIONS: Exterior items of a primarily decorative nature visible from the public right-of-way and associated with the celebration of seasonal events or holidays shall be displayed no earlier than sixty (60) days prior to, and removed no later than sixty (60) days after, the holiday.

SIDEWALK SHOWCASE: A transparent case, attached to a building wall, to protect displays.

STREETSCAPE: A group of structures whose primary façade fronts a public right-of-way and which collectively reflect a unified visual statement. A “streetscape” can include one or both sides of a public right-of-way.

STRUCTURES: Any building, sculpture, bridge, public art, fountain, sign, streetscape, or riverscape located in the FoxWalk Overlay District.

SUSTAINABILITY: The ability to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN: Sustainable design seeks to reduce negative impacts on the environment, and the health and comfort of building occupants, thereby improving building performance. The basic objectives of sustainability are to reduce consumption of non-renewable resources, minimize waste, and create healthy, productive environments.

TRANSOM: A small window or panel directly over a door or window.

WALL: A building surface varying no more than forty-five (45) degrees from the vertical.

WINDOW: That portion of a building façade originally providing visual access to or from the building, made of glass or a glass-like material. A painted window shall be considered a window, but a window covered or replaced by brick, wood, metal, etc. shall be considered part of the wall.

1.7: History and Character of the District

The FoxWalk Overlay District was created in 1993, to formulate a unified development concept and improvement program for downtown Aurora. Initial efforts were focused on the 18-block area flanking the Fox River in the heart of downtown, centering on historic Stolp Island. In 1994, the district was expanded to encompass all properties bounded by Lincoln Avenue on the east, Lake Street on the west, Benton Street on the south, and Spring/Spruce Street on the north.

At the north end of downtown Aurora, the Fox River splits into two branches, ranging in width from 100 to 200 feet, and forming the 15-acre Stolp Island. The central business district consists of both the island and portions of the east and west riverbanks, creating four zones with river frontage in the downtown. This arrangement effectively doubles the amount of property with river frontage. Unlike some other river cities, movement through downtown Aurora is not significantly impeded by the river. There are seven ornamental bridges that span the two branches of the river and Stolp Island.

Stolp Island is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and many of its building contribute to this recognition. Peak development years in the downtown were between 1900 and 1940, with the majority of structures consisting of one- to four-story, masonry commercial buildings. There are some notable exceptions, however, including several mid- to high-rise structures constructed in the 1920s and 1930s. Also, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, LaSalle Street between Downer Place and Benton is significant as an early automobile commercial center in Aurora.



This map of Stolp Island marks the various structures and places that contribute to the recognition of the island's listing on the National Register of Historic Place.

Source: City of Aurora



Automobile access to downtown Aurora is provided via Illinois Routes 31 and 25, which parallel the Fox River on the east and the west. Mass transit is available via the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Metra commuter line to the western suburbs and downtown Chicago, and the Pace bus system. Access to I-88 is possible from Route 31 as well.

During the period between 1974 and 1993, multiple reports were commissioned by various entities with the intent of developing a strategy for the revitalization of downtown Aurora. Each plan was prepared to provide direction to the re-awakening of an improved downtown Aurora as the civic, retail, entertainment, and cultural center of the city. A common element found in each of the reports is the need for a cohesive design theme that unites the downtown as a destination with a distinctive character and sense of place.

1974

Preliminary Development Program for Downtown Aurora

In 1974, the consulting firm BAF (Ben-Ami Friedman) contracted with the city to complete a “Preliminary Development Program for Downtown Aurora.” Extensive research into the existing condition of the downtown was conducted and analyzed throughout the course of the BAF report. Many recommendations were made that have since been completed by the city, such as the rehabilitation of the Paramount Theatre, and the construction of North Island Center. Notwithstanding the importance of specific projects, Friedman repeatedly stated the need for a cohesive design theme to unite the downtown, and acknowledged the obvious lack of recognition that the Fox River was the downtown’s greatest asset. The BAF report consistently pointed out the missed opportunities in an environment where downtown buildings and businesses turned their “collective backs” on the Fox River. Beautification of the banks of the river and emphasis on the river’s relationship to the downtown was put forth as the basis for the essential design theme of the future.

1984

A Strategic Plan for Downtown Aurora, Illinois

“A Strategic Plan for Downtown Aurora, Illinois” was prepared by Robert B. Teska Associates, Inc. in 1984. As the title suggests, this report followed the directives suggested in the Ben-Ami Friedman Plan, evaluating the contemporary strengths and weaknesses of Aurora’s downtown prior to delineating the course of action necessary to bring about revitalization. Again, river frontage was a dominant strength according to Teska, along with accessibility/location, existing real estate “bargains” in the downtown, and organizational capability provided by the existing development agencies associated with the Greater Aurora Chamber of Commerce, among other groups. Teska reiterated the need for a “focal point” and a “critical mass of human activity” in the downtown. The riverfront, according to Teska, was “key to Aurora’s image and economic advantage.” The report went on to state that of cities of comparable size, “no city in Illinois has the riverfront and potential that Aurora has.” To utilize both the riverfront and the total downtown, the Strategic Plan emphasized the need for a guided downtown redevelopment strategy creating a “well-defined and (a downtown which is) more accessible to the people who really count: pedestrians.”

1985

Fantus Report

The following year in 1985 brought the Fantus Report, a three-phase analysis of potential high growth industries which were compatible with existing conditions in Aurora. Hourly wages were compared with national and state averages to determine their influence on attracting potential businesses. Warehouse/distribution, clerical and manufacturing wages, to name a few, were all found to be favorable to incoming investment. Location, available sites, and accessibility were among Aurora’s assets. Liabilities for a would-be Aurora developer were specified as well, such as property taxes and labor attitudes.

1987

Downtown Aurora, Illinois: A Report on Current Development Opportunities

In 1987, Shlaes & Company prepared “Downtown Aurora, Illinois- A Report on Current Development Opportunities.” Again, phrases used by previous consultant teams stand out: “the missed opportunity of the (Fox) river” and development “based on a theme.” The Shlaes report suggested that downtown Aurora had, in the past, suffered due to a lack of “quality stores with compatible merchandise.” The writers found this to be an essential element of successful retail uses in the downtown, equating such stores with “multiple-stop shopping.” Downtown Aurora naturally lent itself to specialty retail according to Shlaes, who added that such uses have been historically attracted to waterfront sites. This report concurred with previous analyses, noting the unfortunate fact that many of the buildings with river frontage have their backs to the river.

1989

Perkins & Will Conceptual Design

The Perkins & Will/Groves and Associates Conceptual Design submitted to the City of Aurora in 1989, proposed several planning, design, and development principles that were accepted by the Aurora Riverwalk Commission and adopted by the City Council. They were based on a number of identified themes: “City of Lights,” “Rural,” “Urban,” “Historical,” “Ethnic Diversity,” and “Environmental,” and led to the crafting of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Guidelines, the Intent, Rules, and Regulations, and the FoxWalk Concept Plan.

1993

Aurora ‘98: A Strategic Plan for the Development and Management of Downtown

In 1993, the Aurora Downtown Redevelopment Corporation commissioned the preparation of “Aurora ‘98: A Strategic Plan for the Development and Management of Downtown.” Over 100 stakeholders crafted a blueprint, a plan of action to achieve a thriving, successful downtown Aurora. The strategic plan called for establishing downtown Aurora as a destination for shoppers, tourists, and business people by attracting more anchor developments (hotel, convention center, museums, galleries and housing); by marketing downtown through advertising, promotion, public relations, and other activities; by making downtown more attractive, safe, and convenient through street improvements, building renovation, and security measures; and by providing financial incentives to assist local business and property owners in improving properties.



To achieve these broad visions, participants agreed that it would require a concentrated, coordinated effort by downtown stakeholders through a dynamic central development and management organization. This organization would serve as an “umbrella” group that would coordinate planning, link owners with resources needed to expand, unify existing organizations, and reach out to encourage wide participation. It could link existing Special Service Areas (SSAs), either through the creation of one SSA, or through increased cooperation between existing SSAs. The organization, which took shape in the form of Aurora Downtown, would be the central forum for the planning and implementation of programs and policies for the development and management of downtown Aurora.

2006

Seize the Future Master Plan Aurora Riverfront Vision Plan

In 2006, the Aurora City Council adopted two new plans, the Seize the Future Master Plan and the Aurora Riverfront Vision Plan, both of which were intended to direct continued redevelopment efforts in downtown Aurora. The City also provided a 2006 revision to the Historic Districts and Landmarks Guidelines for four of Aurora’s historic districts and individual landmarks, which was drafted prior to the 2008 FoxWalk Overlay District Design Guidelines but offers relevant guidelines for the protection of historic properties and guidance on new construction. In 2007, a revised FoxWalk/Riverwalk Master Plan and the RiverEdge Park Master Plan were adopted by the City Council as well.

2009

Aurora Sustainability Plan

The City prepared its first Sustainability Plan in 2009 to serve as a long-range plan utilizing sustainable planning and development practices to enhance Aurora’s quality of life for present and future generations. In particular, the Sustainability Plan identified goals regarding a range of topics, including climate change, energy efficiency, conservation, environmental justice, resiliency, and water quality and conservation. Many of the recommendations outlined in the original plan have been implemented since its first adoption, which inspired the City to update the Sustainability Plan in 2019 to respond to emerging issues, new opportunities, and renewed expectations.

2009

Aurora Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

In addition to the Sustainability Plan, the City prepared the Aurora Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in 2009 to formulate policies, initiatives, and guidelines to enhance the community’s network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

2016

Mural Guidelines

In 2016, there was much interest from the public, artists, City staff, and various Committee members in encouraging murals in the downtown. This led to a Text Amendment for the Guidelines on a new process and guidelines on allowing murals in the downtown.

2017

Downtown Master Plan

In 2017, the City coordinated with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) to prepare the Downtown Master Plan, which defines recommendations to enhance downtown’s sense of place, formulate a comprehensive signage and wayfinding program, support marketing and communications, improve safety, pursue economic development initiatives, cultivate arts and culture, promote environmental stewardship, and strengthen the livability of downtown Aurora.

2018

Combining the FoxWalk Design Review Committee with the Riverwalk Advisory Subcommittee

In 2018, following the Downtown Master Plan, staff began reviewing the effectiveness of the Riverwalk Commission and the DRC. It was discovered that since the initial conception of the Riverwalk, City staff have taken on many of the Commission’s duties. So it was determined that the most prudent way of implementing the new Downtown Master Plan was to combine the two organizations into one being the FoxWalk Design Review Committee with a Riverwalk Advisory Subcommittee.

2019

Downtown Housing Study Aurora Sustainability Plan Update

In 2019, the City commissioned a Downtown Housing Study. The report determined the market potential and optimum market position for new rental or for-sale housing units that could be developed within the Downtown. The report concluded that Aurora could see as many as 1,260 new rental and for-sale housing units in the downtown within the next five years.

2020

City of Aurora Complete Streets Policy

The 2009 Aurora Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan influenced the 2020 City of Aurora Complete Streets Policy, which was intended to align the recommendations from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan with the City’s 10-year capital plan to advance a balanced multimodal transportation network for people of all ages and abilities.

2023

Downtown Parking Study

In 2023, the City initiated a Downtown Parking Study to review and analyze the Downtown Aurora parking system and provide recommendations and strategies to ensure a well-balanced parking system over the next ten years.



1.8: Purpose and Goals of the District

The FoxWalk Overlay District’s intended purpose is to guide the continued revitalization of downtown Aurora by providing a flexible framework that melds private and public sector efforts under a unifying design concept, respecting the City of Aurora’s significant architectural history, and ensuring that new development projects meet the highest standards of design, imagination, and execution.

The City of Aurora supports the attainment of this purpose by dedicating financial resources and personnel to the administration of appropriate programs assisting property and business owners within the FoxWalk Overlay District.

The FoxWalk Overlay District goals include:

- 1.8-1:** Establishing a pedestrian- and bicycle friendly, commercially-viable, destination district by:
 - 1.8-1.1:** Preserving, enhancing, and promoting the downtown’s pedestrian character;
 - 1.8-1.2:** Maintaining the historic urban pattern of downtown Aurora as one of small, densely constructed blocks which define public ways;
 - 1.8-1.3:** Locating and establishing pedestrian-oriented uses along pedestrian-friendly walkways;
 - 1.8-1.4:** Encouraging the establishment of visually-interesting and visible uses adjacent to pedestrian walkways;
 - 1.8-1.5:** Fostering sidewalk activities;
 - 1.8-1.6:** Improving linkages to existing bicycle paths;
 - 1.8-1.7:** Providing new bicycle paths, bicycle parking, and other bicycle facilities;
 - 1.8-1.8:** Encouraging safe access to transit;
 - 1.8-1.9:** Promoting facilities that accommodate emerging transportation options such as electric vehicles and micromobility (e.g., scooters, e-bikes, electric skateboards, bicycle shares, etc.);
 - 1.8-1.10:** Providing an upgraded streetscape, thereby supporting private sector redevelopment efforts with public sector commitments;
 - 1.8-1.11:** Capitalizing on Aurora’s ethnic and cultural diversity through the encouragement of uses, spaces, and public art reflecting that diversity;
 - 1.8-1.12:** Building a “critical mass” of experience-based uses, spaces, and activities that invites people of all ages to take advantage of expanded retail, dining, residential, entertainment, recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities; and
 - 1.8-1.13:** Dedicating street-level space in new or renovated buildings to public uses, e.g., retail, dining, etc.
- 1.8-2:** Honoring Aurora’s architectural history while encouraging innovative and imaginative redevelopment projects by:
 - 1.8-2.1:** Permitting mixed-use developments with upper-floor residential units;
 - 1.8-2.2:** Integrating “rural” and “urban” themes by connecting regional bicycle paths north and south of the downtown with the downtown Riverwalk system;
 - 1.8-2.3:** Creating programs to raise awareness of Aurora’s rich historic roots and architectural tradition;
 - 1.8-2.4:** Advancing implementation of the City’s plans that impact the FoxWalk District, including the Master Plan for Downtown Aurora;
 - 1.8-2.5:** Providing the downtown FoxWalk Overlay District with a distinctive character and sense of place;
 - 1.8-2.6:** Discouraging demolition of contextually-significant buildings;
 - 1.8-2.7:** Preserving buildings with architectural or historic significance;



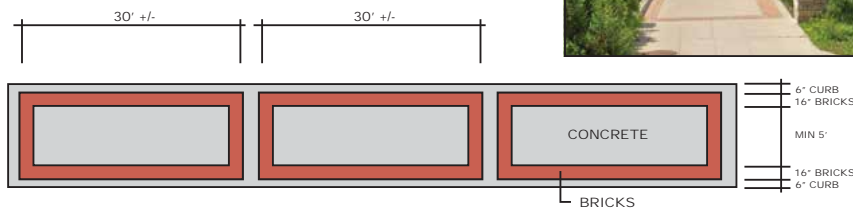
- 1.8-2.8: Denying approval of “prototype” building designs as requested by national chain enterprises;
- 1.8-2.9: Encouraging adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings and spaces; and
- 1.8-2.10: Exploring innovative uses of spaces such as creative lighting, interactive spaces, and public art.
- 1.8-3: Maximizing awareness of the Fox River’s potential as the City’s greatest natural asset by:
 - 1.8-3.1: Increasing public access to the riverfront;
 - 1.8-3.2: Enhancing viewsheds of the Fox River;
 - 1.8-3.3: Improving water quality and beautifying the river;
 - 1.8-3.4: Evaluating the potential of dam removal or the ability to safely traverse dams for recreational uses;
 - 1.8-3.5: Committing infrastructure dollars to enhancement of recreational opportunities; and
 - 1.8-3.6: Advancing implementation of the City and Kane County’s plans that impact the Fox River, including the Aurora Riverfront Vision Plan (2006), Revised FoxWalk/Riverwalk Master Plan (2007), and the Kane County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (2015 and ongoing updates).
- 1.8-4: Supporting redevelopment efforts by:
 - 1.8-4.1: Giving authority to the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee to oversee design and development within the district;
 - 1.8-4.1: Assigning staff specifically to expedite the development review process; and
 - 1.8-4.1: Offering financial incentives and technical assistance to property owners for building rehabilitation and restoration.

1.9: Coordination with Current Plans and Infrastructure Projects

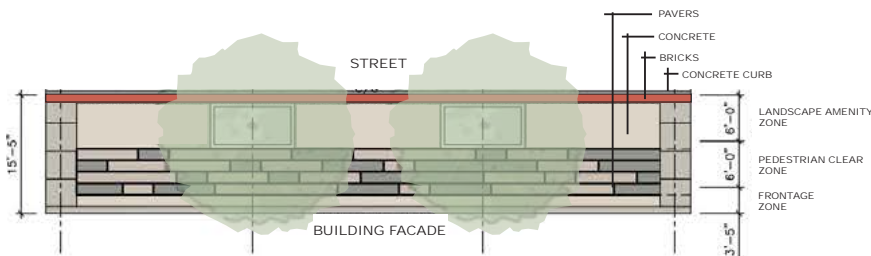
As described in the earlier history section, the City has completed multiple plans and studies that have varying levels of impact on the FoxWalk Overlay District. The design guidelines defined herein reflect the recommendations outlined in these plans and studies. In addition, the updated design guidelines account for ongoing infrastructure projects, specifically the Broadway streetscape improvements and New York Street bridge renovations, to ensure the future improvements add to the design and character of the FoxWalk Overlay District. Design guidelines for paver elements, intersections, planter beds, and trees and plants are illustrated in Figure 13 on pages 63-66.

RIVERWALK DESIGN

RIVERWALK ALONG WAUBONSEE COLLEGE



BROADWAY DESIGN



1.10: Land Use Survey

The following is a block-by-block survey of land uses within the FoxWalk Overlay District. Please refer to the map in Figure 5 on page 18 to locate blocks. Information about specific properties within the District can be found at the websites of Aurora Downtown, the Mayor’s Office of Economic Development, and Invest Aurora.

Properties listed as “significant/contributing” are of historic, cultural, or architectural value and contribute contextually to the character of the district. Subsequent changes to any of the property listings since 2006 are noted accordingly.

Figure 2: Land Use Survey Summary (Blocks 1-5)

Block	Location	Existing Land Use(s)	Significant/Contributing Structure(s)	Development Opportunities
1	Bounded by River Street on the west, Pinney Street on the north, the west bank of the Fox River on the east, and New York Street on the south	Residential, office, dining, bars, public open space, and surface parking; the deck along the rear of 29-41 W. New York Street provides access to the Riverwalk; Pinney Street terminates at the Riverwalk	29-41 W. New York Street	Property owners have made significant investments in this block to renovate buildings; continuation of these efforts should be encouraged
2	North end of Stolp Island, bounded by the Fox River on the west, north, and east and New York Street on the south	Hollywood Casino site	Pershing Memorial Bridge and “Victory” sculpture	Future redevelopment of this site is a significant topic of discussion in the community because the casino proposed relocating outside of downtown in 2025. At the time of drafting of this document, future redevelopment discussion was on ongoing; however, future redevelopment opportunities could include possible mixed-use redevelopment that enhances views of the Fox River and improves public access
3	Bounded by the east bank of the Fox River on the west, Spring Street on the north, Broadway on the east, and New York Street on the south	Residential, office, dining, surface parking, public open space (Fox River Trail), recreation (boat ramp)	Dillenburg Complex: 36-52 E. New York Street and 48-52 N. Broadway	Property owners have made significant investments in this block to renovate buildings; continuation of these efforts should be encouraged; new development should be mixed-use in character with enclosed parking
4	Bounded by Broadway on the west, Spring Street on the north, La Salle Street on the east, and New York Street on the south	Government, cultural, storage, surface parking, public open space	Aurora Regional Fire Museum, 53 N. Broadway; sculpture and pocket park	Continued preservation of block
5	Bounded by the BNSF viaduct on the west, Spring Street on the north, Lincoln Avenue on the east, New York Street on the south	Commercial, surface parking	None	New development should be mixed-used in character with potential enclosed public parking



Figure 2: Land Use Survey Summary (Blocks 6-12)

Block	Location	Existing Land Use(s)	Significant/Contributing Structure(s)	Development Opportunities
6	Bounded by Lake Street on the west, New York Street on the north, River Street on the east, Galena Boulevard on the south; bisected north/south by Middle Avenue	Retail, office, residential, surface parking	Hobbs Building, 2-4 N. River Street Victorian commercial buildings: 10-12 N. River Street, 129-131 W. Galena Boulevard, 15 N. Lake Street	Property owners have made significant investments in this block to renovate buildings; continuation of these efforts should be encouraged. New development should be mixed-used in character
7	Bounded by River Street on the west, New York Street on the north, the west bank of the Fox River on the east, Galena Boulevard on the south	Office, residential, parking structure with first-floor commercial, Tivoli Plaza, Riverwalk, canoe chute, covered walkway to Stolp Island	32-42 W. New York Street, 46 W. New York Street Tivoli Plaza, Riverwalk	Enhancement of the Riverwalk
8	On Stolp Island, bounded by the Fox River on the west, New York Street on the north, Stolp Avenue on the east, Galena Boulevard on the south	Commercial, residential, covered walkway to Stolp Island and through west end of North Island Apartments	North Island Apartments (Aurora Hotel), 2 N. Stolp Avenue	Connection of walkway through North Island Apartments with the Riverwalk
9	On Stolp Island, bounded by Stolp Avenue on the west, New York Street on the north, the Fox River on the east, Galena Boulevard on the south	Commercial, entertainment, parking structure, Riverwalk, public open space	North Island Center, 8 E. Galena Boulevard, Riverwalk	Enhancement of the Riverwalk and Plaza
10	Bounded by the east bank of the Fox River on the west, New York Street on the north, Broadway on the east, Galena Boulevard on the south	Office, retail, dining, residential, surface parking, Riverwalk, public open space	Hotel Arthur (Terminal Building), 2 N. Broadway Buildings facing Broadway, Riverwalk	Property owners have made significant investments in this block to renovate buildings; continuation of these efforts should be encouraged; "back doors" and rear business activity should be opened to the river; enhancement of the Riverwalk
11	Broadway on the west, New York Street on the north, BNSF viaduct on the east, Galena Boulevard on the south	Commercial, office, retail, dining, residential, surface parking	Buildings facing Broadway	Property owners have made significant investments in this block to renovate buildings; continuation of these efforts should be encouraged; replacement of surface parking with structure that incorporates first-floor commercial
12	BNSF viaduct on the west, New York Street on the north, Lincoln Avenue on the east, Galena Boulevard on the south	Churches, Wayside Cross mission, warehouse, commercial, dining, surface parking	20 N. Lincoln Avenue, 200 E. Galena Boulevard, 220 E. Galena Boulevard, 230 E. Galena Boulevard	Adaptive re-use of warehouse (residential/commercial) Redevelopment of Wayside Cross site



Figure 2: Land Use Survey Summary (Blocks 13-17)

Block	Location	Existing Land Use(s)	Significant/Contributing Structure(s)	Development Opportunities
13	Bounded by Lake Street on the west, Galena Boulevard on the north, River Street on the east, and Downer Place on the south; bisected north/south by Middle Avenue	Commercial, residential, surface parking	Old Second National Bank, 37 S. River Street Galena Hotel, 116 W. Galena Boulevard	Further restoration of the Galena Hotel. Replace surface parking with structure that incorporates first-floor commercial
14	Bounded by River Street on the west, Galena Boulevard on the north, the west bank of the Fox River on the east, Downer Place on the south; Hoyt Place provides access to Waubonsee Community College downtown campus	Waubonsee Community College downtown campus; Riverwalk	Aurora Business Center, 31 W. Downer Place (former YWCA)	Enhancement to the Riverwalk
15	On Stolp Island, bounded by the Fox River on the west, Galena Boulevard on the north, Stolp Avenue on the east, Downer Place on the south	Residential, retail, dining, commercial, public open space	Fox Island Apartments (Leland Tower), 7 S. Stolp Avenue; Graham Building, 33 S. Stolp Avenue; 37 and 41 S. Stolp Avenue; Millennium Plaza; Sherer Building, 7-15 W. Downer Place	Property owners have made significant investments in this block to renovate buildings; continuation of these efforts should be encouraged; enhancement to Millennium Plaza
16	On Stolp Island, bounded by Stolp Avenue on the west, Galena Boulevard on the north, the Fox River on the east, Downer Place on the south	Residential, offices, retail, entertainment, cultural, Riverwalk, public open space	Paramount Theatre, 23 E. Galena Boulevard; Silverplate Building, 6 E. Downer Place; David L. Pierce Art and History Center and sculpture garden, 20 E. Downer Place; 22 E. Downer Place; Fox Theatre complex, 24-28 E. Downer Place; Keystone Building, 30 S. Stolp Avenue; Riverwalk	Property owners have made significant investments in this block to renovate buildings; continuation of these efforts should be encouraged; enhancement to the Riverwalk
17	Bounded by the east bank of the Fox River on the west, Galena Boulevard on the north, Water Street mall on the east, Downer Place on the south	Government, entertainment, public open space	City Hall (main building), 44 E. Downer Place	Enhancement to the Water Street mall and Riverwalk



Figure 2: Land Use Survey Summary (Blocks 18-23)

Block	Location	Existing Land Use(s)	Significant/Contributing Structure(s)	Development Opportunities
18	Bounded by Water Street mall on the west, Galena Boulevard on the north, Broadway on the east, Downer Place on the south	Government, residential, retail, dining, office, commercial, public open space	City of Aurora (former German-American Bank), 1 S. Broadway; City of Aurora, 51-57 E. Galena Boulevard; Agnes Mundy Park; Beilman Park; Skinny Park	Property owners have made significant investments in this block to renovate buildings; continuation of these efforts should be encouraged; Enhancements to public open space; Adaptive reuse of vacant buildings
19	Bounded by Broadway on the west, Galena Boulevard on the north, La Salle Street/BNSF viaduct on the east, Downer Place on the south	Commercial, residential, office, surface parking	Smith Tower (Aurora National Bank), 2 S. Broadway/105 E. Galena Boulevard; Coulter Court (Merchants Bank), 32 S. Broadway/104 E. Downer Place	Property owners have made significant investments in this block to renovate buildings; continuation of these efforts should be encouraged; replacement of surface parking with structure that incorporates first-floor commercial
20	Bounded by La Salle Street on the west, Galena Boulevard on the north, Lincoln Avenue on the east, Downer Place on the south	Commercial, residential, retail, dining/bar, surface parking	Downer Place Lofts, 220 E. Downer Place; Early 20th century commercial buildings: 213-215 E. Galena Boulevard, 217-219 E. Galena Boulevard, 221 E. Galena Boulevard, 225 E. Galena Boulevard; Italianate multi-family building: 15 S. Lincoln Avenue	Property owners have made significant investments in this block to renovate buildings; continuation of these efforts should be encouraged
21	Bounded by Lake Street on the west, Downer Place on the north, River Street on the east, Benton Street on the south; bisected north/south by Middle Avenue	Commercial, residential, dining, retail, surface parking	Holbrook Mill, 121 W. Benton Street 77-81 S. River Street	Property owners have made significant investments in this block to renovate buildings; continuation of these efforts should be encouraged; Adaptive reuse of vacant buildings
22	Bounded by River Street on the west, Downer Place on the north, the west bank of the Fox River on the east, Benton Street on the south	Commercial, residential, retail, offices	52-54 W. Downer Place, 60-64 S. River Street, 70 S. River Street, 80 S. River Street	Property owners have made significant investments in this block to renovate buildings; continuation of these efforts should be encouraged; “back doors” and rear business activity should be opened to the river; construction of the Riverwalk
23	On Stolp Island, bounded by the Fox River on the west, Downer Place on the north, Stolp Avenue on the east, Benton Street on the south	Government, residential, commercial, retail, office, dining, surface parking, public open space	Stolp Woolen Mill, 2-6 W. Downer Place; Metropolitan Business College and Stolp Dye House, 8-20 W. Downer Place; Columbia Conservatory of Music, 71 S. Stolp Avenue; Elks Lodge, 77 S. Stolp Avenue; Swimming Stones sculpture and plaza	Property owners have made significant investments in this block to renovate buildings; continuation of these efforts should be encouraged; “back doors” and rear business activity should be opened to the river; construction of the Riverwalk



Figure 2: Land Use Survey Summary (Blocks 24-29)

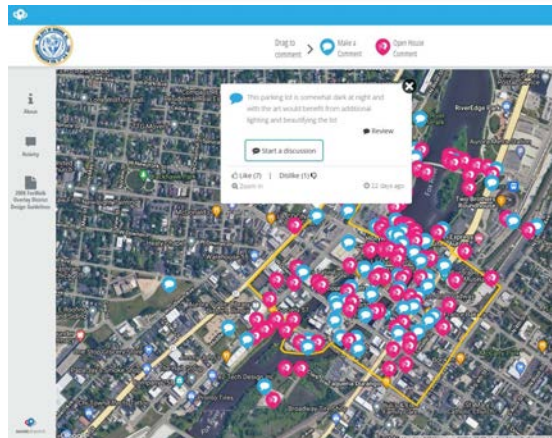
Block	Location	Existing Land Use(s)	Significant/Contributing Structure(s)	Development Opportunities
24	On Stolp Island, bounded by Stolp Avenue on the west, Downer Place on the north, the Fox River on the east, Benton Street on the south	Riverwalk; parking structure with first-floor commercial; culture, retail, dining, office	Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall, 23 E. Downer Place AT&T building, 82 S. Stolp Avenue	Continued promotion of the renovated GAR; Enhance the Riverwalk; Encourage new development within commercial spaces of garage; Enhance the structured parking.
25	Bounded by the east bank of the Fox River on the west, Downer Place on the north, Water Street on the east, Benton Street on the south	Surface parking, Riverwalk, public open space	Riverwalk (limited access, no connectivity)	Redevelopment as mixed-use (commercial/residential) project with enhancements to the Riverwalk
26	Bounded by Water Street on the west, Downer Place on the north, Broadway on the east, Benton Street on the south	Commercial, retail, office, public open space, government	59 S. Broadway	Limited investment has been made by property owners; more should be encouraged; redevelopment as mixed-use (commercial/residential)
27	Bounded by Broadway on the west, Downer Place on the north, La Salle Street on the east, Benton Street on the south; bisected by BNSF viaduct	Commercial, residential, office, retail, vacant lot, surface parking	62 S. Broadway and 78-84 S. Broadway; all buildings facing La Salle Street (La Salle Historic Auto Row)	Property owners on La Salle Street have made significant investments in this block to renovate buildings; continuation of these efforts should be encouraged; redevelopment of vacant parcel at 66 S. Broadway and surface parking at 54 S. Broadway (mixed-use) and adaptive reuse of vacant buildings
28	Bounded by La Salle Street on the west, Downer Place on the north, Lincoln Avenue on the east, Benton Street on the south	Commercial, bank drive-through, churches, residential, office, surface parking	All buildings facing La Salle Street (La Salle Historic Auto Row) Trinity Episcopal Church, 218 E. Benton Street	Property owners on La Salle Street and Lincoln Avenue have made significant investments in this block to renovate buildings; continuation of these efforts should be encouraged
29	On the south end of Stolp Island, bounded by the Fox River on the west, east, and south and Benton Street on the north	Office, surface parking	Former U.S. Post Office, 18 W. Benton Street	Redevelopment of site as mixed-use (commercial/residential) or public open space; development of the Riverwalk; addition of bicycle/pedestrian bridges to the east and west banks of the river to the end of Stolp Island



1.11: Community Engagement

Throughout the years, Aurora has had many opportunities for community engagements in the planning process for the downtown. In 1993 for example, prior to the original creation of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Guidelines the “Aurora ‘98: A Strategic Plan for the Development and Management of Downtown” included engagement of over 100 stakeholders to prepare an action plan to achieve a thriving, successful downtown. For the 2017 “A Master Plan for Downtown Aurora,” the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and the City of Aurora held key stakeholders meetings, hosted a public visioning workshop, presented a public open house, and created an interactive online tool to engage people unable to attend meetings.

The 2023 update of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Guidelines included its own community engagement including meetings with City staff and the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee and public feedback via a web-based comment map to reach people unable to attend meetings, an open house, and stakeholder outreach.



1,796
Total visits

532
Unique visitors

193
Comments

32
Downloads of 2008 Design Guidelines

Stats as of June 19, 2023



Figure 3: FoxWalk District Boundaries Map



Figure 4: Existing Zoning Map

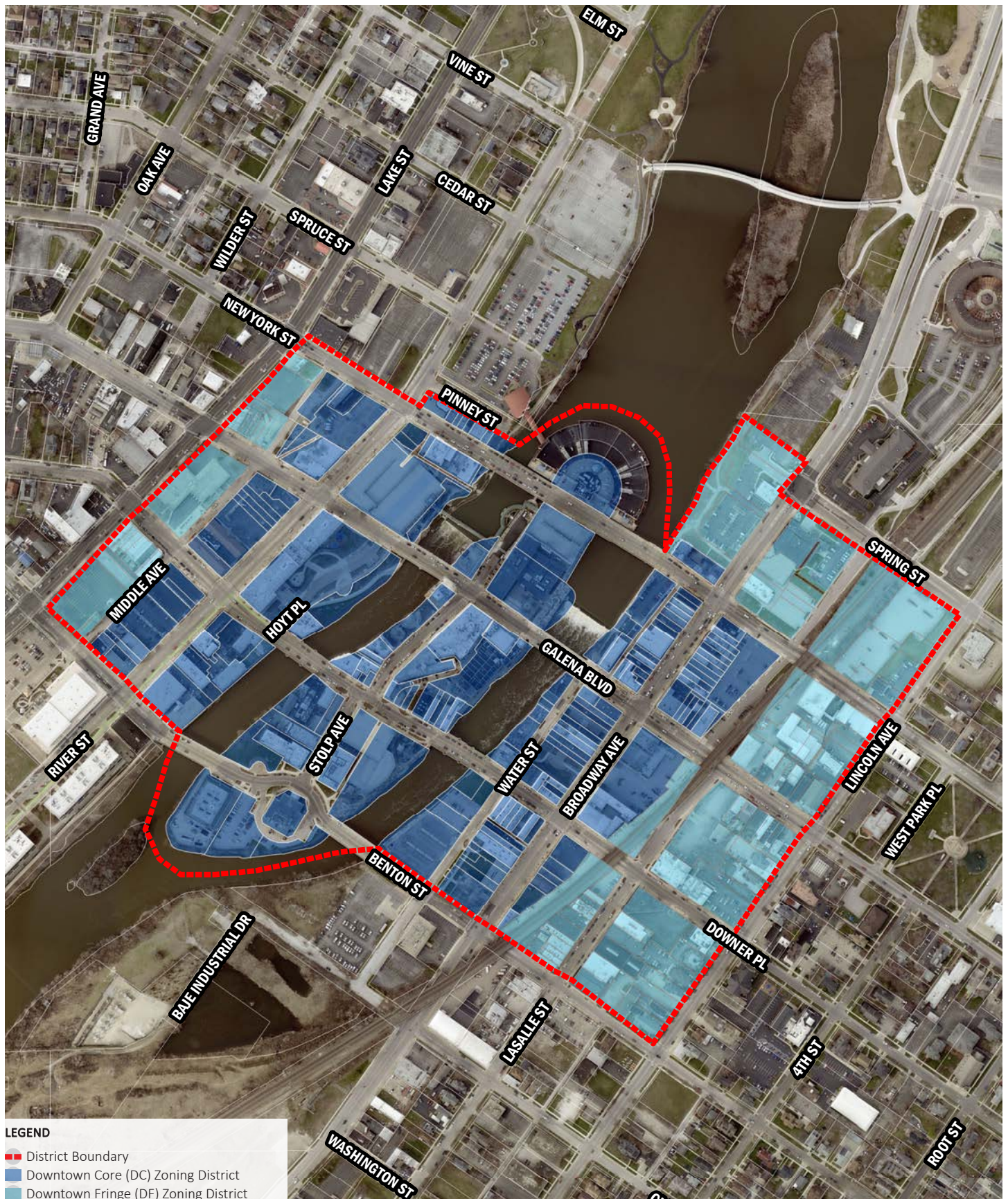
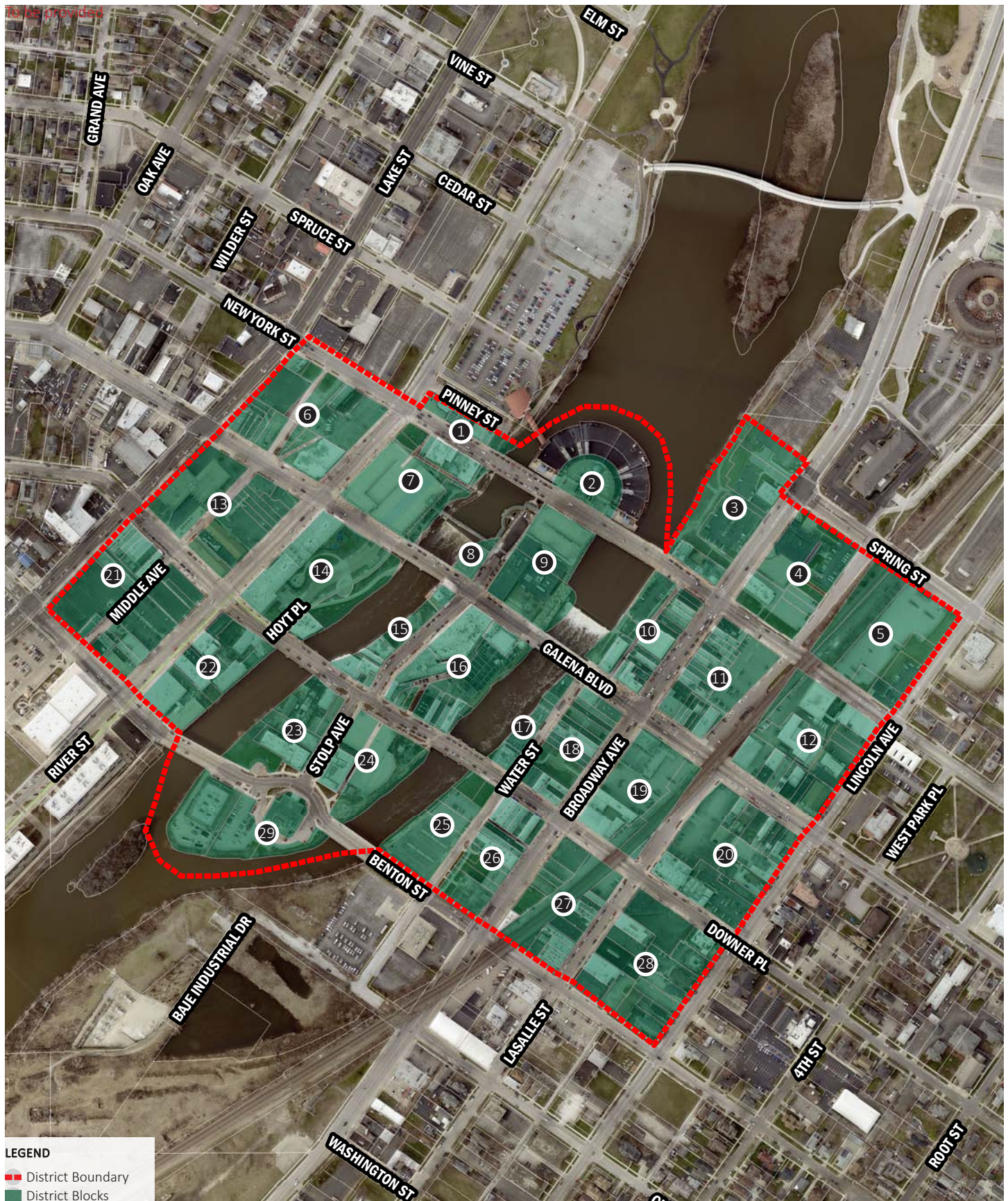


Figure 5: District Map by Blocks



LEGEND
- - - District Boundary
■ District Blocks



Figure 6: Topography Map

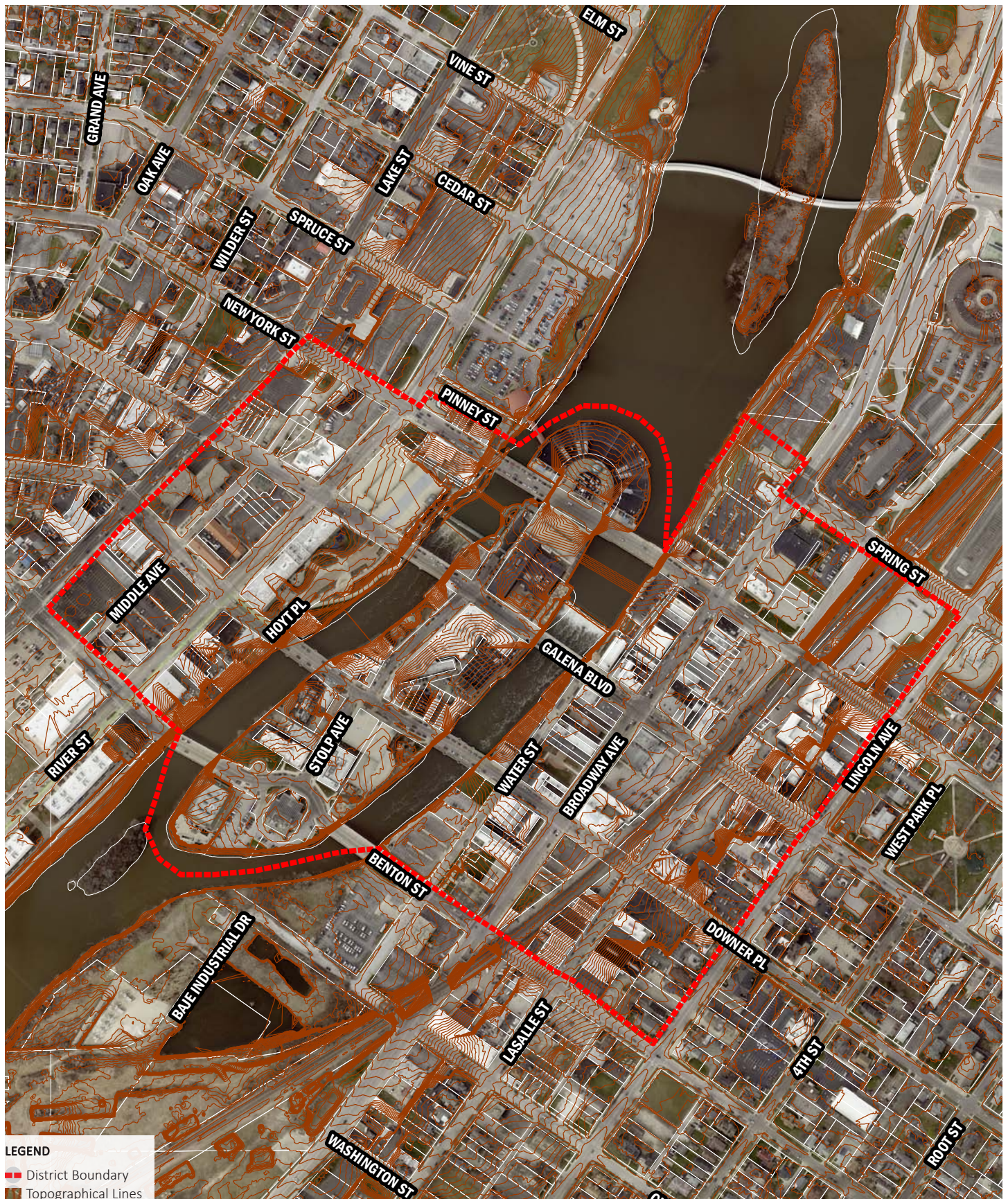


Figure 7: Floodplain Map

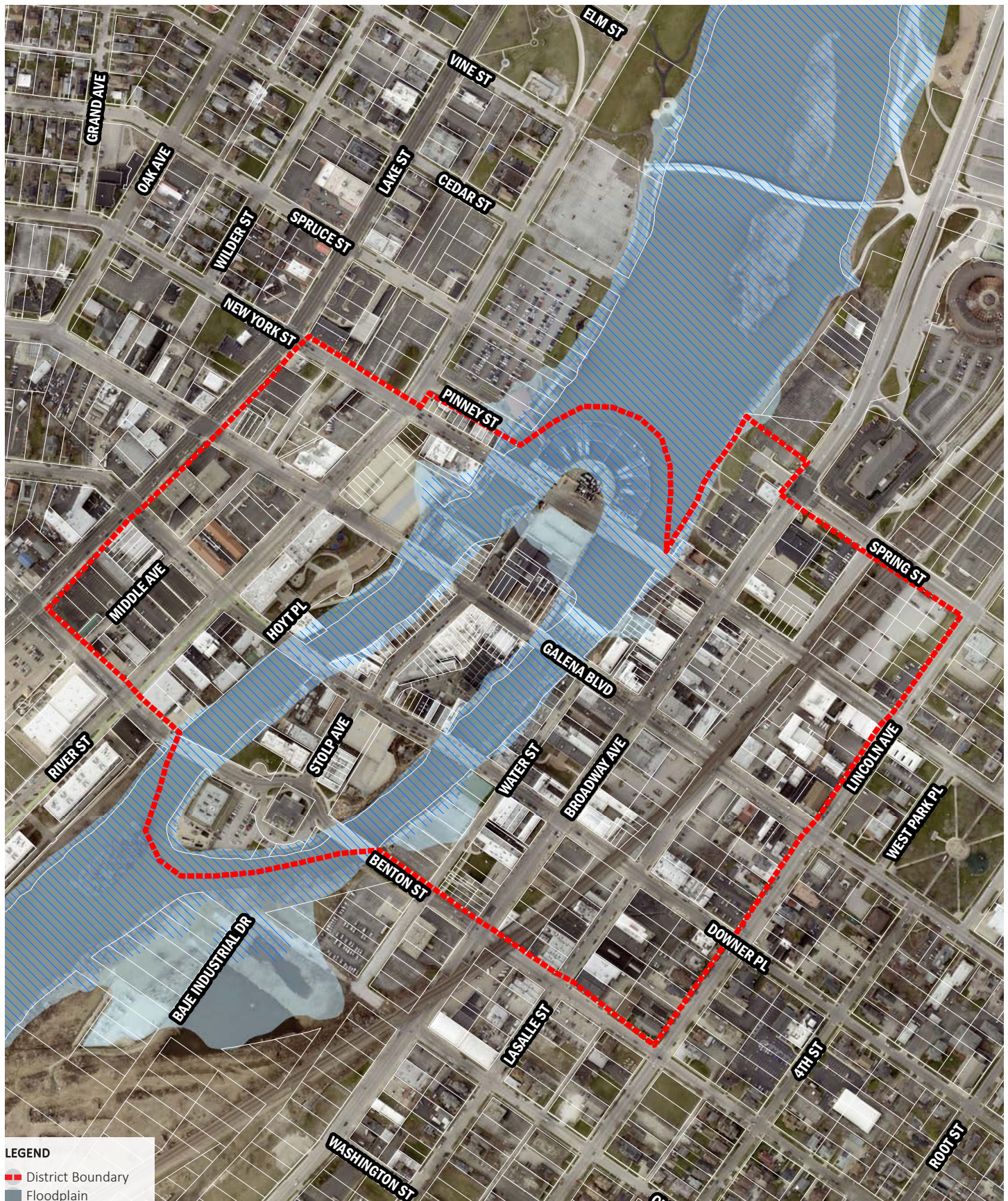


Figure 8: FoxWalk/Riverwalk Map



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SECTION 2

DESIGN GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS FOR Maintenance and Alterations to Existing Structures

2.1: Purpose and Goals

The design theme advocated in the original FoxWalk Overlay District Design Guidelines was not, in its strictest sense, a recommendation that each building reflect a certain style or follow a strict pattern for rigid, architectural uniformity. Rather, it involved a set of principles which were intended to restore downtown Aurora to an active and functioning city center of intrinsic beauty and interest.

Redevelopment and improvement of the FoxWalk Overlay District area was to occur in a “naturalistic” manner, respecting the character and form of existing significant structures, streets, and civic improvements. This was in contrast to a uniform “Disneyland” theme, which strives for artificial and idealized design standards.

It is acknowledged that no single, coherent historical or architectural reference exists within the FoxWalk Overlay District. The District clearly features a range of building types and styles which span the history of Aurora. This sense of history was perceived to be important to building a distinct image and character within the FoxWalk Overlay District, and thus preservation of significant structures was emphasized.

New construction was expected to respect significant structures as well as those deemed worthy of preservation. Public space improvements were to be implemented to unify the FoxWalk Overlay District visually as well as spatially. Improvements, both public and private, were to be made with pedestrian scale in mind. Public and private improvements were to reinforce the urban character of downtown.

Numerous sites within the FoxWalk Overlay District are available for renovation and redevelopment. Future projects have the potential to contribute significantly to revitalization efforts as they bring additional energy and revenues to downtown Aurora, as well as contribute to the character and viability of the FoxWalk Overlay District. All development within the FoxWalk Overlay District should be executed in a manner consistent with the principles and spirit outlined within this document.

2.2: Building Program

The following provisions shall apply when extensive or major reconstruction work, as determined by the Zoning Administrator, is planned for the exterior of a building within the FoxWalk Overlay District:

- 2.2-1:** At least seventy percent (70%) of the total area of all new or reconstructed first floor or FoxWalk level building walls that face a public street or walkway must be devoted to pedestrian entrances, display windows, or windows affording views into the building.
- 2.2-2:** Such views shall be of retail and commercial spaces, dining uses, any use which extends out into sidewalk activities, and any use, which, in the opinion of the Zoning Administrator, is in keeping with the overall objectives of the FoxWalk Overlay District. Views of interior spaces which do not conform to this objective shall be screened by displays attractive to pedestrians.
- 2.2-3:** For each street or Riverwalk level façade, the total of all blank façade segments, including garage doors, shall not exceed forty percent (40%). This applies to any façade at the front, side, or rear of a building that is visible to the general public, whether at the front from the sidewalk, back or side entrances, or a side alley with activity such as outdoor dining, pedestrian seating, or public art display. While major alterations are more appropriate on the rear of the building, the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee may allow more discretion for major alterations on the front or exterior side of the building if such construction holds the potential to enhance the character of the streetscape or increase activity on the sidewalk or public open space.
- 2.2-4:** Blank façades shall be limited to 15 feet in width. When enhanced with architectural detailing, artwork, landscaping, or similar features that have visual interest, façade segments of 30 feet in width are permitted.
- 2.2-5:** Separate pedestrian entries onto the public street or walkway shall be required for each 15,000 square feet of street level use.



2.3: Ground Floor Use

The ground floor of buildings within the FoxWalk Overlay District should be accessible to the public and encourage interaction among the building interior and the street. Storefronts, arcades, terraces, and lobbies should be utilized to promote this connection between interior and exterior spaces and the natural and built environment.



2.4: Building Exteriors: Materials, Scale, and Detail

Many of the existing buildings in the FoxWalk Overlay District are embellished with ornamentation and carefully designed detail. This craftsmanship, which is executed in masonry, metal, wood, glass, and other materials, adds significant interest to the pedestrian experience and should be creatively pursued in all restorations and new construction.

2.4-1: General Provisions

- 2.4-1.1: Existing original exterior building materials shall be retained. If they require repair or maintenance, the original construction materials shall be restored if possible.
- 2.4-1.2: If existing original architectural or façade details have deteriorated beyond repair, they shall be replaced by replicas fabricated of similar design and where feasible materials. Replacement material shall either replicate historic materials or be fabricated of a contemporary, alternate material that is able to replicate the detailing, dimensions, proportions, appearance, texture, etc. of the historic material as determined by the Zoning Administrator.
- 2.4-1.3: Metal trim, railings, and other secondary building elements shall be painted or anodized to match or complement masonry coloration.
- 2.4-1.4: Aluminum or vinyl siding shall not be used on additions to existing structures. Cement Board, engineered wood or similar siding that simulated wood siding may be allowed. This material shall be smooth finish and primed to be painted, or if available in colors appropriate for the specific architectural style of the home can be ordered pre-painted.
- 2.4-1.5: Materials that would be inappropriate to the original building, e.g., asbestos, asphalt, cast stone, exterior insulation and finish systems (E.I.F.S.), or artificial brick, shall not be used on the existing building or in building additions.
- 2.4-1.6: Glass block shall not be used.
- 2.4-1.7: Non-decorative or concrete block shall not be used for anything other than foundations and structural elements.
- 2.4-1.8: Plant materials and trees in close proximity to the building that are causing deterioration to the building's historic fabric shall be removed.
- 2.4-1.9: Signboards or signable areas are required on buildings which are newly constructed, or on which the façade is extensively renovated.
- 2.4-1.10: Dumpster enclosures shall be 100% opaque and fabricated of weather-resistant, stained, or painted wood, masonry, or decorative galvanized metal. Such enclosures shall be placed on concrete slabs. Enclosures shall be a neutral color in a matte finish that complements the colors scheme of surrounding buildings, such as black, brown, or gray, and shall not be metallic. Chain link, louvered, corrugated metal, concrete block, or mesh panels enclosures are not permitted.
- 2.4-1.11: Security bars, gates, wires, cages, and similar devices are not permitted on primary or Riverwalk façades, or portions of other façades which are highly visible to the public.
- 2.4-1.12: Awnings and canopies shall be fabricated of weather-resistant material, except that plastic, vinyl, or 100% opaque metal awnings or canopies are not allowed.
- 2.4-1.13: Awnings, hoods, or shutters that would detract from the existing character or appearance of the building shall not be used.
- 2.4-1.14: Decorative glass shall be replaced with like material if damaged.



- 2.4-1.15:** Existing lead, stained, prism, or cut glass shall not be removed from its position.
- 2.4-1.16:** Decorative glass shall not be introduced where it did not previously exist.
- 2.4-1.17:** Fixtures such as clocks, sidewalk tiles, decorative pavers, etc. which reflect the property's history and development shall be retained. Existing clocks shall be maintained to ensure they operate in a manner that accurately reflects the current time.
- 2.4-1.18:** Existing original features such as handrails, balusters, columns, brackets, façade tiles, entrance tiles, roof decorations, and other details shall be retained. When original features are deteriorated beyond repair, they should be replaced by replicas of similar design and materials. They may be replaced with period appropriate designs when exact replicas are not feasible as determined by the Zoning Administrator. Additions reflecting later architectural styles, and which are important to the historical integrity, shall be retained.
- 2.4-1.19:** Entrances, balconies, promenades, and stairs that are appropriate to the building's style and development shall not be removed, enclosed, or otherwise altered. If any of these elements are damaged, they shall be repaired.
- 2.4-1.20:** Mechanical systems shall be placed in areas that will result in the least possible alteration to the structural integrity and physical appearance of the building. Mechanical systems should be located on roofs or rear facades not visible from the street where possible. Equipment should be setback on roof to be least visible and setback so fencing/safety railing is not required. If located at ground level or if located on the roof but visible from the street, mechanical equipment shall be screened per the requirements for dumpster enclosures above. The Zoning Administrator may approve heights greater than what is permitted by right if needed to fully screen equipment.
- 2.4-1.21:** Equipment such as utility transformers and junction boxes should be located on roofs or rear facades not visible from the street where possible. Equipment should be setback on roof to be least visible and setback so fencing is not required. If located at ground level or if located on the roof but visible from the street, equipment shall be screened per the requirements for mechanical systems above.
- 2.4-1.22:** Holes shall not be cut through walls in primary façades to accommodate air conditioners, heat pumps, or other mechanical equipment.
- 2.4-1.23:** Window air conditioners, exhaust fans, or heat pumps shall not be installed in primary façades.
- 2.4-1.24:** New exterior electrical telephone, television, or data cables shall be hidden or buried in locations such as public open spaces, streetscapes, or riverscapes.
- 2.4-1.25:** New electrical, telephone, data or television cables or conduits shall not run up or across exterior primary surfaces to connect to existing installations.
- 2.4-1.26:** New exterior electrical, telephone, satellite dishes, data or television cables or conduits shall not be attached to primary façades.



2.4-2: Windows and Doors

- 2.4-2.1:** Existing or original windows, including sash, lintels, sills, shutters, pediments, hoods, and hardware shall be retained. When deteriorated beyond repair, as determined by the Zoning Administrator, the Zoning Administrator can approve the replacement with a solid wood window that replicates exactly in detailing, proportions, operation, material, glazing, grill configuration, etc.
- 2.4-2.2:** When metal or synthetic storm windows and doors are used they shall be painted, anodized, or coated to match the existing color of the trim. Storm windows shall be correctly sized to fit the window openings including round arched windows.
- 2.4-2.3:** Loading doors shall be painted, anodized, or finished to match the existing texture, color of trim, and/or other doors and windows.
- 2.4-2.4:** If new windows and doors are installed, the existing or original material, design, and hardware shall be duplicated. The Design Review Committee will consider allowing the use of contemporary, alternate material in punched window openings (not storefront systems) if the detailing, dimensions proportions, type, grill pattern, muntin profiles, and styling are consistent with that of other historic windows found on the building or if it is consistent with the style and period of the building. Replacement window and window frame material shall either replicate historic materials (wood or metal) or be fabricated of a contemporary, alternate material (e.g. aluminum clad, wood windows) that are able to meet the above specifications. If the historic windows had (or likely had) muntins, then new windows must be true, divided-lites or simulated divided lite with exterior and interior applied muntins with spacer bars between the panes of glass. Glazing should match the historic character of the glass.
- 2.4-2.5:** Existing or original doors shall be retained. When deteriorated beyond repair, as determined by the Zoning Administrator, the Zoning Administrator can approve the replacement with a wood door or fiberglass/resin that resembles the historic door.
- 2.4-2.6:** When replacing non-storefront doors, aluminum, fiberglass/resin replacement doors may be substituted for wood, so long as the design of the door is appropriate for the historic style and commercial use and blends with the architectural elements of the building.
- 2.4-2.7:** New windows or door openings that would alter the scale and proportion of the building shall not be introduced. Inappropriate new window or door features such as aluminum insulating glass combinations that require the removal of original windows and doors shall not be used.
- 2.4-2.8:** Windows of vacant street level spaces shall remain transparent, and shall not be papered or otherwise blocked or covered over. The area of the room within a minimum of ten (10) feet of the window shall be maintained in a clean, neat, and presentable state. The remainder of the interior shall be screened from view.
- 2.4-2.9:** Windows on vacant units and units that are actively being restored with valid building permits as determined by the Zoning Administrator may install window screen signs per the requirements of [Section 4](#) below.
- 2.4-2.10:** When metal or synthetic storm windows and doors are used, metal finish, aluminum, or silver shall not be permitted.
- 2.4-2.11:** For windows and doors on Storefronts, see 2.6.1: Guidelines for Storefront Renovation.

2.4-3: Decorative Garage or Patio Doors

Decorative garage and patio doors have emerged as an attractive feature for restaurants and other businesses. While some businesses incorporate an existing garage door into the building design, others seek to add a new decorative garage or patio door on a façade to provide for more ambient light and provide for a more dynamic engagement between indoor and outdoor spaces, such as an indoor dining room and seating on a sidewalk patio. The following guidelines should be considered when incorporating a decorative garage or patio door into a restaurant or business design to create an attractive space without sacrificing functionality and safety:

- 2.4-3.1: Location:** A decorative garage or patio door may be located on the side or rear of a building with a Certificate of Appropriateness, particularly if it relates to access to outdoor seating or sidewalk access. A rear location is recommended as it would have the least impact on the historic streetscape and may bring additional value to restaurants or businesses that open up to the riverfront, which enhances the attraction and river views for customers. Decorative garage or patio doors may be located on any elevation of a building that is less than 50 years old with the approval of a Certificate



of Appropriateness. Location on the front façade of historic buildings over 50 years old is discouraged. When located on such façade, the approval of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee is required.

- 2.4-3.2: Style and Aesthetics:** A decorative garage or patio door should complement the overall exterior design of the restaurant or business, including considerations like architectural style, color scheme, and intended ambiance. Doors shall be weather resistant material such as aluminum or similar material and shall be full view clear glass. Doors should replicate muntin patterns found on the rest of the storefront for a cohesive design.
- 2.4-3.3: Branding and Signage:** The addition of signage or other elements featuring the restaurant or business's logo or other branding elements on a decorative garage door serves as an opportunity to enhance visibility and create a unique identity for the establishment. Branding and signage refers only to on-site businesses, off-site advertising is prohibited.
- 2.4-3.4: Noise Control:** Noise control may be a factor to consider, depending on the location and surroundings of the restaurant or business, particularly along a busy street or area that experiences significant vehicular traffic. Decorative garage and patio doors should incorporate insulation options or additional noise-dampening features to minimize disruptions from ambient noise.
- 2.4-3.5: Accessibility and ADA Compliance:** Installation of a decorative garage door shall be ADA compliant to meet accessibility requirements.
- 2.4-3.6: Sidewalk Clearance:** Decorative patio doors must maintain a minimum of five (5) foot sidewalk clearance.

2.4-4: Lighting

- 2.4-4.1:** Lighting should be used to illuminate significant architectural elements, building entrances, signage, parking areas, sidewalks and bicycle paths, the Riverwalk and other trails, and gateway entry points into the FoxWalk Overlay District. Lighting levels should provide adequate illumination to create a safe environment without detracting from or overly emphasizing the site or building.
- 2.4-4.2:** All lighting will require a Certificate of Appropriateness, primarily checking for compatibility in terms of design, material, use, size, scale, color, brightness, and relation to the site and/or building. The following information may be required for review: location of all light fixtures; positioning height for wall-mounted fixtures; the number of light fixtures to be located on a building or site; the type, wattage, and light level of all light fixtures; the areas to be illuminated; and angle of each light fixture.
- 2.4-4.3:** Light fixtures that are original to a building or site shall be preserved and maintained as best as possible.
- 2.4-4.4:** Exterior building lighting should be subtle and compatible with the style, scale, and period of the structure. Light fixtures should generate minimal glare and/or spillover onto adjacent properties, whether through the design or positioning of the fixture (e.g., providing a light shield, pointing downwards, etc.).



- 2.4-4.5:** Security lights, flood lights, and foot lights shall be located on rear and sides not visible from the street or Riverwalk and should generally be small and simple in design. The number of such light fixtures should be minimized to avoid oversaturating a site or building with lighting without sacrificing safety.
- 2.4-4.6:** Except for special events and occasions, spotlighting on building façades is prohibited within the FoxWalk Overlay District. For Special Occasions, spotlighting on blank facades by the City of Aurora is permitted with a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- 2.4-4.7:** Downward spotlighting on the sidewalk by the City of Aurora is permitted with a Certificate of Appropriateness. Private downward spotlighting on the sidewalk requires the approval of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee.
- 2.4-4.8:** Downward spotlighting and architectural accent lighting on buildings less than 50 years old is permitted with a Certificate of Appropriateness. Downward spotlighting and architectural accent lighting on buildings older than 50 years old requires the approval of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee.
- 2.4-4.9:** Lighting underneath bridges is permissible with a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- 2.4-4.10:** Motion or strobing effects of any lighting is prohibited.
- 2.4-4.11:** Incandescent lighting is encouraged as the primary type of lighting, as it creates a warm and subtle environment. Other types of lighting including LED, high pressure sodium (orange lighting) and diffused, soft white light is permissible. Neon lighting may be used if the colors are compatible with the façade of the building. Extensive lighting is discouraged to help reduce light pollution.
- 2.4-4.12:** Creative lighting, such as concepts proposed by the Broadway streetscape improvements, is encouraged with proper review and approval by the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee.
- 2.4-4.13:** Electrical service lines that power exterior lighting should be placed underground, where possible.



2.5: Maintenance of Building Exteriors

- 2.5-1:** Deterioration of wood materials shall be prevented through repair, cleaning, and painting.
- 2.5-2:** Masonry, including glazed brick, shall be maintained, tuckpointed, and properly cleaned when necessary. Masonry shall be cleaned only when necessary to halt deterioration or to remove stains, and shall be done with the gentlest method possible, such as low pressure water and soft natural bristle brushes. Deteriorated or damaged masonry shall be replaced with similar material. Brick should not be cleaned with high-pressure water that exceeds 300 pounds per square inch.
- 2.5-3:** Unpainted brick shall remain unpainted. Exceptions may be made for painted murals applied directly onto the brick, with proper review by the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee and approval by the City.
- 2.5-4:** Unnecessary re-pointing of mortar joints shall not be performed. Mortar joints shall be re-pointed only when there is evidence of moisture problems, or when sufficient mortar is missing to allow water to stand in the mortar joint. Original mortar shall be duplicated in composition, tensile strength, color, texture, joint size, method of application, and joint profile. The original or early color and texture of masonry surfaces shall be retained.
- 2.5-5:** Re-pointing shall not be done with a mortar of high Portland cement content, since this technique can create a bond that is stronger than the building material, thus causing deterioration that results from the differing co-efficient of expansion and the differing porosity of the material and mortar. If the original composition cannot be determined, a historic compound such as one part lime, one part Portland cement, and six parts sand must be used.
- 2.5-6:** Concrete shall be cleaned only when necessary to halt deterioration or remove stains. Cleaning shall be done with the gentlest method possible, such as low pressure water and soft natural bristle brushes.

- 2.5-7: Unpainted concrete shall remain unpainted. Exceptions may be made for painted murals applied directly onto the concrete, with proper review by the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee and approval by the City. When necessary, concrete shall be replaced with that of similar color and texture
- 2.5-8: Stucco surfaces shall be maintained by cleaning and repainting when necessary. When repairing original stucco, a stucco mixture duplicating the existing in appearance shall be used.
- 2.5-9: Stucco or E.I.F.S shall not be applied to existing masonry surfaces.
- 2.5-10: Metal, including steel, extruded aluminum, cast, and forged iron, shall be maintained and cleaned only when necessary to halt deterioration or to remove stains and shall be done with the gentlest method possible, such as low pressure water and soft natural bristle brushes.
- 2.5-11: Unpainted metal shall remain unpainted. Exceptions may be made for painted murals applied directly onto the metal, with proper review by the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee and approval by the City. When necessary, metal shall be replaced with that of similar color and texture.
- 2.5-12: Terra cotta shall be cleaned, maintained, and where applicable, tuckpointed.
- 2.5-13: Before any painting is undertaken, technical assistance shall be sought from City staff, so as to ensure authenticity in regard to the color schemes characteristic of the various eras represented within the district.
- 2.5-14: Wood siding shall not be resurfaced with new materials which would have been inappropriate when the building was originally constructed, e.g., artificial stone, brick veneer, asbestos, or asphalt shingles.
- 2.5-15: Blasting with sand or the use of harsh detergents shall not be used on wood, concrete, masonry, stucco and, in certain instances, metal. This method of cleaning erodes the surface material and accelerates deterioration. Water blasting above 600 pounds per square inch to remove loose paint is not recommended as it can cause damage.
- 2.5-16: Waterproof or water repellent coating or surface consolidation treatments shall not be used unless required and approved by the City to solve a specific problem that has been thoroughly studied and identified.
- 2.5-17: Electric saws and power hammers shall not be used to remove mortar since they can cause serious damage to adjacent brick.
- 2.5-18: Paint shall not be removed from masonry surfaces indiscriminately.
- 2.5-19: New site improvements shall be appropriate to the past appearance of the property, as researched through photographs, drawings, and historic publications. They shall match existing surrounding site elements in terms of scale, type, and appearance.
- 2.5-20: Windows shall not be boarded, except for emergency purposes. Board-ups shall not extend beyond thirty (30) days, unless an extension is granted by the Zoning Administrator. Damaged windows shall be replaced within thirty (30) days unless an extension is approved by the Zoning Administrator.
- 2.5-21: Existing clocks on an exterior wall shall be maintained to ensure they operate in a manner that accurately reflects the current time.



2.6: Alterations to Building Exteriors

Buildings identified as contextually significant should be renovated in a manner that respects the original building design and the general recommendations for new building design.

Demolition of contextually significant buildings may be permitted but is strongly discouraged. When approved demolition does occur, it is recommended that some reference to the former building or buildings, if architecturally or historically significant, be made within the new structure or development. Stones, pavers, or other architectural details and elements should be incorporated into the new project, along with a commemorative plaque or display of historic photos.

In all cases, building renovation shall be done in the least detrimental manner possible. For example, chemical washing rather than sandblasting is the preferred method of cleaning façades.

Two typical conditions that are favorable for potential building renovation exist throughout the FoxWalk Overlay District. Many storefronts of the two (2) and three (3) story masonry buildings have been altered or destroyed. Additionally, some of these buildings “back up” to the river and present the opportunity for creating a second “front” facing the water.

2.6-1: Guidelines for Storefront Renovation

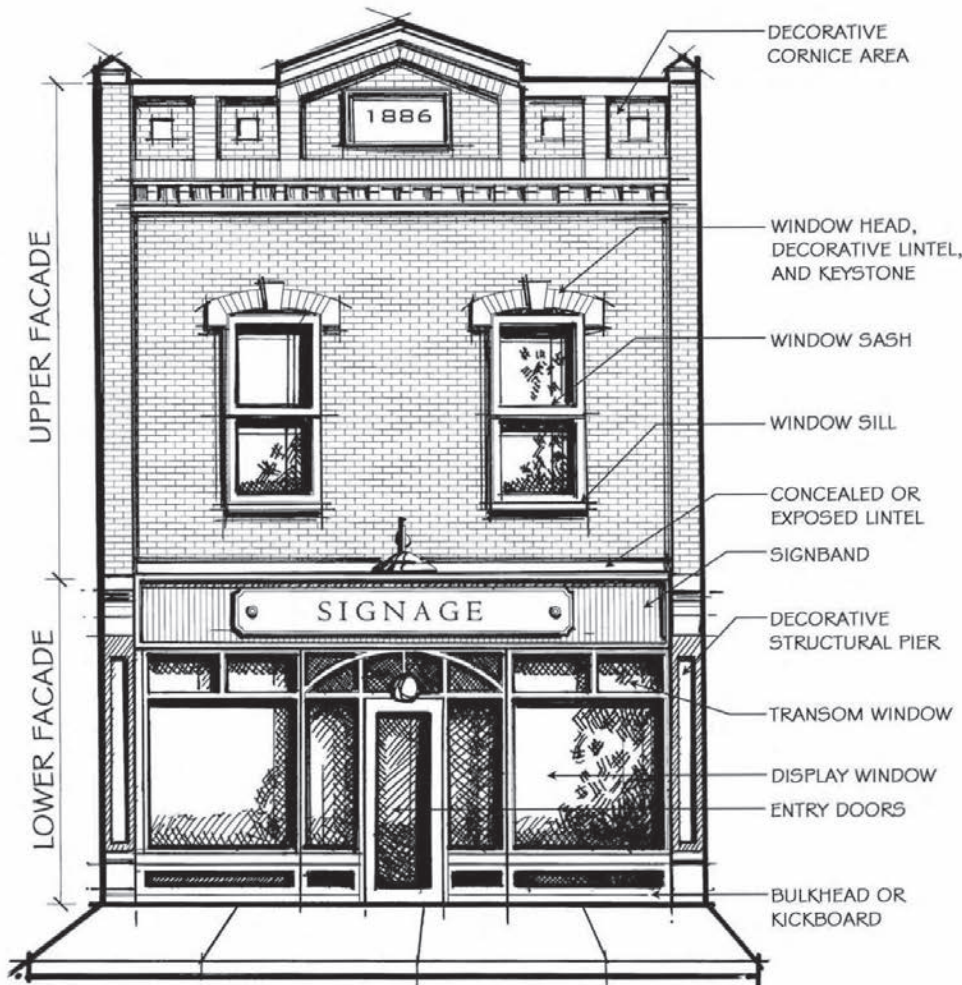
- 2.6-1.1: Maintain the traditional division between street level storefront and upper façade by use of a decorative cornice. Cornices should be consistent in design with the original building and in approximate alignment with adjacent cornices.
- 2.6-1.2: Storefront areas should be contained at each edge by the building façade. The primary material within the storefront should be glass. A setback of three (3) to six (6) feet for the entrance door should be allowed.
- 2.6-1.3: The upper façade, typically a flat masonry wall with a second decorative cornice, should be restored to original conditions when possible.
- 2.6-1.4: In cases where the upper façade has been removed or renovated beyond recovery, a new façade should be designed. The new façade should respect the height, proportions, and primary lines of adjacent buildings. Contemporary, alternate material that is able to replicate the detailing, dimensions, proportions, appearance, texture, etc. of the historic material as determined by the Zoning Administrator may be used to design a new facade. Windows should be based upon historic photos or physical evidence of the original. If none of the above exists, consideration should be given to the window size, pattern, and rhythm of adjacent buildings.
- 2.6-1.5: Original fabric on few remaining existing storefronts, including original wood doors, framing, exterior tile flooring, decorative transoms, low bulkheads, etc. shall be preserved unless deteriorated beyond repair. When deteriorated, they should be replaced with replicas fabricated of similar design and where feasible materials. Replacement material shall either replicate historic materials or be fabricated of a contemporary, alternate material that is able to replicate the detailing, dimensions, proportions, appearance, texture, etc. of the historic material, including cement board, engineered wood, porcelain tile, fiberglass, polyurethane, or other materials as determined by the Zoning Administrator.



- 2.6-1.6:** When replacing wood on storefronts, such as low bulkheads and sign boards, material should be durable natural wood or a contemporary, alternate material that is more weather resistant than plywood, such as medium density fiberboard, cement board, etc.
- 2.6-1.7:** Major alterations to original storefronts, as determined by the Zoning Administrator, shall go before the FoxWalk Overlay Design Review Committee.
- 2.6-1.8:** When historic storefronts do not exist and the storefront is being rebuilt, the storefront should be rebuilt either based upon historic photos or be compatible with the rest of the building and the streetscape. Modern materials, such as aluminum storefront windows, cement board, engineered wood, fiberglass, porcelain tile, polyurethane, etc. may be used. Aluminum, full-view commercial doors are permitted on aluminum storefronts. The following should be incorporated into the new storefront:
- Low bulkheads with traditional look, such as wood paneling or natural stone but allow synthetic material that replicates historic material;
 - Thin framing;
 - Large displays of clear glass;
 - Recessed Commercial entrances (3 to 6 feet);
 - Other elements like transoms should be considered.
- 2.6-1.9:** Falsely constructed or pseudo-historic detail should not be permitted. Façade design which directly mimics that of adjacent buildings should not be permitted.

Figure 9: Traditional Storefront Components

Sketch prepared by Allen+Pepa Architects



2.6-2: Roof Design

- 2.6-2.1:** The existing original form of the roof shall be retained. All architectural features which give the roof its essential character, such as parapets, cornices, brackets, and chimneys, shall be retained. When solar panels or skylights are installed, they shall be located to the rear of the roof area to minimize visibility especially from street and river levels.
- 2.6-2.2:** Whenever possible, the original materials of the roof should be restored. Particular effort should be made to preserve certain materials such as slate, tile, and other unique materials not commonly found in new construction. Roof materials which are deteriorated beyond repair should be replaced with the original material whenever possible. If not possible, roof material should be replaced with new material that matches as closely as possible the existing or original in composition, size, shape, color, and texture.
- 2.6-2.3:** The roof shall not be stripped of architectural features important to its character. Nothing shall be done to change the essential character of the roof by adding architectural features or roofing materials inappropriate to the style of the building.
- 2.6-2.4:** Public use of rooftop spaces, such as a rooftop deck, is permissible if designed with safe ingress/egress and access to fire escapes in compliance with fire safety codes. A rooftop deck must also meet code requirements including but not limited to: structural loads; setbacks; options for screening certain sections or activities; railings or walls; and placement of mechanical systems. Approval by the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee is required. For a rooftop deck on a historic property, it should be compatible with the historic property and the surrounding historic properties. The rooftop deck should not remove, cover, or damage any historic building materials or architectural elements. Rooftop decks should be placed to be the least obtrusive, including being setback from the front façade. All work must be reversible.
- 2.6-2.5:** Railings should be designed to be unobtrusive allowing for the most visibility to the skyline, such as cable railing, glass, or other clear material. Woven mesh, chain link, or metal guardrail shall not be permitted.

2.6-3: Outdoor Dining

- 2.6-3.1:** Outdoor dining spaces are permissible on patios and sidewalks that provide adequate space to accommodate tables, chairs, server stations, and space demarcation elements (e.g., decorative planters, movable fencing, stanchions with ropes, trellises, etc.) and retain a minimum of five (5) feet clearance of sidewalk to not encroach on space for pedestrians and bicyclists to pass by safely and free of hindrances.
- 2.6-3.2:** Furniture such as tables, chairs, and benches should be weather-resistant, durable, and low-maintenance. All furniture must be movable and not affixed to the sidewalk or ground materials. Tables and chairs that are stackable or foldable are recommended for convenient storage.
- 2.6-3.3:** Heating lamps and fire pits are permissible provided they comply with fire safety codes and property city approvals are obtained. While heating lamps are allowed on sidewalks and patios, fire pits are only permitted on patios.



- 2.6-3.4:** Shade treatments like umbrellas and pergolas or shade sails on patios are permissible to protect diners from the sun and light rain. If tables and chairs are located adjacent to the building, historically appropriate retractable awnings or canopies affixed to the building may be utilized for flexible shading solutions, provided that the awnings or canopies comply with sign code standards. Placement of shade treatments shall not obstruct views, airflow, or pedestrian circulation.
- 2.6-3.5:** Outdoor dining spaces shall be lit by a mix of lighting sources: light fixtures on the building, ambient light from interior building lights, streetlights, tabletop lighting, and light features that are part of a heating lamp. String lights, lanterns, or pendant lights that are strung along a pergola or trellis are permissible on patios with a Certificate of Appropriateness and may be permissible on sidewalks with approval from the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee.
- 2.6-3.6:** Light levels should be adequate to provide safety and visibility during evening hours without excessive spillover onto the street or adjacent properties.
- 2.6-3.7:** Greenery is encouraged in outdoor dining spaces to provide a natural aesthetic and soften up the surrounding hard surfaces. Outdoor dining on the sidewalk may utilize raised and hanging planters, as well as engage with existing landscaping features that exist in the public right-of-way, such as shade trees and planters. Since patios are not part of the public right-of-way like sidewalk cafés and dining areas, patios generally have a greater degree of latitude to provide greenery, which may include elements such as shade trees, raised and hanging planters, flower beds, shrubs, etc. Raised planters may play a secondary role to define dining zones and provide a sense of enclosure. Greenery must comply with landscape code requirements.
- 2.6-3.8:** Outdoor dining where alcoholic beverages will be served must adhere to City requirements. Any fencing used to adhere to City requirements must follow the fence regulations outlined [Section 5](#) below. Chain link, rope rails, chain rails, and other materials not specifically designed as fencing are prohibited. Any barriers used should be of high quality such as decorative planters and should not include non-ornamental materials, such as plywood, bare wood, barrels, and cones.
- 2.6-3.9:** Screens, trellises, planters, or other decorative partitions may be provided to provide an added level of privacy by creating individually defined dining spaces. To help with acoustics, such partitions may be constructed of materials that absorb sound to minimize noise levels and enhance the dining experience.
- 2.6-3.10:** Outdoor dining spaces shall be ADA compliant to meet accessibility guidelines defined in [Section 5.5](#), including wheelchair accessibility, proper clearance, and appropriate signage. Ramps, tactile paving, and appropriately spaced seating are additional elements that will help accommodate a diverse range of physical abilities and needs.
- 2.6-3.11:** Where possible, eco-friendly materials and practices should be utilized in the design and construction of outdoor dining spaces, particularly in compliance with sustainability guidelines defined in [Section 3.11](#). Such sustainable measures may include use of permeable pavers, water-saving irrigation systems, and installation of native plants for landscaping.
- 2.6-3.12:** Parklets are encouraged but must adhere to the City's parklet requirements and receive appropriate City approval.

2.6-4: Winter Vestibules and Enclosures

- 2.6-4.1:** Winter vestibules and enclosures shall require a Certificate of Appropriateness and Building Permit along with any required City license or agreement.
- 2.6-4.2:** Such enclosures shall only be permitted October to March.
- 2.6-4.3:** Such enclosures shall be a neutral color and be constructed of weather resistant material, which shall be changed immediately if they show signs of deterioration.
- 2.6-4.4:** Installation shall not cover or damage architectural features of the building.
- 2.6-4.5:** Any text or graphics would be regulated as a wall sign.



2.7: Adaptive Re-use of Buildings Adjacent to the Riverwalk

The ultimate success of the Riverwalk will be enhanced with the development of retail, dining, residential, recreational, experiential, and entertainment uses along the riverfront. Many buildings located adjacent to the river have no access to it, and few, if any, windows at the upper levels.

As they undergo restoration and rehabilitation, the design principles listed below should be followed, to the greatest extent feasible.

- 2.7-1: Ground floor (street level) and intermediate levels between street and river should be dedicated to public or retail uses that engage the Riverwalk.
- 2.7-2: Stairways, ramps, terraces, and balconies should be visually integrated into the architectural and landscape design and not interrupt pedestrian movement along the Riverwalk.
- 2.7-3: Visible on-grade parking shall not be permitted adjacent to the Riverwalk. The FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee may approve an exception if such parking areas adequately integrate safe pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, provide public recreational space, provide access to the river, and offer clear views of the river. In situations where parking structures are located adjacent to the Riverwalk, first floor commercial/retail space is encouraged. If such uses are not economically viable, a landscaped buffer should be designed.
- 2.7-4: Renovation of buildings pursued as an effort to provide river access at the lowest level should not be limited to that level. The entire building façade, including upper levels whether occupied or not, should be renovated.
- 2.7-5: For buildings which are sited away from the river, the resulting open space shall engage the riverfront and be landscaped in a manner consistent with the adjacent Riverwalk.
- 2.7-6: Service entrances which are retained at the back or visible side building façades shall be fully screened with walks or mature landscaping. Such walks shall be architecturally compatible with adjacent buildings and Riverwalk construction. Temporary fences shall not be permitted.



SECTION 3

DESIGN GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS FOR Additions and New Construction

3.1: Purpose and Goals

Downtown Aurora is typical of other American Industrial Age cities in that masonry of many types is the most commonly used building material. Its characteristics of durability, economy, human scale, design flexibility, and permanence are compatible with the intentions for future development in the downtown area. The use of masonry as the primary exterior material is encouraged for downtown buildings, particularly in situations where infill projects are planned for blocks with existing buildings of significance.

Where multiple parcels are being assembled for new, large-scale development within the FoxWalk Overlay District, it may be appropriate to introduce a variety of exterior materials. Designers should be mindful of the City's objective, i.e., to encourage construction of buildings with architectural elements and details that convey a sense of permanence, creativity, and imagination, as opposed to structures reflecting fleeting trends, homogeneity, or inauthentic uniformity. This type of design is an art, not a science. Developers are expected to work closely with the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee and staff in an iterative process, so that the end product exemplifies the highest quality in materials, execution, imagination, and visual interest.

3.2: New Building Façade Design

The 1993 FoxWalk Design Guidelines described two predominant façade types that traditionally existed in downtown Aurora, as illustrated on the right. In order to establish an architectural consistency between new and existing construction, it was suggested by Perkins & Will that new work should be derivative of one of these two basic types.

In this revised edition of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Guidelines, it is appropriate to offer additional direction for future development within the District, acknowledging that some projects will entail the demolition of individual buildings, redevelopment of vacant parcels or surface parking lots, or assemblage of multiple parcels to create larger expanses of real estate. All new construction requires approval by the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee.



Type 1

The historic character of Stolp Island is evident in part due to the consistent use of masonry in a load-bearing capacity. This technology is based upon reasonable spans —three (3) to five (5) feet for windows, twelve (12) to fifteen (15) feet for storefront or other major openings-- which are possible using a masonry arch or steel lintel as the structural device over wall penetrations. Buildings constructed in this manner appear to have holes “punched” into a solid wall. The pattern is evident in many of the two (2) to three (3) story storefronts and large buildings such as North Island Apartments (formerly the Aurora Hotel) located at 2 N. Stolp Avenue.



Type 2

An alternate façade design frequently seen in downtown Aurora is the expressed structural frame which allows larger expanses of glass within the building façade. The basic composition of the old façade is derived from the proportion of floor-to-floor heights and structural bay dimension. These buildings are generally clad with a terra cotta or masonry skin. Several examples of this construction type can be seen in the buildings that were adapted for re-use in the mid-1980s to create a downtown campus for Waubesa Community College and then again reused for the Paramount Art Center at 5 E. Galena Boulevard.



In cases where buildings have been razed to create buildable sites, the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee will evaluate proposals in light of their capacity to accomplish the following objectives:

3.2-1: New construction should reflect the highest quality in building materials and techniques.

The “signature” buildings developed in downtown Aurora during the pre-World War II era reflected a strong sense of pride of ownership and craftsmanship. State-of-the-art building techniques and materials were incorporated, imparting a sense of strength and constancy to the projects. Developers did not plan obsolescence into their buildings; it was expected that structures might change uses over time, but that the buildings would remain in place beyond the lifetimes of those who conceived and constructed them. Though techniques and materials have changed since the early and mid-20th century, it is appropriate to expect that new buildings within the FoxWalk Overlay District will reflect the same underlying level of construction quality exhibited by existing buildings.

3.2-2: New construction should reflect architectural variety and character.

The FoxWalk Overlay District is home to buildings that were designed by architects who were recognized for their work nationally (e.g., George and C.W. Rapp, George Grant Elmslie); and regionally (e.g., J. E. Minott, Josephy Mulvey, and Eugene Malmer). It is appropriate to expect that the design of new projects within the FoxWalk Overlay District will reflect the same underlying level of architectural quality, imagination, and variety as was sought by those who commissioned the pre-World War II structures.

Buildings that currently exist within the FoxWalk Overlay District were constructed over a relatively long period of time (100+ years). As such, each block contains a significant variety of architectural style and detail. In developing new projects, it would not be appropriate to create massive blocks of identical buildings. As stated in [Section 2](#) of this document, the intention of the FoxWalk Overlay District was, from the beginning, to foster a built environment “...in contrast to a uniform ‘Disneyland’ theme, which strives for artificial and idealized design standards.” Rather, it should be expected that new development will be striking and distinctive in appearance, and clearly not homogeneous, especially if projects are large in scale.

The distinctive nature of each block within the FoxWalk Overlay District should be honored and complemented as new infill development comes forward; however, it “...should not create a false historic appearance through the replication of a specific architectural style” (City of Aurora – Historic Districts and Landmarks Guidelines, p. 105). One or more distinctive architectural elements should be incorporated into the design, making the new structure unique and notable as a “signature” project.

3.2-3: New construction should reflect the principles of environmental sustainability.

The principles promulgated by the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program should be incorporated, to the greatest extent feasible, in new development projects within the FoxWalk Overlay District.



3.3: Site Development Location

In an effort to maintain the existing contextual character of downtown Aurora, two basic concepts should be employed.

- 3.3-1: Building Face at Street Front.** Buildings should occupy entire parcels of ground with street façades being developed at the sidewalk edge. Corner sites should be developed with building façades directly along both streets. Open areas required for service and parking should be placed within the block away from the public street.
- 3.3-2: Building Face at Riverfront.** Construction adjacent to the river is encouraged directly at the Riverwalk line, but in no case more than twenty-five (25) feet from the property line. The open space between walkway and building face should be developed as a publicly accessible extension of the walkway/landscaping system which will parallel the river. Utilitarian spaces such as utility yards, trash storage areas, etc. should not be permitted between buildings and the river.

3.4: Service Areas

Exterior service areas, loading docks, roof- or grade-mounted mechanical equipment, and other utilities areas shall be screened from public view by walls or mature evergreen landscaping. Mechanical equipment, utility transformers, and junction boxes should adhere to the requirements outlined in Section 2.4-1.20 above.

3.5: Building Height and Massing

- 3.5-1:** New construction in infill settings should preserve the present scale of architecture by being compatible in mass to the adjacent, existing buildings. Existing building masses in the FoxWalk Overlay District vary from one (1) to twenty-one (21) stories. The average building is three (3) stories in height.
- 3.5-2:** The spatial relationship of the structures in the FoxWalk Overlay District to each other and to the streetscape shall be maintained. Examples of the elements to be considered in defining the spatial relationship include the scale, façade proportions, height, setbacks, and orientation of structures.
- 3.5-3:** The height of a new structure and its height-to-width proportions shall be consistent with buildings in the block on which it is located or onto which it faces or backs. In addition, the building height shall be no more than one (1) story higher than the tallest building in the block on which it is located or onto which it faces or backs. Façade proportion shall be established by permitting no structure with a façade narrower than those existing in the same block, the block it is facing, or the block onto which it backs.
- 3.5-4:** Buildings shall be a minimum of two (2) stories high at street level and a minimum of three (3) stories high at the Riverwalk level.
- 3.5-5:** The rhythm of a new building, e.g., the pattern of “solids” or walls, “voids” or window and door openings and other recessed architectural features, and floor levels, shall match the rhythm of the existing buildings on the block.
- 3.5-6:** Additions to existing buildings shall be related in height and proportion to the existing structure. Additions that would add new height or change the scale or proportions of existing primary façades of a building shall not be constructed. Existing original stories shall not be removed.
- 3.5-7:** For new construction on large expanses of vacant land, i.e., projects that are not strictly infill in nature, building massing is more complex. Since these properties are not abutting historic buildings and not strictly “infill”, these are the areas of the FoxWalk Overlay that presents an opportunity to create new landmarks. Not being directly adjacent to smaller scale historic buildings, new buildings on these sites do not need to strictly reflect the scale, height, and massing of other downtown buildings. These buildings can be more modern in design while still respecting the historic character of the Downtown. These sites provide an excellent location to address the purpose and goals of the Guidelines including to encourage construction of buildings with architectural elements and details that convey a sense of permanence, creativity, and imagination.
 - 3.5-7.1:** Minimum heights for new construction should be a minimum of two (2) at the street and three (3) stories at river level, but maximum heights should be determined by the overall context of the proposed project. The objectives are to maintain architectural variety and interest, and avoid homogeneity and monotony or an inauthentic sense of uniformity. Diversity of height and imaginative design is encouraged. If buildings heights exceed those of surrounding buildings by several stories, the imaginative design is even more vital to ensure that the goal of creating a building of the highest quality is met.
 - 3.5-7.2:** New construction along the river and Riverwalk should be designed to engage the riverfront. This presents an opportunity to incorporate public space that allows for passive recreation to enjoy the river.



3.6: Roof Design

The vast majority of roofs in downtown Aurora are flat. There are several simple gabled roofs which provide an intriguing counterpoint to the steady rhythm of flat roofs. This pattern very clearly differentiates the highly urban, mixed-use FoxWalk Overlay District from predominantly suburban, residential neighborhoods in Aurora. To maintain this clear pattern and identify the downtown, only flat and simple gabled roof designs for new construction shall be used. Hip, mansard, gambrel, and other roof patterns uncommon to the FoxWalk Overlay District are not permitted.

- 3.6-1: Vegetative Roof Systems also known as roof gardens and “green” roofs are allowed under these guidelines to support principles of environmental sustainability as outlined in [Section 3.11-4.1](#).
- 3.6-2: Public use of rooftop spaces, such as a rooftop deck, is also allowed under these guidelines, provided that safe ingress/egress and access to fire escapes adhere to fire safety codes. A rooftop deck must also meet all code requirements including but not limited to: structural loads; setbacks; options for screening certain sections or activities; railings or walls; and placement of mechanical systems.
- 3.6-3: Rooftop spaces should also follow the requirements outlined in [Section 2.6-2 Roof Design](#).

3.7: Building Exteriors: Materials, Scale, and Detail

- 3.7-1: While large glass windows are permissible, including as a means to enhance building transparency adjacent to the Fox River, very dark reflective glass shall not be used. In general, large expanses of metal and glass curtain wall systems should be avoided. Street and river level storefronts should be designed in a manner consistent with the city’s recommendations for structural renovation.
- 3.7-2: Exterior materials used in a new building shall be compatible in scale and texture with buildings in the block in which it is situated or facing or onto which it backs.
- 3.7-3: Materials used on an addition to an existing original structure shall relate to the materials used on the existing or original structure. As much of the original structure as possible shall be retained so that the addition could be removed without damage to the basic structure and appearance of the building.
- 3.7-4: For new construction on large expanses of vacant land, i.e., projects that are not strictly infill, more modern materials are acceptable as long as they still respect the historic character of the Downtown. These locations are more appropriate for large expanses of metal and glass curtain wall systems.
- 3.7-5: Aluminum or vinyl siding shall not be used on new structures. Cement Board, engineered wood or similar siding that simulated wood siding may be allowed. This material shall be smooth finish and primed to be painted, or if available in colors appropriate for the specific architectural style of the home can be ordered pre-painted.

3.8: Lighting

The design guidelines for lighting outlined in [Section 2.4-4](#) for maintenance and alterations to existing structures apply to additions and new construction.

3.9: Outdoor Dining

The design guidelines for outdoor dining outlined in [Section 2.6-3](#) for maintenance and alterations to existing structures apply to additions and new construction.

3.10: Decks

- 3.10-1: Decks shall be located at the rear of buildings or areas not visible from the street.
- 3.10-2: Decks should not remove, cover, or damage any historic building materials or architectural elements.
- 3.10-3: Decks should be kept simple in design.
- 3.10-4: Decks should be durable natural wood or a contemporary, alternate material such as composite decking.
- 3.10-5: Railings should be traditional style wood balusters or designed to be unobtrusive, such as cable railing, glass, or other clear material. Woven mesh or metal guardrail shall not be permitted.



3.11: Sustainability

The City of Aurora has continually taken steps to advance sustainability across the community. Programs and efforts include the 2009 and 2019 Sustainability Plans, the Mayor’s Sustainable Aurora Advisory Board, participation to local and regional sustainability oriented events such as GreenFest, GreenTown pursued Zoning Code revisions, rain barrel and rain garden programs, and recent actions like the Gold SolSmart designation as friendly solar community and electric vehicle (EV) charging stations initiative. The City is also a founding member of the Fox Valley Sustainability Network, which grew out of the 2015 GreenTown event hosted in Aurora.

The City’s longstanding history of promoting sustainability includes efforts that directly impact the FoxWalk Overlay District. Plans and studies like the Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Riverfront Vision Plan, Seize the Future Master Plan, 2017 Downtown Master Plan and even these Design Guidelines all set forth strategies and policies to advance sustainability in Aurora. In addition, the City has an ongoing Green Infrastructure Implementation Project that aims to improve water quality in the Fox River.

The following design guidelines are intended to further advance Aurora’s legacy of being green and ensure the City continues to encourage sustainable approaches to design and development. These design guidelines should be coordinated with Building Code requirements, where appropriate. Many sustainability solutions are eligible for local, state, and federal grants and tax incentives, including those that support the preservation of historic properties.

3.11-1: Air Sealing and Ventilation

- 3.11-1.1:** Methods like weather-stripping, caulking, and repairing cracks are encouraged to help streamline and maximize the flow of air through exterior walls of buildings.
- 3.11-1.2:** The following air sealing and ventilation approaches are encouraged as they utilize the inherently energy conserving and comfort-enhancing architectural features typically found on buildings, from older and historic structures to modern buildings:
- A. Vestibules to serve as air locks
 - B. Gable vents to help keep attics dry
 - C. Thermal mass of masonry walls to balance daily temperature extremes
 - D. Operable windows to provide cross ventilation when open
 - E. Drapes, curtains, and blinds above the first floor to foster window insulation, including cooling during warmer weather and draft-proofing during colder weather
 - F. Exterior awnings on first floors and interior window shades to provide shading
- 3.11-1.3:** Steps should be taken to maintain interior humidity within a range that will not lead to structural damage by condensation, particularly in the form of wood rot, corrosion, or freezing. Condensation is particularly an issue for windows, which can decrease energy efficiency if damage occurs and is left unchecked with little to no remediation. Inclusion of humidity checks with regular heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) maintenance is encouraged. In addition, high moisture areas like bathrooms and laundry areas should be vented to the outside of the building, where feasible.
- 3.11-1.4:** Regular maintenance is encouraged for all HVAC equipment to ensure they stay in adequate working order and optimize their efficiency. This includes upgrading HVAC equipment as needed, particularly those that have a high rating (75 or greater) on the Energy Star energy efficiency rating system run by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy.



CITY OF AURORA’S LEGACY OF SUSTAINABILITY

- :: 2009 and 2019 Sustainability Plans
- :: Mayor’s Sustainable Aurora Advisory Board
- :: Sustainability events like GreenFest and GreenTown
- :: Fox Valley Sustainability Network (founding member)
- :: Sustainability-minded Zoning Code revisions
- :: Rain barrel and rain garden programs
- :: Gold SolSmart designation (solar-friendly community)
- :: Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations initiative
- :: Ongoing Green Infrastructure Implementation Project (improve water quality in Fox River)



3.11-2: Window Energy Efficiency

- 3.11-2.1:** Installation of storm windows can help increase energy efficiency. This includes the pairing of an existing, properly sealed window with a storm window. This type of application of storm windows creates dead airspace that significantly reduces conductivity, which helps to moderate the flow of heat and enhance energy efficiency. An added benefit of an exterior storm window is the additional protection of the existing window that may have historical value. In terms of material for storm windows, wood is generally more energy efficient than aluminum due to the former having a higher resistance to transfer of heat than the latter.
- 3.11-2.2:** Weather-stripping is a relatively inexpensive method to reduce energy costs and improve window energy efficiency. Since they are a major source of drafts leading to heat loss and gain, weather stripping should be considered for all window and door openings. Depending on its application, weather-stripping is available in a variety of shapes and materials, including adhesive strips of foam or plastic, foam strips, felt strips, and metal and plastic sweeps.

3.11-3: Alternative Energy Sources

- 3.11-3.1:** Consideration to install any form of alternative energy source in the FoxWalk Overlay District shall be coordinated with the City and FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee. This includes compliance with all applicable Zoning Code and Building Code requirements to ensure they are properly installed and designed to minimize the visual and structural impact of such infrastructure on adjacent properties and the overall character of the district.
- 3.11-3.2:** Wind energy infrastructure typically comes in the form of wind turbines, which includes smaller infrastructure that is more suitable for smaller sites and compact urbanized areas. Smaller infrastructure shall not be located on buildings greater than 50 years old where they are visible from the public right-of-way and should be kept at a low profile, where possible. Installation of such infrastructure anywhere within the FoxWalk Overlay District requires the approval of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee.
- 3.11-3.3:** Solar energy is one of the most common forms of alternative energy sources, particularly solar panels. Whether situated on the ground or on a rooftop or other elevated position, solar energy infrastructure shall not be visible from the public right-of-way and be kept at a low profile, where possible. In addition, solar panels and mounting systems shall be reasonably compatible in color to the property's roof materials.
- 3.11-3.4:** Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations shall be permissible in the FoxWalk Overlay District to the extent possible per City Code regulations. In general, EV charging stations are most appropriate in off-street parking areas.

3.11-4: Vegetative Roof Systems

- 3.11-4.1:** Vegetative roof systems offer numerous environmental benefits, including improved air quality, reduction in the urban heat island effect, energy conservation, and promotion and protection of biodiversity. The design of rooftop gardens and green roofs entails ecological considerations, structural requirements, and aesthetic elements. As a result, the design of vegetative roof systems shall be subject to review of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee and shall be in compliance with all applicable Zoning Code and Building Code requirements.
- 3.11-4.2:** Vegetative roof systems should follow the requirements outlined in [Section 2.6-2 Roof](#).
- 3.11-4.3:** A certified structural engineer shall confirm the structural integrity of a building, including the potential for structural reinforcement, to ensure the structure can support the added weight of the vegetative roof system, including soil, plants, and water.
- 3.11-4.4:** Plant selection shall include a mix of native or drought-tolerant plants that can thrive in the local climate. A diverse mix of plant species also enhances biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. Plants with shallow root systems are encouraged to avoid damage to the waterproofing layer.
- 3.11-4.5:** The use of lightweight, well-draining growing mediums specifically designed for green roofs is encouraged to support plant growth while reducing weight on the roof structure. The growing medium should incorporate a mix of organic and inorganic materials to foster adequate water retention and aeration.



- 3.11-4.6:** Installation of a high-quality waterproofing membrane is encouraged to prevent water leakage into the building. The waterproofing membrane should include a proper drainage system to facilitate flow of excess water off the roof and ensure prevention of waterlogging.
- 3.11-4.7:** An efficient irrigation system should be installed to deliver water directly to the plant roots, which will help to minimize water waste. Rainwater harvesting systems such as rain barrels should also be considered to reduce reliance on external water sources. Rain barrels shall not be visible from the public right of way.
- 3.11-4.8:** Pathways and access points shall be part of the rooftop design to allow convenient and safe access for maintenance activities. This may include features like dedicated irrigation zones and planting beds to help streamline maintenance.
- 3.11-4.9:** Vegetative roof systems should integrate a variety of plant species and habitat elements, such as bird feeders, nesting boxes, and insect-friendly plants, to encourage wildlife and pollinator activity.
- 3.11-4.10:** To enhance the aesthetic appeal, the design of vegetative roof systems should integrate an aesthetically pleasing layout and arrangement of plants, including the use of different textures, colors, and flowering seasons to create an attractive and engaging space throughout the year.
- 3.11-4.11:** If accessible to the public, vegetative roof systems should provide opportunities for relaxation, recreation, and education, including the incorporation of seating areas, walkways, and interpretive signage to promote community engagement, appreciation, and education of the green elements.



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SECTION 4

DESIGN GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS FOR Signage

4.1: General Provisions

The FoxWalk Overlay District is intended to be an attractive, inviting, pedestrian-oriented place. Establishing and maintaining the architectural integrity and historic character of buildings within the FoxWalk Overlay District is essential to accomplishing this objective. Signage shall blend with, rather than dominate, the design of each building. The provisions of the Aurora Sign Ordinance shall apply within the FoxWalk Overlay District, except as set out below.

4.2: Prohibited Signage

The following signs are expressly prohibited within the FoxWalk Overlay District:

- A. Billboards
- B. Signs with mechanical movement of any type
- C. Flashing, blinking, or scrolling signs
- D. Roof signs
- E. Obsolete signs
- F. Any sign which obstructs ingress or egress
- G. Any sign which obstructs the vision of drivers
- H. Any sign which interferes with official traffic control signs or devices
- I. Any sign which mimics an official traffic control device
- J. Any sign which impedes pedestrians, bicycles, or accessibility

4.3: No Certificate of Appropriateness Required

The following signs do not require neither a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA), but are restricted as follows:

- 4.3-1: **Building Identification Monuments.** Installation of building identification monuments on new buildings shall not require a Certificate of Appropriateness; however, a Certificate of Appropriateness is required for demolition of existing identification monuments.
- 4.3-2: **Civic or Commercial Banners or Flags Installed on Publicly-Owned Downtown Streetlights or Utility Poles.** Banners or flags to be installed on publicly-owned downtown streetlights or utility poles equipped with banner hangers must be forty-two inches by sixteen inches (42" x 16") wide with a four (4) inch top pocket and a one (1) inch bottom hem, and a grommet on the pole side. Material shall be canvas or canvas-like. Scheduling and hanging shall be coordinated through the City of Aurora Downtown Services Division. Banners shall be changed immediately if they show signs of deterioration or if they are out-of-season or obsolete.
- 4.3-3: **Door Signs.** Such signs may be applied directly to glass doors and shall cover a maximum of twenty-five (25%) of the door area or glass. Signs on service doors on non-primary façades may be either directly applied to or hung against the door.
- 4.3-4: **Ghost Signs.** Preservation is encouraged where suitable and feasible.
- 4.3-5: **Sandwich Board Signs.** Such signs are permitted where they do not impede pedestrians, bicycles, or accessibility and allow for a minimum clearance of five (5) feet in the public right-of-way. Sandwich board signs shall be no larger than four (4) feet high and two (2) feet wide. A maximum of two (2) such signs are permitted per one hundred (100) feet, or one (1) per property or business, whichever is greater. Sandwich boards shall be professionally fabricated of weather-resistant molded plastic or finished metal. They shall be removed from the public right-of-way when the business they are advertising is closed.
- 4.3-6: **Street Address Numbers.** Shall be displayed on all buildings but shall not obscure decorative architectural details. Characters shall be a minimum of three (3) inches wide and a maximum of twelve (12) inches in height.



- 4.3-7: Street Signs.** Such signs shall be consistent with the Design Guidelines and reviewed and approved by the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee.
- 4.3-8: Temporary Signs for Properties Under Construction.** If a property is under construction, the following regulations shall apply:
- 4.3-8.1:** Are permitted as ground or fence signs with a maximum area of twenty-four (24) square feet.
 - 4.3-8.2:** Are permitted as window signs (in addition to other window signage) with a maximum area of four (4) square feet.
 - 4.3-8.3:** Are permitted as wall signs (in addition to other wall signage) with a maximum area of four (4) square feet.
 - 4.3-8.4:** The provisions of the Aurora Zoning Ordinance regarding the maximum duration of temporary signs for properties under construction shall apply to such signs within the FoxWalk Overlay District.
- 4.3-9: Temporary Signs for Property Listed for Sale or Lease.** If a property is listed for sale or lease, the following regulations shall apply:
- 4.3-9.1:** Are permitted as window signs in addition to other window signage, provided all window signage does not occupy more than fifty percent (50%) of the window area.
 - 4.3-9.2:** Are permitted as wall signs in addition to other permitted wall signs provided all wall signage does not exceed the maximum amount of wall signage as outlined in [Section 4.4-15](#).
 - 4.3-9.3:** Are permitted as ground or fence signs only on vacant parcels. The maximum area shall be sixteen (16) square feet per sign. No more than two (2) signs shall be allowed per property. No more than one (1) sign shall be allowed per building façade.
 - 4.3-9.4:** All such signs shall be removed upon the closing of the sale or initiation of the lease.
- 4.3-10: Temporary Window Signs.** Such signs are permitted, provided they do not occupy more than 50% of the window area. The maximum duration of temporary window signs is sixty (60) days or less if they show signs of fading, curling, or other deterioration.
- 4.3-11: Window Screen Signs (Temporary) for Vacant Properties and Properties Under Construction.** Such signs are subject to the following restrictions:
- 4.3-11.1:** Window signage and window screen signage on vacant properties and properties under construction may occupy one hundred percent (100%) of the total window area.
 - 4.3-11.2:** This is limited to vacant units that are registered as vacant with the City of Aurora and units that are actively in the process of rehabilitating the space for a new tenant as determined by the Zoning Administrator based upon status of building permits.
 - 4.3-11.3:** Temporary window screen signs must be removed upon issuance of Certificate of Occupancy.
- 4.3-12: Vehicular Signs.** The vehicle shall be currently licensed, operable and parked in a designated parking space. No such vehicle shall be parked on a public right of way, on public property, or on private property so as to be visible from a public right of way at any time, including, but not limited to overnight parking.
- 4.3-13: Window Signs (Permanent).** Such signs are subject to the following restrictions:
- 4.3-13.1:** The total window signage shall not exceed fifty percent (50) percent of total window area for all temporary and permanent signage. At no time shall the total area for window signage and window screen signage exceed 50% of the total window area.
 - 4.3-13.2:** Such signs are not permitted above the first floor.
 - 4.3-13.3:** Such signs are permitted only on windows enclosing a business.
 - 4.3-13.4:** Such signs are not permitted on decorative glass.
 - 4.3-13.5:** Such signs are permitted only on primary façades, including façades that face the river and engage pedestrians and bicyclists accessing sidewalks, bicycle paths, or other trails with access to the riverfront.



4.3-14: Window Screen Signs (Permanent). Such signs are subject to the following restrictions:

- 4.3-14.1: The total window signage shall not exceed fifty (50) percent of total window area on a façade for all temporary and permanent signage. At no time shall the total area for window signage and window screen signage exceed 50% of the total window area.
- 4.3-14.2: Such signs are not permitted above the first floor.
- 4.3-14.3: Such signs are permitted only on windows enclosing a business.
- 4.3-14.4: Any number of such signs are permitted, provided total permitted sign area is not exceeded.
- 4.3-14.5: Screen placement shall be designed to maximize visibility into the building for safety purposes.

4.4: Certificate of Appropriateness and Sign Permit Required

The following signs require both a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) and a sign permit. Certificate of Appropriateness signs shall be subject to the regulations below.

4.4-1: Attention-getting devices for grand openings.

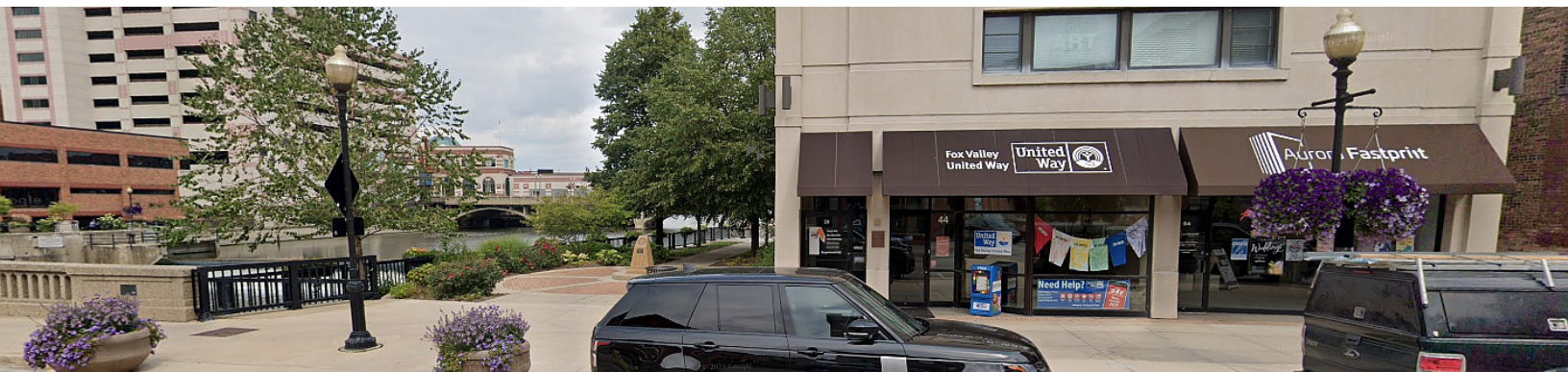
- 4.4-1.1: Such devices are permitted only for the grand opening of the business at that particular location and shall be removed upon expiration of the sign permit.
- 4.4-1.2: Grand openings shall occur within six (6) months of the opening of the business or within six (6) months of an ownership change. Only one (1) such grand opening shall be permitted.
- 4.4-1.3: Permits for such devices shall be limited to thirty (30) days.
- 4.4-1.4: Such devices shall only be placed on private property, not on the public right-of-way.
- 4.4-1.5: Such devices shall not obstruct pedestrians, bicycles, or accessibility in the public right-of-way, including public sidewalks.

4.4-2: Attention-getting devices for special events.

- 4.4-2.1: Such devices are permitted to promote City approved special events, including community activities, holiday celebrations, festivals, and parades.
- 4.4-2.2: Permits for such devices shall be limited to thirty (30) days prior to and one (1) day after the event being promoted.

4.4-3: Awning Signs. Such signs shall be fabricated of weather-resistant material, except that plastic or vinyl awnings are not allowed. Such signs are permitted as art-applied signs on awnings and shall cover a maximum of thirty percent (30%) of the front panel or valance, wherever located. If an awning sign is used, the unit is not eligible for a fascia sign.

4.4-4: Canopy Signs. Signs that are parallel to the building shall follow the regulations outlined under [4.4-5](#) Fascia Signs. Signs that are perpendicular to the building shall follow the regulations outlined under [4.4-13](#) Projecting Signs. If a canopy sign is used, the unit is not eligible for a fascia sign.



4.4-5: Fascia Signs. Fascia signs shall be subject to the following restrictions:

- 4.4-5.1:** Such signs shall be permitted only on primary façades or primary entrance if the unit's entrance is located on an exterior side or rear.
- 4.4-5.2:** On a façade where a signboard exists, the fascia sign shall be installed on the signboard.
- 4.4-5.3:** On a façade where no signboard exists, the fascia sign shall be installed in the area between the top of the storefront or on top of the doors/windows on the first floor and the bottom of the second floor windowsills.
- 4.4-5.4:** The fascia sign shall be centered, and shall not cover doors, windows, architectural features, or decorative materials.
- 4.4-5.5:** Maximum area of the fascia sign shall be calculated by multiplying the width of the storefront, including entry doors, by two and one-half (2.5) feet, and then by sixty percent (60%).
- 4.4-5.6:** The following are prohibited as fascia signs: cabinet signs, fabric signs, banners, temporary signs made to look permanent, vinyl stickers, plastic, and plastic core signs.



- 4.4-6: Ground Signs.** Such signs are permitted with a maximum height of five (5) feet and a maximum square footage of thirty (30) square feet. If the sign is installed in the Downtown Fringe, the setback must be five (5) feet. If the sign is installed in the Downtown Core, the setback can be eliminated.
 - 4.4-6.1:** Where ground signs are installed in parking lots, a landscaped and/or curbed area shall protect the sign from damage by cars.
 - 4.4-6.2:** Ground signs must be permanent. Signs affixed to wheels or other non-permanent structures are not permitted.
 - 4.4-6.3:** The base of a ground sign shall be seventy-five percent (75%) of the sign width and shall be a masonry material.
- 4.4-7: Kiosks.** Such signs are permitted to be installed in public walkways by public or semi-public agencies or entities. They shall be placed so as not to inhibit pedestrian, bicycle, or wheelchair accessibility.
- 4.4-8: Changeable Copy Signs.** Such signs are permitted only for motion picture theatres and Live Entertainment facilities. They shall be fabricated with letters that are changed manually. No electronic or animated displays shall be permitted.
- 4.4-9: Digital Message Boards.** For the purpose of limiting light pollution and oversaturation of digital media in the FoxWalk, such signs are limited to Live Entertainment Facilities, parking garages, and city facilities. If located on the primary façade or exterior side elevation of a contributing building, such sign shall require the approval of the FoxWalk Design Review Committee. The following regulations should apply:
 - 4.4-9.1:** Projecting signs with digital message boards should be located between the first and second floors. The total sign face should be a maximum of twelve (12) square feet with a maximum width of the sign face being five (5) feet.
 - 4.4-9.2:** For wall signs and marquee signs, the digital message board shall not constitute one-hundred percent (100%) of the sign.
 - 4.4-9.3:** Wall signs and marquee signs shall follow the size requirements for wall signage with a maximum of fifty (50) square feet unless approved by the FoxWalk Design Review Committee.
- 4.4-10: Marquee Signs.** Such signs are may be installed on the vertical portions of marquees, provided they do not extend above, beyond, or below the edge of the marquee. Marquee signs shall follow the size requirements for wall signage.

4.4-11: Parking Lot Identification Signs. Such signs are permitted as ground signs, no more than five (5) feet high, no more than ten (10) square feet in area, and not more than one (1) such sign per parking lot entrance onto an arterial or collector street. Public parking garage signs may include an electronic message portion limited to providing current information on availability. Larger signs for public parking may be permitted with FoxWalk Design Review Committee approval.

4.4-12: Plaque Signs. Such signs shall be permitted with the following restrictions:

4.4-12.1: Such signs shall be located only on decorative façades.

4.4-12.2: Such signs shall not cover architectural features or decorative architectural materials.

4.4-12.3: The total area of all such signs on a façade shall not exceed one (1) square foot for each four (4) linear feet of façade length.

4.4-12.4: Such signs shall not be located above the first floor.

4.4-13: Projecting/Blade Signs. Such signs shall be permitted with the following restrictions.

4.4-13.1: Such signs shall clear the walkway by at least eight and one-half (8.5) feet.

4.4-13.2: In the case of an awning or canopy structure, eight and one-half (8.5) feet is measured to the supporting metal frame, not the bottom of the valance.

4.4-13.3: Such signs may not project so far from the building that they interfere with trees, light poles, street signs, etc. Generally, such signs should project no farther than four (4) feet from the building.

4.4-13.4: Such signs shall be pinned away from the wall at least six (6) inches.

4.4-13.5: Such signs shall project from the wall at an angle of ninety (90) degrees to the face of the building. Corner projecting signs may project at an angle of forty-five (45) degrees.

4.4-13.6: Such signs shall have a maximum area of twelve (12) square feet., and shall not extend above the window sills of the highest story, up to the fourth story.

4.4-13.7: They shall not cover any architectural details, including window frames, door frames, or visible lintels.

4.4-13.8: Commercial banners shall be mounted on brackets fabricated of weather-resistant metal. The brackets shall be installed only in the interstices between windows.

4.4-13.9: Banners shall be fabricated of weather-resistant canvas or canvas-like material.

4.4-13.10: Banners shall be changed immediately if they show signs of deterioration or if they are out-of-season or obsolete, as off-season banners detract from the appearance and value of the downtown.

4.4-13.11: No such sign shall be permitted to overhang the Fox River. The location on a wall to which such sign is attached shall be no less than ten (10) feet from the Fox River horizontally. Such distances shall be measured from the mean waterline, as determined by the City Engineer.

4.4-13.12: In order for a corner projecting sign to be erected, both building façades shall be separately eligible as a location for such a sign. If such corner projecting sign is erected, no other such sign shall be permitted on either building façade.

4.4-13.13: Only one (1) projecting sign is permitted per unit per side.

4.4-14: Wall Mounted Display Case. A maximum of two (2) such signs shall be permitted per one hundred (100) feet, or one (1) per property, whichever is greater. Showcases shall not cover architectural features of the building.



4.4-15: Wall Signs. Such signs shall be permitted with the following restrictions:

- 4.4-15.1:** Such signs shall be located only on non-decorative facades and shall not cover architectural details, including window frames, door frames, or visible lintels. If located on a primary façade or primary entrance, such sign shall not be located above the window sill of the second-story. On all non-primary facades, such signs shall be located above the windows and doors of the first story and below the window sills of the highest story, up to the fourth story.
- 4.4-15.2:** If a unit has a fascia sign, it is not eligible for a wall sign on that façade.
- 4.4-15.3:** No sign shall be permitted on a building that is used solely for private storage.
- 4.4-15.4:** Maximum area of the sign shall be calculated by multiplying the width of the wall by two and one-half (2.5) feet, and then by forty percent (40%) with a maximum size of seventy (70) square feet.
- 4.4-15.5:** The following are prohibited as wall signs: cabinet signs, fabric signs, banners, temporary signs made to look permanent, vinyl stickers, plastic, and plastic core signs.

4.4-16: Murals. A mural is a piece of artwork painted on or applied to an exterior building, excluding signs that advertise or promote any business, service, product, or private interest. (Signs that advertise or contain commercial content are wall signs and shall be regulated accordingly.) See [Section 8.3](#) for process. Murals shall be regulated as follows:

- 4.4-16.1:** The proposal shall be reviewed for the following criteria:
 - A. Consistency with the overall goals of APAC.
 - B. Wall location and visibility.
 - C. Wall or surface preparation.
 - D. Paint type.
 - E. Exterior protective coating.
 - F. Ongoing maintenance.
 - G. Duration of mural installation.
 - H. Review of best practices including planning (responsibilities and rights of each partner in the process).
 - I. Whether the mural could pose any safety or traffic issues.
- 4.4-16.2:** Prior to any approvals, an anti-vandalism/graffiti plan shall be in place. Said plan shall include measures to prevent and discourage vandalism or graffiti, and a remedy if it occurs. Said remedy shall take place within forty-eight (48) hours of the occurrence.
- 4.4-16.3:** The theme of any mural proposed may relate to the history of downtown Aurora or of the City, in which case, the staff of the Aurora Historical Society may assist with research.
- 4.4-16.4:** Additional mural themes may be proposed, with input and guidance from the Aurora Public Art Commission.
- 4.4-16.5:** Murals may not be painted on masonry surfaces that have never been painted before. In those cases, murals could be painted on panels that would be attached to the mortar joints without damaging existing brick. The mural panels should be installed to permit air flow around and behind them, and to deter nesting birds.



4.5: Sign Lighting

For the purpose of limiting light pollution and an oversaturation of artificial light, the following rules shall apply to signage within the FoxWalk Overlay District:

- 4.5-1: **Bare Bulb Illumination.** This type of illumination is limited to establishments that provide eating, drinking, motion picture theatres, and live entertainment facilities. Brightness shall not exceed two hundred (200) lumens per bulb.
- 4.5-2: **External Lighting.** Flood and spot external lighting is permitted, only if the light does not spill over onto the adjoining property and does not glare or shine into the eyes of the passing public.
- 4.5-3: **Indirect Lighting.** Indirect lighting is permitted.
- 4.5-4: **Internal Illumination.** Internal illumination is permitted except for awnings and canopies.
- 4.5-5: **Direct Source Lighting.** Signs that are illuminated by a direct source of light are encouraged over internally illuminated cabinet signs.
- 4.5-6: **Individually Illuminated Letters.** Individually illuminated letters, either back-lit solid letters (reverse channel) or internally illuminated (channel-lit), are strongly encouraged instead of internally illuminated cabinet signs. Such letters shall be installed on a raceway rather than being directly affixed to the building façade or signboard.
- 4.5-7: **Illuminated Cabinet Sign.** If used, internally illuminated cabinet signs shall be designed so that the background is a darker color than the foreground (message and graphics). Plastic sign material shall be fabricated with a matte finish rather than a glossy one.
- 4.5-8: **Neon Lighting.** Neon is permitted if it is incorporated into permanent signage and used as an accent to the overall design of the sign. Neon shall be encased within a channel; no exposed neon is permitted.

4.6: Historic Signage

In keeping with the philosophy that the FoxWalk Overlay District is intended to be an interesting, engaging, pedestrian-oriented destination, consideration should be given to permitting historic signs to remain, even if they do not meet the stated regulations for commercial signage. The FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee may designate a sign as historic (so it may remain without full compliance with the regulations detailed in this document), if it meets any of these criteria:

- A. Adds individuality and character to the streetscape;
- B. Has tourist appeal;
- C. Is associated with historic persons;
- D. Is significant as evidenced by the history of the product, service, or business advertised;
- E. Is significant as reflecting the history of the building or the development of the downtown;
- F. Is characteristic of a specific period of historic significance to the downtown's past;
- G. Is integral to the building's design or physical fabric.

4.7: Modifications from Signage Provisions

Modifications of any requirement of this section may be granted by the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee, if the committee finds that the sign colors, movement, form, lighting, materials, placement, scale, and design fit the building, the use of the building, and the streetscape or riverscape of which the building is a part of.

4.8: Non-Conforming Signage

For the purpose of amortization, non-conforming signs may be permitted for ten (10) years from the date of the adoption of this ordinance. Ten (10) years after the date of the adoption of this ordinance, all non-conforming signs must be either removed or brought into compliance. Failure to do so will result in a notice of violation.



Figure 10: Signage Examples

Sketch prepared by Allen+Pepa Architects



Figure 11: Signage Examples
Sketch prepared by Allen+Pepa Architects



Figure 12: Signage Examples

Sketch prepared by Allen+Pepa Architects



SECTION 5

DESIGN GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS FOR Site and Setting

5.1: Fences and Walls

Fences shall be fabricated of decorative metal. Chain link, plastic, vinyl, or wood fences are prohibited.

5.2: Fire Escapes and Secondary Exits

Fire escapes and secondary exits shall adhere to the following:

- 5.2-1: Historic fire escapes shall be preserved.
- 5.2-2: New fire escapes may be added when required by fire or safety codes.
- 5.2-3: Non-historic fire escapes shall be removed when no longer required by code.
- 5.2-4: New fire escapes shall be constructed of metal and shall reflect the character of the building.
- 5.2-5: New fire escapes should be located where they will not be visible from the street, where feasible.



5.3: Parking

As a compact mixed-use environment with urban dense housing that generates traffic from pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit, parking in the FoxWalk Overlay District continues to be a critical component effected by a variety of factors such as demand, space, access, and proximity to destinations. Parking will also be impacted by ongoing changes to the broader landscape of the FoxWalk Overlay District, including the transition of one-way streets to two-way streets, the future Broadway streetscape improvements, and the eventual redevelopment of the former casino site (not to mention new development in general).

The following design guidelines outline elements to consider for on-street and off-street parking facilities, as well as a growing need to accommodate bicycle parking. In all cases, these design guidelines shall comply with all applicable Zoning Code and Building Code requirements.



5.3-1: On-Street Parking

- 5.3-1.1: On-street parking spaces shall be distributed evenly across the district to minimize congestion and optimize equitable access for all users and destinations.
- 5.3-1.2: The type of on-street parking – including parallel, angled, or other configuration – shall be guided by parking demand, available right-of-way space, roadway engineering factors, and the character and design of the surrounding streetscape.
- 5.3-1.3: The dimensions of on-street parking spaces shall comply with **Chapter 49** of the Code of Ordinances, City of Aurora.
- 5.3-1.4: On-street parking areas shall maintain clear sightlines of other drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists, which will help to enhance a safe multimodal travel environment.
- 5.3-1.5: Signage and pavement markings shall be provided, where feasible, to serve as wayfinding, delineate separate parking spaces, and maintain safe spacing from pedestrian crossings. The use of curb extensions or bump-outs can help to reduce crossing distances and improve visibility for pedestrians where on-street parking is present.
- 5.3-1.6: In cases where on-street bicycle lanes are provided, bike lanes should be separated from rows of parking spaces.
- 5.3-1.7: On-street parking shall be located in close proximity to ADA-compliant curb ramps to ensure equitable and safe access to the sidewalk from accessible parking spaces. Where feasible, an ADA-compliant curb ramp onto the sidewalk should be located adjacent to the crosshatched area serving an accessible parking space.
- 5.3-1.8: On-street parking spaces shall have a clear view of parking information and facilities, including signs indicating parking hours, restrictions, and other helpful information. Signs for on-street parking shall be coordinated with other wayfinding signage in the public right-of-way to minimize visual clutter of the overall streetscape.

5.3-2: Off-Street Parking

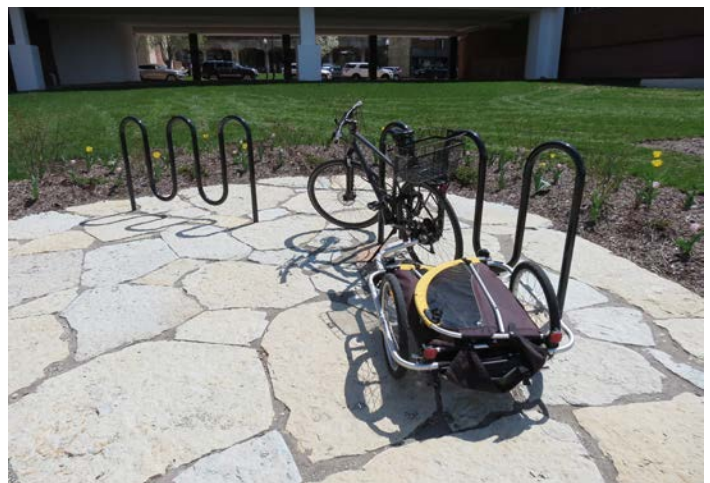
- 5.3-2.1: Whether part of a surface lot or structure, the amount, dimensions, and configuration of off-street parking shall comply with **Chapter 49** of the Code of Ordinances, City of Aurora. The configuration of off-street parking spaces shall optimize the layout for efficient circulation, including considerations for non-parking elements like travel aisles, entrance and exit points, sidewalks, landscaping, electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, and bicycle parking. Parking garages need to consider other elements like ramps, stairways, elevators, and support columns.
- 5.3-2.2: Surface parking shall be allowed only in the rear yard of a zoning lot. Parking in a front or side yard or as the sole use of a property shall only be permitted per the approval of the FoxWalk Overlay Design Review Committee. When permitted, parking areas on the side or rear of a site should have safe pedestrian access to a building entrance, whether the entry is at the front, side, or rear of the building.



- 5.3-2.3:** Shared parking lots are encouraged. Shared parking may also come in the form of uses utilizing the parking spaces at different times of the day or week, such as when such uses having differing peak hours like religious institutions, restaurants, retail stores, and offices.
- 5.3-2.4:** In cases where two or more different off-street parking areas are adjacent to each other, cross access and common entry points are encouraged to minimize curb cuts and disruption of the streetscape.
- 5.3-2.5:** Off-street parking areas shall maintain clear sightlines of other vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists, which will help to enhance a safe environment for all users of a site.
- 5.3-2.6:** Signage and pavement markings shall be provided, where feasible, to serve as wayfinding, delineate separate parking spaces, and maintain safe spacing from pedestrian spaces in a lot or garage.
- 5.3-2.7:** Off-street parking spaces shall be located in close proximity to ADA-compliant curb ramps to ensure equitable and safe access to the sidewalk and building entrances from accessible parking spaces, as well as close access to stairways and elevators in parking structures. Where feasible, an ADA-compliant curb ramp onto the sidewalk should be located adjacent to the crosshatched area serving an accessible parking space.
- 5.3-2.8:** Landscaping shall be implemented to help to enhance the visual appeal of the site and provide a buffer between surface lots, the sidewalk, and adjacent properties.
- 5.3-2.9:** The use of permeable pavers is encouraged as it can enhance the capacity of the parking area to improve on-site stormwater management.
- 5.3-2.10:** Off-street parking spaces shall have a clear view of parking information and facilities, including wayfinding, entrance and exit markers, and signs indicating parking hours, restrictions, and other helpful information.
- 5.3-2.11:** Parking structures should not have more than one entry per street façade to minimize curb cuts and disruption of the streetscape. Blank portions of the parking structure façade should be adorned with features like architectural elements, vertical landscaping lighting, and different color palates to minimize the monotony of a blank wall. Parking structures shall be constructed of high quality and durable building materials that complement the existing character and context of the block and overall district.
- 5.3-2.12:** Parking structures are encouraged to have ground floor businesses and other active uses to activate the streetscape around the structure.

5.3-3: Bicycle Parking

- 5.3-3.1:** Bicycle parking should be provided as a means to promote cycling as a sustainable and healthy mode of transportation and reduce reliance on cars. Opportunities for bicycle parking shall be provided in public and private spaces, as well as within surface parking lots and parking structures. Placement of bicycle parking is encouraged near building entrances and visible areas to ensure easy access and use.
- 5.3-3.2:** Bicycle parking may come in different forms. Bicycle racks are the most common form, as they come in various shapes, sizes, and configurations to fit a range of spaces. Bicycle racks should generally be constructed of sturdy, weather-resistant material that supports bicycle frame and allow for at least one wheel to be securely locked.
- 5.3-3.3:** Bicycle parking areas should be accessible to people with disabilities, allowing them to securely park their bicycles. Accessible bicycle parking areas should also be located as close to building entrances, stairways, and elevators as possible. Clear signage shall be provided to indicate accessible bicycle routes and parking areas.



5.4: Landscaping

- 5.4-1: Due to the urban setting of the FoxWalk Overlay, extensive landscaping is not feasible; however, the addition of raised beds, planters, and hedgerows are encouraged, particularly where they can provide screening for existing parking, trash enclosures, and utility cabinets.
- 5.4-2: Where trees and shrubs are installed, they should be regularly pruned and maintained to ensure structures, streetscape elements, and pedestrian and bicycle paths are not concealed, obstructed, or damaged.
- 5.4-3: Native plantings are highly encouraged to ensure compatibility with the local environment, enhance natural stormwater management, and advance the local nature of the district's character.

5.5: Barrier-Free Accessibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the Illinois Accessibility Code, (71 Illinois Administrative Code 400), effective May 1, 1988, provide comprehensive civil rights to individuals with disabilities by requiring equal access be afforded to all citizens in all places of public accommodation, commercial facilities, and state and local governments. The FoxWalk Overlay District shall strive to optimize barrier-free accessibility for people of all abilities.

While the law acknowledges the national interest in preserving historic properties, they are not exempt from compliance with barrier-free accessibility standards. All alterations are expected to comply with ADA regulations, but qualified historic buildings (which are listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or designated as historic under an appropriate State or local law) are eligible for alternative minimum design guidelines for accessibility routes, entrances and toilet facilities. Owners of these historic properties may initiate a consultation with the DRC to investigate such alternative methods of access.

The FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee (DRC) has oversight of the application of these alternative minimum design guidelines for exterior work and if the Committee determines that compliance with the standard requirements for accessible routes, entrances, or toilet facilities would threaten or destroy the historic significance of part or all of the building or facility, the ADA exceptions for alterations to qualified historic buildings or facilities for that element shall be permitted to apply.

- 5.5-1: The DRC is tasked with reviewing proposed exterior alteration to ensure they provide barrier-free access to the site and/or structure for people of all abilities. However, the DRC is not required to review interior alterations that provide access to the main floor, other floors, toilet facilities, and other indoor facilities, unless they have exterior expression such as an elevator tower. City staff will support the DRC in reviewing proposed changes to paved surfaces to ensure compliance with building codes and other requirements. While signage identifying accessible parking spaces and entryways is exempt from DRC review, City staff may conduct a cursory review to ensure such signage complies with sign code requirements.
- 5.5-2: Owners exploring potential alterations to their historic properties to provide for barrier-free accessibility shall take the following steps to identify and implement appropriate solutions:



- 5.5-2.1:** Identify the architectural materials, features, and spaces that convey the historic significance of the property, which may include, but are not limited to:
- A. Construction materials (e.g., brick, stone, wood);
 - B. Elements that are clear reflections of the design intent of the architect or builder (e.g., porticos, bay windows, balconies, stairs, porches, columns, gates, paving and entryways); decorative features exhibiting a high level of craftsmanship (e.g., moldings, trim, carvings, applied ornaments); and
 - C. Landscape and site features (e.g., driveways, walkways, berms, terraces, steps, green spaces).

This identification will assist on where changes to meet accessibility requirements is most appropriate and would not threaten the significance of the structure.

- 5.5-2.2:** Evaluate the historic property for compliance with state and federal accessibility requirements – stricter requirements shall take precedence – before actively pursuing the proposed alterations.
- 5.5-2.3:** Assess potential accessibility options for the historic property with regard to the alternative minimum design guidelines outlined below. The optimal accessibility solution for a historic property is one that facilitates the highest level of access, is readily achievable, and does not threaten or destroy the property’s historically significant materials, features, and spaces. If barrier-free access to the primary entrance of the structure cannot be provided without threatening or destroying significant architectural features, an alternative is to consider access at a secondary entrance that is well-lit, secure, and well-maintained, as allowed and required by the Illinois Accessibility Code. This secondary entrance is considered a prime alternative if it is located adjacent to an accessible parking area.
- 5.5-3:** Wheelchair ramps should be placed in locations that will have the least visual impact on the historic building and setting. In certain cases, ramps can be integrated into existing stairs or porches with minimal visual impact. In other cases, landscaping is an effective method to screen ramps from view. Materials used to construct ramps and railings should be compatible with the building. For example, wooden ramps are generally compatible with frame buildings, while concrete or brick may be used for ramps serving masonry buildings. Slip resistance for wooden ramps can be achieved with a sanded paint on the ramp surface.
- 5.5-4:** Wheelchair lifts may be a viable alternative for sites that lack ample space for a ramp. However, vertical platform lifts and incline lifts can be just as intrusive as a ramp due to their need for a level platform between the lift and the entryway at a primary entrance. One potential solution that is less intrusive is a telescoping hydraulic lift, which keeps the platform at grade level when not in use.



- 5.5-5:** To enhance barrier-free access at building entryways, the installation of offset door hinges to widen the opening is a viable solution in cases where an existing door opening is too narrow to accommodate a wheelchair. For a historic structure with double doors, installation of an automatic door opener helps to widen the opening without the need to replace the doors or enlarge the opening itself. However, replacing double leaf doors with a single leaf off-center door and fixed side panel may be appropriate in certain cases. Alterations to door hardware should consider reversible solutions that meet universal design standards, such as replacing an existing round doorknob with a lever handle. If no other option is feasible, widening an existing doorway opening may be appropriate.
- 5.5-6:** In cases where steps must be replaced to comply with ADA requirements, the original historic appearance of the steps should be preserved as best as possible. Materials for new steps should either replicate the original steps or be compatible with other materials on the building.

5.6: Art Displays and Seasonal Decorations

- 5.6-1:** Art displays that are displayed less than or equal to one hundred twenty (120) days shall be considered temporary and shall not require a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- 5.6-2:** Art displays that are displayed longer than one hundred twenty (120) days shall be considered permanent and shall require a Certificate of Appropriateness. The Zoning Administrator shall consult with the Director of Public Art on the issuance of the permit.
- 5.6-3:** Seasonal decorations shall not require a Certificate of Appropriateness.



SECTION 6

DESIGN GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS FOR Demolition

Demolition of any structure – whether it is historic or not – is an irreplaceable loss to the character and urban fabric of the FoxWalk Overlay District. However, there will be cases in which demolition is an appropriate action. While demolition may not occur often, proposals for such activity shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis due to the unique factors of each site. The following subsections outline the considerations and procedures for reviewing FoxWalk structures proposed for demolition. These guidelines shall comply with all applicable Zoning Code and Building Code requirements.

6.1: Consideration of Demolition as an Appropriate Option

- 6.1-1:** For historic structures, demolition may be acceptable if 75% or more of the exterior materials or structural elements are substantially deteriorated and require replacement. In addition, demolition may be pursued if an emergency condition exists that requires the removal of the historic structure to protect public safety and welfare.
- 6.1-2:** Removal of a structure that does not contribute to the historical or architectural character of the districts may be deemed appropriate if such removal will improve the appearance of the district or make way for a more productive use that enhances the district.
- 6.1-3:** Since demolition is irreversible, careful evaluation is required to ensure it is appropriate and allowed. As a result, a good faith effort by the applicant must be made to demonstrate that all alternatives to demolition have been evaluated including rehabilitation, sale, adaptive reuse, and relocation of the structure. The applicant must provide architectural information, financial data, and all other relevant documentation supporting the decision to pursue demolition as the only feasible solution.

6.2: Review Procedures for Application for Demolition

- 6.2-1:** Demolition of a structure requires a Certificate of Appropriateness, per [Section 8.2-1](#), and must be approved by the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Commission.
- 6.2-2:** Applicants or property owners must attend all meetings at which the application is discussed.
 - 6.2-2.1:** Applicant should provide appropriate documentation to the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Commission to allow a thorough review of the demolition, which may including the following:
 - A. An evaluation by the property owner of the option to pursue adaptive uses of the property.
 - B. A report from a licensed architect or engineer with experience in rehabilitation as to the structural integrity of the structure(s) on the property and their suitability for rehabilitation.
 - C. An estimate from an architect, developer, real estate consultant, appraiser, or other real estate professional experienced in rehabilitation as to the economic feasibility of rehabilitating or reusing the existing structure. The estimate should evaluate the feasibility of renovating the structure on the property and the option of renovating the structure on a new site as an alternative method of preservation.
 - D. Information about how the site will be treated and how any foreseen issues will be remediated once the structure is removed.
 - E. Any other information deemed necessary to evaluate the potential for the property to be reasonably used or to yield a reasonable return to present or future owners.
 - 6.2-2.2:** The FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Commission shall evaluate the proposed demolition based on the following criteria:
 - A. Retention of the structure constitutes a hazard to public safety which cannot be eliminated by economic means available to the owner, such as selling the structure to a buyer willing to preserve it.
 - B. Preservation of the structure is a hindrance to a major improvement program, which will be of substantial benefit to the community.



- C. Preservation of the structure would cause an undue and unreasonable financial hardship to the owner, taking into account the financial resources available to the owner including the sale of the structure to any buyer willing to preserve the structure.
- D. Preservation of the structure would not be in the interest of the community.
- E. The effect of the demolition on surrounding structures and the FoxWalk Overlay District as a whole.
- F. The effect of the demolition on the local economy and the ability to enhance the FoxWalk Overlay District.

6.2-2.3: The requirement for a Certificate of Appropriateness may be waived in emergency circumstances, which require immediate relief, repair, or demolition, where the Fire Chief or Building Commissioner determines that an emergency exists and/or the present conditions of the structure endanger public safety.

6.3: Guidelines for Demolition

If demolition is approved by the DRC, then the following guidelines apply:

- 6.3-1:** Create a permanent record of the structure before demolition occurs. The record shall consist of photographs taken prior to demolition, and any other drawings or documents that may exist describing the architectural character and special features of the structure. The precise documentation of a specific structure shall be determined by the DRC on a case-by-case basis. The documentation must be submitted for review by the DRC in advance of granting a demolition permit. The record shall be retained by the City of Aurora.
- 6.3-2:** Coordinate with the DRC to identify all materials that can be salvaged and sold or given to potential buyers or recipients of salvaged materials. The removal of all salvageable materials before demolition is encouraged.
- 6.3-3:** Clear the structure in a prompt and thorough manner and restore the site per the Property Maintenance Code.



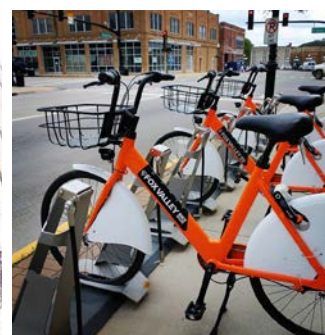
SECTION 7

SPECIFICATIONS FOR Public Improvements

7.1: Street Furniture, Signage, and Other Amenities

The following street furniture, signage, and other amenities are allowed in the public right-of-way to help enhance the experience of people coming to the downtown, whether by car, on bike, on foot, or via transit.

- A. Benches
- B. Bicycle Racks
- C. Bike Share Stations
- D. Bollards
- E. Decorative Lighting
- F. FoxWalk Railings
- G. Hanging Floral Baskets
- H. Kiosks
- I. Litter and Recycling Receptacles
- J. Newsracks
- K. Public Art and Murals
- L. Sidewalk Clocks, which shall be maintained to ensure they operate in a manner that accurately reflects the current time
- M. Street Planters
- N. Tree Grates
- O. Wayfinding and Destination Signage



7.2: Sidewalks and Paving

Sidewalks and paving shall generally follow the Guidelines with the first installation of a specific design requiring approval of the FoxWalk Overlay Design Review Committee. Recommended designs that in the opinion of the Zoning Administrator significantly differ from the original DRC approval should be brought before the Committee again.

- 7.2-1: Pavers.** Pavers should follow the three design types as shown on the below exhibit. Although these types are recommended, there should be opportunities for flexibility. For example, having pockets of distinct areas help define character and create visual interest. For instance, Broadway is its own unique street being a major thoroughfare that presents an opportunity to implement distinctive streetscape design that would allow the street to stand out, which could include landscaping amenities, lighting, and pavement and sidewalk pattern while still complementing the historic character of the downtown.
- 7.2-2: Intersections.** Intersections should be highlighted using colored concrete or pavers and the ribbon pavers and should follow the design as outlined in Figure 13.
- 7.2-3: Planter Beds.** Raised planters should be utilized in amenity areas that are a minimum of four-and-a-half (4 ½) feet or wider. The raised planter should be no smaller than four feet by six feet, but the exact size will be determined upon consultation with an arborist. Planters should be raised six inches off the ground with a concrete curb and shall be irrigated. The design of the planter beds should follow the four tier design as shown in Figure 13.
- 7.2-4: Trees and Plants.** Trees are recommended to only be planted within raised planters as outlined above. To ensure an extended life expectancy, trees should follow the requirements as shown in Figure 13.

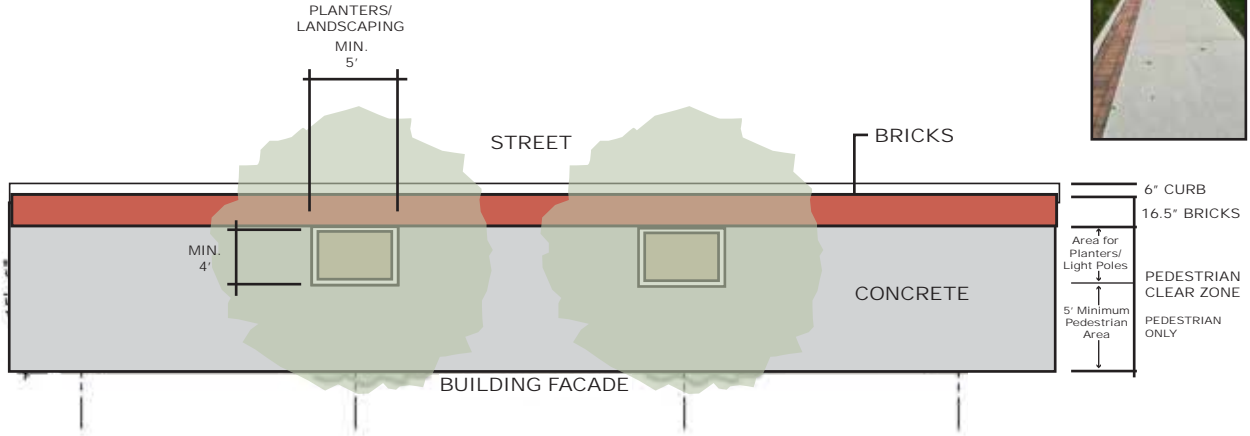


Figure 13:

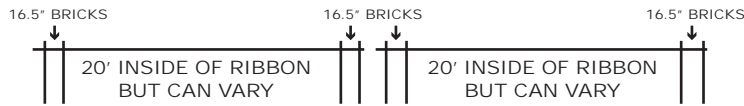
FOXWALK DESIGN GUIDELINES: PAVER ELEMENTS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FLEXIBILITY: Although the following three design types are recommended there should be opportunities for flexibility. For example, having pockets of distinct areas helps define character and create visual interest.

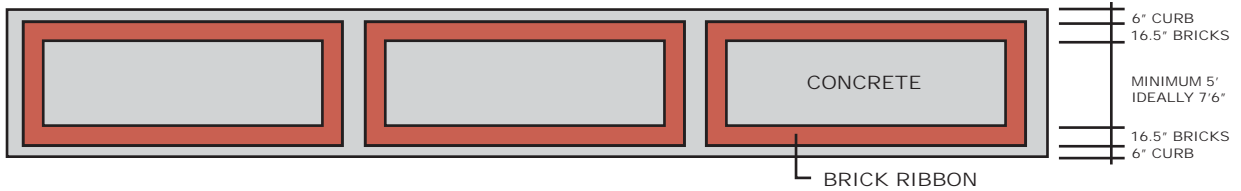
TYPICAL DESIGN



RIVERWALK DESIGN



RIVERWALK ALONG WAUBONSEE COLLEGE



BROADWAY DESIGN

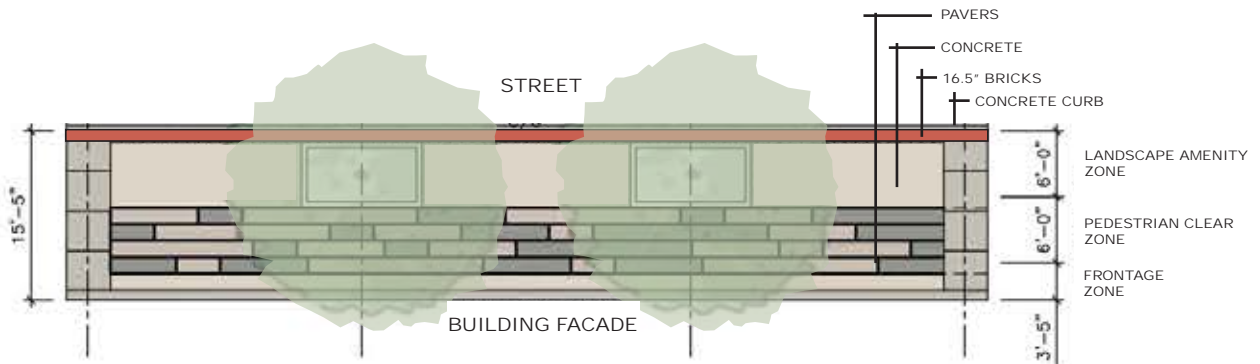


Figure 13:

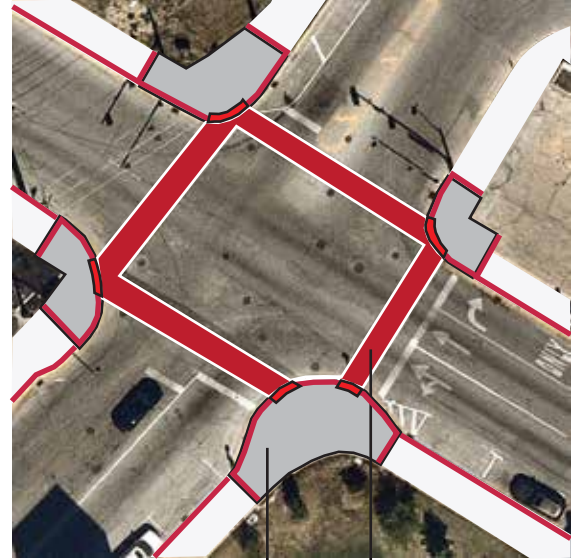
FOXWALK DESIGN GUIDELINES: INTERSECTIONS

TYPICAL INTERSECTION

EXISTING INTERSECTION (W. NEW YORK/RIVER)



GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING EXISTING INTERSECTION (W. NEW YORK/RIVER)



COLORED CONCRETE OR PAVERS

UNILOCK PAVER

VISION (EXISTING BENTON AND STOLP)



Figure 13:

FOXWALK DESIGN GUIDELINES: PLANTER BEDS

STREET TREES

Trees provide shade and increase comfort for pedestrians. Trees are recommended to only be planted within raised planters to ensure a quality living environment and extended life expectancy. The City shall select a variety of tree species and cultivars which are tolerant of salt and urban conditions. Additionally, the mix of trees should consider spring flower, fall color, and summer attractiveness, as well as space available for the root system and crown.

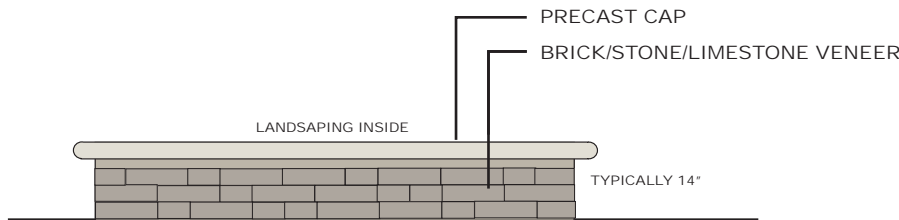
RAISED PLANTERS

Raised planters should be utilized in amenity areas that are 4 ½ feet or wider. The raised planter should be no smaller than 4' x 6' in size, and will be raised 6 inches off the ground with a concrete curb and shall be irrigated.

FIRST TIER DESIGN

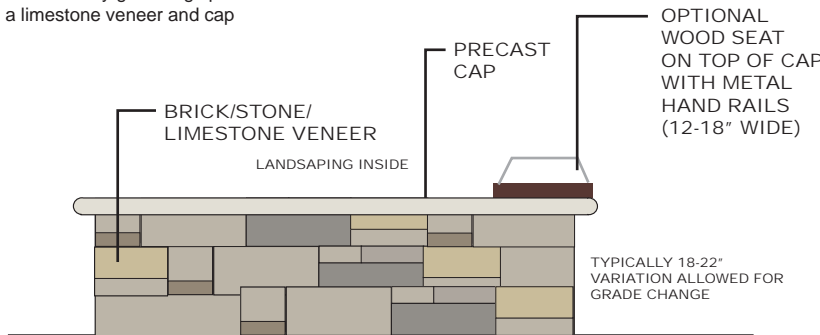


SECOND TIER DESIGN



THIRD TIER DESIGN

The guidelines encourage limestone seat walls to be incorporated where space allows and to enhance key gathering spaces. Walls shall have a limestone veneer and cap



FOURTH TIER DESIGN

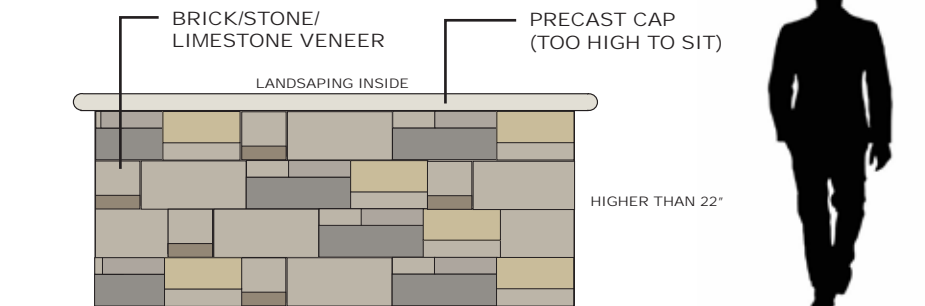


Figure 13:

FOXWALK DESIGN GUIDELINES: TREES & PLANTS

STREET TREES

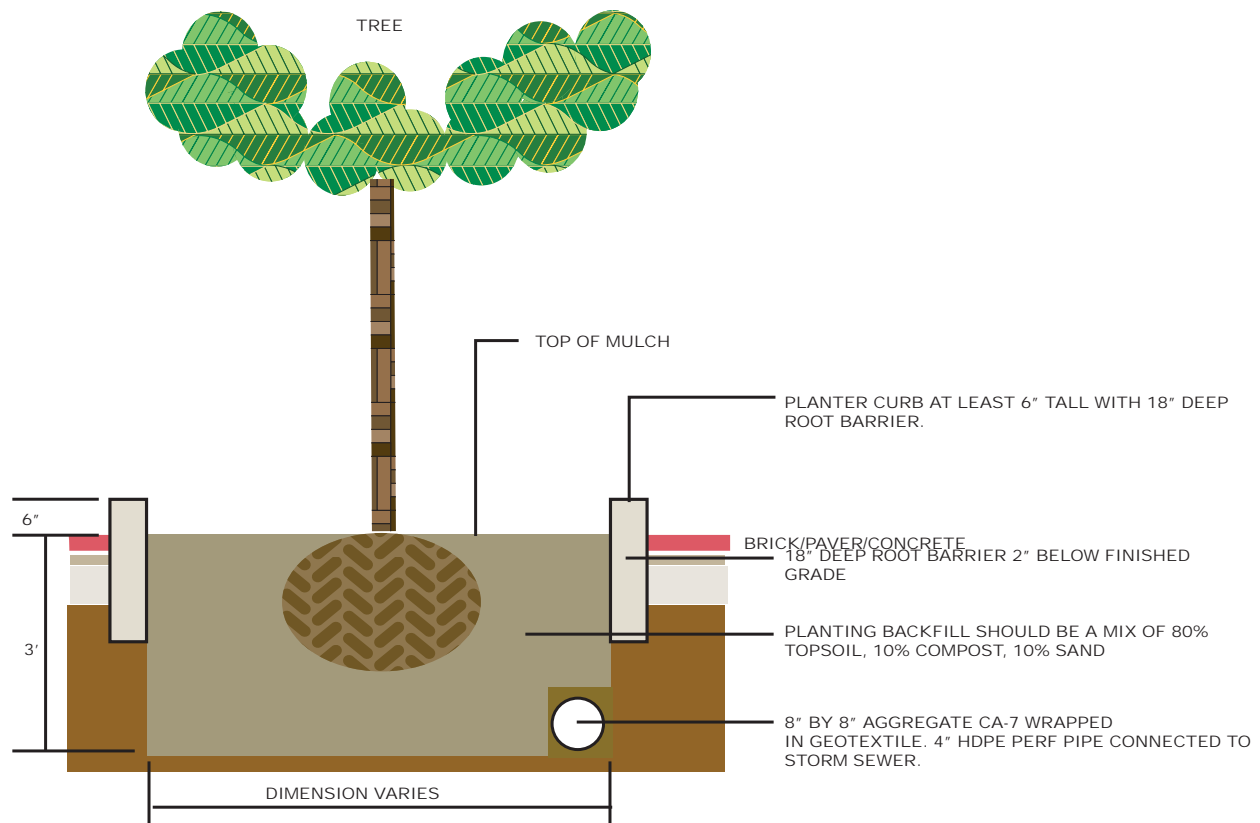
Trees are recommended to only be planted within raised planters to ensure a quality living environment and extended life expectancy. The City shall select a variety of tree species and cultivars which are tolerant of salt and urban conditions. Additionally, the mix of trees should consider space available for the root system and crown.

RAISED PLANTERS

Raised planters shall be utilized where the amenity areas are 4'-6" or wider. The planters will not encroach the carriage walk or walking area. Raised planters will be no smaller than 4' x 6' in size, and will be raised 6" off the ground with a concrete curb. In some instances, a limestone seat wall will be combined with the concrete curb as part of a raised bed. Where pedestrian zones widen and allow for wider amenity areas, planters too can become wider for more plant variety.

IRRIGATION

All raised planters shall be irrigated with a spray irrigation system and supplied with a quick coupler valve.



7.3: Bridge Maintenance and Restoration

- 7.3-1: **Bridge Structures.** Bridge structures should generally be maintained in original condition. Any attached objects or superficial modifications should be removed.
- 7.3-2: **Bridge Span.** Concrete, masonry, and steel integral to the deck span and supporting structure should be repaired and maintained under the guidance of qualified architectural and engineering consultants.
- 7.3-3: **Concrete and Masonry.** Where possible, concrete and masonry should maintain its natural color. Where painting is required, colors should be selected to complement adjacent areas.
- 7.3-4: **Bridge Undersides.** The undersides of bridges should be regularly cleaned and repaired.
- 7.3-5: **Lights.** Light standards and luminaires shall match those portrayed in historic photos of each individual bridge.
- 7.3-6: **Rails.** The pre-cast concrete railings that replaced the non-original metal rails on the bridges should be regularly cleaned and repaired.
- 7.3-7: **Other Bridges.** No new vehicular bridges should be constructed within the FoxWalk Overlay District.
- 7.3-8: **Repair and Replacement.** Bridges should be regularly cleaned and repaired. If portions of the bridge become severely deteriorated, replacement may be considered. Replacement should be in-kind, matching the original design of the bridge; however, alternative material may be considered if they match the historic appearance.

7.4: Riverfront

The riverfront is the crown jewel of the FoxWalk Overlay District, providing visual and physical access to one of the region's most prominent natural assets. While the businesses, services, and organizations form the economic engine of downtown Aurora, the Fox River is the natural artery that greatly defines the identity of the FoxWalk Overlay District and offers a variety of opportunities for recreation, commerce, historic connection, and community activity. The following design guidelines are intended to enhance the visual and physical connectivity of the district to the riverfront as a functional, aesthetically pleasing, and sustainable space for the community.

- 7.4-1: Safe, convenient access shall be provided to the riverfront for people of all physical abilities and non-vehicular modes of transport, including pedestrians and bicyclists. Sidewalks, trails, ramps, and stairways shall serve as the primary pathways between the riverfront and the rest of the downtown area.
- 7.4-2: Continued efforts shall be made to continue adding to the pathway system along the riverfront, including extension of the existing Riverwalk in accordance with the concepts proposed in the 2008 Aurora Riverwalk Revised Master Plan.
- 7.4-3: A variety of public spaces, such as plazas, parks, and gathering spaces, shall be provided along the riverfront, where feasible, to provide opportunities for recreational, educational, and social activities relating to the Fox River. Amenities like public art, fitness spaces, and informational kiosks should also be considered to enhance the user experience. Spaces should be flexible to accommodate a range of activities and events throughout different seasons, as well as be adaptable to accommodate future changes or additions.
- 7.4-4: There should be a concerted effort to prioritize the preservation and enhancement of views of the Fox River from various vantage points in both public and private spaces. This includes the consideration of utilizing glass as a primary material for new construction on non-infill sites due to their transparency and reflective properties. The use of landscaping, elevation changes, and carefully positioned structures should also be considered to frame and accentuate scenic views of the river.
- 7.4-5: Safety measures should be a primary design consideration, including the use of railings, lighting, and signage that foster a safe environment along the river.
- 7.4-6: A cohesive design theme and visual identity should be maintained for the riverfront to reflect the legacy of the Fox River and the evolving character of the Riverwalk. This may be coordinated with streetscape improvement efforts in downtown Aurora to provide a cohesive design around elements like lighting, signage, and streetscape/riverfront furniture to enhance the overall aesthetic of both the riverfront and overall district.
- 7.4-7: Care should be taken to protect the Fox River's natural flow, topography, vegetation, and wildlife habitats as new riverfront access and nearby development are pursued. Design and development should be sensitive to the local ecosystem to preserve natural habitats and promote biodiversity.



- 7.4-8:** Flood resilience and safety should be considered as part of design and development concepts, particularly through the use of sustainable design practices like native landscaping, permeable surfaces, and other flood-resistant design elements that foster natural stormwater management.
- 7.4-9:** Use of durable materials and efficient infrastructure should be considered as part of the design of riverfront spaces to streamline space management processes, including maintenance, security, flood mitigation, and programming of the riverfront space.

7.5: BNSF Railway Viaduct

The BNSF railway runs through the east side of the FoxWalk Overlay District, with the Aurora Transportation Center to the north serving as the terminus of the Metra BNSF commuter rail line. As the BNSF railway continues south of the Metra station, the railroad transitions into an elevated track in the segment traversing through the FoxWalk Overlay District. The elevated track is situated on a viaduct that creates underpasses and serves as a physical divide between the far eastern edge of the FoxWalk Overlay District and the rest of the district.

The following design guidelines provide methods to integrate the BNSF railway viaduct and the conditions it creates into the design of the built environment, particularly in a manner that turns negative aspects into benefits and mitigates the impacts of how the viaduct acts as a physical divide. These Guidelines are subject to agreements with BNSF who has full control over what occurs to the viaduct.

- 7.5-1:** Coordination between the City and BNSF is encouraged to define the viaduct as a multi-functional space including options like public art installations, community space, urban greenery, bicycle parking, and off-street parking. Some of these potential options would require further coordination with other agencies or organizations, such as the Parks and Recreation Department, Aurora Public Art, and Aurora Downtown.
- 7.5-2:** Since some businesses already use the viaduct to store their trash receptacles and temporary storage, the City should formalize such arrangements to ensure they comply with trash enclosure and outdoor storage requirements. Compliance may require some flexibility given the unique nature of the viaduct and businesses using the space for off-site activities.
- 7.5-3:** Since the viaduct already serves as underpass for automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic, the viaduct should be designed to encourage safe passage for all modes of transport, including adequate lighting, wayfinding signage, well-defined pedestrian pathways and buffering between cars, pedestrians. In addition, the viaduct should be designed to be accessible to people of all ages and abilities, including those with disabilities, the elderly, and families with strollers.
- 7.5-4:** Collaboration with local artists and arts organizations is encouraged to broaden the viaduct's appeal-as a community asset for arts, culture, and history. Public art may include murals, sculptures, historical markers, informational kiosks, and interactive installations that engage passersby.
- 7.5-5:** Creative use of the viaduct should be flexible in design to adapt to changing needs and conditions. For spaces that may have seating and other outdoor furniture, modular and movable pieces are recommended to easily reconfigure spaces for different events and programming.
- 7.5-6:** Collaborative partnerships should be pursued with local agencies, organizations, and community groups to invite creative uses of the viaduct and pool resources, funding, and responsibilities for long-term maintenance and management of the space.



SECTION 8

Administrative Provisions

8.1: FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee

- 8.1-1: Responsibility.** All reviews will be based upon these guidelines, as appropriate. It is the responsibility of the Review Authority to enforce the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Guidelines by balancing specific design guideline requirements with the overall design principles and concepts.
- 8.1-2: Establishment of, and Membership on, the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee.** The FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee is established under and governed by [Section 2-440](#) of the Code of Ordinances, City of Aurora.
- 8.1-3: Powers and Duties of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee.** The following powers and duties shall be in addition to the powers and duties described throughout this document and in the Aurora Zoning Ordinance:
- 8.1-3.1:** The DRC shall review this document on a regular basis and may propose amendments to it, to be approved by the City Council.
- 8.1-3.2:** In reviewing an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, the DRC shall have the authority to modify any provision of this document, if such modification is consistent with the purpose and intent of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Guidelines.
- 8.1-4: Savings Provision.** If any section, phrase, or paragraph of this document is construed to be invalid, void, or unconstitutional, the remaining sections, phrases, or paragraphs shall not be affected and shall remain in full force and effect.

8.2: Procedures: Certificates of Appropriateness

- 8.2-1: Certificate of Appropriateness Requirement.** All exterior work as defined in this document shall be required to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness, including but not limited for the following:
- A. Demolition
 - B. Additions and New Construction
 - C. Fencing
 - D. Accessory Structures
 - E. Winter Vestibules
 - F. Outdoor Dining
 - G. Construction of public space on a rooftop, such as a roof deck
 - H. Decks
 - I. Any construction project within the public right-of-way
 - J. All exterior work, as defined in this document
 - K. Installation or erection of signage, except as specifically exempted
- 8.2-2: Review Process.** A Certificate of Appropriateness may be granted pursuant to the process outlined herein. The Review Authority shall interpret and implement the Design Guidelines incorporated within this document. Furthermore, the Review Authority shall have the power to mandate implementation of the 2007 FoxWalk/Riverwalk Revised Master Plan, and shall determine what timing and scale of improvements are reasonable and appropriate in each case, by balancing the specific proposal with the standards set forth in these Guidelines, and the 2007 FoxWalk/Riverwalk Revised Master Plan.

At all steps in the Certificate of Appropriateness process, the Review Authority must act within specified time limits as detailed below. References to 'days' in this section shall mean calendar days unless otherwise specified.



All requests for a Certificate of Appropriateness must be complete in order to begin the review process. A complete request will include:

- A. A signed Certificate of Appropriateness application
- B. Approval by the property owner
- C. Legible, accurate, scaled drawings, if applicable
- D. Paint, fabric swatches, and/or material samples, if applicable

8.2-2.1: Decision by the Zoning Administrator. An applicant shall submit a Certificate of Appropriateness with Building and Permits. The Zoning Administrator will work with the applicant to refine the Certificate of Appropriateness request so that it conforms to the provisions of this document. The Zoning Administrator may make one of two decisions regarding Certificate of Appropriateness requests:

- A. **Certificate of Appropriateness approval by Zoning Administrator.** For all Certificate of Appropriateness applications that conform to this document, the Zoning Administrator shall issue the approved Certificate of Appropriateness. The Zoning Administrator's decision will be reported to the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee.
- B. **Certificate of Appropriateness requests denied by the Zoning Administrator.** If after working with the applicant, the Certificate of Appropriateness request still does not conform to the provisions of this resolution, the Zoning Administrator shall deny the request. This decision is appealable by either the applicant or a member of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee. If appealed, the Zoning Administrator will place the Certificate of Appropriateness on the next regularly scheduled meeting of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee. The committee shall render a decision to grant, deny or modify the requested Certificate of Appropriateness on the basis of the criteria set forth in this document.

The decision of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee may be appealed within seven (7) days to the Building, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee of the City Council, by the applicant or by a member of the City Council. If so appealed, the final decision shall be made by the Building, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee.

8.2-2.2: Decision by FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee. An applicant for an exception, variation or modification (as determined by the Zoning Administrator) from the provisions of this document shall apply to the Zoning Administrator, who shall forward their recommendations to the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee. All applications must be complete in order to begin the review process. The Committee shall make the decision within forty-five (45) days.

The FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee shall direct the Zoning Administrator to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness if it finds that such exception, variation or modification is consistent with the goals, objectives, purpose, and intent of the FoxWalk Overlay District. The decision of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee may be appealed within seven (7) days to the Building, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee of the City Council, by the applicant or by a member of the City Council. If so appealed, the final decision shall be made by the Building, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee.

If the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee fails to make its decision within forty-five (45) days of the application date, the application shall be placed on the next available agenda of the Building, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee, which shall make the decision.

8.2-2.3: FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee Review Required. Rehabilitation projects over 10,000 square feet in size, or where extensive redevelopment and site work are contemplated as determined by the Zoning Administrator (e.g., building demolition, assemblage of multiple parcels for redevelopment, significant alteration to the historic building, etc.), requires the approval of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee.

The review process shall begin with a pre-application meeting with City staff, known as the Development Services Team meeting, and shall occur early on in the process. If needed, multiple meetings of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee can also be scheduled to allow the Design Review Committee the opportunity to provide direction to the applicant early on in the process so that unnecessary effort can be avoided and the end result is acceptable to both the applicant and the review authority.

All new construction, additions, and demolitions require the approval of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee.



- 8.2-2.4: Large Scale Development.** Projects over ten thousand (10,000) square feet of new construction will be divided into Preliminary Review and Final Review or Final Review with no Preliminary as set forth in [Chapter 34](#) of the Code of Ordinances, City of Aurora.
- 8.2-2.5: Projects Implementing the 2007 FoxWalk/Riverwalk Revised Master Plan.** In projects where there is the potential to implement aspects of the 2007 FoxWalk/Riverwalk Revised Master Plan, the applicant will be required to meet with the Riverwalk Advisory Subcommittee, which will then make a recommendation to the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee regarding approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness. Joint meetings among the applicant, the Riverwalk Advisory Subcommittee, and the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee may be scheduled to facilitate streamlined discussion and review.

8.3: Murals

Mural proposals for downtown buildings, whether publicly or privately owned, shall be reviewed by the Aurora Public Art Commission (APAC) for initial review and recommendation, prior to a review and recommendation by the FoxWalk Overlay Design Review Committee (DRC). The final decision shall be made by the Building, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee.

8.4 Administrative Review

All decisions made by the Building Zoning and Economic Development Committee shall constitute a final determination for purposes of judicial review and shall be subject to review under the Illinois Administrative Review Law (735 ILCS 5/3-101, et. seq.).



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SECTION 9

Accomplishments

9.1: Implementation of the FoxWalk Guidelines

Many recommendations that were either specifically stated or implied in the previous versions of the FoxWalk Guidelines have been implemented. They are described below.

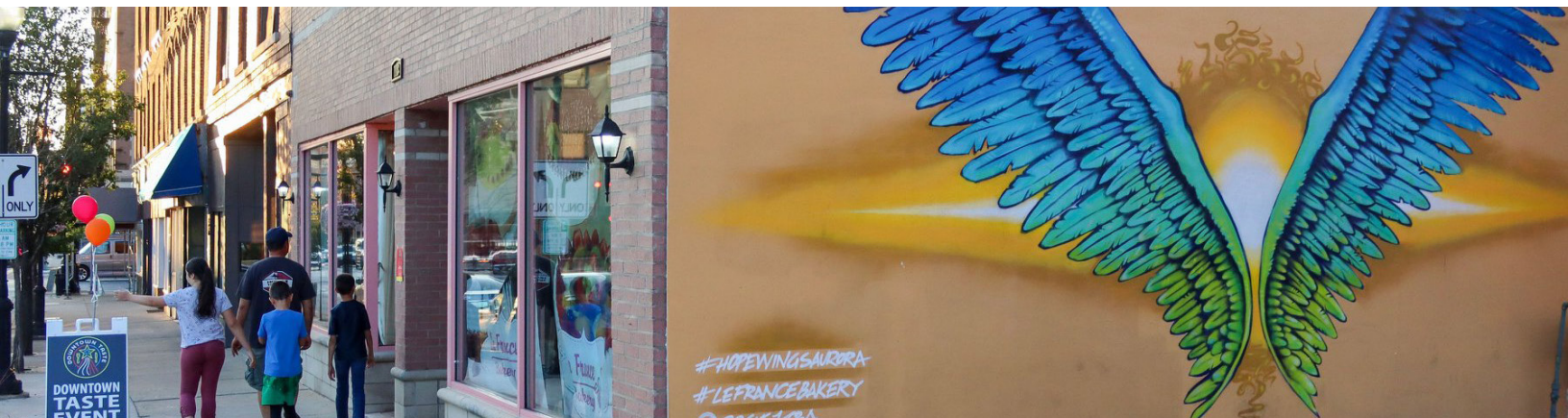
9.1-1: Riverwalk and Public Amenities

9.1-1.1: Public Art and Celebrations: It was recommended that wherever possible and appropriate, public art and celebrations be included in the design and programming of the FoxWalk Overlay District. In June, 2001, Swimming Stones, an interactive water sculpture, was installed at Stolp and Benton. In 2008, an outdoor sculpture garden was created on open space at the west edge of the David L. Pierce Art and History Center. Since then, public art installation in the FoxWalk Overlay District have include:

- A. Blues Mural (2017) at 6 E. Downer
- B. Great Blue Herons (2018) under the New York Street bridge on the west side of Stolp Island
- C. Cultural Context of a Fox (2018) at 54 E. Galena Boulevard
- D. Hope Wings (2018) at 118 E. Grand Boulevard
- E. Pierpont Grocery (2018-2019) at 83 S. LaSalle Street
- F. Mexican Heritage (2019) at 36 E. Downer Place
- G. Yetee Station Arcade (2019) in the alley behind 11 N. Broadway
- H. Graffiti Wall (2021 and ongoing) on Parking Lot O at 14 Middle Avenue
- I. Calaveras (2021) at 36 W. Downer Place
- J. Alexa (2021) at 13 S. Broadway
- K. Cultural Heritage Stamps with Augmented Reality: Brazil, Greece, Luxembourg, and Kenya (2021) at 7 S. Broadway
- L. Diversity in Technology (2021) at 105 E. Galena Boulevard
- M. Alebrijes (2021) under the BNSF viaduct at E. New York Street
- N. Aurora Downtown Gateway (2021) at 210 E. Galena Boulevard
- O. City hosted a Warhol Exhibit with Activities throughout the Downtown (2023)

The City routinely installs temporary art installations throughout the downtown. The City also celebrates cultural heritage with flag raisings throughout the year.

Blues on the Fox, a weekend event each June that features nationally-renowned performers, kicked off in 1998. Downtown Alive!, a Friday night summer music festival, was launched in 1999. The Midwest Literary Festival was hosted downtown from 2003 through 2007. Parades for the Fourth of July, Veterans' Day, and Holiday Magic are staged annually within the FoxWalk Overlay District. The Downtown Aurora organization hosts events throughout the year in the FoxWalk Overlay District, including First Fridays, arts and music, outdoor movies, cultural events, and other activities.



- 9.1-1.2: Decorative Planters:** Concrete street planters with banding in a design that mirrors the terra cotta trim found on many downtown Aurora buildings were installed in 2002.
- 9.1-1.3: Hanging Floral Baskets:** Baskets in colors evocative of terra cotta were hung from the cast iron decorative light poles in 2002. Plant displays are designed annually by a horticulturalist.
- 9.1-1.4: Pocket Parks:** These landscaped public open spaces are located at various sites throughout downtown: Agnes Mundy Park on Broadway, Millennium Park on Stolp Island, and Rotary Park, adjacent to the Galena dam (east side). Fixtures to highlight trees have been installed at their bases, along with stamped asphalt walkways. Beginning in 2018, water street mall was renovated with a new decorative plaza concrete, brick pavers, new planter beds, string lighting, tables, and benches. Mundy Park was repurposed to provide outdoor seating for concerts at the adjacent music venue. The park was also completely redone with new trees, flowers, bike racks, and interpretative plaques. Beginning in 2021, Skinny Park was rejuvenated with new brick pavers, planter beds, ping pong tables, water feature, artwork, bean bag toss, and string lighting.
- 9.1-1.5: Streetscape Improvements:** Since 1995, as sidewalk improvement projects have been undertaken within the district, decorative elements have been added. Among them are pavers, tree grates, cast iron light poles, benches, bollards, waste receptacles, and bicycle racks.
- 9.1-1.6: Decorative Newsracks:** In 2005, the City of Aurora adopted an ordinance requiring publishers to use city-owned newsracks, fabricated of powder-coated black aluminum, in the central business district and at both transportation centers. As web-based media has impacted the circulation of print media, the City may elect to pursue actions like consolidating, reducing, or removing newsracks from the streetscape.
- 9.1-1.7: Civic Banners:** Decorative banners are periodically installed on downtown cast iron poles, celebrating various events.
- 9.1-1.8: Winter Holiday Decorations:** Each year during the week of Thanksgiving, holiday decorations are installed within the FoxWalk Overlay District. An eight-story shooting star and Christmas tree have been placed on the roof of Fox Island Apartments (the Leland Tower) at 7 S. Stolp. The star is lit throughout the year; the tree is lit during the winter holidays. The commercial storefronts are transformed with beautiful painted scenes highlighting the various holidays. Colored lights around the light poles brighten up the streets during holidays. Large holiday displays are added to parking garages. The City adds variety of free standing holiday decorations scattered throughout the downtown and Riverwalk.
- 9.1-1.9: Kiosks:** In 2007, four lighted kiosks were installed to advertise downtown cultural events. Two are located on the Riverwalk; one is located at each of Aurora's transportation centers. In 2019, new digital kiosks were installed throughout the downtown, including in front of City Hall, in front of the Paramount, and by the old library.



- 9.1-1.10: Wayfinding and Destination Signage:** A system of parking lot signage was developed in 2006; wayfinding signage was installed in 2008. Both were intended to assist visitors in navigating their way throughout downtown Aurora. In addition, destination signage directing people to downtown Aurora was installed in 2008. In 2019, the City installed new parking lots signage to better direct the public to the available parking.
- 9.1-1.11: Light-Emitting Diode (LED) Illuminated Street Signs:** Signs were installed at the Galena Boulevard/Stolp Avenue and Downer Place/Stolp Avenue intersections in 2007.
- 9.1-1.12: Restored Bridges:** Seven (7) historic bridges link Stolp Island with the city proper. The majority have been restored: the east and west segments of the Galena bridge (1998); the east and west sections of the Benton Street bridge (1996); and the New York Street (Pershing Memorial) bridge (1993). The Memory Sculptures that grace the Pershing Memorial Bridge were restored in 2003. The east and west sections of the Downer Place bridge were restored in 2012.
- 9.1-1.13: Parking:** The table on the next page lists parking facilities that have been constructed as of this 2023 update. In October, 2002, a downtown parking study was undertaken by Walker Parking Consultants. The study was updated in 2007 and in 2013 the City created the Downtown Parking Management Report and Recommendations.
- 9.1-1.14: Bicycle Path and Multi-User Trail Facilities:** For many years, a bicycle path connecting the communities north and south of Aurora had been proposed for the west bank of the Fox River. The path was envisioned as being constructed at the water level and running parallel to a pedestrian walkway. In 2004, after a somewhat uneven history, a collaborative partnership that included the City of Aurora, the Fox Valley Park District, and the Kane County Forest Preserve District, embarked on a concerted effort to close the gap in the Fox River Trail through downtown Aurora, particularly as visualized in the 2007 FoxWalk/Riverwalk Revised Master Plan.

In coordination with the Illinois Department of Transportation, construction commenced on the southern section of the “gap” in 2010. This pathway was built as part of the River Street Plaza development to enhance connectivity from Benton Street south toward North Avenue. As of 2023, this pathway extends along the western bank of the Fox River south of Benton Street to Cross Street, which is approximately half of the intended trail length to reach North Avenue further south. An additional connection was provided in conjunction with construction of the new campus for Waubensee Community College, which opened in 2011. While the Fox River Trail does traverse along the Fox River’s western bank at the rear of the Waubensee Community College building between Galena Boulevard and Downer Place, the trail system continues to have a gap between Downer Place and Benton Street, which may not be filled with a trail connection until the existing site in this gap is redeveloped or retrofits a trail. The Green Mile is filling the gap with off street protected connection off the riverbank. The true existing gap is to be found south of 160 S River Street instead, but again, the Green Mile bypasses that.



Figure 14: Downtown Parking Facilities

#	Location	Status
1	North end of Stolp Island adjacent to North Island Center	A parking deck was constructed as part of the Hollywood Casino project
2	South end of Stolp Island adjacent to the G.A.R. building	A public parking deck with commercial uses on the first level was constructed in 1993
3	East bank of the river between Galena Boulevard and New York Street	Lot "F": 36 spaces on surface lot
4	New York Street east of Broadway	Lot "E": 111 spaces on surface lot. In 2019, the lot was reconfigured for better parking flow and incorporating parking islands and string lights on the alley to the street
5	East bank of the river north of Clark Street	Lot "Q": was incorporated into Shodeen's East Bank Project
6	East side of Broadway between Galena Boulevard and Downer Place	Privately-owned surface lot for 2 S. Broadway
7	Northwest corner of Water Street and Benton Street	Lot "B": 108 spaces on surface lot, serves as site of Farmers Market and Food Truck venue
8	South end of Stolp Island on south side of Benton Street	Lot "D": 66 spaces on surface lot
9	Southeast corner of Stolp Avenue and Downer Place	Lot "G": 347 spaces in structure
10	East side of River Street and north of Benton Street	Lot "P-20": 12 spaces on privately-owned surface lot
11	Along Hoyt Place on south side of Galena Boulevard and near one of the access points to the Fox River Trail	Lot "T": 12 spaces on surface lot
12	Northeast corner of River Street and Galena Boulevard	Lot "V": 750 spaces on privately-owned structure
13	North end of Stolp Island on south side of New York Street	Lot "P-11": 513 spaces in privately-owned structure
14	North end of Stolp Island between New York Street and Galena Boulevard	Lot "P-12": 39 spaces in privately-owned structure
15	Southwest corner of BNSF railway and New York Street	Lot "P-13": 23 spaces on privately owned surface lot
16	Southeast corner of Broadway and Galena Boulevard	Lot "P-16": 77 spaces on privately-owned surface lot
17	Southeast corner of LaSalle Street and Galena Boulevard	Lot "P-17": 55 spaces on privately-owned surface lot
18	East and west sides of the BNSF viaduct, south of Downer Place	Lot "P-23": 20 spaces on privately-owned surface lot
19	East side of Broadway, south of Downer Place	Lot "P-24": 38 spaces on privately-owned surface lot
20	Northwest corner of Lincoln Avenue and Benton Street	Lot "P-25": 46 spaces on privately-owned surface lot
21	Southwest corner of Lincoln Avenue and Downer Place	Lot "P-26": 14 spaces on privately-owned surface lot



On the western bank of the Fox River, the Fox River Trail is currently a completely connected path from Downer Place to the area north of the FoxWalk Overlay District, which links to trails in North River Street Park and the RiverEdge Park Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge that crosses the river to RiverEdge Park on the eastern bank. The Fox River Trail traverses the eastern riverfront in both directions, including southward back to the FoxWalk Overlay District until reaching Galena Boulevard, at which point the trail shifts off of the riverfront onto the pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly Water Street to Downer Place. At this point the Fox River Trail does not re-engage the eastern bank of the riverfront south of Downer Place, with bicyclists and trails currently traveling on sidewalks, disjointed paths, and the street. While the 2007 Revised FoxWalk/Riverwalk Master Plan envisioned trails to traverse the eastern bank of the river south of Benton Street to North Avenue, this area still lacks in any trail infrastructure despite the Fox River Trail picking up south of North Avenue on Hurds Island and back to the western riverfront.

Links between the bicycle path and street level, located near the Benton and New York Street Bridges, were envisioned to provide convenient access, allowing bicyclists to tour the island and continue their journey. These recommended connections were visualized in the 2007 Revised FoxWalk/Riverwalk Master Plan. The FoxWalk path system currently starts on the east side of Stolp Island at New York Street and extends south along the riverfront to the north side of Benton Street, at which point the FoxWalk travels across to the west side of the island. But rather than continue to circle Stolp Island on the west side, the FoxWalk crosses the river on the Benton Street bridge to the western bank of the Fox River. Rather than bypass the far southern end of Stolp Island, the 2007 Revised FoxWalk/Riverwalk Master Plan envisioned the FoxWalk to travel along the south riverfront, which could still occur with some redevelopment of the surface parking lot serving the 1 E. Benton Street building and the former SciTech property.

Bicycle racks and/or bicycle lockers were proposed for all publicly-controlled facilities and downtown sidewalks. A number of bicycle racks were installed in the early 1990s; that number increased by thirty-five (35) in 2006 and several more added since then. Bicycle lockers were installed at the Aurora Transportation Center on Route 25. In 2015 the City's first protected bike lane opened on River Street connecting two major regional trail segments.

- 9.1-1.15: Boating Opportunities:** In the original FoxWalk Design Guidelines, it was suggested that small boats should be encouraged to navigate around Stolp Island. Boat ramps at the dams were envisioned to allow passage between the different river levels and accommodate both upstream and downstream travel. A separate canoe chute was constructed in 1993 just above the dam on the west branch of the Fox River. Massive flooding did substantial damage to the chute in 1996. In 2007, a recreational engineering consultant was retained to begin assessing the feasibility of a redesign of the canoe chute, as well as modification of downtown dams to enhance safety for kayaks, canoes, and "tubers," and to encourage these uses. The canoe chute was eventually built in 2009 by the segment of the Fox River Trail below the New York Street bridge on the western riverfront, with periodic inspections since its construction. A 2020 inspection indicated the need to repair the canoe chute, with a City bid for repairs going out in 2021. As of 2023, the canoe chute remains closed as a larger discussion is occurring regarding the future dams along the Fox River.
- 9.1-1.16: Architectural Illumination:** Many buildings – both public and private – offer possibilities of enhancement through carefully designed illumination. As buildings continue to be renovated and re-inhabited, the 2008 version of the FoxWalk Design Guidelines recommended thoughtful consideration for the use of lighting to convey the sense that Aurora is a place where electric light has special purpose and meaning. City officials continue to support this recommendation for the use of lighting to enhance building architecture and the overall character of downtown Aurora, which is reflected by the addition of new lighting design guidelines in this 2023 update. In addition, the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee has clearly stated its desire to see architectural lighting installed that is of a high quality; resistant to the weather and low maintenance. Rope lighting, for example, has been deemed unacceptable, except if installed on a temporary basis as a holiday decoration.
- 9.1-1.17: Grand Army of the Republic:** Extensive renovations in 2011 and 2016 produced an outstanding museum with dozens of exhibits documenting Auroran and Illinoisan contributions to the Union effort in the Civil War.



9.1-1.18: Accomplishments Bordering FoxWalk Overlay District:

- A. In 2012 construction began on the River Edge Park, an idea that emerged from the Seize the Future Master Plan to reconnect the neighborhoods and create an outdoor gathering space.
- B. In 2021, a pedestrian bridge was opened that connects the RiverEdge Park and the Aurora Transportation Center on the east side of the river with existing neighborhoods, redeveloped parks, and trails on the west side.
- C. In 2021, the City undertook a major renovation of Wilder Park, including the construction of a concession, restrooms, playground, landscaping and lighting. A key component of the project was the closing of River Street.

9.1-2: Policies and Programs

9.1-2.1: Downtown Heritage Tour: Thirty (30) porcelain enamel signs mounted on decorative cast iron poles delineate a self-guided tour of downtown architecture and history. Included are markers for significant buildings which have been demolished.

9.1-2.2: Downtown Architecture Poster and Trading Cards: In 2005, line drawings of iconic downtown buildings were created by local artist David J. Merk. The drawings were reproduced in the form of commemorative posters and trading cards. Framed posters were given annually to winners of the Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Downtown Property Improvements. The trading cards were also used in an educational program targeted at third grade students as part of their Community Studies curriculum, with students guided on walking tours of downtown Aurora.

9.1-2.3: Expansion of the Urban Design Guidelines District: In the 1993 Perkins & Will Plan, the FoxWalk Overlay District encompassed all of Stolp Island and portions of the downtown area east and west of the Fox River. The district was ultimately enlarged so that its boundaries became the west side of Lincoln Avenue, the east side of Lake Street, Benton Street on the south, and Spring Street/Spruce Street on the north, coterminous with the boundaries of Tax Increment Financing District #1, which had been established in 1986.

9.1-2.4: Conversion of Downtown One-Way Streets to Two-Way Streets: When the Design Guidelines were created in 2008, a study of a possible reconfiguration of the downtown street system was underway. The study's objectives were to examine ways in which to enhance the urban character of the FoxWalk Overlay District, and to increase the ease of pedestrian navigation within downtown Aurora. Since that time, certain one-way streets in and around the FoxWalk Overlay District have successfully been converted to two-way streets:

- A. New York Street (between Broadway and Smith Boulevard)
- B. Galena Boulevard (between Ohio Street and Broadway)
- C. River Street (between Gale Street and New York Street)
- D. Lake Street (between Gale Street and New York Street)
- E. Downer Place (between Broadway and State Street)
- F. Benton Street (between Broadway and Locust Street)

The first four streets officially opened to two-way traffic in 2015. Downer Place opened to two-way traffic in 2018, with Benton Street following soon after.

9.1-2.5: Improved Transit Circulation: At the time the Design Guidelines were created in 2008, the City had conversations with Pace to consider reduced use of the Aurora Transportation Center as a "pulse point", which would be paired with increased access to buses within the FoxWalk Overlay District. Currently, three Pace bus routes serve the FoxWalk Overlay District, with all three providing service to the BNSF Aurora Metra station at the Aurora Transportation Center.

9.1-2.6: Creation of a Special Service Area: Aurora Downtown, an organization of property owners located within the boundaries of the FoxWalk Overlay District, was created as Special Service Area (SSA) One in 1994. The organization is led by a 19-member board of directors and operates under an agreement with the City of Aurora wherein it spends no funds on administrative or support services. The SSA was initially created with an eight-year "sunset" provision and has been renewed at each time it was up for renewal since then. While the SSA supports local business, Aurora Downtown also hosts a variety of events from First Fridays and outdoor movies to arts and cultural activities.

