We would like to thank the people of Aurora, Indiana for their support in this endeavor and their interest in their community.

We would like to extend special thanks to:
The Aurora Plan Commission,
The Aurora City Council,
The Steering Committee,
Mayor Leon Kelly,
Mayor John Borgman,
Mayor Richard M. Ullrich, Jr.,

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August, 2000
Transportation: Location

The City of Aurora has relatively good transportation access. This is important for the following reasons:

- Travel throughout Aurora
- Residents have access to nearby employment opportunities
- Gives neighboring communities access to the city
- Access for business and industry to supplies and raw materials

Located at the junction of US 50, SR 350, and SR 56 Aurora residents have easy automobile access to the surrounding areas. The Ohio River provides water transportation access and air transportation is available at the airport in Northern Kentucky, about a half an hour away.

Residents can reach any part of the city by walking within a relatively short span of time. However, factors such as deteriorating or nonexisting sidewalks and railroad crossings make it difficult to traverse certain parts of the city.

Regional Transportation

Transportation to Cincinnati

Aurora is accessible to Cincinnati via US 50 which connects to I-275, I-74, I-71, and I-75. These interstate highways connect the entire Cincinnati metro area.

Transportation to Other Regions

Aurora is accessible to other regions by several transportation routes. It is connected to other areas in Indiana by US 50, SR 148, SR 56, SR 350, and I-74. These routes connect Aurora to other communities such as Rising Sun, Lawrenceburg, Versailles, and Indianapolis.

Roads, Parking and Pedestrian Travel

Roads

The city of Aurora has good overall street conditions. Portions of the surfaces recently have been resurfaced while a greater number of them still need to be. The street conditions demonstrate that the maintenance of streets is adequate, but no more. The majority of the streets in Aurora have been surfaced with asphalt.
Most roads have curbs and gutters. Many curbs and gutters are in need of maintenance and reconstruction work. Sections of these have deteriorated or shifted, and need to be fixed or replaced.

Many of the light poles have a lean to them either due to age or weather damage. Second Street, the main commercial street of Aurora, has pedestrian friendly lighting that provides historic character.

Parking

There are designated places in which to park in the City of Aurora. The downtown area has parallel and angle parking, as well as a variety of different sizes of parking lots. A portion of these lots are used by commuters who travel to Aurora then carpool to other places.

Transportation

The city of Aurora has two pedestrian transportation systems, as well as cars, taxis, and buses. The primary pedestrian system is the sidewalks within the city. A large portion of Aurora has sidewalks available for pedestrian use, many of which are in need of maintenance and repairs. The other system is a trail that runs along the river and connects into the park system. This trail offers pedestrians a view of the river. Aurora residents may also travel throughout the area by using the local taxi and bus service. Access to air transportation is also within easy traveling distance.

Water and Rail Transportation

There are three marinas located within the city of Aurora. The Blue Ribbon Marina is located just southwest of the intersection of SR 350 and US 50. The second is located just northwest of the same intersection. The third is located toward the northern edge of Aurora on US 50. There is also an exporting center along the river that is used by barges to move agricultural products and raw materials that is operated by Consolidated Grain & Barge.

Railroad tracks owned by the CSX and Central Railroad of Indiana enter Aurora from the west and then turn to the northeast and run along the Ohio River. The Aurora rail depot has been converted to retail space.

Commuting

The transportation routes of Aurora and the surrounding area are used frequently by the residents traveling to and from their employment. As residents travel to and from work, each vehicle used increases highway congestion and wear and tear on road surfaces.
The residents of the City of Aurora have become more mobile in the past thirty years. As seen in Chart 6 only eleven percent of Aurora's residents do not have the use of an automobile. This is down seven percent from ten years earlier and down twelve percent from twenty years earlier. The majority of the residents, approximately ninety percent, have at least one vehicle available to them.

As seen in Chart 7 more than fifty percent, spend less than one-half hour on their way to work. The average travel time to work for Aurora residents is approximately 25 minutes. Aurora's proximity to Cincinnati creates an availability of jobs within commuting distance.

Since the 1980s the residents of Aurora, like the residents of Dearborn County, have been working more within the city of Cincinnati (Chart 8). Residents also have been working less in areas surrounding Cincinnati. Since US 50 is the main route into and out of Aurora, nearly all commuters add to the amount of traffic on US 50 and SR 350.
Infrastructure is the term used to define the systems that make life in modern cities and towns possible and convenient. The public owns many of these systems, such as wastewater treatment plants. It is necessary to have well-maintained infrastructure, with enough capacity to handle all of the stresses put on it by the population it serves, in order to make sure that daily life is convenient and safe.

**Water**

The water utility, like many of the utilities in Aurora, is publicly owned. The original water infrastructure in Aurora was laid in the downtown area in 1904. These pipes are still in place. The system was expanded to the majority of the incorporated city in 1958 and currently serves approximately 12.2 square miles and 2,348 customers.

As of July 1998, the average daily water use for the city, based on the metered amount billed, was approximately 818,000 gallons, which is near full capacity for the system. A well field that is currently running on three wells supplies this water. The first two wells were installed in 1953 before which the supply was drawn from the Ohio River. A third well was drilled in 1964. Sanding, the buildup of mineral deposits on the well screens, has been a problem which necessitated the redrilling of one well in 1975 and the abandonment of another in 1989. A fourth well was installed in 1996 to replace the abandoned well. The water in the city’s supply is considered hard, though the color and turbidity are not considered a problem.

There are various pressure zones within the system using booster pumps to provide water to the city’s high elevations. There are five pressure zones and five storage tanks to supplement them for fire protection. Several of these areas are considerably below the standard average daily pressure. This means these areas are more sensitive to flow problems. It is more difficult to do more than one water intensive task, such as running a dishwasher or showering, at the same time, in these areas.

**Sewers/Wastewater**

Wastewater treatment for the City of Aurora is contracted to the wastewater treatment facility in Lawrenceburg, known as the South Dearborn Regional Sewer District: Treatment Facility. Aurora pays an
annual fee for water treatment at this facility and leases its excess water treatment capacity to the Seagram’s plant on a yearly basis. The wastewater utility services residences within the city limits as well as some area outside the incorporated boundaries of Aurora. The city is currently using one third of its allotted capacity, signifying that the wastewater system has room to accommodate both residential and industrial growth in Aurora.

The downtown portion of the sewer system in Aurora is a combined sanitary and storm sewer. In a combined system, there is no separation between raw sewage and storm water. They get mixed together in the lines on the way to the water treatment facility. This poses a potential health threat when there is flooding, severe storms, or high water. The storm water can overload the sewer system, causing backup through storm drains. When this happens, the floodwater becomes contaminated with raw sewage, which remains in the open, until the floodwaters recede. Plans to address this problem are currently being developed.

**Gas and Electric**

Gas services for Aurora are provided by the city. The city operates their own gas which is a subsidiary of Cinery. Electric services are provided by the Public Service of Indiana. The Public Service of Indiana serves 69 counties which includes Aurora.

**Septic Systems**

There are currently 113 structures inside Aurora using septic systems for their wastewater treatment. The clay soil, presence of rock close to the surface and the hilly topography in Aurora make these systems unsuitable. Providing city sewer service to these structures is currently under development.

**Communication**

The City of Aurora has several cellular service providers, Airtouch and GTE. Both cable and satellite television are available. Cable television is provided through Fairbanks Cablevision. Hoosier Telecom is the satellite television provider for Aurora. The area is also served by SEI Data for internet services. A number of radio and television stations can be received by Aurora residents, both local, regional, and national stations.

**Municipal Infrastructure includes:**
- Water lines
- Wastewater lines (some homes are not yet part of the system)
- Wastewater treatment
- Natural Gas lines
- Electricity
- Voice and data transmission
- Cellular transmission
- Cable TV
- Fiber optics
Economy

The economy of any community is a very important factor to weigh when trying to diagnose the strengths or shortcomings that community may have. Information on the economy of a location can lead you to conclusions in areas other than pure economics. For example, what percentage of the community’s workforce works in the community rather than commuting elsewhere is a statistic which can lead you to a conclusion about how self-sufficient the community is, and how much of the money earned by the residents stays in the local economy. The types of employment opportunities available in the community also are good indicators of how strong the community will be over time. If there is a good mix of jobs in a variety of fields, then the community is likely to be stronger financially than a community with one type of employment dominating the local economy.

Industrial Make-up and Economic Specialization

In the city, there are two major employers. The largest is the Aurora Casket Company with over 500 employees. This company has been in business since 1890. The other major employer in Aurora is Wal-Mart, with 100 employees.

There are many small businesses in downtown Aurora that help to keep the local economy vital and provide employment for local residents. However, many people who live in Aurora commute to Cincinnati for employment.

According to information published by the Dearborn County Chamber of Commerce in 1990, the economy of Aurora is dominated by manufacturing. The retail and service sectors also are represented in Aurora’s economy. A large amount of growth in the service and retail sectors during recent years may indicate that many lower wage jobs have been created in Aurora. Chart 9 shows the breakdown of Aurora’s employment into the various sectors.

![Aurora Employment By Sector](chart)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade &amp; Utilities</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When comparing Aurora’s economy to those of Dearborn County and Indiana it becomes clear that Aurora has a much larger percentage of jobs in the manufacturing sector than is typical in Indiana. There also are larger than average percentages of jobs in the Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate sector for a city its size which means that Aurora probably is filling the need for these services for populations outside of Aurora. We also see that although there has been growth in the service and retail trade sectors, they still account for a smaller percentage of the economy in Aurora than they do at the county or state level.

**Employment**

Employment is always an important and dynamic issue effecting the economic development, character and overall strength of any community. Unique issues that are presented to the area influence employment in Aurora and in Dearborn County.

There are two major gambling boats located within 15 miles of the city limits. Many people who live in Dearborn County are employed directly in the gaming industry. Other Dearborn County residents find themselves in jobs that compliment the gaming industry. These jobs include restaurants, lodging, gas stations and other service oriented jobs.

Aurora’s location along the Ohio River provides jobs in marina work and recreation. Many of these jobs are seasonal or part time. Additionally, Aurora’s location near Cincinnati provides employment opportunities. This allows for some people to live in the Aurora area and commute to Ohio for work.

Aurora and the County of Dearborn are both products of an interesting mix of employment. Ranging from gambling to manufacturing, the employment opportunities in this area are quite different from much of the rest of the state.

The Argosy Casino is not only the largest employer in Dearborn County but up until 1999 was the largest floating casino in the entire world. The Argosy Casino is the county’s largest employer with over 950 employees. This provides several economic benefits for Aurora as well as the rest of the county. The boat employs many citizens from Aurora and brings travelers from the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana region to participate in this immense gambling experience.

With Aurora being located between the Agrosy and Grand Victoria casinos visitors may stop in Aurora to enjoy the historic neighborhoods or one of the fine restaurants. The casino traffic also provides Aurora residents with employment opportunity in the service industry.
Manufacturing employs the largest segment of the workforce in the City of Aurora. The largest of the manufacturers is the Aurora Casket Company, providing jobs for over 500 people. Founded in 1890, the Aurora Casket Company is the third largest casket producer in the United States. The company is also the largest privately held casket manufacturer in the United States. The company produced mainly wood caskets until 1934 when they began producing metal caskets. Today, the Aurora Casket Company's products are sold internationally. This provides an important economic link between Aurora and the rest of the world.

Unemployment

Unemployment is very low in Aurora. This is attributed to the recent opening of two casinos near Aurora. The jobs available at the casinos are low skill, low wage jobs but offer benefits which many small businesses cannot afford to offer to their employees. Consequently, the casinos have drained the pool of low skill workers from small businesses in Aurora.

Dearborn County Economy Compared to Indiana Economy

Economic growth is measured in terms of total employment in the state between two periods. Proportional shift measures the rate of growth in individual sectors compared to the total rate of growth in the state. Differential shift is used to show the competitiveness of local economic sectors compared to the same sector at the state level.

In the analysis of Dearborn County, the importance of growth in the agricultural sector is quite misleading. This is due to the fact that in 1985 there were no agricultural workers reported for Dearborn County. This caused the related shift to be exaggerated.

Shift share analysis is conducted only for Dearborn County due to a lack of reliable data for the city over time. Dearborn County experienced growth in all areas between 1985 and 1995. Positive differential shifts indicate a strong competitive position. In Dearborn County, these sectors include all economic sectors except for agriculture.

Sectors that already are competitively strong compared to the state are sectors that should be considered for economic development. Growing sectors are also sectors that should be explored for economic development potential. Growth means they may be gaining competitiveness, which would make them easier to improve upon than sectors that have not seen growth lately. However, shift share analysis should not be substituted for local knowledge of the local economic climate. Sectors which have experienced the most growth are retail trade, wholesale trade, and services along with the finance, insurance, and real estate category.
Between 1985 and 1995, all economic sectors, except for mining and agriculture, proved to be competitive with the state. The areas where Dearborn County is most competitive are Retail Trade, Services, and Finance, Insurance and Real Estate. This indicates that a larger portion of the workforce is employed within these service sectors in Aurora compared to the rest of the state. This is comparable with the shifting of the national economy to a more service based position, and is fairly close to the proportion of growth the state is seeing in these areas. This can be a drawback if high-wage manufacturing or agriculture jobs are being replaced with low-wage service and retail jobs. However, this is not the case in Dearborn County. There has been no decline in the number of manufacturing jobs, there has simply been an increase in the number of retail and service jobs. This indicates that the economy of Dearborn County is growing and that high-wage jobs are not being replaced with low-wage service sector jobs.
South Dearborn Schools

The City of Aurora is serviced by the South Dearborn School Corporation. The Corporation is a consolidation of Center, Washington, Hogan, Manchester, Sparta, Clay and Caesar Creek townships. The corporation consist of over 3,000 students, 180 professional educators, and 126 support staff within six schools. The six schools operate on an annual budget of about 18 million dollars. In addition to the public schools, there are three private denominational schools available within the area.

A new middle school recently opened adjacent to the South Dearborn High School. In addition to strong academic background and special education programs, South Dearborn Schools offer many extracurricular clubs and sports on all levels. South Dearborn high school students may select a career development program and attend the Southeastern Career Center for vocational training and education.

There are also opportunities for continuing education and adult education classes for Aurora residents within a short drive from Aurora. These opportunities are available at community colleges, universities, and state colleges. A number of colleges and universities are located in Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky, Versailles, and Lawrenceburg.
County Government

A three-member board of commissioners and a seven-member county council governs Dearborn County. The county commissioner and council are elected positions.

Other elected County officials include the prosecuting attorney, sheriff, judges of circuit and county courts, surveyor, assessor, recorder, treasurer, and county auditor.

Dearborn County is in the 9th congressional district, which is composed of Brown, Clark, Crawford, Dearborn, Dubois, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Ohio, Perry, Ripley, Scott, Spencer, Switzerland, Union, and Washington counties. The 9th Congressional District also includes part of Bartholomew County. Except for a small portion of Northeast Dearborn County, which is in the 55th State Senate District, Dearborn County is in the 43rd State Senate District.

A mayor and city council lead the Cities of Aurora, Greendale, and Lawrenceburg while town boards govern Dillsboro, Moores Hill, St. Leon, and West Harrison.

Aurora Government

Aurora is classified by Indiana Code as a third-class city (population less than 35,000).

An elected Mayor and five-member City Council lead the city. The office term of the Mayor and Council members is 4 years. Other elected officials include a Clerk-Treasurer and a City Judge.

The Mayor is supported by an Area Plan Commission, made up of seven to nine appointed members, a city attorney, and a Board of Public Works and Safety. The Board of Public Works and Safety consists of three appointed members, and is responsible for overseeing the activities of the Police, Fire, Streets, and other public departments.

Additional departments support the Mayor: the Economic Development Commission, the Utility Service Board, the Board of Zoning Appeals, Historic Preservation Commission, and Code Enforcer.

Police Protection

The Aurora Police Department (PD) employs eight full-time officers, each with prior experience in policing elsewhere. The longest current tenure of any Aurora officer is eight years with the Aurora PD and the department has a fairly high turnover rate among newer officers. Many of the current Aurora PD were recruited from within the OKI region, and most of the officers hired away are lost to neighboring communities.
The department recently expanded its resources to include two additional squad cars, bringing the department total to eight.

All emergency calls for Dearborn County are routed through the Dearborn Communication Center, resulting in a small increase in response time. Despite this delay, Aurora has excellent emergency response both in capacity and response time.

Aurora PD must house detainees in the Dearborn County Law Enforcement Center, as the Aurora jail has been condemned. This is common among older, smaller jail facilities nationwide, and is not a reflection upon the Aurora PD.

Fire Protection

The Aurora Volunteer Fire Department serves the city with two fire houses and is a not-for-profit operation. The main fire house is responsible for areas within the city limits. It also provides support for incidents requiring the use of the Jaws of Life. The second fire house is responsible for Aurora proper. It also provides fire protection for Washington and Center townships.
The following is a list of some of the community organizations within Aurora. Other groups exist in Aurora and the surrounding area.

**Business Groups**

These groups provide information and assistance through professional experience.

- Aurora Business and Professional Association
- Dearborn County Home Builders Association
- Southeastern Indiana Board of Realtors
- Riverfront Beautification Committee

**Educational Groups**

They provide educational opportunities including a Headstart program, training programs, and many more.

- Dearborn County Extension Service

**Arts and Entertainment**

- South Eastern Art Guild
- Dearborn Highlands Arts Council
- Ohio, Indiana, Northern Kentucky Theatre Productions

**Homemaker Clubs**

The homemaker clubs allow the residents of Aurora to become directly involved with other residents that have similar interests.

- Ebenezer Ridge Runners
- Sunbonnets
- Hi Lo’s
- Washington Township

**Fraternities, Business Clubs, Sororities and Women’s Clubs**

These groups provide social opportunities and service to the community. Many of these organizations work towards providing essential elements for a well rounded community.

- Dearborn County Jaycees
- Eagles Home
- Knights of Columbus
- Lions Club
- Loyal Order of the Moose
- Kappa Kappa Kappa
- The Mother’s Network
- Phi Beta Psi
- Order of White Shrine of Jerusalem
- Aurora Rotary
- Daughters of the American Revolution
- Aurora Girl Volunteers
- Aurora Women’s Research Club
- Beta Sigma Phi
- Internationally Yours
- Masonic Lodge
- Southeastern Indiana Shriners
- St. John Lutheran Quilters
- Women of the Moose
Historical and Preservation

Opportunities dealing with the historic nature of the community is provided through the following organizations:

- Hillforest Historical Foundation
- Main Street Aurora
- Dearborn County Historical Society
- Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana

Recreational and Youth Organizations

Aurora offers a wide variety of recreational activities for all ages. Many of these are directly related to the youth of the community.

- Aurora Little League
- Dearborn County Country Club
- Dearborn Trails
- Dillsboro Soccer Association
- South Dearborn Babe Ruth Baseball League
- Southeastern Indiana Darters Association
- Sport and Fitness Representative to Dearborn County Step Ahead Council
- Boy Scouts of America
- Girl Scouts of America
- 4-H Clubs
- YMCA

Religious and Service Groups

These groups in Aurora allow residents to become involved in Bible Study, community service, helping the needy and many other related items.

- American Baptist Women of the First Baptist Church
- Community Methodist Women
- St. Vincent DePaul
- Heart House
- The Clearinghouse
- Lydia Bible Study Group
- Women's Aglow Fellowship
- Habitat for Humanity

Veteran’s Groups

These organizations for veterans participate in social activities, fundraisers and provide other services such as counseling.

- American Legion
- Disabled American Veterans Chapter
- Korean War Veterans Association Southeastern Indiana Chapter
- Southeastern Indiana Vietnam Veterans of America
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
Recreation is an essential part to the total quality of life of any community. The quantity and quality of recreation facilities is often one of the best indicators of a community’s well being. Park and Recreation opportunities also are areas of community pride. Aurora is able to maintain a small town character yet offer big city recreational opportunities due to its proximity to Cincinnati.

Park Facilities

Local Parks

Aurora has five park facilities operated and maintained by the city. These park facilities offer a variety of recreational opportunities including: fishing, swimming, playgrounds, baseball/softball, walking, and picnic facilities. A listing and short description of each park follows:

Aurora City Park [Park Avenue along Hogan Creek]
Being the primary park in Aurora, this park offers an outdoor swimming pool, new playground equipment, horseshoe courts, and fishing along Hogan Creek. A historic pavilion with kitchen facilities, open shelters, civic center, and historic round barn are open for rentals during warm weather. The Boy Scouts have a cabin located in the park. Off-street parking is available.

Waterways Park [Moore and Manchester Streets]
This small park is about 2 square city blocks in the town of Aurora, along the Waterways Marina and Hogan Creek. This park contains a basketball court, picnic areas, shelters, playground equipment, fishing and an ample supply of ducks to feed. On-street parking is available.

Largent Field [off U.S. 50 WEST]
This park is primarily set up for baseball/softball. The fields are lighted for play and are used by leagues during summer months. Off-street parking is available.

Tony Lesko Park [State Route 56 along the Ohio River]
Tony Lesko Park is a large, rolling park that is centered between State Route 56 and the Ohio River just west of downtown Aurora. Lesko Park has gas lamps lighting a paved walk that runs the length of the park, making an excellent fitness trail. The park offers public restroom facilities, covered shelters, playground equipment, fishing, and a small boat launching ramp. The park also offers many benches and picnic facilities as well as hot food from vendors during warm weather. Lesko Park is the site of many public festivals, namely the Unique Aurora Firecracker Festival, July Fourth weekend, and the St. Mary’s Festival held the second weekend in September.
Mary Stratton Park contains a gazebo style shelter, limited playground facilities, and benches. On-street parking is available. The park is one block from historic Hillforest Mansion.

State Park Opportunities

There are two major Indiana state parks within an hour drive from Aurora. Each has modern camping and ranger facilities.

Versailles [Versailles, IN (25 minutes west of Aurora)]

The Versailles State Park offers a 230-acre lake with paddleboat, rowboat, or canoeing opportunities and rentals. A variety of boat launches and play areas are available including a large pool for summer use. The nearby 27-mile Hoosier Hills Bicycle Route is an excellent recreation opportunity for park campers.

Clifty Falls [Near Madison, IN (45 minutes southwest of Aurora)]

Clifty Falls State Park is in one of the state’s most beautiful areas. Waterfalls and a deep boulder canyon are sights along the trails through this scenic area. The park is home to the Clifty Falls Inn, one of the state’s finest state park inns, and a variety of trails and recreational opportunities.

Regional Park Opportunities

There are many regional park recreation opportunities within a 40-minute drive of Aurora. Many of these parks are funded by larger communities. Cincinnati and western Hamilton County in Ohio offer a variety of excellent recreation opportunities, all within a short driving distance.

Western Hamilton County Parks

The Park District has sixteen parks spanning 12,000+ acres of land, making it the third largest regional park system in Ohio. The Land Management Policy ensures that 80% of all land will be kept in a natural state or be scientifically managed for wildlife. There are also a variety of golf courses, fishing lakes, numerous picnic areas, playgrounds, and hiking trails.

Hamilton County Park District is open from dawn to dusk 365 days a year. A valid Hamilton County Park District Motor Vehicle Permit is required to enter any of the parks ($1 daily, $3 annual).
City of Cincinnati

The Cincinnati Parks system covers 5,005 acres in 153 parks, parkways and nature preserves. Many of the unique facilities are newly renovated. The city park system has extensive resources, most of that are available to Aurora residents.

Seasonal Recreation Opportunities

The availability and quality of seasonal recreation opportunities make a community both attractive to visitors as well as local citizens. Quality is a key factor. Communities with high quality parks and recreation not only draw visitors but help a community retain residents. Driving to a better location for seasonal activities is common. Therefore, maintaining quality seasonal recreation opportunities is essential to sustaining a community’s recreational opportunities.

Golf Opportunities

There are a variety of golf courses in the Aurora area including the Dearborn County Country Club. With the increased tourist population, that number of golf courses is expected to grow. There is currently a new championship course due to open in Summer 2000 at the Grand Victoria Casino in Rising Sun. Golfing resources in Cincinnati benefit the Aurora community, allowing many Aurora residents the chance to play several top rate courses.

Dearborn County Golf Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Golf Course</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big Tee Practice Range</td>
<td>Covered tees and miniature golf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dearborn County Country Club</td>
<td>18 hole-private, pro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elk Run Golf Course</td>
<td>9 hole-public, driving range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Oak Golf Club</td>
<td>18 hole-public, driving range, pro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden Valley Lake Golf Club</td>
<td>18 hole-private, pro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Creek Golf Course</td>
<td>18 hole-public, driving range, pro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Skiing Opportunities (Snow and Water)

Aurora has a combination of winter and summer skiing activities.

Perfect North Slopes

The Perfect North Slopes Ski Area, north of Lawrenceburg, offers modern man-made snow making equipment along with a variety of levels of difficulty. Although the season is quite short, December to March, the slopes still offer a recreation opportunity to the area residents.
Water Skiing

Area lakes at Versailles and other parks offer opportunities for water skiing. In addition, the Ohio River is a popular venue for water skiing activities. Aurora residents have access to the river with several public access sites available. In addition, Aurora has several marina facilities to maintain and store boats.

Aurora Marina Facilities

- Aurora Marina ...................... State Road 56 South
- Blue Ribbon Marina .................. Westside Drive
- Lighthouse Point ..................... 11042 S.R. 56
- Lischgke Boat Harbor ................. Judiciary Street
- Tradewinds Marine, Inc. .............. 605 Green Boulevard
- Waterways Marina .................... George & Manchester Street

Motor Sports Opportunities

The Lawrenceburg Speedway Sprint and Lete-Model Modified Cars and Lawrenceburg Motorcycle Speedway, both located at the Lawrenceburg Fairgrounds, offers residents sprint car racing, modifieds, and pro stocks. Motorcycle racing includes motorcycles, quads, and karts. The season runs from May to October. Motor sports are well liked by many Aurora residents and demand for motor sport activity is high.

Sport Clubs and Organizations

Aurora and Dearborn County have nearly 50 sports related organizations. These organizations raise the quality of life for residents and offer opportunities for community socialization and connection. Areas in which sport clubs are active in the Aurora area include:

- Baseball
- Bowling
- Fitness
- Hunting
- Softball
- Basketball
- Canoeing
- Fishing
- Martial Arts
- Swimming
- Bicycling
- Darts
- Football
- Soccer
- Tennis
Aurora is a small town rich in charm. Its old rivertown character makes this city unique amidst the surrounding communities. There is a strong sense of history as you walk through the streets of town. The buildings remind you of a romantic age gone by. Not many cities have succeeded in retaining their original appeal as Aurora has done, which makes Aurora a desirable destination. This history is the foundation for many of the tourist attractions that Aurora has available to its visitors.

**Community Attractions**

**Historic Aurora Mansions**

The greatest historical draw that the City of Aurora possesses is the Hillforest Mansion. Hillforest Mansion is an Italian Renaissance masterpiece built by Thomas Gaff. It now stands as a museum and exhibit hall for historical presentations.

The Vereaustau also draws visitors to the area. Vereaustau was built by Jesse Holman and named after the Latin words for spring, summer, and fall. The structure is a private residence and is open by appointment to tours and meeting events. Also, the facility houses a preservation agent from the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. Both of these mansions are great aspects of the community and provide the cornerstone for the tourist industry in the City of Aurora.

**Dottie G.**

Another attraction that has its roots in the past is the Ohio River Cruise ship Dottie G. Her port of call is the old Aurora Ferry slip and both private and public cruises are available. The little sternwheeler paints a picturesque scene ambling up and down the river. Since riverboat cruises cannot be found just anywhere, this is another ingredient that makes Aurora a unique destination.

**Events**

A small city would be not complete without a summer fair. But Aurora has a twist. Their Farmers Fair is the oldest street fair in Indiana. Every year in October the city shuts down the streets to have a celebration. Carnival rides, food stands, a parade, and stage shows bring people from all the surrounding counties. This is a big day in town as visitors fill the downtown in search of fun. Local businesses take full advantage of the opportunity to sell their wares and services.

Other festivals also take place in the city. The Unique Aurora Firecracker Craft Show & Festival takes place in Lesko Park on the Fourth of July weekend. This event draws visitors to Aurora from all the surrounding counties to see the craft and food booths, stage performers, car show, boat rides, and fireworks displays. The festival includes a fishing derby for kids and a lighted boat parade.
The Hillcrest Art Fair will resume. Held at the Hillcrest Mansion, this event gives local artists a chance to show their work. In conjunction with the Aurora Borealis Art Gallery and The Gallery at the Depot, this event puts the area's strong arts guild in the spotlight.

The Southeaster Indiana Art Guild also organizes and promotes two art shows. One show is in the spring while the other is held in the fall. There are many more opportunities for entertainment in Aurora besides those mentioned above. A calendar of events for Dearborn County can be obtained from the Dearborn County Chamber of Commerce and also from the Dearborn County Convention, Visitor, and Tourism Bureau.

Regional Points of Interest

The area surrounding the City of Aurora has experienced a boom in tourist appeal in the past five years mainly due to the riverboat casinos. There are two of these floating tourist palaces located within a short drive of Aurora. They have given the City a great opportunity in the amount of traffic they generate seven days a week. According to some townspeople, the traffic levels have increased by as much as ten times. This is a massive surge of tourist money passing close by the community.

Argosy Casino & Hotel

Touted as the World's Most Popular Riverboat Casino, the Argosy is truly a gambler's paradise. Containing 1700 of Indiana's loosest slot machines and over 100 gaming tables, this development draws people from all the surrounding states. Other features include stage entertainment and international-theme restaurants. It is located between downtown Lawrenceburg and the Ohio River. Since opening in mid-1998 the Argosy has seen hundreds of thousands of patrons pass through its door. This presents a potent opportunity that Aurora should be quick to capitalize upon.

Grand Victoria Casino & Resort

The second of the great riverboat casino's is located ten minutes from Aurora in Rising Sun, Indiana. This resort complex boasts 1300 slot machines, 80 gaming tables, and a 200-room hotel. Also on the resort property is a beautiful tournament-class golf course soon to be completed. All these elements make the Grand Victoria a wonderful choice for the gambling aficionado. The greatest prospect Aurora has for increasing the amount of tourist dollars spent within city limits passes by on State Road 56 every day. This thoroughfare leading to Rising Sun passes through the cities northside bringing with it large numbers of travelers. However, the image afforded to those passing travelers is not one that invites them into town. In order to pull some of this traffic into the city Aurora must present its true charm and character to passers-by.
Chateau Pomije Winery

Featuring nearly 100 acres of grape vineyards, this local attraction has won national acclaim for its quality and uniqueness. The estate winery is one in which the grapes are grown, barrel-fermented, blended, and bottled on site. Their goal is to produce the finest grapes and wines in all of Indiana. Located in Guilford, Indiana the Chateau offers tours, tasting, and fine dining to visitors from around the region.

Red Wolf Sanctuary & Raptor Rehabilitation Center

Dillsboro, Indiana is home to this natural park facility that operates as a refuge and rehabilitation center for sick or injured animals which were once indigenous to the Ohio River Valley. The animals residing in the park include mountain lions, red fox, barred owl, great horned owl, raccoons, golden eagles, gray and red wolves. Visitors can view the animals in their natural habitats, something that is very rare in this state. Here field scholars can study the habits and behavior of these once local predators on the twenty acres that make up the park.

National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association

Twice a year this group comes to participate in the week long competition of frontier skills in Friendship, Indiana, which is approximately a thirty-minute drive southwest of Aurora.

Papaw’s Family Farm

Papaw’s Family Farm provides learning opportunities for all grade levels. Activities are geared to meet the needs of the class and has been quite successful. Activities range from learning how to care for animals to observing and analyzing their natural surroundings.

Cincinnati Attractions

Being only a thirty-minute drive from a major city provides Aurora with entertainment and cultural options not available to many small cities. Sports franchises such as the Cincinnati Bengals, Reds, and Cyclones have a nationwide audience. Cultural and educational opportunities include the Cincinnati Museum Center and the Cincinnati Zoo. Amusement parks also attract people into the area from surrounding states. These include the Surf Cincinnati Water Park and Kings Island Amusement Park. Other Cincinnati attractions include the Turfway Park Horse Track and the riverboat celebration held every four years, the Tall Stacks Festival. These destinations provide both citizens of Aurora and the surrounding communities opportunities for recreation.

All told, Aurora and the surrounding region have plenty of tourist attractions. The challenge for the city is how to capture more of the tourist market that passes by on the highways around town. By finding a niche, such as arts and crafts, Aurora could benefit greatly from the hoards of gamblers heading to and from the casino boats as well as those traveling to other regional points of interest.

Travel Distance from Aurora (in minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kings Island</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum Center</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverfront Stadium</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turfway Park</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati Zoo</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surf Cincinnati Water Park</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In any community there are a variety of factors that either “pull” resources into a community or “push” resources away from a community. Aurora is certainly no different. These push-pull factors create a basis on which Planning and Visioning activities can occur. It is essential to look at these factors with a domino effect perspective, remembering that each factor has several factors that might influence the push or pull.

**Push Factors**

Push factors tend to be issues or situations that drive resources from the City of Aurora. These push factors are those that might be addressed in a planning setting to help create a new “Pull” factor. According to the residents of Aurora, the factors that push resources away include:

- Higher paying employment opportunities in the Cincinnati area cause “white collar job flight” to other communities.
- Close access to interstate highway system allows for work away from home opportunity and generates the ability to make Aurora a “bedroom community”.
- Lack of new mid- to upper- range housing for business executives pushes businesses away from relocating in the area.
- Minimal entertainment options within city limits (theatre, shows) pushes residents to other towns and cities for these activities.
- Parking difficulties in downtown business areas push potential shoppers away from downtown stores reducing overall business in the downtown.
- Casinos “bookend” Aurora making the city just a bypass for casino traffic and push Aurora residents away from the city for entertainment.
- Flooding issues make new riverfront development difficult pushing new riverfront development opportunities away from the city.
Pull Factors

Pull Factors tend to be positive aspects of the City of Aurora that “pull” resources towards the City. These resources are many of the factors that make the essential character of Aurora. According to the residents of Aurora, the factors that pull resources to Aurora include:

- The small rivertown character pulls tourists and other visitors to the area.
- A solid school system pulls families with young children to the area for new learning opportunities.
- Aurora’s unique historic downtown creates community pride and serves as a showcase for visitors.
- Community activism pulls people into the activities of the City of Aurora.
- Adequate utilities and services for business development pull new businesses to the area.
- Riverfront scenery pulls visitors and residents to enjoy the natural setting of the city.
- Riverfront recreational opportunities pull residents and visitors to the area for river activities.
- Commuting potential brings professionals to live in the city.
The College of Architecture and Planning at Ball State University, since admitting its first class in September of 1966, has recognized its responsibility to not only educate and train environmental professionals, but also provide public education and service to its constituents, the citizens of Indiana. The dual focus of education and service is the primary thrust of the CBP Program, a multi-disciplinary activity that accommodates faculty and students from departments of architecture, landscape architecture, and urban planning and development.

The primary goal of the CBP Program is to provide the CAP students with a series of viable learning experiences in problem recognition, planning and design, citizen participation methods, etc. This goal is based on the philosophy/assumption that a more realistic and pragmatic understanding of these activities can best be gained by students through their participation in a community-based, problem focused, “hands on” format.

A second goal of the program is to provide public education in environmental planning and design to both the public and private sectors so that they may more effectively participate in the decision-making process that is an integral component of creative problem-solving. This goal is based on the philosophy/assumption that an informed and educated “public” is the key to an effective participatory format for all community design, planning, and development efforts. The development of communication techniques geared to increasing public awareness and facilitating a “take part” process, is an important foundation of the program.

The third goal of the program is to provide public service in the form of technical assistance to the public sector in community planning and design matters. This goal is based on the assumption that responsible decisions concerning the future of Indiana’s physical environment must be based on accurate, unbiased, information, and objective comparisons of alternative strategies and proposals.
A fourth goal of the program is to promote research activities that focus on the widest range of Indiana's communities. This research concerns itself with the methodologies employed in the analysis, programming, planning, and design (synthesis) of urban and rural communities and the teaching of professionals who will be involved with them.

Four points should be noted:

- The potential of success for any planning and design project is dependent on you, as involved citizens of Aurora and not us (the Study and Charrette Team);
- We are not a substitute for professional services;
- The educational objectives of the Community-Based Projects Program are of primary importance; and
- Everyone in the community can contribute in their own unique way.
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ................................................................. iii
Introduction .............................................................................. iv
Table of Contents ............................................................... vii
Profile:
   Overview .................................................................................. 1.3
   History ...................................................................................... 1.4
   Character .................................................................................. 1.6
   Demographics ......................................................................... 1.13
   Housing ..................................................................................... 1.17
   Transportation ......................................................................... 1.21
   Infrastructure ........................................................................... 1.24
   Economy .................................................................................... 1.26
   Schools/Education .................................................................... 1.30
   Governance ............................................................................... 1.31
   Civil, Business, and Social Groups ........................................ 1.33
   Recreation ............................................................................... 1.35
   Community Attractions ......................................................... 1.39
   Push-Pull Factors ..................................................................... 1.42

Comprehensive Plan:
   Economic Development ....................................................... 2.3
   Land Use ................................................................................... 2.11
   Transportation and Circulation ............................................. 2.17
   Housing and Neighborhoods .............................................. 2.23
   Communication and Organization ....................................... 2.37
   Downtown Revitalization .................................................... 2.41
   Parks and Riverfront ............................................................. 2.45
   Beautification and Design ..................................................... 2.59

Design Guidelines .................................................................... Section 3
Hillside Development Guidelines ........................................ Section 4
Operations Manual ............................................................... Section 5
Aurora is in the southeastern part of Dearborn County and is in the Ohio-Indiana-Kentucky Region. This small city of 4,000 people is situated on the Ohio River, a forty-minute drive from downtown Cincinnati, only five minutes from Lawrenceburg and only ten feet from Kentucky. Three interstate highways pass near Aurora. U.S. 50 passes along the western edge of downtown and goes directly through Lawrenceburg to Cincinnati. Indiana State Road 350 comes into Aurora from the west and links up with U.S. 50. Indiana State Road 56 runs south out of downtown and follows the river to Rising Sun. Interstate 275, which circles Cincinnati, is just six miles up U.S. 50 from Aurora.

The Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana (OKI) Region, which will be referred to throughout this profile, describes the following counties: Butler, Clermont, Hamilton, and Warren counties in Ohio; Boone, Campbell, and Kenton counties in Kentucky; and Dearborn County in Indiana. The largest and most influential city in this region is Cincinnati, Ohio. Cincinnati is a major destination for people living in Aurora because of its recreational, entertainment, and employment opportunities. Casino boats are another major influence in the lives of citizens of Aurora. Argosy Casino, the closest, is a major employer for the entire OKI Region. Because of the influence felt in Aurora and its membership in the OKI Region, information about the whole of the Region is included in this profile.

**Figure 1:**
OKI Region
Concentric rings indicate 10 mile increments from Aurora.
HISTORY

In 1819, an association was formed for the purpose of establishing a town and purchased the land on which Aurora lies. The original plat was laid out by Jesse Holman, trustee of the Aurora Association for Internal Improvements, and contained 206 lots and six public squares. Very little was developed until 1836. The town was incorporated as a city in 1845. Aurora was developed as a river city because of its access to the Ohio River.

Figure 2 shows the neighborhoods of historic significance throughout Aurora. These districts are still identified as important. There is significant interest in retaining the historic character of the downtown area.

Late in the 19th century, the "Red" bridge was built over Hogan Creek, creating a vital transportation link and furthering the development of Aurora. By 1874, Aurora had approximately 5,000 people. The increase in population brought many new religious backgrounds into the city. These churches and the steeples are a recognized character aspect of Aurora.

In the beginning of the 20th century, Aurora benefited from better transportation modes through and around the city. The construction of US 50 was a milestone in Aurora's development and connected the city with Lawrenceburg, Cincinnati, and the rest of Indiana. In addition to the influence of the highway, the city continued to receive traffic from riverboats.

Figure 2:
Neighborhoods of Historic Significance
Throughout the last 30 to 40 years, Aurora has seen a decline in some of its historical qualities. Ferryboat service across the Ohio River has been discontinued and limited riverboat traffic visits Aurora. Once a town fed by the river, Aurora now depends upon taxation of local industry and housing for economic support.

The history of Aurora plays a vital role in Aurora's character. Aurora contains areas that include historic neighborhoods and districts (Figure 2). The downtown area is an example of one of these districts (Figure 3). Many of the buildings are original and portray part of the city's history. The development of a Main Street program indicates that the history of the city is important to the citizens. The history of Aurora will live on and flourish through the upcoming years, provided current efforts are continued.

Figure 3:
Downtown Aurora local Historic District and Natural Register District
The character of any given community reflects both where the community has been and where it's going. The combination of past and present development with preservation practices has a great impact on the uniqueness of communities. Character is what visitors remember about a town.
Downtown Aurora is a National Register Historic District characterized by diverse building styles. The business district represents the quintessential midwestern small town with two- and three-story brick buildings. The area has unified setbacks and similar scale buildings while displaying many styles including Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, and 20th century infill.
The City of Aurora is located along the Ohio River, providing scenic views, water recreation, and beautiful waterfront open space. Much of the character and development of Aurora is the result of early Ohio River commerce. Aurora must maintain its rivertown appearance as an essential part of the history and character of the community.
Aurora's residential districts are tree-lined neighborhoods exhibiting a vast range of architectural styles including Queen Anne, Moorish, Prairie, and more. Aurora's distinctive hills provide for neighborhoods with beautiful views across the valley. One of the most distinctive homes in Aurora is the Hillforest Mansion. Hillforest was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1992.

**Hillforest Mansion**

**View of Aurora from Hill**
Much of Aurora’s character can be found in its local churches. Not only do they support active and concerned congregations but the buildings are typified by impressive architecture including six steeples that penetrate the skyline. The six steeples of Aurora have become landmarks which the citizens are proud.

As much as the churches serve as a desirable amenity for the community, the fact that they are landlocked has presented hardships. As the congregations grow, parking becomes a concern due to limitations of expanding parking areas and overlapping services.

- Alliance Church
- Aurora Baptist Church
- Aurora Church Of Christ
- Aurora First United Methodist
- Bryk Pete
- Community United Methodist Church
- Crousore Bryan
- Dearborn Baptist Church
- Ebenezer Baptist Church
- First Evangelical Church
- First Presbyterian Church
- First United Methodist Church
- Holman Christian Union Church
- Holmes Hill Church Of Christ
- Hosanna Assembly Of God
- Jehovah’s Witnesses
- Lutheran Church St. John
- Mt. Tabor United Methodist Church
- New Hope Baptist Church
- Pleasant Ridge Church
- St. Mary’s Catholic Church
- Taylor Hughie
- Wilmington Hills Church
Examining the population of an area can offer insight towards the direction in which a city is growing.

The population of Aurora in 1990, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, was 3,825, about 10% of the entire population of Dearborn County (Chart 1). Dearborn County has been growing in population over the past 20 years, while Aurora's population has been slightly decreasing. Dearborn County has gained approximately 9,400 inhabitants since 1970. This growth, in combination with Aurora's loss in population, contributes to the decline in Aurora's percentage of total population of Dearborn County. It had decreased from 14.6% in 1970 to 9.8% in 1990. Lawrenceburg's percentage of Dearborn County's total population has also decreased. This indicates that as people relocate they move outside the city limits, which increases the number of people living in the rural area. The shift to rural living may have a variation of impacts. These may include increased commute times, increased demands on existing county services, and a need for additional services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Aurora</th>
<th>Lawrenceburg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 1:
Aurora and Lawrenceburg's population as a percentage of the county - changes from 1970-1990

Population 1996 (estimated)
- Aurora ..................... 4,713
- Dearborn Co. .......... 45,055
The population projection (Chart 2) indicates that Aurora should reach a total of 4,054 persons for the year 2000. However, the trend in total population shows that population is continuously declining. A closer estimate to the most probable population for 2000 is roughly 3,700 people.

**Chart 2:**
*Population projection 2000 - Aurora*

Aurora lacks racial diversity. This indicates a need for additional efforts to be made if the city is to become more racially diverse. Racial diversity introduces new needs within a community: services, acceptance, and education.

The age and gender of a population (Chart 3) is important when making plans for development. It is used to identify the future needs of the community. One quarter of Aurora’s population consists of 25-39 year olds. This is the childbearing age group, which results in an increased number of young children (under 4 years old). Services related to children will be required: daycare, preschools, pediatricians, etc. Another characteristic of Aurora’s population is the number of women over 75 (4.2%). Services related to their needs also must be addressed.
The majority of persons per household consist of 1-2 persons (58.5%). An additional 30% consists of 3-4 persons per household (Chart 4). These figures are consistent with the averages within the state of Indiana. Approximately 56% of Indiana households consist of 1-2 persons while 3-4 person households make up 33%. This information is directly related to the type of housing Aurora needs when combined with the information from the population pyramid. The high percentage of those within the childbearing age group suggests that current households of 1-2 persons will increase to 3-4 persons due to couples having children. Therefore, they may need additional living space.
Aurora has a median household income that is less than both Dearborn County and Indiana (Chart 5). Dearborn County, on the other hand, has a median household income that is above the state's average. Dearborn County's higher median income indicates that a higher percentage of the population has more money to spend. The opposite is true for Aurora. This must be taken into consideration. Affordable and desired services for both groups should be available.

The population characteristics of Aurora are a direct representation of Indiana's population. This similarity is important to note because Aurora must take efforts to offer the community uniqueness, since most Indiana cities offer the same services that Aurora's population needs. Therefore, an incentive to locate in Aurora must be provided.
Housing Stock

One of the main issues facing Aurora is the age of the housing stock. As shown in Figure 4, the median year that homes in Aurora were built was 1939, as compared to 1965 for Dearborn County.

- **Utility:**
  Aurora has many homes that were built in the 1800's, which raises the issues of homes becoming technically obsolete. Problems include one-car garages, homes with only one bathroom, and homes with limited numbers of electrical outlets. However, the overall construction of these particular homes is quite solid. Many are still in very good structural condition and are only in need of minor updates and rehabilitation.

- **Value:**
  Due to the lack of upkeep of housing in Aurora, the value of the homes is much less compared to those of surrounding areas. As shown in Figure 5, the median value of homes in Aurora is only about 60% of the value of homes in the OKI region, whose median value is $70,805.

- **Condition:**
  Housing condition is affected not only by the year it was built, but more so by the level of maintenance. Some issues raised in regard to housing condition are structural problems, termites, and general maintenance. Some aesthetic maintenance is needed in certain neighborhoods, such as yard work and trash cleanup.

Character

Another issue of importance to Aurora is the preservation of historic character. Aurora has a prominent historic residential and commercial district consisting of many nineteenth and twentieth century buildings representing several architectural styles. The commercial district includes the 1886 City Hall and the various churches built in the mid to late nineteenth century. There are a plethora of historic residences, such as the Hillforest Mansion and Veraestau.

Presently, historic preservation is not a high priority among Aurora residents and its role could be improved upon in the planning process. Most residents appreciate the character of the district, but typically do not take individual responsibility for aiding in preservation. A more clearly defined role in the planning process will help to prioritize historic preservation among residents. Another difficulty has been educating the public, especially those residing within the historic district, about the processes and regulations that are involved with construction and
rehabilitation. Because residents do not realize that they need a permit and the Historic Preservation Commission’s approval before beginning a project, cases involving non-conforming signs, doors, or windows often occur. Once these cases have occurred, it is even more difficult to require the projects to change and conform.

In order to address the issue of historic preservation, Aurora utilizes the services of *The Historic Landmarks Foundation*, like the Hillforest Historic Foundation, deals with preservation within the city.

- *The Hillforest Historic Foundation*, founded in 1956, which deals specifically with the preservation and restoration of Hillforest Mansion. Historic Landmarks Foundation is a private, non-profit organization that seeks to preserve endangered landmarks in Indiana, including Veraestau in Aurora and provides technical assistance to the Historic Preservation Commission, as well as private citizens.

*The Aurora Historic Preservation Commission* and to some degree *Main Street Aurora* deal with the overall preservation of structures in the Aurora historic district.

- *The Aurora Historic Preservation Commission*, created by the City Council in 1993, assists owners who wish to engage in alterations, demolition, and new construction in the historic district. The process for review involves following a set of listed guidelines for alterations, applying for a Certificate of Appropriateness, and presenting the application to the Historic Preservation Commission to insure that the proposal follows the design guidelines.

- *Main Street Aurora* is a non-profit corporation whose purpose is to preserve the historic commercial core area in Aurora. The goals of this new group are to organize the business community and promote a positive image by improving the appearance of downtown through design.

### Housing Market

A positive issue that characterizes the housing in Aurora is the stability of the community and the housing market.

Aurora has an occupancy rate of 93%, which is
near the state average of 92%. A high rate of ownerships of homes is important for the general maintenance of housing, which helps to encourage residents to remain in the community.

The tenure, or length of time residents have lived in their homes, is comparable to both the county and the state. Forty-five percent of homeowners have lived in their homes since 1980 and 26% for twenty to thirty years. These data show that over half of Aurora residents have owned their homes for more than twenty years, indicating that they have become permanent residents of the community.

Another reason for stability is that the average costs for residents with a mortgage is $471 per month, which is lower than the state average of $561 and much lower than the county level of $596 per month. Affordability is an enticing characteristic for potential and long-time residents of Aurora.

The housing market in Aurora is very stable. The occupancy rate, coupled with the fact that the appreciation rate is around 4-5%, shows that housing is a positive investment.

The highest demand for housing in the Aurora market is for medium-priced single-family homes. Many of these homes are being built in new subdivisions that are located in the county, rather than inside city limits as there is very little land remaining to be developed for residential use. Most low-priced single-family homes that are on the market are being purchased as an investment for rental property. There also is a demand for affordable rental apartments; however, the city, at this time, is not able to handle the additional parking that would be needed for new apartments. Additional apartments could be made available only if they offered off-street parking on the property.

Construction

Another housing issue is new construction. In the city of Aurora very few areas of land are available for new development or for infill development. This has caused an increase in land prices and thus a strain on housing projects, especially affordable housing projects, in Aurora. Any projects within city limits would need to absorb the high land costs in the prices of the homes built. One other possibility would be renovation projects involving existing structures. However, this would be an expensive endeavor because of many hidden costs to renovation such as structural rehabilitation or lead paint and asbestos removal.
Typical Aurora house...
- Two-story, single-family, detached house
- Two to three bedrooms
- Year built 1939
- Value $42,900
- Monthly owner costs (including mortgage) $471

The areas that are available for development are outside of city limits, to the south and to the northeast. An estimated 90% of the new homes being built are custom homes, selling for $120,000 and up.

The major new construction project that will bring around 100 new homes to the area is Dutch Hollow, which is a new subdivision on the hill to the south of downtown Aurora. Although this subdivision is located outside city limits, the county has agreed to work with the city on this project. This new development raises many issues, such as hillside preservation, runoff and erosion, and increased traffic. Currently, in regard to both building and runoff regulations, no standards for hillside development exist. A serious problem with runoff exists in the hillside neighborhoods, which will worsen with a new subdivision on the hill above the current neighborhoods. Hillside regulations will need to be introduced to help alleviate runoff problems, such as on-site detention or no net discharge restrictions. The access from the city to the subdivision is a narrow, winding two-lane road that may not have the capacity to handle the traffic load resulting from the completion of the subdivision.

The other major housing project is the 300-unit apartment complex that is planned along Highway 50 in Lawrenceburg. This complex will provide apartments for residents in this area in which there is a need and the availability is low. It also gives Aurora residents a choice between rental housing and apartments in the city and new apartments north of downtown along a major highway.

Two non-profit groups that work in the area to provide affordable housing are Habitat for Humanity and the Area 12 Council. Habitat for Humanity attempts to keep mortgage payments around $250. This is very difficult if there are any additional costs, such as demolition. Advantages that Habitat has over private firms are that the homes are built by volunteers, they can accept tax-deductible donations of land or building supplies, and they receive donations from churches, businesses, and individuals.

The Area 12 Council is a federal commission that grants money for rehabilitation projects. The Housing Department of the Area 12 Council provides a rehabilitation program to improve the living conditions of homes of elderly and low-income families. The Council receives grant money at the federal, state, and local levels. Currently, they have received a federal grant which would allow for renovation of up to fifteen qualified households for around $25,000 each. The goal of this project is to provide the elderly and low-income families a greater opportunity to remain within their current neighborhoods and maintain their homes.
Comprehensive Plan
Economic development is the base that continues to increase the overall quality of life for the citizens of Aurora. By creating a strong economic development program, the city can create a stable economic base on which to build employment opportunities, a larger tax base, and proactive planning for when the gaming money leaves.

The process of economic development requires human resources. Throughout the planning and visioning process, the citizens of Aurora have commented that the people of this great city were quite possibly its primary asset. Those people and their enthusiasm for the city can be used very effectively in the area of economic development. The ability to use Aurora’s own human resources is an outstanding opportunity that must be acted upon.

Since economic development is such a time intensive process, the average small town or city does not typically cover the needs of its economic development plan, if it has one at all. Hiring of new staff or consultants is often one way of improving the city’s economic development condition. However, there are other innovative ways in which Aurora can organize its efforts to create a powerful economic development team that is both cost effective from a staff and budget point of view and time and labor sensitive from a volunteer point of view.

Community funding and marketing for all of these activities is another area of concern. There are direct linkages between the funding required for economic development and the other, more “beautiful” changes that might be found in the areas of downtown revitalization and park development. Without the funding, the projects remain ideas and not actions.

There are many opportunities for industrial development. The greatest of these opportunities is the access that the city has to all forms of transportation. Located on the Ohio River and a busy railroad line, ten minutes from a major interstate, thirty minutes from an international airport, and thirty-five minutes from a major metropolitan area, Aurora is in a great location to provide the transportation access necessary for today’s industry. There are several existing manufacturing sites in and around Aurora where industry could be further developed to provide jobs and stability for the local economy. These are the Aurora Terminal area, including the Alton Box Factory, the Cochran Industrial area, and the U.S. 50 areas including the Legge Associates property, the D&S Development, and the Aurora Industrial Park.

Aurora needs to invest in their future by preparing for when the casino boats are no longer contributing money to the city’s budget and economy. Industrial employers could become the stable suppliers of employment and income of the area. To insure this, the city must promote the expansion of Aurora’s existing industrial facilities and work to retain those industries that are productive amenities to the area’s economy.
**ISSUE:**

Human Resource Development

**Goal:** Utilize citizens and city staff to facilitate and complete the activities of economic development in Aurora in order to increase overall efficiency and problem solving.

**Keywords**

- Economic development
- Team
- Human resources

**Recommendations:**

- Create an opportunity for local citizens to become involved in the Economic Development of the community through the organization of an Economic Development Team.
- Foster improved communication between local, county, and regional Economic and Community Development Agencies.
- Organize training opportunities for the uninformed (in the area of Economic Development) to improve understanding and skills of residents and city staff.
- Develop opportunities for business/city communication through receptions and business fairs.
- Evaluate city staff position funding and work organization.
- Create community business “Welcome Team” to generate positive community perception among incoming business prospects.
- Create volunteer communication system to assist in quick reaction to possible business

**Action Steps:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority action steps</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☑ 3 Create a 10-15 member Economic Development Team of local residents, city staff, and county economic Development Director.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ 3 Designate bi-monthly meetings consisting of one representative from each of the Economic Development agencies in the regional area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 4 Publish semi-annual newsletter of Aurora and area Economic Development news.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ 4 Send two Aurora Economic Development Team members to the Indiana Economic Development Academy or like instructional opportunity per year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ 4 Hold one business reception and convocation for local businesses to show dedication and desire for business retention and expansion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 3 Create Economic Development endowment fund from gambling money to facilitate administrative Economic Development activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 3 Organize “Welcome Team” phone and communication tree.</td>
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**Priority**

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**Background**

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Goal: Create effective publications and informational opportunities for incoming businesses, as well as businesses that are currently operating in the Aurora area in order to generate business attraction, retention, and expansion.

Recommendations:

- Coordinate activities of local banks and utility companies in their marketing efforts with City of Aurora.
- Develop relationships with other regional economic development agencies in order to avoid publication duplication and to allow for cost sharing for county-wide publications.
- Utilize Aurora’s "small town" quality of life as a selling point for retail and industry businesses.
- Maintain an easily accessible file of open industrial and brownfield sites with accompanying aerial photographs to facilitate business attraction.
- Make permitting, zoning, historic preservation, and building code enforcement and application a one-stop process and advertise Aurora as having such a program.
- Coordinate and develop a city logo and sign to be used at all new business openings and publicity showings.
- Use public festivals, such as the Firecracker Festival, to promote local businesses and new business opportunities.

Action Steps:

☑ 2 Launch one unified campaign to advertise and promote the Aurora Industrial Park.
☐ 4 Assess business-marketing approaches both past and present by collecting and evaluating all materials.
☐ 3 Create an "open" notebook of economic development opportunities that through the City of Aurora.
☐ 3 Create a "common day" for all permitting, zoning application, historic preservation review, and building code questions in the office.
☐ 1 Open a city logo and creative design competition to residents of Aurora.
☐ 2 Create free, or subsidized by the city, booth display opportunities at the Aurora Firecracker Festival for local businesses.
**ISSUE:** 
Funding for Administrative Programs

**Goal:** Create a continuing reserve of funding for economic development administrative tasks to create a sense of stability and confidence in Aurora as a business community.

**Recommendations:**
- Utilize gaming money to improve funding for economic development administrative opportunities.
- Continue to seek grants, such as the recent Brownfield Grant, to assist in brownfield redevelopment.
- Apply for community foundation grants to assist in creating and retaining staff and volunteers for Economic Development activities. This would also include possible funding for the New Economic Development Team.
- Utilize community fundraisers or banquets to support local economic development activities under the guise of improving Aurora's quality of life.
- Continue to utilize state and regional universities for statistical and design-based reports in an effort to reduce costs.
- Partner with local utilities and banks to reduce overall printing and administrative costs.
- Utilize State of Indiana Department of Commerce for business attraction and tax incentive information.
- Utilize the Indiana Economic Development Academy at Ball State University's Development Finance Toolbox.

**Action Steps:**

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<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 4</td>
<td>Set aside gaming money in an endowment to fund the administrative tasks of economic development operations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 4</td>
<td>Utilize gaming money as capital start up for economic development fundraisers and banquets.</td>
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<td>☑ 3</td>
<td>Organize a grant notebook with information relevant to grants for economic development.</td>
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<td>☑ 3</td>
<td>Attend Dearborn County Community Foundation meetings to gain knowledge of grant policies.</td>
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<td>☑ 3</td>
<td>Meet semi-annually with Regional State of Indiana Department of Commerce representative to stay up to date on State policies and incentives.</td>
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<td>☑ 3</td>
<td>Download the Development Finance toolbox from the Indiana Economic Development Academy (IEDA).</td>
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<td>☑ 3</td>
<td>Make contacts at each bank and utility company regional office to establish opportunities for joint administrative ventures.</td>
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**Priority**

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Establish an industrial park on the northwest side of the city that is of unique design and function to provide Aurora with a more diverse economy and tax base by providing higher paying jobs and establishing a stable source of new tax revenue.

Recommendations:

- Build on existing markets and industrial operations by establishing better communication between local firms that specialize in bulk materials. This could lead to a better understanding of how firms can work together to make themselves more efficient.
- Cluster these materials processing companies and similar supporting firms in the new eco-park. This will give Aurora a niche in the regional economy that builds on the companies already in place in the Cochran area.
- Provide better utilization and access to all modes of transportation that exist in Aurora. This includes highway, water, and railroad routes, all of which can be an asset to bulk material operations.
- Make the land in the Cochran vicinity available for the new development to occur. This will make it possible for new light industrial firms to locate near the existing processors.
- Market the area as a unique business and industrial attraction. This will show that Aurora is a player in the regional industrial scene and is willing to support industry.

Action Steps:

☐ 3 Priority action steps

☐ 3 Conduct and facilitate regular forums of area firms that deal in bulk material handling, purchasing, shipping, processing, and refining.

☐ 3 Make land available for new firms through acquisition and clearance of existing vacant and light residential land.

☐ 2 Improve the connection to US 50 by providing a wider and more truck-accessible connection with the highway.

☐ 4 Utilize the Aurora Terminal facility by creating a shipping alliance with established rates through that port for products being shipped or received.

☐ 3 Establish and maintain a relationship with the Cinergy PSI and CSX Railroad’s Industrial Development Departments for better service relationships.

☐ 3 Use the Economic Development Team to approach firms in the region about relocating into the development.

☐ 4 Place ads in the region’s newspapers and nationwide industrial magazines touting the parks central location, size, and specialized focus to spread the word.

ISSUE:

Cochran Eco-Industrial Park

Keywords

- Eco-Industrial park
- Materials processing
- Industrial attraction
ISSUE:

Brownfield Redevelopment

Goal: The city has a chance to reestablish two local landmarks as positive contributors to Aurora's character and economic stability. Through adaptive reuse, both the Alton Box Factory and Aurora Distillery can again become amenities to the area instead of following their path of continuing decay.

Recommendations:

- Determine areas of the local economy that could be further developed or are lacking entirely. This will determine the highest and best use of the properties by identifying areas of the economy that may not have adequate levels of service.
- The sites must be examined to determine if contamination exists and if they do, remediation steps must be taken. The property must be cleaned up if new development or demolition is to occur. Money received from Federal sources can be used for this phase of the project.
- Determine whether there is potential for private development. If not, the city may need to take the initial action to get the buildings redeveloped. The city can act as a catalyst by taking the first steps in getting the project moving.
- If the city is to head the project, professional firms or college groups must be approached about development design and implementation. By choosing one design or development proposal, the city can decide the future use of the structures.

Action Steps:

1. Conduct an environmental condition study to determine if contamination exists in the soil and groundwater due to past uses on sites. This will establish what actions need to be taken for full clean up of the sites.

2. Create a plan of action for remediation if contamination is found on the site. Execute the plan through the hiring of clean up contractors.

3. Using the data from the market study, contact developers, architects, and universities to request proposals for the design and reuse of the structures. The city can then take action themselves or sell the property to a qualified developer that has proposed an appropriate project.
**Goal:** Improve the stability of the economy and increase the diversity of the local employment sector by bringing new manufacturing companies into the community while working to retain current businesses. This will also help keep skilled individuals from leaving the community to start new business ventures.

**Recommendations:**

- Aurora has many open industrial sites in the three parks along US 50 west of town. These should be filled with employers in anticipation of the casinos' eventual closure. This will provide a leg for the city’s economy to stand on after the gaming money is gone.
- The area needs to develop a way to help entrepreneurs turn their ideas into businesses. This will help keep skills and dollars in the community, as businesspeople will form ties with the area.

**Action Steps:**

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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Legge Property on US 50 should be purchased and a small-business incubator developed on the site to get small businesses up and running. This site is ideal as it contains four open pole buildings and a building suitable for offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A revolving loan program could be set up to provide capital to companies just getting started in order to give them a chance to compete in the local marketplace. This could be started using gaming funds or Community Development Block Grant money from the government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A speculative building should be built or purchased in the Aurora Industrial Park to be used in conjunction with the new incubator. The facility would act as a go-between for &quot;graduates&quot; of the incubator program when they outgrow their building on that site.</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>An active marketing campaign should be established to promote the area as a place to locate industry. This should involve as many forms of media as possible including newspaper, magazine, television, and internet promotions.</td>
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**Issue:**

**Keywords**

- Industrial development
- Economic diversity
- Entrepreneurism
- Economic localization
The land use of a community is critical in not only the visual element but also the functional. A study of the current land use compared to the needs of the community will allow Aurora to determine the direction growth should take.

There are many techniques that can be used to manage growth and target its development. Managing and targeting growth is important for the development of the community. These practices will allow the city to develop in a planned manner and grow as one community instead of many mini-communities. An effective tool to ensure that this happens is to enact and enforce the following recommended policies.
**Issue:**

Growth Management

**Goal:** Aurora should maintain the small town charm and the historic river town character through effective growth management.

**Recommended Policies:**

- Aurora will continue to experience growth pressures. To address these pressures and maintain its character and a high quality of life Aurora must establish and enforce strong design and development guidelines.
- Aurora should establish urban growth boundaries to match development to infrastructure and service area capacities.
- Aurora should identify Development Target Areas that can best accommodate growth.
- Aurora should encourage infill development, adaptive reuse, and brownfield redevelopments before new development.
- Aurora should establish an effective Development Guidance System to facilitate desired development and aid in decision-making.
- Aurora should encourage Neo-Traditional development patterns and cluster development in new development.
- Aurora should encourage mixed-use development to reduce dependence on the automobile.
- Aurora should actively enforce all development guidelines, ordinances, and building codes.

**Action Steps:**

- ✓ priority action steps
- □ 4 Implement these policies to address the issue at hand.

**Priority**

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Goal: Avoid conditional zoning/permits and spot zoning to help maintain the integrity of neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Recommended Policies:

- Aurora should utilize *conditional zoning/conditional permits and spot zoning* only in very severe cases. This will help maintain the integrity of neighborhoods and commercial areas. This will also help maintain property values across Aurora.
- The *Aurora Development Guideance System* should be developed to effectively minimize spot zoning and encourage appropriate development patterns.

Action Steps:

- ✔ priority action steps
- ☐ 4 Implement these policies to address the issue at hand.

**ISSUE:**

Special Uses

**Keywords**

- Spot zoning
- Special uses
- Conditional uses
- Development Guideance System
Recommend Policies:

Policies and maintain the character of the community.

Goal: New development should follow best development

New Development

Keywords:

- Cluster development
- Mix-use development
- Low density development
- Mill development
- Infrastructure
- Development
- Urban growth boundaries
- Growth

Action Steps:

1. Review existing all development guidelines, ordinances and
   policies.
2. The resource model.
3. Review and enhance mix-use development to reduce dependency
   on development in new development.
4. Review and enhance low density development patterns and cluster
   accommodate new growth.
5. Identify and develop targeted areas that can best
   accommodate.
6. Integrate into the development guidance system and development
   planning.
7. New development should follow best development practices which are
   consistent with the standards and performance design.
8. New development should accommodate new requirements and
   maintain the character and a high quality of the Aurora
   environment to address these
Goal: To facilitate positive growth and change, Aurora should target development to areas best capable of supporting growth.

Recommended Policies:

- The neighborhoods and districts of Aurora each have a distinct character. The character and development patterns of those areas should be maintained.
  - Downtown Commercial District
  - Traditional Neighborhoods
  - Riverfront Industrial District
  - U.S. 50 Commercial Corridor
- New development, adaptive reuse, infill development and rehabilitation/revitalization should be targeted to facilitate appropriate character, infrastructure and service support.
- The *Aurora Development Guidance System* should be developed to clearly identify infrastructure capacity and to encourage appropriate development patterns.

Action Steps:

✔ priority action steps

☐ 4 Implement these policies to address the issue at hand.
Transportation and circulation are influential to how people move throughout the city. The ease or difficulties of moving may either enhance or be detrimental to the view of the city. It is important that people can move about safely and easily. An otherwise healthy and vibrant city will not meet its potential if it is difficult to move about. Many times people will choose to travel to their second choice place only because it is more convenient.

The City of Aurora is a great place, however there are areas that present obstacles in relation to travel. The city’s first priority concerning transportation and circulation should be safety. Current hazards include the number of railroad grade crossings, lack of clear signage, and safe pedestrian crossings.

It is important that vehicular routes of transportation be addressed but also those of pedestrians, bikers, and boaters. Issues dealing with these are discussed in greater detail with the Downtown Revitalization and Parks & Riverfront sections of the comprehensive plan.
**ISSUE:**

Traffic Access onto U.S. 50

**Goal:** To improve the general efficiency and safety of access to U.S. 50 from downtown Aurora.

**Recommendations:**

- Work with INDOT to improve the railroad crossing and access to and from U.S. 50 at Importing Street.
- Use signage to encourage the use of the controlled intersection at Importing Street as the primary access point to the downtown area from U.S. 50.
- Improve the intersection of Second Street and U.S. 50 by:
  - Straightening and consolidating the Second Street and Exporting Street railroad crossings and intersections with U.S. 50.
  - Following the intersection site development standards.
  - Landscape the area of Exporting and Second from the feed store to the railroad station.
  - Make sure all signage at the intersection is compatible with the signage in the rest of the city.

**Action Steps:**

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*Note: aerial photograph: December, 1994, USGS*
**Goal:** To reduce the pedestrian and vehicular hazard at the railroad crossing points in Aurora.

**Recommendations:**
- Work with INDOT and the railroad to improve the railroad crossing at Importing Street.
- Install grade crossing safety devices at Second Street.

**Action Steps:**

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<td>✓ 1</td>
<td>Work with INDOT and railroad to install/upgrade grade crossing safety devices.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Diagnostic team determines what type of grade crossing safety devices are needed.</td>
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<td>CSX submits plans to INDOT for final approval including a funding plan from the City of Aurora.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Agreement between CSX and City of Aurora for redevelopment of the intersections.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Construction begins on the crossing safety devices.</td>
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**ISSUE:**
Safety at Railroad Crossings

**Keywords**
- Railroad crossings
- Exporting Street
- Importing Street
- INDOT
- Safety
- Second Street
- U.S. 50

*aerial photograph: December, 1994, USGS*
Goal: Make traffic in downtown Aurora more efficient and improve circulation.

Recommendations:
- Use signage to focus access points to and from U.S. 50 at Importing Street.
- Create a wider radius curve from Importing Street over to Second Street at Bridgeway.
- Use signage and street markings to make George Street a more attractive path through downtown Aurora.
- Use parallel parking and parking squares to improve parking in downtown Aurora.
- Use unified signage to make visitors aware of where they are and where they are going in downtown Aurora.
- Re-establish Second Street as a two-way street.

Action Steps:

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<td>✓ 1 priority</td>
<td>Acquire property at west side of intersection of Bridgeway and Importing Streets.</td>
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<td>✓ 2 priority</td>
<td>Create curve at Bridgeway and Importing to Second Street.</td>
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<td>✓ 3 priority</td>
<td>Create and improve parking squares.</td>
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<td>✓ 4 priority</td>
<td>Create and follow signage standards.</td>
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Goal: Decrease the number of accidents that occur at intersections in downtown Aurora.

Recommendations:
- Install traffic signs and crossing devices at all major intersections in the downtown area.
- Paint street markings on all intersections, crosswalks, and lanes.
- Install street signs and information signs to help visitors to the downtown area.
- Follow all streetscape standards for the city and enforce them.

Action Steps:

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<td>✔️ 2</td>
<td>Install traffic signs and user activated crossing devices at major intersections.</td>
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<td>✔️ 1</td>
<td>Paint street markings at all intersections and mark lanes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔️ 2</td>
<td>Install street signs and information signs for visitors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔️ 3</td>
<td>Vacate Exporting and Second Street intersection/crossing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ 2</td>
<td>Develop wayfinding system for travelers going through Aurora.</td>
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ISSUE:
Intersection Safety in Downtown Aurora

Keywords
- Intersections
- Safety
- Signage
- Street Department
- Wayfinding
Housing and neighborhoods occupy the majority of the city, therefore, they demand a great amount of attention. These are the areas that residents go home to. By providing housing that meets the demands of the residents is one thing. But providing quality housing is completely different. One must remember, however, that the two together are essential. A community should not have one without the other. This means that housing should be quality housing that meets the demands of the residents.

Issues that must be addressed concerning housing include protection from hillside runoff, hillside building standards, and home maintenance, to name a few.

Residents should be educated in understanding the importance of routine maintenance and their role as a part of the neighborhood and city. Empowerment and pride is essential in encouraging residents to play an active role within the community.
**Issue:** Neighborhood Resource Center

**Goal:** Establish a neighborhood resource center, easily accessible to all of Aurora's neighborhoods, which works to coordinate information, resources, and skills to benefit all of the resident's of Aurora.

**Keywords**
- Neighborhood Resource Center
- Historic Preservation
- Tool bank
- Realtors

**Recommendations:**
- Establish an organization, similar to a CDC (Community Development Corporation) to serve as a technical and support center for the neighborhood organizations.
- Provide informational and technical support for historic preservation efforts.
- Provide information on and assistance in applying for funding for purchasing, renovating, and preserving a home.
- Provide meeting space for neighborhood groups.
- Provide incentives and encouragement for the continued improvement of the quality of neighborhoods in Aurora.
- Encourage homeownership in Aurora through the establishment of home ownership programs (H.O.M.E., etc.) through the Neighborhood Resource Center or in association with the regional planning agency/Indiana Housing Finance Corporation.

**Action Steps:**

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<td>☑ 3 Establish a non-profit corporation, similar to a CDC (Community Development Corporation) to run the Neighborhood Resource Center.</td>
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<td>☑ 3 Acquire a location reasonably accessible to all of Aurora's neighborhoods.</td>
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<td>☑ 4 Hire a part time employee and establish regular hours.</td>
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<td>☑ 3 Recruit volunteers.</td>
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<td>☑ 4 Establish a housing data bank with information on funding, federal programs, and equal opportunity protections.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 3 Establish a tool bank.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 4 Coordinate a historic preservation data bank with preservation briefs, how to manuals, and preservation standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 2 Coordinate &quot;how to&quot; workshops regarding home renovation and maintenance with local businesses such as hardware stores.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 3 Coordinate sessions on how to purchase a home with realtors and mortgage lenders.</td>
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2.24
Goal: To identify hillside neighborhood areas where storm water runoff and erosion are an issue and develop mediation standards to address the problem areas.

Recommendations:

- Gather information related to drainage and erosion in regards to the hillside neighborhood that would help raise significant issues that must be addressed.
  - Identify major drainage courses
  - Identify erosion features, their causes, consequences, and methods of treatment
  - Identify existing storm drainage structures
  - Review model erosion and sedimentation control ordinances for possible adoption
- Using the information gathered, develop erosion and drainage ordinances that will address the issues raised, include these in grading or subdivision ordinances or hillside building standards.
- Reintroduce vegetation to help minimize the effects that runoff and erosion has on hillside neighborhoods.
- Develop a publication to raise awareness of Aurora residents about the issues involved with hillside drainage and erosion and how they are affected.

Action Steps:

1. Develop a list of needed information about hillside neighborhoods necessary to create proper erosion control ordinances.
2. Develop a bimonthly newsletter for residents identifying issues regarding drainage & erosion and what the hillside development committee is accomplishing.
3. Establish an action group to begin implementing the ordinances, such as specifying areas in neighborhoods for vegetation plantings.
4. Develop erosion and drainage ordinances from model ordinances.

Keywords:
- Drainage
- Hillsides
- Erosion
Goal: To develop hillside building standards that regulate the manner in which development occurs on the hillsides to minimize storm water effects and the effects on the natural aesthetics.

Recommendations:

- Establish a set of goals that represent the expectations for hillside neighborhoods and for possible future growth that would affect the physical nature of the hillsides.
- Develop a checklist of information that needs to be collected that is relevant to the addressed goals and issues. The information can be categorized in several different areas:
  - Topography
  - Infrastructure
  - Access
  - Recreational Values
  - Slope Stability
  - Drainage and Erosion
  - Aesthetics and Natural Qualities
- Build the hillside regulations from one of three basic classifications: slope/density provisions, soil overlays, and the guiding principles approach which creates a hillside overlay district that has a set of guiding principles that are applied to all proposed developments in this area.
- Adopt a set of hillside building standards, possibly tailored from a set of model standards that address the specific issues that are discovered from the information gathered in the chosen areas.
- List any existing building or structure problems that will need to be addressed as the hillside building standards are established; as standards are established these problems will gradually need to be brought up to code.
- Inform the residents about the benefits of hillside building standards and how the city is taking steps to develop standards and what the major issues are.

Action Steps:

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<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Establish a hillside building committee that would include members from City Council and the Aurora Plan Commission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Establish checklists of information to be gathered: establish a timeline; evaluate which information can be gathered internally &amp; which must be contracted out.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>4</strong> Publicize issues that are brought up from information gathering based on the specified areas to inform residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Get feedback from residents on the publicized issues to see whether their areas of concern have been covered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Begin hillside building standards based on existing model ordinances and tailored to the issues raised from information gathering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Upon completion of standards, mail out a publication explaining the new standards to existing hillside residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Coordinate sessions on how to purchase a home with Realtors and mortgage lenders.</td>
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**Issue:**

Hillside Development Standards

**Keywords**

- Hillside development
- Building standards
- Building codes
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Goal: Create a center for neighborhood development based on a strong local partnership for initiating and mastering neighborhood redevelopment.

Recommendations:

• Create a corporation for neighborhood development based on a strong local partnership for initiating and mastering neighborhood redevelopment.

Action Steps:

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<th>Priority</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Organize workshops with local developers, banks, city officials, and the Neighborhood Resource Center to identify local financial sources for a continuing support to housing projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hold informational sessions for the Neighborhood Resource Center participants and the city staffs regarding infill options and current codes.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Have a study trip for the Neighborhood Resource Center staff to visit successful infill projects.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Send the Neighborhood Resource Center employee to training sessions regarding project management, monitoring, and evaluation.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Create and implement a comprehensive education and information campaign, by the corporation in conjunction with the city to develop the awareness of residents about opportunities to get technical and financial assistance for improving their current living conditions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ISSUE:

Infill & Maintenance

Keywords

• Neighborhood development
• Local partnerships
• Infill
• Maintenance
**ISSUE:** Viewshed Protection

**Goal:** To establish significant and unique viewshed areas and develop ordinances and development regulations that are sensitive to and protect these areas.

**Keywords**
- Hillside development
- Viewshed

**Recommendations:**
- Evaluate the extent and quality of views to and from the hillsides, include resident opinions.
- Identify any hillside locations with special significance to the community.
- Attempt to create standards so that new construction will not upset the natural shape of the hill or the natural qualities and vegetation patterns.

**Action Steps:**

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<tr>
<td>☑ 1</td>
<td>Publish a hillside awareness brochure that discusses the importance of viewshed protection and details about recognized views and locations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 2</td>
<td>Include in hillside building standards requirements for grading and building size and type that will minimize the effect of new construction on viewsheds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ 3</td>
<td>Create a map showing significant views and major vegetation areas that should be protected.</td>
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<td>☑ 4</td>
<td>Include limits on vegetation removal or revegetation requirements so new construction is buffered from existing neighborhoods to protect the natural views.</td>
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**PRIORITY**

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2.28
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS**

**Goal:** To create standards to eliminate over subdividing of homes to avoid overcrowding causing problems of substandard living areas, the destruction of homes, the accumulation of trash problems, and parking problems.

**Recommendations:**

- Create standards for new and existing housing to avoid overcrowding.
- Find ways of using volunteers and residents to enforce standards.
- Inform the public of what the standards are, why they cause problems and how to report substandard housing.
- Reduce the number of residents on overcrowded streets thereby reducing the problems of lack of parking and trash problems.

**Action Steps:**

- [ ] 4 Add housing occupancy standards into ordinance.
- [ ] 4 Use neighborhood organizations to inform landlords and tenants of their rights.
- [ ] 4 Create a mechanism for reporting violators and checking up on these violations.

**Issue:**

**Occupancy Standards**

**Keywords**

- Neighborhood development
- Overcrowding
- Occupancy standards
- Enforcement
who is eligible for these funds.

Create a directory of funding opportunities that will allow
people to easily see where types of funding are available and
possibly seek with other cities.

Similar to Aurora,

Continue funding opportunities and possibly seek with other cities.

Community regional groups such as Area 12 in an effort to

Locate areas available for funding.

Community efforts through the Neighborhood Resource Center.

Market study.

Plan for Authority to conduct a formal housing survey and

Contact the Regional Planning Agency and Indiana Housing

Priority: Action Steps:

Money:
- Find a way to coordinate volunteers or ways to fund a small version to deal
- Regional efforts as well as with other local areas.
- Improve communication and coordination of local funding efforts with
- Help increase the awareness of funding options.
- Become a source that is reliable for some funding.
- Set up a nonprofit group to help locate available funding options and to
- Conduct or the existing housing stock.
- Create funding opportunities to decrease costs in improvements to the
- Conduct a formal housing study to determine the housing supply

Recommendations:

Eligible for funding:
- Coordinating groups, local housing and areas that are
- Opportunities for affordable in situ housing by creating a

Goal: Improve the existing housing stock and create

Planning & Design Studies

Aurora

Keywords
- Neighborhood Resource
- Funding
- Initial Development

Funding
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Goal: Increase the level of awareness in Aurora regarding housing programs, financing, and protections.

Recommendations:

- Establish a data center at the Neighborhood Resource Center with easily accessible information regarding housing programs, financing, and legal protections regarding fair housing statutes.

Action Steps:

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>✓ 2</td>
<td>Have informational campaigns and sessions to promote awareness in Aurora.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Provide information various types of home financing and explanations about how they work.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Provide information regarding federal housing programs.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Provide application forms and technical assistance in applying for federal housing programs.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Provide information on housing rights and laws such as the Fair Housing Act and the Community Reinvestment Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Provide names and phone numbers of people to contact locally if you feel your housing rights have been violated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ISSUE: Data Center

Keywords
- Housing
- Home ownership
- Equal opportunity
**ISSUE:**

How-To Workshops

---

**Goal:** Create a series of informational programs and workshops regarding subjects incidental to homeownership with the areas of concentration being home finance and housing maintenance/rehabilitation/historic preservation.

**Recommendations:**

- Increase the level of home ownership in Aurora by making people aware of their financing options.
- Encourage and support efforts of historic preservation, housing rehabilitation, and ongoing maintenance through the provision of technical support.

**Action Steps:**

- [✓] priority action steps

  - [☐] 2 Coordinate information sessions on housing finance with local realtors and banks.
  - [☐] 2 Coordinate a series of how-to workshops with local businesses such as hardware stores, plumbing suppliers, and tile stores.
  - [☐] 2 Advertise the sessions in the local newspaper, church bulletins, grocery stores, and local social notes.

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Goal: Increase the awareness of historic preservation efforts in Aurora while relieving some of the misconceptions regarding the implications of a historic designation.

Recommendations:
- Reduce the amount of resistance to historic designations through providing accurate information to affected parties.
- Increase the level of participation in historic preservation.
- Increase community pride in the historic structures in Aurora.
- Increase the amount of knowledge regarding historic preservation in Aurora.

Action Steps:

☑ 2 priority action steps

donotask

☐ 2 Have an informational campaign including newspaper articles and mass mailing to let people know if their home or business is in a historic district.

☐ 2 Have an informational campaign outlining the top ten misconceptions regarding historic preservation and what the realities of a historic designation means.

☐ 2 Erect signage at entry and exit points to the existing historic districts to allow residents and visitors to know where the districts are.

☐ 2 Establish a highly visible annual award for the outstanding historic preservation effort.

☐ 1 Publicize the award in the local paper with an article and before/after photos.

☐ 4 Create a data center with information such as regulations regarding residential & commercial, preservation briefs, and National Trust guidelines.

☐ 4 Create a data bank of Aurora residents involved in preservation who are willing to share expertise with those who are just staring preservation efforts.

ISSUE:

Historic Preservation Awareness

Keywords
- Historic preservation
- Community pride
- Awareness
**Aurora Planning & Design Studies**

**Issue:**

Neighborhood Organizations

**Keywords**

- Neighborhood organizations
- Neighborhood Resource Center

**Goal:** To organize the neighborhoods in Aurora into entities with political voice and the ability to disperse information and plan and implement neighborhood scale improvements.

**Recommendations:**

- To provide an intermediary body between the city and residents for the purposes of the mutual sharing of information.
- To coordinate neighborhood improvement efforts such as park improvements and crime watch programs.
- To provide information on building codes and maintenance requirements.
- To provide a social setting in which neighbors may meet each other.
- To serve as an advocate for the continuing improvement of the quality of the city of Aurora.
- To help the residents establish a neighborhood organization in every neighborhood in Aurora that does not currently have one.

**Action Steps:**

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<td>✔️ 1</td>
<td>Post information regarding what neighborhood organizations are and how to get in touch with the Neighborhood Resource Center in key places such as grocery stores.</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ 2</td>
<td>Organize an informational meeting on how to start a neighborhood organization in each neighborhood.</td>
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<td>□ 3</td>
<td>Create a notebook of neighborhood organization success stories with details on how the projects achieved success to serve as inspiration.</td>
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<td>□ 4</td>
<td>Keep an updated file with the names of the officers of neighborhood organization for the purposes of networking.</td>
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<td>□ 4</td>
<td>Have monthly meetings of each organization in the Neighborhood Resource Center.</td>
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<td>□ 4</td>
<td>Relay resident’s concerns to the appropriate city council members.</td>
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<td>□ 2</td>
<td>Have annual or semiannual neighborhood rallies or festivals.</td>
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**Comprehensive Plan - Housing & Neighborhoods**

**Goal:** Create a tool bank where Aurora residents involved in preserving or rehabilitating their homes can share knowledge regarding construction and borrow or rent tools which may be cost prohibitive for individuals to purchase.

**Recommendations:**
- Reduce the cost of renovation through the sharing of resources.
- Provide a center through which several individuals needing the same materials, such as paint or roofing, can coordinate orders to receive bulk discounts.
- Provide a network in which residents may share expertise or knowledge, allowing projects to reach completion much faster.

**Action Steps:**

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<td>Establish a program where businesses can donate tools to the tool bank and receive tax credits in return.</td>
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<td>☐ 2</td>
<td>Establish a check out/rental agreement in which the terms of borrowing/renting tools are outlined.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ 4</td>
<td>Create a notebook in which people who have done preservation and rehabilitation projects enter pieces of advice they found valuable during their experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ 4</td>
<td>Create a bulletin board system/community web page in which questions can be posted.</td>
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</table>

**Issue:**

Tool Bank - Neighborhood Resource Center

**Keywords**
- Tool bank
- Neighborhood Resource Center
- Building rehabilitation and maintenance
Communication and organization are important elements that provide for a healthy community. They allow a community to come together as a whole and function as one. Many techniques can be used to increase the quality and effectiveness of communication not only between the city officials but with the residents also. An important factor to remember is that the number of organizations do not reflect the quality of them. Each organization should have a mission statement and work towards meeting what they set out to do.
Goal: Increase the effectiveness of communication between and within city/county departments, community organizations, and residents.

Recommendations:
- Utilize new technology for communication on a regular basis among those of a common interest.
- Recognize that the written word is a good means of reaching a large number of interested parties.
- Encourage direct personal relationships to promote effective and unified decisions both within city/county departments and community organizations.
- Recognize that the most important key to success is the people.

Action Steps:

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<td>3</td>
<td>Set up an email address book within each city department and community organization.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Create an education program on the workings of email and the internet.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Create and utilize a phone tree for each organization and department.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Create a unified monthly/quarterly newsletter that includes information from all city departments and community organizations.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Develop a weekly column in the local newspaper that is shared by all organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Promote a program that sponsors placemats at local restaurants as an information provider.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Develop a system of information boards and signage for downtown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Create focus groups between and within community organizations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Establish department head meetings to be held monthly.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Create an ombudsperson position to serve as a source for information and problem resolver within the community.</td>
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2.38
Goal: Create and utilize organizations to address the needs of the community as it develops and matures.

Recommendations:

- Support and protect the river and the assets it provides.
- Provide activities and opportunities for residents of all ages.
- Create neighborhoods that offer pride to the community.

Action Steps:

- [✓] priority action steps
  
- [□] 2 Reestablish the Port Advisory Board of Aurora.
  
- [□] 2 Study the area along the river and develop a plan that would enhance the river as an asset for the community.
  
- [□] 2 Further the existing recreational programs and develop new ones that will include all seasons and ages.
  
- [□] 2 Develop neighborhood organizations within all neighborhoods of the city and educate them on how to operate effectively.
  
- [□] 2 Provide a local center for education and help dealing with issues of housing and neighborhoods.

ISSUE:

Community Organizations

Keywords
- Port Advisory Board
- Recreation
- Neighborhood Resource Center
The focus of downtown revitalization is the preservation of the small town character and increased economic vitality. The buildings in downtown possess certain historic characteristics that portray the history of the city. However, over the years weather and pollution have contributed to facade damage. Also, often times owners of the buildings have been unable to make necessary repairs and provide upkeep for these buildings.

Commercial development along major roadways has impacted the economic strength of downtown. Local small business retailers often times have difficulty competing with the larger chain retailers.

The goal of revitalizing the downtown is to create a core for the community that is “functional” and “practical” at the same time. The residents of Aurora need an area of commerce that provides a mix of high quality general merchandise. One of the main reasons that larger retailers capture so much business is because they buy merchandise in bulk and sell it at a lower price. At the same time, they usually provide a lower level of service. Small businesses have an advantage over large retailers because they can provide a high level of service and high quality goods at the same time.

Downtown should also be a diversified district of uses. Along with the commercial uses, the downtown should provide access to services such as lawyers, dentists, accountants, insurance agents, and hair stylists. Residential units, located above small stores should also be provided as well.
**ISSUE:**

Rehabilitation & Restoration of Historic Buildings

**Keywords**
- Historic buildings
- Building maintenance
- Rehabilitation

**Goal:** To enhance the quality, character, and life of historic buildings.

**Recommendations:**
- Maintain the historic fabric, original facade design and signage of the building.
- Paint the details of buildings, window trim and/or cornice, where appropriate.
- Clean building facades.
- Add cloth awnings, where appropriate.
- Remove inappropriate alterations such as metal slipcovers, window coverings and oversized signs.
- Repair the original materials that were damaged when the alterations were made.
- Add elements that reflect the scale and pattern of the downtown.
- Remove all elements that were not part of the original structure.
- Duplicate original parts of buildings that are missing.
- For buildings that have never been altered, enhance the architectural qualities of the buildings.

**Action Steps:**

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<tr>
<td>☑️ priority action steps</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Create a Building Improvements/Review Committee (BIRC), which may have members from the Streetscape Improvements/Review Committee (SIRC).</td>
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<td>4 Develop and distribute a design guidelines handbook.</td>
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<td>4 Contract work in <em>bulk</em>.</td>
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<td>4 Develop funding opportunities for business owners.</td>
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<td>3 Identify buildings that are candidates for major rehabilitation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Examine first the possibilities of structural damages and address them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Address maintenance issues such as painting, weatherproofing, and tuck pointing second.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Identify and address cosmetic concerns after a building is determined to be structurally stable and in good repair.</td>
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<td>3 Identify buildings that are candidates for restoration.</td>
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GOAL: To construct new buildings in the downtown area that are designed to match the existing character.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Construct buildings that are compatible with the appearance, color, and patterns of the surrounding buildings.
- Construct buildings whose windows and storefronts of the new buildings should be compatible with the sizes and scales of the surrounding buildings.

ACTION STEPS:

☑️ Priority action steps

☐ 3 Promote infill/new construction to developers, including funding incentives.

☐ 3 Work with developers to promote compatible infill/new construction.

ISSUE:

Infill/New Construction

KEYWORDS

- Infill development

APPROPRIATE INFILL

Similar proportions to existing buildings

BUILDINGS SHOULD HAVE RELATIVELY SIMILAR DISTANCES FROM THE CURB.

ROOF PATTERNS SHOULD CONFORM TO EXISTING ONES.
**ISSUE:**

**Streetscape Improvements:**
- Sidewalks, Street Furniture & Lighting

**Keywords**
- Accessibility
- Pedestrian
- Maintenance
- Character

**Goal:** To create a streetscape that is pedestrian oriented and is compatible with the historic character of downtown Aurora.

**Recommendations:**
- Create accessibility to all sidewalks in the downtown for handicapped persons.
- Use consistent patterns and materials throughout downtown.
- Utilize a Sidewalk Maintenance Improvements Schedule.
- Provide seating, waste containers, and flower boxes that are all compatible with the design of the buildings and spaces.
- Remove signs that are overbearing and out of context.
- Separate parking from pedestrians using landscape buffers.
- Provide lighting that has character and helps provide safety. Continue the program of gas light installation already underway.

**Action Steps:**

- ☑ 3 Form a Streetscape Improvements/Review Committee (SIRC).
- ☑ 3 Develop a Design Guidelines/Improvements Plan.
- ☑ 4 Acquire the necessary funding to carry out projects within the Plan.
- ☑ 1 Continue the installation of gas lights already in progress.
- ☑ 4 Review and update the plan annually.

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244
Parks and riverfront have played an important role in the character of Aurora. The importance of this will continue to be essential in the continuing growth of the city. The parks provide excellent recreation opportunities and enhancements to the quality of the neighborhoods surrounding them. There are also opportunities within the city to expand park development. Lesko Park's proximity to the river provides for a great opportunity for the users and the character of the city.

There are a number of issues that must be addressed concerning parks and riverfront. These include linkages between parks, marinas, downtown, and riverfront, quality of marinas, safety, and parking concerns to name a few.

Aurora has great park and recreation opportunities. However, these can always be enhanced and improved through growth and maintenance. It is also important to remember a great park system needs users to be great!
Goal: Improve Aurora's existing recreational opportunities and recommend new areas for development as park or open space.

Recommendations:
- Provide Aurora with maximum recreational opportunities including parks, trails, and marinas.
- Increase facilities for water based activities. (Fishing, boating, etc.)
- Increase facilities for land based activities. (Tennis, basketball, volleyball, picnics, etc.)
- Develop new areas for recreation in Aurora.
- Develop a county wide recreation opportunity.
- Increase recreation facilities for adults.

Action Steps:

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<td>☑ 3</td>
<td>Identify existing recreational facilities and establish areas for development of parks, trails, and marinas.</td>
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<td>☐ 4</td>
<td>Identify potential areas for development of new marinas.</td>
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<td>☐ 4</td>
<td>Purchase of land for development of new marinas if areas are not owned by the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ 2</td>
<td>Construct new marinas.</td>
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<td>☑ 2</td>
<td>Establish design for construction of dock/boardwalk in City Park.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 2</td>
<td>Construction of dock/boardwalk in City Park.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 2</td>
<td>Establish areas for development of tennis, basketball, volleyball, and horseshoes in public parks.</td>
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<td>☑ 2</td>
<td>Design and construction of community gardens located in City Park.</td>
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<td>☑ 1</td>
<td>Design and construction of chess/checkers tables to be distributed throughout specified public parks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 1</td>
<td>Development of green space of the abandoned box factory as a park and &quot;jumping on&quot; spot for the proposed County Bike Route.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 2</td>
<td>Develop the proposed County Bike Route.</td>
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<td>☕ 2</td>
<td>Design and development of a performance stage in Lesko park for music and outdoor entertainment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ 2</td>
<td>Move the existing car-pool lot located near the abandoned box factory to Wal-Mart or other more appropriate area.</td>
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**Priorities**

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Goal: To provide the city with possible technical solutions to help diminish the negative effects of erosion and flooding.

Recommendations:

- Slow the run-off water in swale area located uphill from proposed Conwell Street Neighborhood Park.
- Increase holding capacity of retention pond at proposed Conwell Street Neighborhood Park.
- Address the erosion problem effecting the area near the drainpipe on the east side of Lesko Park.
- Provide the Parks with amenities that can be easily moved or cleaned up after a major flood.
- Define potential spaces that can be used as connector trails or a Greenway system.

Action Steps:

- [ ] 3 Construct multiple small retention areas along problem swales located near Lesko Park and the proposed Conwell Street Neighborhood Park.
- [ ] 3 Expand holding capacity of retention pond near the proposed Conwell Street Neighborhood Park to the approximate size before infill development occurred.
- [ ] 3 Inspect the working condition of the drainpipe on the east end of Lesko Park.
- [ ] 3 Infill the area between the drainpipe in Lesko Park and the Ohio River and plant with riparian vegetation that will hold the land and slow erosion.
- [ ] 3 Construct a riparian zone between Lesko Park and the Ohio River by introducing native plant material along the bank.
- [ ] 3 Introduce aesthetically pleasing and appropriate amenities that are light enough to be moved or sturdy enough to withstand flood waters.

Keywords
- Erosion
- Flooding
- Retention
- Riparian zone
**Goal:** Conserve and improve the aesthetic quality and historic integrity of Aurora's parks, riverfront, and marinas.

**Recommendations:**
- Preserve historic structures and places within Aurora's park system.
- Maintain Aurora's historic integrity within the park system.
- Landscape and planting improvements.
- Provide proper and adequate amenities.
- Development of an Urban Waterfront area that would create a beautiful and scenic gathering point as well as provide opportunities for economic development.

**Action Steps:**

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<th>Priority</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔️ 2</td>
<td>Construct a buffer in Waterway Park along both sides of the circular drive to prevent individuals from driving on the grass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ 2</td>
<td>Construct a buffer between the highway and Lesko Park. A hedgerow is suggested as the most proper; other possibilities are trees, stones, and a wall/fence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Plan and implement additional planting and appropriate landscaping to improve the overall beauty of the public parks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Identify any historic structures or sites and apply for placement in the National Register of Historic Places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Construct a consistent strategy for all park amenities that will preserve Aurora's historic integrity. (Light fixtures, benches, trash units, signs, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Replace existing rusted guardrails in Lesko Park with a more aesthetic buffer. A small, concrete or brick wall that is short and wide enough to sit on is suggested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Revitalize the old tennis, basketball, volleyball, and playground facilities in Waterway Park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Construct a design strategy for the proposed Conwell Street Neighborhood Park and a park near the old box factory site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Widen and extend the walkway through Lesko Park to accommodate walking, biking, and in-line skating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Construct a picnic area in the hill located on the backside of City Park. (Proposed new dock/boardwalk area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Maintenance and preservation of the wetland area in Waterway Park that is considered vital for flood relief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Construct Conwell Street Neighborhood Park and Box Factory Park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Develop a design strategy for proposed Urban Waterfront Development and maintain an &quot;Urban theme.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Construct Urban Waterfront Development providing for both large and small boat docking opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Keywords**
- Growth
- Growth management
- Design and development guidelines
- Urban growth boundaries
- Best Development Practices
- Development Target Areas
- Development Guidance System
- Infill development
- Mixed-Use development
- Brownfields
- Restoration
- Adaptive reuse
- Enforcement
- Neo-Traditional Development
- Cluster Development

**Priority**

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</table>
Goal: Create a cohesive system of linkages and trails that allows for pedestrian movement to and from parks, marinas, and the downtown area.

Recommendations:
- Construct a Greenway system.
- Construct connector trails as appropriate.
- Utilize Rails to Trails to aid in the pedestrian connection of parks and downtown.
- Provide links from existing and proposed marinas to trails, parks, and downtown.
- Utilize proposed County Bike Route as a linkage.

Action Steps:

☐ priority action steps

☐ 3 Define potential spaces that can be used as connector trails or a Greenway system.

☐ 3 Identify areas that may need to be purchased from private ownership in order to develop the Greenway or connector trails.

☐ 3 Purchase areas needed for construction of the system.

☐ 2 Implement construction of the cohesive linkage system.

ISSUE:

Parks, Green Space, Downtown, and Marinas

Keywords
- Bike route
- Connector trail
- Greenway
- Linkage
- Pedestrian
- Rails to Trails
Goal: To improve the quality of existing marinas and provide new marina sites for future development as needed.

Recommendations:

• Explore the small business opportunities related to marinas and river access.
• Beautification of marinas.
• Set aside sites for future development of marinas as river traffic increases.
• Construct an area providing for large riverboat docking. This will improve tourism, economic development, and community pride.
• Link marinas to parks and trails.
• Renovation of existing facilities.
• Improve small boat access to parks system.

Action Steps:

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</table>
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - PARKS & RIVERFRONT

Goal: Effectively administer policy actions concerning parks, trails, and marinas.

Recommendations:
- Determine the range of issues to be administered by the existing Park Board.
- Decide if new boards or sub-committees should be formed to confront the issues concerning trails and marinas.

Action Steps:

☑️ priority action steps

☐ 3 Study the current workload encountered by the Aurora Park Board to determine need for increased staffing.

☐ 3 If needed, form new board or sub-committee to address the volume of issues created by new pedestrian trails, marinas, and bike routes.

☐ 3 Decide if the bike route should be administered on the city or county level.

☐ 3 Delegate authority over parks, trails, and marinas as seen appropriate.

ISSUE:
Park and Riverfront Administration

Keywords
- Administration
- Delegate
- Organizations
- Park Board
ISSUE:

Maintenance and Security

Keywords
- Accessibility
- Americans with Disabilities
- Barriers
- Handicapped
- Marinas
- Parks
- Trails

Goal: Provide a safe, clean, and appealing system of parks and recreation areas.

Recommendations:
- Regularly schedule inspections of all park equipment, facilities, and amenities.
- Scheduled and frequent security checks by city police.
- Schedule frequent cleanup sessions.

Action Steps:

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<tr>
<td>☑️ 3</td>
<td>Hire and maintain a full time city maintenance crew assigned to public parks, trails, and marinas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐️ 3</td>
<td>Plan a rotating inspection schedule that includes all parks, trails, and marinas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐️ 3</td>
<td>In conjunction with the city police, design a schedule of frequent security checks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐️ 3</td>
<td>Designate regular clean up duties to appropriate city crew.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐️ 1</td>
<td>Work in conjunction with local volunteer groups to coordinated periodic park, trail, and marina clean up efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐️ 3</td>
<td>Inspect and upgrade all lighting in parks and marinas to facilitate easy patrol and maintain safety for users.</td>
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</table>
**Goal:** Provide ample opportunity for handicapped accessibility in the Aurora parks, trails, and public marinas.

**Recommendations:**

- Make sure that public buildings and facilities, in all parks, and marinas are readily accessible.
- Eliminate existing barriers to handicapped accessibility in all public parks, marinas, and trails.

**Action Steps:**

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<tr>
<td>✓ 1</td>
<td>Review and follow all guidelines set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 3</td>
<td>Explore various options for development of accessible restrooms, picnic areas, trails, docks, piers, and other outdoor recreation facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 3</td>
<td>Begin construction of any amenities or facilities required to provide equal access for the handicapped in Aurora parks and marinas and in the use of the trails.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ISSUE:**

Handicapped Accessibility

**Keywords**

- Accessibility
- Americans with Disabilities
- Barriers
- Handicapped
- Marinas
- Parks
- Trails
**ISSUE:**

Land Purchasing

**Goal:** Enhance the current quality and opportunity for additional park, trail, and marina services.

**Recommendations:**
- Purchase land that is not owned by the city.
- Develop that land in accordance with the proposed comprehensive plan.

**Action Steps:**

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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Determine areas of land that are not owned by the city that are necessary for the development of the parks system as proposed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Explore various ways and means available to the city for purchasing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Purchase the land and develop as proposed in the comprehensive plan.</td>
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**Priority**

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2.54
Goal: Provide adequate parking while maintaining the aesthetic quality of the green areas.

Recommendations:
- Improve or rehabilitate the existing parking facilities.
- Construct new and appropriate parking facilities as needed.
- Construct facilities that are more aesthetically pleasing and environmentally friendly.

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<tr>
<td><strong>✓ priority action steps</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>☐ 3</strong> Identify existing parking facilities in the park system that need to be revitalized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>☐ 4</strong> Construct a design strategy that incorporates plantings and buffers to create pleasing aesthetics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>☐ 2</strong> Begin the revitalization of the facility according to the plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>☐ 3</strong> Identify areas of new development that require parking facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>☐ 1</strong> Locate bicycle racks in all public park facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>☐ 1</strong> Provide the minimum amount of required parking spaces so that users will be encouraged to share a ride or use alternate transportation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>☐ 2</strong> When planning new parking spaces, place automobile access on the outer edge of the park facilities and offer the user a trail or greenway to the park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>☐ 1</strong> Install a mix of large, compact, and disabled parking spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>☐ 1</strong> Install natural surfaces as opposed to paved surfaces as a method for slowing travel within the parking lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>☐ 1</strong> Provide hard surfaces only in the lots that contain disabled parking for safety reasons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>☐ 2</strong> Provide adequate lighting for nighttime safety and patrol. Light fixtures should be designed to reflect Aurora's heritage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ISSUE:**
Parking

**Keywords**
- Aesthetics
- Automobile
- Bicycle racks
- Design options
- Parking
- Safety
**ISSUE:**

**Recreational Programs**

**Goal:** Create a renewed interest in programs for youth and adult activities within Aurora.

**Recommendations:**
- Provide organized recreational activities for the youth and adults.
- Increase community pride and togetherness.

**Action Steps:**

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<th>Priority</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Establish and maintain a men’s, women’s, and/or co-ed softball league during the spring and summer months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Establish and maintain a men’s, women’s, and/or co-ed basketball league during the fall and winter months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Establish golf and card playing leagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Establish an array of clubs. For example: walking, swimming, biking, tennis, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Encourage and promote participation in youth activities through schools, churches, and advertisements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Promote heavy youth involvement in scholastic sports programs.</td>
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**PRIORITY**

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2.56
Comprehensive Plan - Parks & Riverfront

Goal: Encourage and promote the use and quality of Aurora parks, trails, and marinas.

Recommendations:
- Create an Aurora parks marketing scheme.
- Advertise the quality and abundance of Aurora parks to both residents of Aurora and surrounding areas.
- Promote outdoor recreational opportunities and their benefits.

Action Steps:

✓  priority action steps

☐ 3 Create an Aurora parks recreation slogan.

☐ 1 Print advertisements in the local paper featuring the slogan.

☐ 3 Create a pamphlet featuring the slogan and outlining the functions and quality of Aurora parks, trails, and marinas.

☐ 1 Place pamphlets in local businesses, restaurants, and city buildings.

☐ 3 Create small flyers that promote the parks, trails, and marinas that can be placed in grocery sacks and passed out by local businesses on occasion.

☐ 1 Advertise on the local radio and public television stations.

Issue:

Promotion of Park System

Keywords
- Marketing
- Pamphlet
- Promote
- Advertise
Beautification and design plays an important role in the way people perceive Aurora. These elements deal with the cosmetics and visual aspects of the city. One of the most effective methods of addressing these issues is through establishing and enforcing a landscape ordinance.

The landscape ordinance should address issues concerning plantings, open space, parking square designs, and signage, among many others. This ordinance would prove to be beneficial to the city by identifying a standard that must be met. This not only increases the visual quality of the city but also informs the public of what is expected.

Gateways are also important to the city and, therefore, must be enhanced. This may be done through standards set by the landscape ordinance as well as traffic control. The parking squares downtown also provide an opportunity for the city to incorporate parking as an amenity instead of a function only.

The City of Aurora will experience a greater sense of character and community pride with the use of beautification and design tools.
**ISSUE:**

**General Beautification and Design**

**Keywords**
- Landscape ordinance
- Sign ordinance
- Murals

**Goal:** Establish and maintain a standard of beauty within the city of Aurora for the residents to be proud of.

**Recommendations:**
- Recognize that a landscape ordinance can provide guidance for not only future development but current redevelopment.
- Establish desired criteria for elements within the landscape ordinance.
  - Tree plantings
  - Open space
  - Parking squares
- Establish desired criteria concerning signage throughout the city.
- Utilize current organizations in maintaining clean city parks, right-of-ways, and the riverfront.
- Use local artistic abilities in the development of murals.

**Action Steps:**

<table>
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<th>Priority Action Steps</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Establish and enforce a landscape ordinance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Review current sign ordinance for necessary improvements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Enforce updated sign ordinance. Grant variances only in severe cases of hardship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Establish a schedule for volunteers and organizations to clean up city parks, right-of-ways, and the riverfront.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Establish a plan for identifying and implementing desired locations for murals.</td>
</tr>
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**Priority**

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*Usage of above recommendations along U.S. 50*

*Example of mural on pool house wall*
**Goal:** Enhance gateways throughout the city along key routes of transportation including vehicular, pedestrian, and bikeways.

**Recommendations:**
- Recognize the influence a gateway has on the perception of the city as a whole.
- Improve the quality of the gateways along key routes of transportation.
- Utilize the small town character as a means of promoting gateways.

**Action Steps:**

- **✓** priority action steps
- □ 3 Identify ideal locations for establishing prominent gateways within the city.
- □ 2 Establish consistent signage for welcoming residents and visitors into the city.
- □ 1 Hold a contest for establishing a design for signage that represents the city.
- □ 1 Hold a ceremony for unveiling the "Welcome to Aurora."

**Example of gateway signage**

**George Street Bridge as a gateway**
**ISSUE:**

Parking

**Goal:** Provide adequate amount of parking while maintaining aesthetic quality of the downtown area.

**Recommendations:**

- Utilize current parking areas to their fullest potential.
- Recognize that parking areas can also be pleasing to the eye.
- Utilize alleyways as corridors.
- Incorporate parking squares with efforts to beautify the rears of buildings.

**Actions Steps:**

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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Take an inventory of current parking conditions: number available, types available, how often filled, and turnover ratio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Determine desired course of action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Incorporate standards set by landscape ordinance into redesign of parking squares.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Use rear doors as entrances to downtown businesses and second story households.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fix up rear of buildings for cosmetics, safety, and structure support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Link pedestrian walkways from parking squares with rear entrances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Increase lighting in alleyways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Clean alleyways to maintain safety for both pedestrians and vehicular traffic.</td>
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**Priority**

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*Redesigned parking square with landscaping*
**Goal:** Present a unified character throughout the downtown while maintaining its functionality.

**Recommendations:**

- Recognize that restoring the facades of downtown buildings to their original state will increase the quality of aesthetics and unite the character of downtown.
- Maintain standards of sign ordinance for unity.
- Utilize streetscape furniture throughout downtown to allow seating space for pedestrians.
- Maintain standards concerning landscaping.
- Incorporate rear entrances of buildings to parking squares.

**Action Steps:**

<table>
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<tr>
<td>✓ 3</td>
<td>Identify buildings which need facade restoration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ 3</td>
<td>Contact owner of building and establish a partnership in restoring facade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ 4</td>
<td>Set and enforce standards for signage by use of sign ordinance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ 2</td>
<td>Use pedestrian scaled streetlights for safety and information purposes: banners, street signs, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ 2</td>
<td>Determine desired streetscape furniture needed and purchase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ 2</td>
<td>Plant necessary trees, shrubs, and flowers along street and buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ 2</td>
<td>Link rear entrances with pedestrian walkways to parking squares.</td>
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**Example of streetscape furniture and pedestrian scaled streetlights**

**Downtown facade restoration**

**Keywords**
- Facade
- Streetscape
- Ordinance
- Parking squares
Improvements and Design Guidelines
Improvements and Design Guidelines

Introduction ......................................................... 5
Small town Design Principles ............................. 7
SWOON .......................................................... 11
General Recommendations ............................... 13
Building and Design Guidelines ......................... 15
Basic Considerations ........................................ 16
Building Condition ........................................... 17
Original Design or Minimally Altered Buildings .... 18
Substantially Altered Buildings ........................... 20
New Construction/ Infill ..................................... 21
Storefront Design .............................................. 23
Doors ............................................................ 26
Decorative Elements ......................................... 27
Painting and Color ............................................ 28
Awnings ......................................................... 29
Rear/ Side Entrances .......................................... 30
Signage .......................................................... 32
Masonry Maintenance ....................................... 33
Appendix ......................................................... 35
Appendix A - Award Guidelines ......................... 36
Appendix B - Grant Application ......................... 40
The following design and building guidelines will serve as recommendations for future improvements to the buildings in Aurora’s Downtown. This section also covers planning and downtown revitalization tools and techniques to further assist the City of Aurora’s efforts to improve its core.

The first section presents the basis as they pertain to the entire community. This section emphasizes twelve principals which will serve as the basis for implementation. The second section summarizes the analysis of the downtown district and is presented using the SWOOD (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Obstacles, and Needs) structure. Based on the SWOOD, a section identifying general recommendations for the downtown district is presented. Following the general recommendations section the Building and Design guidelines are presented. Finally, a short section is included to introduce several downtown development/ economic development tools which were thought of during the analysis process and development of this document.

The Building and Design Guideline section includes guidelines for the following areas:

- awnings
- energy conservation
- masonry maintenance
- painting/color
- signage
- upper story windows
- window displays
- general beautification
- consistency
- doors
- decorative elements
- infill
- rear/side entrances
- storefront designs
- storefront windows
- lighting
- miscellaneous items
- parking

These recommendations are not intended to point fingers or to accuse people of not having attractive buildings. The specific recommendations are intended to help building owners identify ways to improve their building and prioritize their improvement projects. Long-term planning will be a key element in the downtown improvements.

The City of Aurora makes available a matching grant to building owners in the downtown for aesthetic improvements to their structures. The Downtown Improvement Grant program will use design and building guidelines in order to promote:

- consistent and cohesive improvements with other projects in the downtown;
- quality and properly implemented improvements; and
- projects being completed in order of priority.
The guidelines in this document are intended to be used by City officials in their decision making, building owners prior to starting projects, and the committee who will score the Downtown Improvement Grant applications. These guidelines should become the dogma for any building improvements or new construction in the downtown district. Ideally, the Aurora Plan Commission and BZA will consider The Building and Design Guidelines when reviewing proposed changes in the downtown district. Furthermore, this document should be made available to any stakeholder in the downtown upon their request.

How To Proceed From Here

Below is a prioritized action checklist for community leaders and stakeholders in the downtown.

- Develop a design/grant review committee (Main Street Aurora could serve this role);
- Committee to review the grant award guidelines and application;
- Distribute the grant award guidelines and applications;
- Distribute the Building and Design Guidelines to owners interested in the grant program and the key stakeholders;
- Meet with all stakeholders to answer questions and review grant program;
- Accept applications for Downtown Improvement Grant
- Design/grant review committee to score and award grant(s);
- Construction or improvements to be completed within nine months;
- Design/grant review committee to evaluate the process, identifying the strengths and weaknesses and make report to City of Aurora officials
A community's identity and character are critical components of its quality of life and economic vitality. The design of small towns should celebrate and improve the quality of the physical environment in relation to the social, economic, ecological, political and historic driving forces that give it its unique character. This unique character goes far beyond the design and appearance of individual buildings and landscapes. It arises from the heritage of the community and its people. The enhancement and design of small towns involves:

1. Understanding what you have;
   - What makes the community look the way it does?
   - What are the things that have influenced, and are influencing the character of the community?
   - Where do you take visitors?
   - Where do you not take visitors?
   - What makes the community unique?

2. Deciding what you want;
   - What's important to the community?
   - What are we willing to do?
   - What will be the impact of the changes?

3. Taking action; and
   - What are the community's priorities?
   - Who's going to do it?
   - What can we do when?
   - Does the community have the resources it needs to get the job done?

4. Getting the job done.

When asked, most people who live in small towns will say they do so, to a great extent, because of the community's small town character and charm. Some of the things that give a small town its character, identity and charm include:
Architectural compatibility:

A community will benefit visually from a consistency of architectural character. While much of a community's character comes from the often eclectic variety of buildings there should be a compatibility (but not uniformity) of architectural styles. While being sensitive to the basic style and character of the community, the buildings should also reflect the continuing development of the community.

Each community, or district within a community, should find its own unique combination of elements, character and features. This helps to give the community or district its identity. While it is important to avoid cute "themes," establishing a clear character (i.e. gas light district, turn-of-the-century village, etc.) helps maintain and promote the visual quality of the community.

Some of the key points to consider in examining the architectural compatibility of small towns include:

- A consistency of roof style and height;
- All buildings should follow the same orientation (narrow, wide, square, etc.);
- The proportion (height and width) and scale (relative size) of buildings should be the same across the entire district. This not only helps define the visual character of the district, but also helps define the district itself;
- There should be a distinct and characteristic rhythm (spacing) of building openings (windows and doors);
- The general massing and details of the buildings in the district should be consistent;
- Each building should have a clear and characteristic entrance;
- In order to establish a clear edge, all buildings should have a similar setback from the curb; and
- They should utilize similar materials, colors and textures. New buildings should be of compatible materials and textures. New and renovated buildings should preserve basic architectural details.

Gateways:

The first impressions of a community are lasting ones. The community should have a distinct entrance, or gateway. Each individual district should also have a clear boundaries and entrances.
By focusing on infill development in the downtown and maximizing density, the sprawl along corridors leading into town can be minimized and the need for costly services, traffic congestion and visual clutter can be greatly reduced.

**Density and Infill Development:**

A community gains much of its character from its density of buildings and activities. Whenever possible, new development should locate in the downtown district. Upper floors should be utilized as offices and/or apartments. This helps bring life and vitality to the downtown and avoids the missing teeth that are all too often a part of small towns.

Vacant lots should be developed as community gardens or vest pocket parks until appropriate uses can be found for the space. Discourage the temptation to make them into parking lot.

**Open space:**

While density of buildings and activities is important to the visual quality of a community, open space is important as well. Activities need places to happen. The spaces should provide for a variety of events and relaxation. Larger spaces can be home to community events and recreation while small places can provide for relaxation. Community gardens can be a great way to bring citizens together and be a positive addition to the visual character of the community as well.

**Parking:**

Parking (or the lack of it) is often mentioned as a problem in small town downtowns. In reality, it rarely is. If the destination is of quality and the path is well designed, most people don’t mind the slight walk. In fact, most downtown shopping areas have closer parking than do the large suburban shopping malls.

While on-street parking is important to businesses success, the majority of parking should be in lots behind the storefronts, or in non-prime building lots in or near downtown. Lots should be well landscaped and well lit to be a positive addition to the community.

**Signage:**

It is important for businesses to inform customers of their location. The types, size, location and character of signs should be consistent and well designed. A well designed signage system can be an effective part of a community’s visual character and an important marketing resource for the businesses as well.

Wayfinding is also important in a community. A well designed system of information signs clearly directing visitors is an important part of community character and design.
Sidewalks and alleys:

Not only are sidewalks and alleys important circulation elements, they are critical design elements as well. The importance of well maintained sidewalks and alleys goes without saying. The character of these very public places is a major factor in the visual character of the community. They should be pleasant places to walk, and convey to the patrons a sense of security.

Street furniture:

Seating, lighting, newspaper racks, waste containers, flower boxes, etc. are all important ingredients in a community’s visual character. Like all other aspects of small town design, street furniture should be compatible with the design of the buildings and spaces and not a design afterthought.
Improvements and Design Guidelines

Strengths

The following is a listing of the strengths of Aurora's Downtown. The listing below is in no order of priority.

- Proximity to the river and Cincinnati
- Accessibility to transportation modes
- Solid school system
- Small rivertown character
- Strong community leaders
- Diversity of retail opportunities
- Fire Cracker Festival and other festivals
- Main Street Association

Weaknesses

The following is a listing of the weaknesses of Aurora's Downtown. The listing below is in no order of priority.

- Little use of the upper stories
- Vacant buildings within Downtown
- Streets and sidewalks maintenance
- Lack of benches and seating downtown
- Perceived lack of parking
- 50/56 intersection
- ADA accessibility
- Overhead power lines
Opportunities
The following is a listing of the opportunities in Aurora’s Downtown. The listing below is in no order of priority.

- Upper story spaces
- Vacant/ parking lots
- Rear entrances to businesses
- Enhance the gateways into the community and downtown
- Available storefronts
- Aurora cleanup weekend
- Car ferry across river

Obstacles
The following is a listing of the obstacles to Aurora’s Downtown. The listing below is in no order of priority.

- Located within floodplain
- Lack of signage in downtown
- Building maintenance
- Location of a “Big-box” retailer in Aurora
- Allowing substantial sprawl of business
- Coordinating citizens to get involved

Needs
The following is a listing of the needs in Aurora’s Downtown. The listing below is in no order of priority.

- To be a proactive community
- Increase signage
- Increase quality of sidewalks, infrastructure and streetscape
- Provide funding assistance for maintaining buildings
The following is a listing of general recommendations for Aurora’s downtown and overall community based on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, obstacles, and needs listed on the previous pages. The recommendations listed below are in no order of priority.

- Continue to encourage upper story housing or their adaptive reuse of upper stories
- Pursue grant programs to support upper story housing projects and façade improvement projects
- Bury electrical lines in alleyways and behind buildings where appropriate
- Purchase trash receptacles, benches, human scale light fixtures and other street furniture which are in character with the downtown
- Adopt a landscape ordinance, especially for businesses locating along U.S. 50
- Investigate ways to offer additional incentives for investment in the downtown. There are numerous, innovative programs which can work for Aurora.
Building and Design Guidelines for Downtown Aurora

Concepts and Ideas to Enhance Aurora’s Downtown
Why Make Improvements to My Building?

There are numerous great reasons to make improvements to your building. Making improvements to your building can...

1. extend the life of the structure;

2. enhance the appearance, thus improving the market image of the business or businesses which operate in it. A “tired” looking building is far less likely to attract new clients or customers to the businesses;

3. reduce the energy consumption, thus reducing the operation/overhead costs to the businesses;

4. increase the income generation from a building via increasing rent/lease rates. In some downtowns, building owners have been able to renovate the upper stories into elderly or studio apartments;

5. result in receiving tax credits on the amount of money invested in the structure. Buildings which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places are eligible for income tax credit. Most buildings in downtown Aurora are eligible for listing on the National Register;

6. improve the overall character of the downtown and the community. Upon improving the overall character of a downtown, improved vitality is sure to follow.

What Type of Improvements Should I Make?

There is not a standard answer for each building, but in general, the following rules should apply...

1. Focus first on structural damage or deterioration. Deteriorated stone or brick, collapsing roof structure, and leaky roofs are examples of structural damage;

2. Second, maintenance items should be attended to. Items such as tuck-pointing, painting, re-glazing windows and weatherproofing are considered maintenance items;

3. Finally, if the building is structurally sound and in good repair, consider cosmetic improvements. Some enhancements may include: replacing single pane windows with thermal insulated windows; cleaning exterior brick and stone; replacing or repairing architectural details which have been removed, are damaged, or are deteriorated; or adding or replacing an awning.
The Past and Present Condition of Buildings

Many buildings are altered over time. The drawings below illustrate how this can happen. Sometimes alterations made to buildings are very beneficial. Other times these alterations are damaging to both the structure and character of the building as well as the integrity of the downtown.

Buildings can be described on a scale between the “original design” and “significantly altered.” The drawings below illustrate buildings on both ends of the continuum.

The position on the continuum will determine what redevelopment or improvement options are available for a building.
Do:

- Maintain the historic fabric of the building (i.e. maintain the original stone or brick);
- Spruce up a "tired" look. Add color selectively by painting the building's details, window trim, or cornice;
- Add a cloth awning which complements the storefront or upper story windows, where appropriate;
- Maintain the original facade design and signage.

Don't:

- Cover up or alter architectural details such as the cornice, decorative hoods above upper story windows, or clerestory windows;
- Paint or stucco-coat the original brick and mortar. Once a historic structure is painted or covered with stucco it usually can never be reversed without substantially damaging the integrity of the brick;
- Substitute modern metal and tinted windows or doors for the original ones;
- Use large signage or excessive neon lighting.

True Value Downtown as example.
Existing condition of City Hall.

Potential design for City Hall.
Buildings which have been significantly altered have a variety of options for improvements. Those options range from reconstructing the original facade to disguising it to reduce the impact to the overall character in the downtown. Some examples of how this can be accomplished are illustrated below.

Do:

- Investigate the potential for removing the materials covering the original facade;
- Restore original facade, if possible;
- Add or enhance elements which may reflect the scale, patterns, and lines of neighboring buildings;
- Add an awning to add color and help disguise the substantial alterations;
- Add color selectively to complement colors used by neighboring structures.

Don’t:

- Use large, protruding signage;
- Continue altering the architectural style.
- Use bold, eye catching color or materials.
New construction/infill in the downtown can have a good or bad result. Buildings which are constructed to match or reflect the context are positive additions to a historic downtown. New buildings which ignore height, width, scale, building lines, rhythm and the indigenous materials used by surrounding buildings generally are not good neighbors in the downtown.

Do:

- Use materials which match or complement surrounding building's patterns, color and appearance;
- Match the sizes, scale and rhythm of the windows and store fronts of neighboring buildings;
- Use signage which is not overpowering.

Don't:

- Introduce materials which are not already found in buildings in the downtown;
- Use exotic shapes or patterns which will disrupt visual continuity;
- Try to imitate historic styles without professional assistance and thorough investigation of the scale, materials, proportions, and characteristics of that style. Some historic styles such as Colonial, Federal, and Beaux Arts are not appropriate in a downtown.

Out-of-character infill

In-character infill
Encourage similar proportions to existing buildings.

All buildings should be on the same vertical plane. Irregularities in this pattern detract from the downtown’s overall cohesiveness.

Roof patterns should conform to or accentuate existing facades and roof patterns.
A storefront is often the heart of a business’ identity. It acts as an invitation, and therefore, its design, its relationship to the pedestrian, and its relationship to the street are very important. Because of these reasons, it is often the most frequently changed component of a building’s facade. Though change is positive and necessary for maintaining an image, there are some traditions that should be considered when altering a building’s storefront.

The storefront, historically, was built into the facade, whereas many of today’s storefronts appear to be applied as additions to the front of the building. This interrupts the historic pattern established by the openings. The following guidelines apply to storefronts:

1. Storefronts of adjacent buildings should be of similar proportions, scale and height;

2. The pattern of storefronts creates a very strong relationship between the buildings on a street and the pedestrian. Traditionally, it is appropriate to slightly recess the storefront at the sidewalk edge. A storefront that is pushed back into the building more than a few inches, however, isolates the first floor from the street;

3. Storefronts of the era when downtown Aurora was built were composed largely of windows with a recessed entry. This was a functional solution to allow natural light to penetrate into the building. As well, the design allowed for visual access from the sidewalk deep into the building giving the pedestrian a chance to view merchandise without entering the store;

4. Storefront windows usually consist of an upper band of transoms, the large display windows, and a lower base of wood, masonry or some other material;

5. Usually the door had a vision panel. Recessing the door emphasizes the entry and is a way to provide shelter for customers when going in or out. It also lessens the hazards of opening a door directly onto the sidewalk and must be done to meet codes;

6. Display windows and transoms are appropriate places for subtle painted signs. Decoration of the storefront should be carefully considered, as the design may detract the customer’s attention from merchandise. Loud patterns, colors or signs will not make it easy for the customer to look through the storefront;

7. When choosing materials for your storefront, consider first those that are indigenous to the buildings along the street. They should be simple and inconspicuous so that the emphasis is on the entry and the relationship of the sidewalk to the interior is strong; and

8. Avoid using materials in nontraditional applications; variations in the overall pattern may negatively isolate the building.
Existing condition

Minor Improvements:
- Paint trim
- Add awning
- Reglaze windows

Significant Improvements:
- Clean exterior surfaces
- Use historic kickplates
- All items from minor improvements listed above
These kickplates have been radically altered and replaced with glass. What is important is that the kickplate proportion has been maintained.

Original (historic) kickplate.
Doors are a very important design feature of a storefront. Doors are not only for a person to walk through, they also add character and identity to the storefront. Doors serve also as an insulator from weather and can provide light.

When choosing a door consider the following:

1. Use a door which imitates the original. If the original door has been removed find a historic photo to base your decision (if possible);

2. Avoid "slab" doors. These doors not only do not fit the character of downtown buildings, they are uninviting to the customer as well;

3. Doors with windows are generally more inviting. People naturally tend to avoid entering spaces they cannot see into;

4. The door should be made of materials which look compatible to the rest of the facade;

5. Doors for external stairway entrances (secondary doors) should have less detail to avoid drawing attention to them; and

6. If you choose an aluminum and glass door, select one which has a dark finish rather than a reflective one.

Maintenance Note: All original doors in good repair should be kept. New hinges and hardware can be added to make them more operable and secure. Wood doors should be kept well sealed with a varnish or paint.

Maintain original doors and proportions.

Poorly altered entryway: door relocation, modern door with no windows.
Decorative elements, or details, add visual interest and character to the streetscape. These can be in the form of carved ornaments, mouldings, stained glass or painted graphic elements. Care should be taken not to introduce too much detail into a building facade as this may result in visual clutter.

The typical details found in downtown Aurora are brick, stone or metal:

Brick - many building facades have incorporated decorative brickwork. If brick must be replaced at any time, it is important that the craftsmanship and pattern of the existing masonry be respected. This includes coursing, brick shape or design, and pointing.

Stone - stone details can be very elaborate or simple accents to other elements.

Metal - metal is used frequently in cornices and bracket details.

In restoring the details of downtown buildings, you should:

1. Uncover any original elements that are hidden by inappropriate additions or alterations. For example, cast iron columns are decorative structural elements that often are covered by storefront modernizations and are likely to still be in place; and

2. Many times, pieces of decorative elements are removed for alterations, such as modern signage; or pieces simply deteriorate. It is important to protect and preserve existing decorative elements, as reproduction of details can be costly. However, it is recommended that missing elements be replaced to match existing if possible. It is the collection of details that creates a building’s character and enhances the overall streetscape.

An example of a very unique building material.
A building's color can have the single most significant effect on its appearance. Buildings which are painted using complimentary colors are inviting. On the other hand, buildings which have been painted with single, bland colors will have the opposite effect. Additionally, paint which is peeling or in bad condition makes a building unattractive.

Below are some things you should consider when painting a building.

1. Look at your neighbor's properties to select a color which will not clash with its surroundings or duplicate the scheme of another building. Being a good neighbor is important in building a clear identity for downtown;

2. The weather and sun will fade and damage paints. To ensure longevity of your paint, buy top quality paint, properly prepare the surfaces, and select colors which are less likely to fade;

3. If you are not good at selecting colors that match or work well together, consider consulting with someone who can. Consulting with someone may make a considerable difference between a bland building and an exciting one;

4. Consider using colors which were used at the time the building was built. Most major brand paint companies have specific pallets for historic buildings. White paint was not used in the periods which most buildings in Aurora were built;

5. Do not paint details or trim in dark colors;

6. Once a brick building has been painted, it generally should always be repainted versus restoration back to the original brick;

7. Repoint brick before painting (if necessary);

8. Reglaze (reputy) windows before painting;

9. Remove all peeling and loose paint; and

10. Consult a paint specialist to determine the best paint for the surface you are painting.
Awnings serve numerous purposes and should be considered by building owners as a wise addition to their structure. On this page these benefits are described.

1. Protect merchandise, interiors, and furnishings from sun damage;
2. Provide shade and shelter from elements for customers and pedestrians;
3. Reduce heat loss and heat gain;
4. Help establish a pedestrian scale - encourage street activities;
5. Can be operable or fixed and are available in a variety of styles;
6. Variety of materials - canvas, plastic and vinyl. Canvas is traditional material, but requires maintenance. Vinyl is durable;
7. Provide opportunity to add color to building:
   • to decide on a color - consider colors that will contribute to variety and diversity of street;
   • if building is rich in detail, use a subtle color for awning;
   • if building has fewer architectural details, use a bright color to enliven facade;
8. Provide an effective space for signage. Advertising on awnings is encouraged. Signage on awnings should be used primarily for identification and be limited to simple designs.
9. Awnings should be weather resistant and vandal resistant:
   • consider durability against wind damage, color fastness (resistance to sun-bleaching), retardant to deterioration caused by rain and snow;
   • certain colors are more likely to fade than others. Dark colors tend to fade faster; and
10. Can be used to “hide” inappropriate store front alterations.

Inappropriate awnings:

In a historic downtown like Aurora’s, there are several types of awnings that are considered inappropriate and out of place. They include:

1. Metal, flat awnings on historic buildings;
2. Back-lit cloth, vinyl, or plastic awnings;
3. Permanently constructed;
Many businesses have benefited greatly by introducing a side or rear entrance. The advantage of a side or rear entrance is that customers, clients, owners, and employees can park behind the building, utilizing typically wasted space. Rear entrances, whether they are used frequently or not, improve the overall character of the building.

Nice rear entrances also make alleys feel safer for pedestrians who usually are frightened to walk in an alley. More often now, parking areas are being developed behind buildings. Adding a rear or side entrance will cater to the people parking in these spaces and can also increase fire safety.

The following are some guidelines on how to improve or add a side or rear entrance.

1. Remove all garbage and debris away from the entrance;
2. Place a small sign by the door along with an open/closed sign;
3. Consider placing a small awning over the doorway to communicate that the door is operable and in use;
4. Windows or loading docks near the entrances should not be boarded up. This condition will indicate that the rear or side door of the building is not operable;
5. Creating a window display in windows along side the entrance will help indicate its purpose as an entrance; and
6. For reasons of security, cash registers, etc. should be located so both doors can be monitored.
Examples of significant improvements to rear entrances.
Signage

Signs are used to draw attention to a business and to help develop the identity and image of that business. In a historic downtown like Aurora’s, signs should be selected wisely to complement the buildings and to avoid a clustered appearance.

In general, signs in Aurora’s downtown should follow these guidelines:

1. Use the smallest sign necessary to convey your message;
2. The sign should not dominate the facade. The shape and scale of the sign should complement the building;
3. Determine who you want to see your sign. If you want to attract pedestrians consider window signs, signs hanging from the entry, and signs above the doorway. Use awning signs and wall mounted signs to attract vehicular traffic;
4. Use materials which reflect and compliment the building materials;
5. If you use neon, it should be used carefully so as not to be overpowering;
6. Backlit plastic signs are not encouraged in the downtown;
7. Keep your message simple. Signs are generally a part of a complex, visual environment; and
8. Avoid flashy colors. These colors should be used on a highway, not in the downtown.

Awning signs are effective for attracting vehicular attention.

Window signs gain the attention of pedestrian traffic.
It is very important to maintain a building's masonry skin, as neglect can lead to accelerated deterioration of the structure resulting in very costly damage. Locating problems with masonry does not require a trained eye, the most serious problems include mortar deterioration and brick decay. However, the origin of the problem and its proper remedies may require the opinion of a professional. Often damage to mortar or to masonry units is caused by water infiltration. It is imperative that masonry be properly drained, including adequate flashing and weeps. Building owners should inspect bricks and mortar for signs of water infiltration. If the mortar has become soft it will allow water to seep into the brick. After this occurs, the protective outer covering of the brick will deteriorate, requiring that the brick be replaced, at risk of compromising the structural integrity of the wall.

When making repairs to deteriorated masonry:

1. Care should be taken to avoid obvious patching. The color, configuration, size of mortar joints and coursing of the existing masonry should be matched as closely as possible. Repointing brick is often all that is required, but the same attention should be given to duplicating the old mortar strength, composition, color and texture. After patching or repointing it is recommended that surface treatments to repel water infiltration be applied.

2. If a masonry facade has historically been painted, the paint should not be removed from the masonry, nor should the type or color of the paint be radically changed. The paint acts as a protectant for the masonry and removing it may cause damage to the brick.

3. Cleaning masonry is only recommended when necessary to halt deterioration to the brick or to remove heavy soiling. If masonry is painted, and is still in good condition, cleaning is acceptable. If masonry is dirty, microorganisms can multiply on the masonry, damaging it over time. The decision to clean masonry is not easy, so seeking advise is recommended.

4. The process of cleaning is very technical and requires a professional. Many methods are available, but not all are appropriate for all masonry. The wrong method can accelerate deterioration. Some appropriate methods available include simple water and detergent cleaning and chemical cleaning.

5. Sandblasting to remove soil and paint from masonry is highly discouraged and unacceptable, as it considerably damages the masonry and mortar. If a cleaning will be done, take care in selecting a contractor with a good reputation. Require that a test patch be executed and allowed to weather for several months before commencing with the project. Consider the effect that cleaning may have in areas that have been patched.
Appendices

A. Award Guidelines
B. Grant Application
The Process:

1) Develop a five member Downtown Improvement Review Committee comprised of:
   • One member appointed by the Aurora EDIT Board;
   • One member appointed by the Economic Development Corporation of Aurora County;
   • One elected official from the City of Aurora; and
   • Two at-large members.
   *The elected officials and at-large members should be appointed by the Mayor.

The following rules are to apply to the Downtown Improvement Review Committee:

• No member shall be pursuing a grant award or own property in the downtown;

• All members shall score the grant applications independently and objectively; and

• No member shall directly assist the applicants in applying for the grants.

2) Upon developing the Downtown Improvement Review Committee a Building Owner Meeting shall be held to:

• Make proper notification of the grant program and building owner meeting;

• Distribute the applications;

• Discuss the Building and Design Guidelines;

• Announce the deadline for grant applications;

• Make clear the scoring criteria for the grants; and

• Answer questions

3) All interested building owners must deliver their application to the Mayor’s office by the close of business on Friday, August 25, 2000. No extensions, or exceptions will be awarded.

4) The Downtown Improvement Review Committee will score grant applications according to the published Scoring Criteria.

5) Announcements of grant awards will be made by September 1, 2000.
6) A press release announcing the grant recipients should be prepared for publishing in the next edition of the newspaper.

7) Work/Construction can begin immediately upon award.

8) All work must be completed by the Construction Deadline, September 1, 2001.

9) The Downtown Improvement Review Committee shall meet by March 1, 2001 to assess project progress. All grant projects will be reviewed for their adherence to the grant rules, expediency of the process and for meeting the project goals.

10) The Downtown Improvement Review Committee shall meet by June 1, 2001 to prepare a Program Report to the Town Council. This report shall address the strengths and weaknesses of the grant program and make a recommendation for continuing, altering, or eliminating the program.

The Grant Application Guidelines:

The following are the Grant Application Guidelines which determine the eligibility and parameters for each applicant.

1) The maximum grant award is two thousand dollars ($2,000);

2) The grant will match a dollar for every dollar invested by the owner up to the maximum allowable grant award of $2,000. All additional costs associated with the improvements are the responsibility of the owner;

3) Only buildings in the defined district are eligible for the 2000 grant program;

4) All privately-owned buildings in the specified district are eligible for a grant. Owners of two or more buildings in the district are eligible for a grant for each building;

5) Decisions by the Downtown Improvement Review Committee are final;

6) All improvements, as described in the grant application, must be completed within twelve (12) months from the award date, or be subject to deobligation by the Downtown Improvement Review Committee. Project extensions and/or modifications may be awarded with the approval of a majority of the Downtown Improvement Review Committee;

7) If work has not begun by March 1, 2001, a report must be submitted to the Downtown Improvement Review Committee describing the reasons for the delay, and offering a revised time schedule for completion. The Downtown Improvement Review
Committee may approve an extension or revoke the grant at that time;

8) A change to the scope of the project outlined in the grant application must be presented to the Downtown Improvement Review Committee for approval. If the change is substantial, a decision will be made by the Downtown Improvement Review Committee to deobligate the grant or allowed to continue;

9) Any deobligated grant project is eligible to reapply for another grant, if or when, additional funds are available;

10) Grant funds awarded to a building owner will be paid to the owner upon substantial completion of the project, at the discretion of the Downtown Improvement Review Committee. The grants will be used to reimburse expenses incurred to complete the project. Material, consultant fees, and labor costs qualify for reimbursement;

11) Proof of all costs, fees and labor must be submitted to the Downtown Improvement Review Committee prior to grant award disbursement; and

12) “Sweat Equity” or donations will not count as matching funds.

Scoring Criteria for the Downtown Improvement Grants:

The following criteria will be used to score all grant applications. The maximum score is 100 points.

1) Amount of matching funds (20 point maximum). The minimum amount for matching funds is one dollar per every grant dollar. If the matching amount exceeds the minimum amount, additional points will be awarded. The below chart describes the scoring for matching fund amounts.

| Minimum match ($1 match per $1 grant) | 10 points |
| Exceeds $2 match per $1 grant | 15 points |
| Exceeds $3 match per $1 grant | 20 points |

2) Readiness to proceed (15 point maximum): Projects that demonstrate that they can be started immediately will be awarded more points than projects that cannot start for several months. Projects that are not ready to proceed have a higher likelihood of not being completed within the twelve (12) month deadline. Furthermore, a goal of this program is to make an impact on the existing conditions as soon as possible. If the improvements can be started and completed within a short time frame, a higher point scoring will be awarded.
Projects that are ready to proceed immediately will be awarded the maximum points. Projects that have considerable steps to accomplish prior to being ready to proceed will be awarded less than the maximum.

3) Demonstration of need (15 point maximum): Additional points will be awarded to building owners who demonstrate a need for the grant due to financial constraints, hardship, or due to emergency. Projects that can be afforded by the owner and that are not in an emergency situation will not score as high.

4) Degree to which the project follows the Building and Design Guidelines (20 point maximum): Building and design guidelines have been developed to steer building improvement decisions, to ensure consistency throughout the downtown, and to ensure quality improvements. These guidelines should be followed where applicable. The degree to which the Building and Design Guidelines are followed will determine the scoring in this category. Projects which disregard the Building and Design Guidelines shall receive few or no points in this category.

5) Discretionary scoring (30 point maximum). The discretionary score will be determined using the following criteria: (A) existing condition of building - buildings which are in deteriorated condition, or are in disrepair will score higher, (B) impact to the overall structure, (C) impact to the overall downtown, (D) impact to the current business or operation in the building, (D) occupancy of building - buildings which are vacant will take priority, and (E) amount of grant request.
Downtown Improvement Grant Application
Aurora, Indiana

Name of owner: ________________________________________________

Address of building: __________________________________________

Mailing address of owner: ______________________________________

General description of proposed project: __________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

Total cost of improvement: ______________________________________

Total grant amount being requested: ______________________________

________________________________________________________________

Time frame of project (include start date, benchmarks in the process, and completion date): ________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

Need for grant funds: __________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

How does this project meet the Building and Design Guidelines?:

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

How will this project improve the overall condition of the building, tenant(s) and the downtown?: __________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________
HIllside
Development
Guidelines
HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The hillsides of Aurora have been identified as an amenity that many of the residents feel are valuable to the character of the city. Therefore it is important to treat them accordingly. The following guidelines are recommended to protect those qualities the hillsides provide and are considered valuable: views, wildlife habitat, and natural surroundings.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

• Minimize the disturbance to the terrain, avoiding no cuts or fills unless they are necessary.

• Preserve and incorporate natural features and vegetation, save significant mature trees, rock formations, and stands of vegetation, particularly in the front yard.

• Mitigate visual impacts, by keeping structures below ridgelines, stepping structures with the slope, and minimizing the height of structures.

• Place utilities and driveways in the same cut.

• Add supplemental natural landscaping to compensate for vegetation losses.
- Design the building to fit the site, rather than modifying the site to fit the building.
- Use architectural features to conform to hillside characteristics, use natural materials, earth tone colors, and broken roof and wall components.

**Calculating Slope**

Slope is usually indicated as a percentage. To calculate slope divide the vertical change in elevation over a horizontal distance and multiply by 100.

\[(\Delta \text{height} / \Delta \text{run}) \times 100 = \% \text{ slope}\]

Determining a slope profile from a topographic map (USGS).

Technique for mapping potentially sensitive slope areas using a topographic map (USGS).

*Illustrations from Marsh, Landscape Planning, 3rd Edition*
• Enhance the streetscape appearance by saving front yard vegetation, staggering setbacks, and use minimal sized driveways that take up grade.

• Avoid slopes of 25% or greater.

• Identify and mitigate geologic and other hazards.

• Use retaining walls as only the last resort, they should not be built to create flat lawns.

• Control excess drainage, soil erosion and sedimentation during and after construction. Use a tiered swale system to reduce runoff.

• Take care during construction to minimize the destruction of natural features.

Example of tiered swales
GRADING

Good grading design must be exercised for safety as well as aesthetics and should incorporation the following measures:

1. Utilization of land form or contour measures to produce cut-and-fill slopes compatible with existing land character. Continuous unbroken slope surfaces that are visible from offsite are discouraged.

2. Graded slopes contoured by varying slope increments and undulating banks vertically and horizontally.

3. Varied cut-and-fill banks and drainage terrace spacing to alleviate monotony and allow random landscaping.

4. Berms at top of slopes and other locations used to screen, vary profile, and insure drainage away from slopes.

5. A drainage plan devised to direct flow to streets or approved collector systems that will be maintained by a public agency or maintenance district.
6. Varied pad elevations above street level to avoid appearance of monotonous, flat, level, pads.
7. Creation of views from hillside sites.
8. Cuts-and-fills in excess of 50 feet depth are discouraged.

**ROADS AND SIDEWALKS**

The roadway should be designed in a manner to minimize grading by following existing contours.

Preserve existing trees and natural features by dividing or routing roads and sidewalks around them.

Use common driveways were practicable and desirable.

Install sidewalks on one side of the road in areas of low pedestrian travel.

**MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE HEIGHTS**

To determine the slope of a site: measure from outer edge to out edge of the site, measure from one side to another in the direction of the steepest slope.

Level lots – Gradient less than 20 percent – maximum allowable height is 30 feet.

Up slope lots – Gradient equal to or greater than 20 percent – maximum allowable height is 36 feet.

Down slope lots – Gradient equal to or greater than 20 percent – maximum allowable height is 40 feet.
Operations Manual
Plan Commission Purpose:

A. To improve the health, safety, convenience, and welfare of the citizens of Aurora and to plan for the future development of the community.

Members:

A. Plan Commission consists of seven (7) members, as follows:

   (1) The City Council appoints three (3) persons, who must be elected or appointed city officials or employees in the city government, as members.

   (2) The Mayor appoints four (4) citizen members, no more than two (2) may be from the same political party.

B. Each member should be knowledgeable about the social, economic, agricultural, and industrial problems of the area, and the member's interest in the development and integration of the area.

C. A citizen member may not hold other elective or appointive office in city, county, or state government.

D. A citizen member must be a resident of the jurisdictional area of the plan commission.

Rulings:

A. A quorum consists of a majority of the entire membership of the plan commission.

Member Positions:

A. At the first regular meeting in each year the commission elects from its members:

   (1) a president; and

   (2) a vice president who may act as president during the absence of the president

B. Plan Commission appoints and determines duty of a secretary:

   (1) secretary is not required to be a member of the commission.

Goals for the Aurora Plan Commission:

• Serve to facilitate and coordinate groups and individuals in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and its policies, projects and programs;

• Continue to evaluate progress towards achieving the goals and implementing the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and adjust and refine the plan as appropriate;

• Work with the Aurora City Council and appropriate other agencies to facilitate effective and efficient implementation of the Comprehensive Plan;

• Ensure that all planning related documents and programs are coordinated; and

• Acknowledge positive actions of property owners, businesses and citizens.
Meetings:
A. Decide and fix time for regular meetings each month.
B. Minutes must be kept for each meeting, filed, and are public record.
C. Special meetings:
   (1) may be called by the president or by two (2) members of the commission upon written request to the secretary.
   (2) At least three (3) days before the special meeting the secretary must send a written notice of the time and place of the meeting to all members. Written notice of a special meeting is not required if:
      (a) the date, time, and place of a special meeting are fixed in a regular meeting; &
      (b) all members of the commission are present at that regular meeting.

General Duties:
A. Make recommendations to the City Council concerning:
   (1) the adoption of a comprehensive plan and amendments to the comprehensive plan;
   (2) the adoption or text amendment of:
      (a) an initial zoning ordinance;
      (b) a replacement zoning ordinance; and
      (c) a subdivision control ordinance;
   (3) the adoption or amendment of a PUD district ordinance; and
   (4) zone map changes.
B.Render decisions concerning and approve plats, replats, and amendments to plats of subdivisions.
C. Render decisions concerning development plans and amendments to development plans.

Numbering/Renumbering and Street Naming/Renaming:
A. Assign street numbers to lots and structures;
B. Renumber lots and structures; or
C. Prescribe a numbering system for lots and structures.
D. If streets are named or renamed or lots and structures are numbered or renumbered, the commission must notify:

(1) the circuit court clerk or board of registration;

(2) the administrator of the enhanced emergency telephone system, if any;

(3) the United States Postal Service; and

(4) any person or body that the commission considers appropriate to receive notice; no later than the last day of the month following the month in which the action is taken.

Committees:

A. May establish advisory committees of citizens interested in problems of planning and zoning; the commission specifies the terms of the advisory committee members and its purposes.

B. Each advisory committee shall:

(1) study the subject and problems specified by the commission and recommend to the commission additional problems in need of study;

(2) advise the commission concerning how the subject and problems relate particularly to different areas and groups in the community; and

(3) if invited by the commission to do so, sit with and participate, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the commission, when subjects of mutual concern are discussed.

C. An advisory committee reports only to the commission and make inquiries and reports only on the subject and problems specified by the commission's resolution establishing the committee.

Fees:

A. The plan commission may establish a schedule of reasonable fees to defray the administrative costs connected with:

(1) processing and hearing administrative appeals and petitions for rezoning, special exceptions, special uses, contingent uses, and variances;

(2) issuing permits; and

(3) other official actions taken.
Approval Process for a Comprehensive Plan

A. Plan commission prepares the comprehensive plan.

B. Approval process:

1. give notice and hold one (1) or more public hearings on the plan;

2. publish a schedule stating the times and places of the hearing or hearings in a local daily newspaper or other qualified publications. The schedule must state the time and place of each hearing, and state where the entire plan is on file and may be examined in its entirety for at least ten (10) days before the hearing;

3. after the public hearings have been held, the commission may approve;

4. the plan commission now certifies the comprehensive plan to the City Council;

5. after certification of the comprehensive plan, the City Council may adopt a resolution approving, rejecting, or amending the plan. The resolution requires only a majority vote of the City Council, and is not subject to approval or veto by the executive of the adopting unit, and the executive is not required to sign it;

6. the comprehensive plan is not effective until the City Council approves it;

7. the City Council clerk is to place one (1) copy of the plan on file in the recorders office.

C. Approval of the rejection or amendment by the City Council

1. the plan is returned with a written statement of why it was rejected or amended by the City Council to the plan commission for consideration;

2. the plan commission has sixty (60) days to consider the rejection or amendment and to file a report to the City Council (an extension may be granted by the City Council);

3. if the commission approves the amendment, the comprehensive plan as amended is effective the date the commission filed its report with the City Council.

D. Disapproval of the rejection or amendment by the City Council

1. the City Council's action of rejection or amendment stands only if confirmed by another resolution of the City Council.
E. Fails to file report on time

(1) if the plan commission fails to file a report within the specified time, the action of the City Council in rejecting or amending will be final.

Adopting a Comprehensive Plan
Zoning Ordinance:

A. A comprehensive plan must have been approved prior to the adoption of a zoning ordinance.

B. Purpose:

(1) securing adequate light, air, convenience of access, and safety from fire, flood, and other danger;

(2) lessening or avoiding congestion in public ways; and

(3) promoting the public health, safety, comfort, morals, convenience, and general welfare.

C. When it adopts a zoning ordinance, the City Council shall:

(1) designate the geographic area over which the plan commission can exercise jurisdiction; and

(2) incorporate ordinance zone maps.

D. Districts:

(1) Establish one (1) or more districts, which may be for agricultural, commercial, industrial, residential, special, or unrestricted uses and any subdivision or combination of these uses. A district may include geographic areas that are not contiguous. A geographic area may be subject to more than one (1) district.

(2) In each district, regulate how real property is developed, maintained, and used. This regulation may include:

(a) requirements for the area of front, rear, and side yards, courts, other open spaces, and total lot area;

(b) requirements for site conditions, signs, and nonstructural improvements, such as parking lots, ponds, fills, landscaping, and utilities;

(c) provisions for the treatment of uses, structures, or conditions that are in existence when the zoning ordinance takes effect;

(d) restrictions on development in areas prone to flooding;

(e) requirements to protect the historic and architectural heritage of the community;

(f) requirements for structures, such as location, height, area, bulk, and floor space;

(g) restrictions on the kind and intensity of uses;
(h) performance standards for the emission of noises, gases, heat, vibration, or particulate matter into the air or ground or across lot lines;

(i) standards for population density and traffic circulation; and

(j) any other provisions that are necessary to implement the purposes of the zoning ordinance.

E. Zoning Maps:

(1) When it prepares a proposal to initially adopt a zoning ordinance for a jurisdiction, the plan commission shall also prepare zone maps. The purpose of the zone maps is to indicate the districts into which the incorporated areas and unincorporated areas, if any, are divided.

F. Adopting a zoning ordinance:

(1) The plan commission must initiate the proposal.

(2) The plan commission must prepare the proposal.

(3) The plan commission and City Council must pay reasonable regard to the following when adopting a zoning ordinance:

(a) the comprehensive plan;

(b) current conditions and the character of current structures and uses in each district;

(c) the most desirable use for which the land in each district is adapted;

(d) the conservation of property values throughout the jurisdiction; and

(e) responsible development and growth.

(4) The plan commission must give notice and hold a public hearing.

(5) The plan commission must certify the proposal to the City Council by a favorable recommendation.

(6) The City Council must consider the proposal and governs whether the proposal is adopted or defeated.

(a) At the first regular meeting of the City Council after the plan commission certifies the proposal, the City Council shall either:

(1) adopt, reject, or amend the proposal; or

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<th>Adopting a Zoning Ordinance</th>
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<td>☐ Notification</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Public hearing</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Favorable recommendation from plan commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Recommendation filed 10 days prior to hearing</td>
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<td>☐ City Council votes on w/i 90 days</td>
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<td>☐ City council adopts</td>
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<td>☐ City Council fails to act w/i 90 days</td>
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<td>☐ Ordinance adopted</td>
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<td>☐ City council rejects or amends ordinance</td>
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<td>☐ Ordinance returned to plan commission w/ written explanation</td>
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<td>☐ Plan commission considers w/i 45 days</td>
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<td>☐ Approves amendment or fails to act</td>
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<td>☐ Ordinance stands as amended by city council</td>
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<td>☐ Disapproves of amendment</td>
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<td>☐ City council must confirm original disapproval w/i 45 days (ordinance defeated)</td>
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<td>☐ City council fails to act (ordinance adopted)</td>
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(2) decide to further consider the proposal, in which case the proposal may be scheduled for a further hearing at any regular or special meeting of the City Council within ninety (90) days after certification. In any event, the City Council shall vote on the proposal within ninety (90) days after the plan commission certifies the proposal.

(b) The recommendation of the plan commission concerning the proposal must be on file in the commission's office for public examination for at least ten (10) days before any hearing. On completion of the hearing, the City Council shall consider the proposal.

(7) If the City Council adopts the proposal, the ordinance takes effect as other ordinances of the City Council.

(8) If the City Council fails to act on the proposal within ninety (90) days after certification with a favorable recommendation, the ordinance takes effect as if it had been adopted (as certified) ninety (90) days after certification.

(9) If the proposal is adopted, the plan commission must print (and publish, if required) the zoning ordinance.

G. Rejection or amendment by City Council:

(1) If the City Council rejects or amends the proposal, it shall be returned to the plan commission for its consideration, with a written statement of the reasons for the rejection or amendment. The commission has forty-five (45) days in which to consider the rejection or amendment and report to the City Council as follows:

(a) If the commission approves the amendment or fails to act within the forty-five (45) day period, the ordinance stands as passed by the City Council as of the date of the filing of the commission's report of approval with the City Council or the end of the forty-five (45) day period.

(b) If the commission disapproves the rejection or amendment, the action of the City Council on the original rejection or amendment stands only if confirmed by another vote of the City Council within forty-five (45) days after the commission certifies its disapproval. If the City Council fails to confirm its action under this subdivision, then the ordinance takes effect.

H. Amendment of adopted zoning ordinance:

(1) The plan commission may initiate the proposal.

(2) The plan commission must give notice and hold a public hearing.
(3) The plan commission must certify the proposal to the City Council.

(4) The City Council must consider the proposal and governs whether the proposal is adopted or defeated.

(5) If the proposal is adopted, the plan commission must print the amendments to the zoning ordinance.

I. Change zone maps of adopted ordinance:

(1) The proposal may be initiated either:

(a) by the plan commission; or

(b) by a petition signed by property owners who own at least fifty percent (50%) of the land involved.

(2) The plan commission or petitioners must prepare the proposal.

(3) The plan commission must give notice and hold a public hearing.

(4) The plan commission must certify the proposal to the City Council.

(5) The City Council must consider the proposal and governs whether the proposal is adopted or defeated.

(6) If the proposal is adopted, the plan commission must update the zone maps that it keeps available.

Subdivision Control Ordinance:

A. The ordinance is adopted, amended, or repealed in the same manner as a zoning ordinance. After the subdivision control ordinance has been adopted an da certified copy of the ordinance has been filed with the recorder, the plan commission has exclusive control over the approval of all plats and replats involving land covered by the subdivision control ordinance.

B. In determining whether to grant primary approval of a plat, the plan commission will determine if the plat or subdivision qualifies for primary approval under the standards prescribed by the subdivision control ordinance.

C. The subdivision control ordinance must specify the standards by which the commission determines whether a plat qualifies for primary approval. The ordinance must include standards for:

(1) minimum width, depth, and area of lots in the subdivision;
Approval Process for a Primary Plat

☐ Petitioner submits application and pays application fee
☐ Hearing date set w/i 30 days after received application
☐ Notification of hearing 10 days prior to hearing
  ☐ Applicant - in writing
  ☐ In local newspaper
  ☐ Interested parties, as determined by plan commission
☐ Approves plat if complies with subdivision control ordinance
  ☐ Make written findings and decision
  ☐ Sign decision
☐ Disapproves plat
  ☐ Make written findings and decision
  ☐ Sign decision
  ☐ Send copy to applicant

(2) public way widths, grades, curves, and the coordination of subdivision public ways with current and planned public ways; and

(3) the extension of water, sewer, and other municipal services.

D. The ordinance may also include standards for the allocation of areas to be used as public ways, parks, schools, public and semipublic buildings, homes, businesses, and utilities.

E. The standards fixed in the subdivision control ordinance may not be lower than the minimum standards prescribed in the zoning ordinance for a similar use.

F. As a condition of primary approval of a plat, the commission may specify:

(1) the manner in which public ways shall be laid out, graded, and improved;

(2) a provision for water, sewage, and other utility services;

(3) a provision for lot size, number, and location;

(4) a provision for drainage design; and

(5) a provision for other services as specified in the subdivision control ordinance.

Primary Plat Approval:

A. Petitioner must submit a written application for approval.

  (1) A fee must be paid upon filing an application, which had been set by the plan commission and is included in the fee schedule.

B. The plan commission shall review the application for technical conformity with the standards in the subdivision ordinance.

C. Within thirty (30) days after application has been filed, a date for the hearing before the plan commission shall be set and provide notice of hearing:

  (1) notify the applicant in writing;

  (2) give notice of the hearing by publication in local newspaper of other qualified publication;

  (3) provide due notice to interested parties at least ten (10) days prior to hearing.
(a) plan commission determines who are the interested parties, how notice is to be given to them, and who is required to give that notice.

D. If after the hearing, the plan commission determines that the application and plat comply with the standards in the subdivision control ordinance it shall make written findings and a decision granting primary approval to the plat. The decision must be signed by an official designated in the subdivision control ordinance.

E. If after the hearing, the plan commission disapproves the plat, is shall make written findings that set forth its reasons and a decision denying primary approval and shall provide the applicant with a copy. This decision must be signed by the official designated in the subdivision control ordinance.

Appeal of Primary Plat Decision:

A. An appeal may not be taken directly to court until all administrative remedies have been exhausted.

B. An applicant or other interested party may appeal to the plan commission the primary approval or disapproval of a plat, or the imposition of a condition on primary approval by the plat committee.

C. A notice of appeal must be filed with the commission within ten (10) days after the action of the plat committee.

D. However, if the plan commission grants primary approval for the subdivision of land without public notice and hearing, an interested party may appeal the approval to the plan commission by filing a notice of appeal with the plan commission not more than ten (10) days after a copy of the plat committee's action is mailed to the interested party.

E. The primary approval by the commission of a plat must be certified on behalf of the commission by an official designated in the subdivision control ordinance.

F. The primary approval or disapproval of a plat by the plan commission or the imposition of a condition on primary approval is a final decision of the plan commission.
Secondary Plat Approval:

A. Secondary approval may be granted to a plat for a subdivision in which the improvements and installments have not been completed as required by the subdivision control ordinance, if:

(1) the applicant provides a bond, or other proof of financial responsibility as prescribed by the City Council in the subdivision control ordinance, that,

(a) is an amount determined by the plan commission or plat committee to be sufficient to complete the improvements and installations in compliance with the ordinance; and

(b) provides surety satisfactory to the plan commission or plat committee; or

(2) with respect to the installation or extension of water, sewer, or other utility service:

(a) the applicant shows by written evidence that it has entered into a contract with the political subdivision or utility providing the service; and

(b) the plan commission determines based on written evidence that the contract provides satisfactory assurance that the service will be installed or extended in compliance with the subdivision control ordinance.

B. Any money received from a bond or otherwise shall be used only for making the improvements and installments for which the bond or other proof of financial responsibility was provided. This money may be used for these purposes without appropriation. The improvement or installation must conform to the standards provided for such improvements or installations by the municipality in which it is located, as well as the subdivision control ordinance.

C. The plan commission shall, by rule, prescribe the procedure for determining whether all improvements and installments have been constructed and completed as required by the subdivision control ordinance. The rule must designate the person or persons responsible for making the determination.

D. The plan commission may grant secondary approval of a plat.

E. Secondary approval may be granted, after expiration of the time provided for appeal.

F. No notice or hearing is required, and the provisions of this series concerning notice and hearing do not apply to secondary approvals.
G. A plat of a subdivision may not be filed with the auditor, and the recorder may not record it, unless it has been granted secondary approval and signed and certified by the official designated in the subdivision control ordinance governing the area. The filing and recording of the plat is without legal effect unless approved by the commission.

Order of Presentation*:

A. Presentation of the application, petition, or request.
B. Presentation by the applicant.
C. Questions directed to the applicant by commission members.
D. Presentations by other proponents of the application, petition, or request.
E. Questions directed to the proponents by commission members.
F. Presentations of opponents of the application, petition, or request.
G. Questions directed to the opponents by commission members.
H. Restatement of the application, petition, or request.
I. Deliberation of the commission.
J. Decision of the commission.

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

Members:

A. Consists of five (5) members as follows:
   (1) Three (3) citizen members appointed by the mayor, of whom one
       (1) must be a member of the plan commission and two (2) must
       not be members of the plan commission.
   (2) One (1) citizen member appointed by the fiscal body of the
       municipality, who must not be a member of the plan commission.
   (3) One (1) member appointed by the plan commission from the plan
       commission's membership, who must be a citizen member of the
       plan commission other than the member appointed under
       subdivision (1).

B. None of the members of a board of zoning appeals may hold other
   elective or appointive office in municipal, county, or state government.

C. A member must be a resident of the jurisdictional area of the board.

Rulings:

A. A member may not participate in a hearing or decision concerning a
   zoning matter in which the member has a direct or indirect financial
   interest.

B. Enter the following in the records:
   (1) the member has been disqualified from participating in the hearing
       and decision; and
   (2) the name of an alternate member, if any, who participates in the
       hearing or decision in place of the member.

C. A quorum consists of a majority of the entire membership of the BZA.

Positions of Members:

A. At the first meeting of each year, a chairman and vice chairman shall
   be elected.

B. The vice chairman may act as chairman during the absence of the
   chairman.

C. The board appoints a secretary.
Meetings:

A. Plan commission provides for suitable facilities for holding hearing and for preserving records, documents, and accounts of the BZA.

B. Minutes of all proceeding must be kept which includes the vote on all actions taken.

C. All minutes and records are public record.

Rules:

A. The BZA may adopt rules that must not be in conflict with the zoning ordinance:

(1) the filing of appeals;

(2) the application for variances, special exceptions, special uses, contingent uses, and conditional uses;

(3) the giving of notice;

(4) the conduct of hearings; and

(5) the determination of whether a variance application is for a variance of use or for a variance from the development standards.

Powers:

A. A board of zoning appeals shall hear and determine appeals from and review:

(1) any order, requirement, decision, or determination made by an administrative official, hearing officer, or staff member under the zoning ordinance;

(2) any order, requirement, decision, or determination made by an administrative board or other body except a plan commission in relation to the enforcement of the zoning ordinance; or

(3) any order, requirement, decision, or determination made by an administrative board or other body except a plan commission in relation to the enforcement of an ordinance adopted under this chapter requiring the procurement of an improvement location or occupancy permit.
Cases/Hearings:

A. A board of zoning appeals shall approve or deny all:
   (1) special exceptions;
   (2) special uses;
   (3) contingent uses; and
   (4) conditional uses;

from the terms of the zoning ordinance, but only in the classes of cases or
in the particular situations specified in the zoning ordinance. The board
may impose reasonable conditions as a part of its approval.

BZA Hearing:

A. The board of zoning appeals shall fix a reasonable time for the hearing
   of administrative appeals, exceptions, uses, and variances.

B. Public notice and due notice to interested parties shall be given at least
   ten (10) days before the date set for the hearing.

C. The party taking the appeal, or applying for the exception, use, or
   variance, may be required to assume the cost of public notice and due
   notice to interested parties. At the hearing, each party may appear in
   person, by agent, or by attorney.

D. The board determines who are interested parties, how notice is to be
   given to them, and who is required to give that notice.

E. Other persons may appear and present relevant evidence.

F. A person may not communicate with any member of the board before
   the hearing with intent to influence the member’s action on a matter
   pending before the board, not less than five (5) days before the
   hearing.

G. The board may require any party adverse to any pending petition to
   enter a written appearance specifying the party’s name and address. If
   the written appearance is entered more than four (4) days before the
   hearing, the board may also require the petitioner to furnish each
   adverse party with a copy of the petition and a plot plan of the
   property involved.
Approval of Use Variances:

A. The board may impose reasonable conditions as a part of its approval.

B. A variance may be approved under this section only upon a determination in writing that:

(1) the approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community;

(2) the use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner;

(3) the need for the variance arises from some condition peculiar to the property involved;

(4) the strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will constitute an unnecessary hardship if applied to the property for which the variance is sought; and

(5) the approval does not interfere substantially with the comprehensive plan.

Approval of Variances from Development Standards:

A. A board of zoning appeals shall approve or deny variances from the development standards (such as height, bulk, or area) of the zoning ordinance. A variance may be approved under this section only upon a determination in writing that:

(1) the approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community;

(2) the use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner; and

(3) the strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property. However, the zoning ordinance may establish a stricter standard than the "practical difficulties" standard prescribed by this subdivision.

Append of BZA Ruling:

A. An appeal filed with the board of zoning appeals must specify the grounds of the appeal and must be filed within such time and in such form as may be prescribed by the board of zoning appeals by rule.
B. The administrative official, hearing officer, administrative board, or other body from whom the appeal is taken shall, on the request of the board of zoning appeals, transmit to it all documents, plans, and papers constituting the record of the action from which an appeal was taken.

C. Certified copies of the documents, plans, and papers constituting the record may be transmitted for purposes of subsection (B).

D. Upon appeal, the board may reverse, affirm, or modify the order, requirement, decision, or determination appealed from. For this purpose, the board has all the powers of the official, officer, board, or body from which the appeal is taken.

E. The board shall make a decision on any matter that it is required to hear:

   (1) at the meeting at which that matter is first presented; or
   (2) at the conclusion of the hearing on that matter, if it is continued.

F. Within five (5) days after making any decision, the board of zoning appeals shall file in the office of the board a copy of its decision.

Commitments:

A. In the case of a petition or an application for a:

   (1) special exception;
   (2) special use;
   (3) contingent use;
   (4) conditional use; or
   (5) variance;

from the terms of the zoning ordinance, a board of zoning appeals may permit or require the owner of a parcel of property to make a written commitment concerning the use or development of that parcel.

B. The board of zoning appeals may:

   (1) adopt rules governing the creation, form, recording, modification, enforcement, and termination of commitments; and

   (2) adopt rules designating which specially affected persons and classes of specially affected persons are entitled to enforce commitments.
C. Commitments are to be recorded in the office of the county recorder and take effect upon the approval of the exception, use, or variance. Unless modified or terminated by the board of zoning appeals, a commitment is binding on:

(1) the owner of the parcel;

(2) a subsequent owner of the parcel; and

(3) a person who acquires an interest in the parcel.

D. A commitment is binding on the owner of the parcel even if it is unrecorded. However, an unrecorded commitment is binding on a subsequent owner or other person acquiring an interest in the parcel only if that subsequent owner or other person has actual notice of the commitment. A commitment may be modified or terminated only by a decision of the board made at a public hearing after notice as provided by rule.

E. By permitting or requiring commitments, a board of zoning appeals does not obligate itself to approve or deny any request.

F. Conditions imposed on the granting of an exception, a use, or a variance are not subject to the rules applicable to commitments.

G. This section does not affect the validity of any covenant, easement, equitable servitude, or other land use restriction created in accordance with law.

Order of Presentation*

A. Application presented including location of affected area

B. Applicant presents evidence.

C. Those in objection then presents.

D. Applicant allowed a rebuttal.

E. Those in objection allowed counter-rebuttal.

F. Board members may direct questions to all who spoke.

G. Following questioning and discussion, board makes a decision for approval or disapproval.