“The Fox River is a clear stream of water, about twenty rods wide, having a hard limestone bottom, from two to three feet deep, a brisk current, and generally fordable. On its banks, and on some other streams, we occasionally found lodges of limestone; but other than that, we found no rocks in the State” (Amos Anderson Parker, 1835).
Our Vision:
The City of Aurora’s Riverfront Vision is:

♦ To identify Aurora’s Riverfront as the economic engine of our future;
♦ To revitalize and restore the health of the Fox River as it flows through Aurora;
♦ To return the river and its banks to their rightful, definitive place as the heart and center of our city;
♦ To maximize our tax base, facilitate job growth, and create a vibrant riverfront community;
♦ To enhance public access and recreational uses of existing and planned open space along the river; and
♦ To optimize signature views of the river for travelers, whether motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, or paddlers.

We will accomplish the goals set forth in this vision with honor and respect for the environment and for the significant natural and cultural resource that the Fox River represents. We recognize the importance of balancing all the goals stated above for the long-term benefit of our City.
Vision
Introduction:

The Fox River has historically been an important economic engine for our city. As global and national economic realities have changed over time, so, too, have the expectations of, and dreams for, American rivers. Aurora’s section of the Fox is evolving from its 19th century role as a home to industry, a channel for transportation, and a place to dump the waste of our society, to a 21st century community centerpiece, functioning as a lively setting for public gatherings and celebrations, to be used and appreciated by residents and visitors. The Fox of the future is destined to be a river which provides:

♦ Bicycle/pedestrian connections and trails
♦ Open space, inviting vistas, and urban wilderness
♦ A setting for mixed-use, environmentally-sustainable development
♦ Places where people can live, work, study, relax, play, dine and shop in the heart of our city.

As we view the Fox River in Aurora with new eyes, we envision this resource as a complete and complex living, dynamic system serving humans, plant life, and wildlife in ways that are compatible and beneficial to all. The Fox River has been our “back door” workhorse in the past; the river of the future will be the front door to our community, working for us, and with us, in an innovative and exciting fashion.
The geographic boundaries of our area of exploration are as follows:

♦ The Fox Riverfront Vision Area runs along the Fox River corridor, from the Sullivan Road bridge south on Lake Street to New York Avenue; then over to River Street to the Ashland Avenue bridge; then along Route 25 to the village limits of North Aurora.

See Map One for an illustration of the study area.

It is the City of Aurora’s intention to partner with property owners, developers, and our residents in refining and attaining the goals set forth in this Fox Riverfront Vision. We believe that the residents of Aurora understand that the Fox River must be protected as we move forward with new and different types of development along this corridor. It is our hope that the Fox Riverfront Vision will serve as the catalyst for a dialogue within our community about how we might strike a balance between development and protection of this important resource, to the benefit of both the human and natural worlds.
The History of Aurora’s Riverfront:
By John Jaros, Executive Director of the Aurora Historical Society

The Fox River has attracted human settlement for hundreds, and even thousands of years, beginning with the Prehistoric Native Americans who settled along its shores.

In more recent history, the Potawatomi tribe occupied the region. In the early 1800s, the powerful chief, Waubonsie and his people made their home along the Fox River in what is now Aurora, spending their winters south on the Illinois and Kankakee, and returning in the spring.

For the Potawatomi, the river was an excellent means of travel, and abundantly stocked with fish, a good source of food. It also nurtured their crops: the islands in the river were covered with fields of Indian corn, cultivated by the women. Forested areas near the river provided ample food and game. Great tracks of timber could be found near the river, like the Big Woods, which stretched on the east side of the river from Aurora for several miles north —these were denuded by the settlers within a decade. To the west, of the river, stretching for miles, one could find open prairie.

When the first white settlers arrived in the area from New York and other eastern states in 1834, the Potawatomi had signed a treaty ceding their lands, and were preparing to move west, which they did in 1835-36. Quite a thriving trade sprang up between the Indians and the first settlers, the Indians trading fish for bread, tobacco, and other goods.

Many of the early settlements on the Fox began as mill towns. The earliest settlers threw up rude dams all along the river from Montgomery to Elgin, harnessing waterpower for sawmills and gristmills. In what became downtown Aurora, it was two brothers from upstate New York, millwrights Joseph and Samuel McCarty
who found an ideal spot to build first a sawmill, and two years later, a gristmill. By mid-1837, there were four sawmills in operation between Aurora and North Aurora. Settlers from the east were soon attracted to this well-watered land that also boasted plenty of timber and fertile prairies.

McCarty Mill, later Aurora, began as two separate settlements on either side of the river. The village of Aurora was located on the east side, while the village of West Aurora was located on the west side. When the two joined as the City of Aurora in 1857, there was still much rivalry, and Stolp’s Island, in the center, became the natural neutral point. There, the City Hall, Police Department, Post Office, and Library were built. In the early days, most of the development on the island occurred along either side of the present-day Downer place. The north end of the island was not used, having a large millrace and swimming hole located there, and the south end was grazing land.

The first bridge over the Fox was a simple wooden structure built by McCarty Brothers in 1836. It stretched just from the east side of the river to Stolp Island (at what is now Galena). It was washed out in the spring floods the following season, as was its successor; for a period of years, a ferry was the only way across the river in Aurora. Throughout the 19th Century, flooding was always a potential problem. Very frequently, a sudden thaw during a severe winter, usually in February or March, would send torrents of water and huge floes of ice destroying buildings and bridges in its path. Major floods occurred in 1849, 1857, 1868, and 1887. Because much of Aurora lies on high ground on either side of the river, most of the damage was confined to the island, the riverbanks, and “the flats” closest to the river.

Aurora has sometimes been called the “City of Bridges,” and has seen over the years, bridges of every style and every material, from wood, to iron, and finally, to concrete in the 20th century. For decades, just one bridge stretched across the river in downtown Aurora, crossing the island and connecting the east and a west portion of what is now...
Downer Place. Additional bridges were added—the first New York Street Bridge in 1883, and the first across North Avenue. East Galena to the island was built in 1914, the west portion in 1926. Also in 1926, the Benton bridges were built. Starting with the reconstruction of the 60-year-old New York Street Memorial Bridge in 1991, most of Aurora’s deteriorating concrete bridges have been rebuilt. The exception is the oldest, the bridge across Downer, which was built nearly 100 years ago, between 1908 and 1910.

Early industry relied on water for power, and the Fox did its job. Besides the sawmills and gristmills, many early industries chose to locate along the river and often utilized waterpower by cutting channels or millraces—Stolp’s Aurora Woolen Mills (opened 1837) and Aurora Silver Plate (opened 1871) being two examples. When factories changed over to steam and electric power, proximity to water was still important, but dumping of waste was also common. It is said that one of the islands north of New York Street is actually comprised of slag from the old American Well Works Company, which operated at the site from 1869 until the 1930s. Other industries located on or near the river in close proximity to downtown Aurora included Hoyt’s American Woodworking Factory (1855), the Aurora Cotton Mills (1883), and the Aurora Brewery (1886).

For decades, in the days before electric refrigeration, ice was harvested from the river. The river might freeze to a thickness of anywhere between nine and 30 inches thick in a hard winter. The ice was first scored in a grid pattern by horse and “ice plow,” then sawn out in blocks. The ice was stored in long, low icehouses near the riverbanks, often cork-lined. The ice was packed in sawdust to inhibit melting, and stored for summer use, when it was delivered in horse-drawn ice wagons for home use in wooden, tin-lined iceboxes.
Also in the winter, ice-skating on the river had several periods of popularity over the decades of the 19th and early 20th centuries. In the mid-1910s, there was a veritable “Skating Frenzy” and the “City Skating Pond” was maintained on the river between the north tip of the island and the old New York Street Bridge. Racing of sleighs and cutters on the frozen river was also an occasional attraction.

The river has long been a place of leisure activities. Fishing, of course has been popular along the banks of the river, and near the Aurora Hotel below the west dam. Boating of all sorts was important. In the 1890s, a number of small steam powered excursion boats plied the waters of the Fox. The small rowboats popular in the 19th century became motorboats in the 1940s and 1950s. For decades, Aurora has been the end destination of the annual Mid-America Canoe Race, and in the 1980s and 1990s, hosted annual powerboat races. Foxfest, along the west bank of the river, was a popular annual festival of that era. And, being cognizant of the leisure uses of the Fox, public officials ensured the installation of a sometimes-controversial canoe chute along the west bank in the early 1990s.

Hurd’s Island, near North Avenue, has been an important site of sporting activities. The Aurora Zouaves, the champion military drill team, was known to practice there in the 1890s. In the 1890s and early 1900s, it was a baseball ground in the summers for the local semi-pro teams. From 1893 to 1920, it was the site of the annual East High-West High Thanksgiving Day Football game, which thousands flocked to. Aurora’s first official Children’s Playground, complete with seesaws and other amenities, was located on the island from 1911 through the 1930s. And during Aurora’s Centennial Celebration of 1937, a complete Pioneer Village with log cabins was recreated there. Today, soccer fields dominate the island.
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Further south, in Montgomery, Riverview Park (later Fox River Park) operated from 1899 until the early 1900s. The park offered carnival amusements, rides, music, food, and dancing; a ball field where
pro baseball games were played; plus camping, canoeing, and a paddle wheel boat.

In 1947, the Fox Valley Park District formed, in an effort to set aside lands, often adjacent to the river, for public leisure purposes. Today, the district owns land along the river and also far from it, and the old railroad right-of-ways on either side of the river and traversing our city have been converted to bike trails.

The function and appearance of Aurora’s downtown, and especially the Stolp Island core, have changed dramatically since the 19th century. The island has been built up extensively. As noted earlier, most of the early development on the island was directly north and south of Downer. The library was located on the south end of the island in 1904, and the north end was not developed until after 1913, when the millrace and the old Swimming Hole were filled. The Aurora Hotel (now North Island Apartments) was built on the site of the old Swimming Hole, while Stolp Avenue north of Downer covers part of the old millrace.

In general, the downtown buildings turned their backs on the river, while their polished fronts provide beauty and variety to the streetscapes. Some exceptions can be found. For example, the west side of the Aurora Hotel made use of a river vista. And the old Fox Promenade (that ran along the west channel, connecting the Fox and Rialto Theaters between Downer and Galena), while enclosed, nevertheless overhung and looked out on the river. Still, the river as an amenity was considered so unimportant that some downtown development designs of the early 1960s planned to cover large parts of the river for parking. And north of the downtown, a number of riverfront properties continued to be used for industrial or other business use.
In the mid-1980s, the downtown FoxWalk concept came into being, based in part on the San Antonio Riverwalk. Early plans projected a two-level Riverwalk in the downtown along all sides of the island and the banks on either side; “North Point,” the flat parking area projecting north of the New York Street bridge on the river, was targeted to hold a kind of outdoor amphitheater. Completion of the whole would take decades. The first segment, between Downer and Benton along the east edge of the island, was dedicated in the Summer of 1992.

At the same time, riverboat gaming had come to Illinois and, instead of an amphitheater, the Hollywood Casino began constructing their docking facility on the North Point adjacent to the New York Street Bridge, along with a large parking deck on the west edge of the river. The casino, with its two massive boats, opened in June 1993. As part of their development agreement, the casino completed a portion of the Riverwalk between Galena and New York on the east edge of the island. Since then, Hollywood has grown, building additional parking facilities, pedestrian bridges, while expanding their dockside facility and phasing out the boats.

Now, Aurora is on the verge of significant development on either side of the river on the south end of its downtown. These developers will help expand the Riverwalk and develop the riverbanks for living, commerce, and leisure. At the same time, there has been a movement up and down the Fox River Valley for elimination of dams, returning the river more to its natural state. In Aurora, the North Avenue Dam was the first targeted and was taken out in late winter 2006.

These major changes will drastically change the face of Aurora’s downtown, and at the same time, the use and appearance of its riverfront areas.
The Riverfront as it is Today:

The Fox River as it runs through the City of Aurora is unique in landscape, uses and stakeholders. There are three ways to view the Fox River: from the adjacent roadways, from its banks and from the river itself. Each of these vantage points illustrates a very different character for the very same river. From the roadways and the banks of the river, one sees a mixture of uses, from parks and trails to commercial, industrial and environmentally contaminated sites called brownfields. These all are illustrated in the appendix on Map Two. From the water itself, this mix of uses is somewhat obscured by the extensive foliage that lines the shores. Kayakers boating on the Fox River say it is hard to believe there is so much hustle and bustle going on just a few hundred feet away. The stakeholders along the river are just as diverse as the uses; though the number of property owners is large, most of the riverfront property is owned by just a few entities. The Fox Valley Park District and the City of Aurora are both major landowners in the corridor, along with a few local business owners. The ownership of the riverfront parcels are illustrated on Map Four of the appendix. Community members have also become stakeholders along the riverfront; in the past six years volunteers with “Help Plant Aurora’s Riverbanks” and other initiatives have restored many sections of the Fox River with water willows to improve the natural habitat, stabilize the shoreline, and enhance water quality. Locations of these riverbank plantings are illustrated in the appendix on Map Three.
The Riverfront as an Economic Engine of the Future:

The Fox River historically was the economic engine for Aurora, and can again be the driving economic force for the entire City. The corridor should be enhanced as an amenity for Aurora residents and visitors. The City should promote recognition of the fact that the Fox River is a gift all Aurorans share, no matter which neighborhood they call home. Improvement efforts should be guided by a conservation/preservation model and accomplish the following objectives:

♦ Enhance recreational assets;
♦ Encourage high-quality, higher-density residential and mixed-use developments with sweeping, unencumbered views of the riverfront that feature a variety of housing types and lifestyle choices;
♦ Encourage similar unencumbered river views when developing properties either not fronting on, or across the public way from the river. This will maximize the viability and marketability of each development;
♦ Upgrade existing businesses; and
♦ Attract new businesses that offer excellent retail, cultural, and entertainment opportunities.

This section of the plan will explore ways to revisit our history and reinvent the Fox River in Aurora with an altered focus. Research will be completed on the following topics:

1. Interesting facts about the river that are not generally known.
2. An inventory of existing attractions and businesses by type: recreation-related, industrial, consumer-oriented retail, wholesale, general office, commercial, restaurants and bars, vacant parcels and buildings.
3. A catalog of preferred businesses and attractions to be encouraged, including full-service restaurants; snack shops to serve park, trail, and river users; outdoor equipment rentals, repairs, accessories (bicycles, kayaks, canoes, roller blades, skateboards); specialty retail, and cultural venues; residential.

4. Economic analysis of current uses as contrasted with desired “highest and best uses.”

5. Identification of redevelopment challenges to riverfront property, e.g. property owner expectations, lack of incentives to sell or occupy, fragmented ownership, environmental cleanup, Kane County Stormwater Management Ordinance, Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) system.

6. Identification of strategies to raise awareness among residents and market the riverfront corridor as a positive attribute of our community.

7. Identification of economic development partners, including the Aurora Economic Development Commission, the Aurora Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Greater Aurora Chamber of Commerce, the African-American Chamber of Commerce, the Aurora Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Aurora Downtown (Special Service Area # One property owners), the Mayor’s Office of Special Events, the City of Aurora Youth Activities Division, the City’s Parks and Recreation Department, Fox Valley Park District, Kane County Forest Preserve District, the Aurora Council of Neighborhoods (ACON), the Aurora Neighborhood Council (ANC) and the Conservation Foundation.
Identify Funding Resources, Tools, and Technical Assistance for River Corridor Improvements:

- **Local Possibilities**
  - On-site improvements and/or fee-in-lieu contributions for stormwater management to improve water quality
  - Kane County stormwater management ordinance
  - Current land-cash contribution ordinance for schools and parks
  - Kane County open space bond
  - Citywide open space bond or tax dedicated to river improvements (technical assistance from the Conservation Foundation),
  - Conservation easements, transfer of development rights, transfer of open space to public entities where appropriate, nurturing a sense of legacy by landowners to the community

- **Non-Local Possibilities**
  - U.S.E.P.A. Clean Water Revolving Fund
  - U.S.E.P.A. Development, Community and Economic Division
  - Brownfield Redevelopment (Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity); partner with utilities (ComEd, Nicor); state legislators
  - Illinois Department of Transportation – Transportation Enhancement Program
  - The Conservation Fund
  - U.S. Green Building Council
  - Land Trust Alliance
  - Illinois Conservation Foundation
  - Conservation 2000 grants (Ecosystem Partnerships)
  - Friends of the Fox River
  - The Trust for Public Land
  - CorLands
  - Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development, Boat Access Area Development, Open Lands Trust Grant Program)
  - Illinois Trails Grant Program
Identify Funding Resources, Tools, and Technical Assistance for River Corridor Improvements
Other City-Led Initiatives and Potential Programs:

- A Fox River Public Information and Outreach Program should be created. Tasks might include:

  1. Organizing a speakers’ bureau;
  2. Producing a guide to development resources;
  3. Creating print and electronic materials to educate the public about the Fox River as a natural and recreational resource;
  4. Organizing and implementing recreational and cultural events to showcase the riverfront;
  5. Facilitating a partnership among the Mayor’s Office of Special Events, Fox Valley Park District, Aurora Township (youth and seniors), City’s Youth Activities Division, the Aurora Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, Aurora Downtown (Special Service Area #One property owners), the Riverwalk Commission, Ward Committees, the Aurora Economic Development Commission, local recreational users’ groups (bicycle, canoe/kayak, hiking clubs), environmental groups (Friends of the Fox, the Sierra Club);
  6. Brainstorming ways to use the Fox River as the focus for a public awareness campaign to improve city’s image (internally and externally);
  7. Enhancing the riverfront to serve all the City’s neighborhoods as a linear, community park system and environmental education. This would be particularly valuable to older, established areas in Aurora that lack sufficient open space, when measured against current nationally-recognized standards;
♦ The City, in collaboration with the Fox Valley Park District and others, should facilitate convenient multi-modal access (transit, biking, walking) to the riverfront corridor. This is particularly important for those who are too young to drive cars, for the disabled, for the elderly, and for those who prefer an alternative to motorized, private transportation.

♦ All development projects should incorporate best management practices in site design, architecture, building placement, and stormwater management and water quality. Developers can be offered incentives (including density bonuses) for projects that implement these principles. The City needs to seek out developers who have successfully executed similar urban riverfront redevelopment projects in other communities.

♦ The City should initiate a “Live Where You Play” marketing campaign to actively recruit outdoor enthusiasts as Aurora residents, with the Fox River as a key lifestyle amenity choice.
The Neighborhood Connection to the Riverfront:

Like most cities in America, the central section of Aurora developed around industrial uses. For this reason, the residential neighborhoods closest to the Riverfront are also those with the least amount of public open space per capita. Consequently, it is critical that we now link the river with existing neighborhoods by developing open space corridors and pathway connections. The Fox River can provide much-needed open space for residents of established, densely-populated neighborhoods which do not have sufficient opportunities for open space in relation to modern-day accepted practices. Points of access should include Spring Street, Pierce Street, and West Park Avenue, along with future pedestrian/bicycle bridges across the river, and an enhanced connection to the train station from adjoining neighborhoods on both banks of the river. Also, access would be provided via the maximization of linear open spaces between the shoreline and the adjacent streets.
Public Access and Open Space:

The goal of our Riverfront Vision is to create a continuous and accessible linear public open space system on both sides of the river, with pedestrian/bicycle connections at strategic points, linking the east and west. The size and characteristics of this greenway can vary depending upon built conditions, adjacent land uses, and natural features. Connectivity and celebration of the river, with its sweeping, inviting vistas and public transportation access, are important concepts. The greenway is interconnected with adjacent neighborhoods and maximizes physical access to, and viewsheds of, the river. As the river is more visible and accessible to the community, it will be more respected and appreciated. The Fox will be recognized as an amenity that adds value to adjacent properties, neighborhoods, businesses and the greater City of Aurora. For a map of existing and proposed public open space within the Fox Riverfront see Map Five in the appendix.
Guiding Principles and Techniques for Developing the Riverfront:

The Guiding Principles and Techniques outlined in this section are intended to suggest ways in which the Fox Riverfront Vision can be implemented. These principles include:

1 **Open Space, Public Access, and Views of the River:** Riverfront development should include public open space with regularly-placed intervals for public access and enhanced connectivity from adjacent neighborhoods to the trail system. Sweeping, unencumbered views of the river should be optimized for travelers, whether motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, or paddlers. A further goal of this vision plan is the implementation of a system of staircases and handicap-accessible ramps leading from each bridge to the river below. Views of the river should be considered in the design of all public infrastructure, including bridge railings, utilities, and roadway systems.

2 **Environmentally-Friendly Site Design:** Conservation design techniques should be utilized, including the planting of native vegetation and the implementation of best management practices for handling stormwater runoff and improving water quality. Participation by developers and residents in riverfront beautification and improvements should be encouraged.

3 **Transition to Existing Neighborhoods:** It is important that redevelopment within the corridor respects existing neighborhoods by providing a well-crafted visual and physical transition from the river, while creating a greatly-needed public connection to the Fox.

4 **Housing Product Choices:** Housing product choices with a higher density than what is currently provided within the City of Aurora are a priority of
Plan. Designed to attract residents of all ages and family types, they will ensure a diverse, multi-generational population along the corridor as a whole, and within each development.

5 **Parking and Density:** Density and structure heights within the corridor will be permitted based on the amount of parking that can be accommodated on-site for residents, commercial uses, and visitors. No surface parking will be allowed. Multi-story, interior parking should be integrated gracefully into building architecture.

6 **Permitted Uses:** All uses should be compatible with, and complementary to, the river, and adjoining open space.

7 **Commercial Base:** In addition to destination retailing, entertainment, and dining, essential consumer commercial services should be provided to serve the needs of the new residents as well as the residents of the existing adjacent neighborhoods.

8 **Signature, Cutting-Edge Architecture:** Buildings should be constructed using materials and design principles that complement the City’s historical commitment to significant architecture, with ornamentation and features that are striking and energy efficiency guided by L.E.E.D. (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) principles. They should feature detailing and articulation on all four facades, be oriented and placed so as to offer views of the river and public spaces, and include direct access from the building to the public spaces in a harmonious and integrated manner.

9 **Two Front Doors:** Traditionally, buildings along the Fox were constructed with no regard for their proximity to the river, which was seen as nothing more than a place in which waste products could be dumped. Under the guidance of this new vision, facades adjacent to the river are as important as those adjacent to the street, hence, the concept of “two front doors.”

10 **Streetscape:** All development should incorporate elements such as street furniture, decorative lighting, and bicycle/pedestrian amenities so as to maximize a sense of comfort, security, aesthetics, and to foster a neighborhood feeling. Special attention should be paid to creating an engaging interface between residential, public, and commercial spaces.
Land Use Scenarios:

A series of land use scenarios is included in this document. They illustrate the opportunities that exist for new commercial and residential development and redevelopment along the entire river corridor. They include a variety of concepts for site layout, architectural features, and the relationship to the public greenway along both sides of the river. They detail implementation of the vision for a riverfront that includes a restored shoreline with natural landscapes, and a built environment that is attractive, engaging, and bicycle and pedestrian-friendly.
Scenario 1: Residential

This illustration depicts a new residential neighborhood right along the river’s edge. The layout includes a grouping of condominiums oriented toward the river with sweeping open space views between the buildings. The units are organized around small driveways with permeable pavers that provide access to garage space at the rear. The front doors of the units face either a public common between each building, or the river across a public lane. The buildings are turned 90 degrees toward the river, offering scenic views from the front porches and balconies of each unit. Maximum exposure and visibility are achieved without creating an environment in which residents feel they are encroaching upon each other’s backyards.

This concept includes a small commercial building that could house a café, a day care facility, or some other neighborhood-scale use. Bicycle, canoe and kayak rental facilities, bait shops, and other businesses that complement the riverfront should be encouraged.

Critical to the success of this design is the approach to stormwater management. This scenario includes techniques that can slow and cleanse stormwater runoff, such as permeable paving, vegetative filters of native plantings, and level spreaders to dissipate rather than concentrate accumulated waters.
Scenar io 1: Residential parking court with permeable paving 3 story condominium with roof top garden. All units have balconies and a view of the river. pedestrian path FOX RIVER
Finally, a series of pedestrian/bicycle bridges links two of the islands in the river, serving recreational needs and providing convenient neighborhood access.
Scenario 2: Marina Neighborhood

This scenario illustrates a new mixed-use neighborhood centered around a marina, providing small watercraft access as a focal point for mid-rise residences, specialty shops, and restaurants. The layout and building orientation are similar to those illustrated in Scenario One. The streets are oriented perpendicular to the river and provide viewsheds, linking the entire neighborhood to the river greenway.

The pedestrian/bicycle path along the river’s edge is flanked by native vegetation that serves to enhance habitat for a variety of birds, animals, and plant life.

The neighborhood could include office uses, a hotel, and other business uses complementary to an urban residential neighborhood.
roadway
3 story retail building and parking garage with green roof/garden
outdoor dining area
pedestrian path

FOX RIVER
SCENARIO 2: MARINA NEIGHBORHOOD
View of proposed pedestrian bridge with connection to recreational island
SCENARIO 2: MARINA NEIGHBORHOOD

View of proposed pedestrian bridge with connection to recreational island.

Scenario 2
Scenario 3: Mixed-Use

This scenario details the redevelopment of river parcels within the downtown area. It includes mid-rise buildings with parking incorporated within the buildings to maximize real estate value and concentrate residents and pedestrians in the downtown. Illustrated here is a mixed-use neighborhood characterized by street-level shops and businesses located below upper-level residences. The layout and building orientations are also similar to the first two scenarios, but the parcels are shallower. Scenic views of the river are optimized from the buildings and between the buildings.

Rooftop gardens could be placed over the parking structures, constructed to provide a view of the river for building residents. These roofs could be integrated as part of the stormwater management strategy, since the vegetation helps to slow, cleanse, and cool stormwater. The bicycle/pedestrian path network along the river’s edge continues, and could be connected to some of the elevated park spaces with stairs or ramps.

This scenario also includes a unique bicycle/pedestrian river crossing lined with shops. This is similar to world-renown bridges in Venice and Florence, Italy, and Bath, England. This bridge could serve Aurora as a major architectural focal point and garner national attention. It could link commercial uses on both sides of the river, and become a bicycle/pedestrian “Main Street,” on the Fox River.
Scenario 3: Mixed-Use

- 2 story parking garage with green roof/plaza
- 6 story mixed-use building
- Pedestrian path
- Fox River
- Roadway
SCENARIO 3: MIXED-USE
View of proposed commercial bridge with connections to the downtown area and river access
Scenario 3: Mixed-Use

View of proposed commercial bridge with connections to the downtown area and river access.
APPENDIX A

Map 1: Study Area
APPENDIX A

Map 2: Brownfield Locations
APPENDIX A

Map 3: River Bank Plantings

[Map showing River Bank Plantings with various colored areas indicating different zones.]

Aurora Riverfront Vision
APPENDIX A

Map 4: Parcel Ownership
APPENDIX A

Map 5: Existing and Proposed Public Open Space

- OPEN SPACE/RECREATION AREA = 145 Acres
- WATER AREA = 187 Acres
- TOTAL OPEN SPACE/RECREATION/WATER AREA = 332 Acres
To obtain a copy of the Plan, ask questions, or give comments, please contact us in any of the following ways:

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