

City of Aurora, Illinois

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Adopted by the Aurora City Council, April 3, 1984 – Ord. No. O84-5279

Prepared by:

Planning Division, Community Development Department
Aurora, Illinois

A.	FRAMEWORK FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN	1
B.	PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POLICIES	2
10.0	URBAN FORM AND FUNCTION.....	2
11.0	Growth Directions	2
12.0	Land Use Interrelationships	3
13.0	Circulation and Land Use Patterns.....	3
14.0	Enhancement of the Urban Environment	4
20.0	RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT/HOUSING.....	4
21.0	Housing Opportunities	4
22.0	Neighborhood Enhancement.....	5
23.0	Housing Quality	5
30.0	COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT.....	6
31.0	Commercial Hierarchy.....	6
32.0	Commercial Design and Appearance.....	6
33.0	The Downtown	6
40.0	INDUSTRIAL, OFFICE AND OFFICE RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT.....	7
50.0	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	8
60.0	TRANSPORTATION STUDIES	8
61.0	Transportation Inter-relationships.....	8
62.0	Transportation Design	8
63.0	Supportive Transportation Systems	9
70.0	PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES	9
80.0	OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION.....	9
90.0	ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND NATURAL RESOURCES.....	10
91.0	Protection of Natural Resources.....	10
92.0	Environmentally Sensitive Growth	10
93.0	Enhancement of the Visual Environment	11
100.0	ENERGY CONSERVATION THROUGH BUILDING AND SITE DESIGN.....	11

A. FRAMEWORK FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

AS AURORA DEVELOPS

Since it was founded, Aurora has grown as a community basically self-sustained in its needs by developing its own economic and social base. Furthermore, Aurora established itself as a regional center, retaining its won identity, within Northeastern Illinois’ growing metropolitan area. Because Aurora finds itself at the intersection of the Fox River and Burlington Northern Regional growth corridors, it is evident that the City will continue to grow and change. The integration and environment is the challenge

Means must be found to harmonize and strengthen the relationship between the old and the new. This requires that the City look forward to its future, as well as back into its past. In looking forward, Aurora must insure that orderliness and quality of new development does not come at the expense of established residential neighborhoods, the Downtown, the environment, and the ability to provide adequate municipal services. As Aurora grows, its identity will expand by incorporating this diverse growth into one community.

In looking back, Aurora must reaffirm its commitment to enhance its status as a regional focal point while providing continued convenience and self-reliance with respect to housing, employment,

commerce and recreational opportunities. Looking back also requires the rehabilitation of Aurora's older residential and commercial sectors. Finally, Aurora should look back to the wellspring of its existence, the Fox River, by promoting the development of the river harmonious to its role as the primary natural resource of the community.

THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Such efforts are meant to enhance the City as a place to live and work by addressing an issue commonly expressed as the "quality of life." Although it is perceived differently by individuals, the quality of life may be broadly defined as that set of "wants: which created a more satisfied community when fulfilled. The quality of life consists of a wide spectrum of components, of which city government can affect only a portion. Most of the components related to the physical development of the community, such as land use, transportation, public services and facilities, and environmental quality, are capable of being influenced by City actions and decisions. These issues, as well as others, comprise the various programmatic elements addressed through the comprehensive land use and transportation plan.

THE ROLE OF GOALS AND POLICIES

For each of the components the community's "wants" have been translated into goals. The goals describe the ultimate condition that is perceived as desirable. They are broadly stated, yet specific enough to be measured against existing conditions. Supporting the goals, in appropriate instances, are defined sub-goals, which describe the situation, action or circumstance. They represent a mean to a goal fulfillment and constitute a more refined measure of goal fulfillment. The tools with which the various goals and sub goals are to be attained are contained in the policies. Based on planning principles, policies provide guidance and direction for City action and decisions. They also provide the basis through which the comprehensive plan is to be implemented. The policies established follow the analysis of problems and situations, or the review of available alternatives to the physical development of the City.

BRINGING US TOGETHER

The use of the comprehensive plan in conjunction with its physical development goals, sub-goals and policies is envisioned to bring together the various parts of the City, such as its older neighborhoods, the Downtown, and its newer areas, so as to form a more cohesive and unified community. Furthermore, the plan will assist in preventing the adverse impacts of development as well as improving those components that constitute the quality of life as perceived in the Aurora community.

B. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

10.0 Urban Form and Function

To provide for the orderly, balanced and efficient growth and redevelopment of the City through the positive integration of land-use patterns, functions, and circulation systems. To protect and enhance those assets and values that establishes the desirable quality and general livability of the City. To promote the City's position as a regional center

11.0 Growth Directions

To guide the growth of the City in an orderly and structured manner

11.1 Policies

- (1) To work to accomplish municipal boundary agreements
- (2) To develop annexation guidelines providing for logical municipal growth
- (3) To encourage new development contiguous to existing development
- (4) To encourage appropriate development on and maintenance according to code of vacant lands within the corporate limits of the City
- (5) To guide and promote development to areas where public utilities, public roads, and municipal services are either available or planned.
- (6) To restrict and discourage inappropriate development on environment mentally sensitive lands.

12.0 Land Use Interrelationships

To plan and provide for the growth of the City through the integration of land use patterns and functions that promote complementary interactions between different land use components

12.1 Policies

- (1) To develop an urban structure with the Downtown and the Fox Valley Center Complex as focal points
- (2) To provide convenient services and visual diversity within the City by developing a hierarchy of commercial centers appropriately spaced throughout the City
- (3) To encourage residential development in close proximity to places of work, shopping and recreation.
- (4) To encourage high density housing at appropriate locations adjacent to commercial centers
- (5) To encourage a gradation from high-density residential areas to lower density residential areas.
- (6) To promote buffering of low density residential areas from high intensity uses with higher density residential when appropriate
- (7) To protect residential development from the negative effects of high volume traffic corridors and incompatible land uses.
- (8) To promote an accessible open space system that would be based on the various needs generated by the community
- (9) To guide development and redevelopment into energy efficient land use patterns

13.0 Circulation and Land Use Patterns

To plan and provide for the growth of the City through the coordination of land use patterns and functions with an integrated, efficient, accessible and energy-conserving circulation system.

13.1 Policies

- (1) To encourage and support the development of an efficient transportation system that provides for the interconnection of the City with the surrounding region.
- (2) To promote interrelationships and interactions within the City through a realistic street plan designed to effectively serve both present and anticipated land uses while incurring the least social, economic and environmental costs.
- (3) To use the improvement and addition of street and highway facilities as a positive force in guiding new development and improving land use relationships.
- (4) To provide for the location of high density residential, commercial, and industrial centers close to or along transportation routes designed to accommodate the movement of people and goods to and from such centers.
- (5) To develop major retail, office and industrial uses that rely on efficient access to expressways in the vicinity of expressway interchanges
- (6) To encourage the development of public transportation, bicycle and sidewalk systems that would link residential area or place of work, shopping and recreation.

- (7) To promote mass transit stations and intensive land uses, including high-density residential complexes, to locate in relative proximity to one another so as to stimulate transit use.
- (8) To promote the use of pedestrian and other non-automotive modes of travel by encouraging mixed use developments and/or multi-use buildings in appropriate locations.

14.0 Enhancement of the Urban Environment

To plan and provide for the growth of the City while protecting, conserving and enhancing its social, cultural and aesthetic environment and economic resources.

14.1 Policies

- (1) To foster future growth in the City that does not contribute to deterioration in either existing developments or a reduction in the City's ability to provide adequate services.
- (2) To promote the preservation and revitalization of older residential neighborhoods and commercial areas within the City of Aurora
- (3) To protect, preserve and restore the historical and architectural heritage of the City of Aurora
- (4) To encourage quality site design throughout the City of Aurora
- (5) To provide for the visual enhancement of the City through attractive landscaping, quality signage and diverse building design and arrangement.
- (6) To encourage the protection and development, for public use, of the Fox River and other significant natural resources within the City.

20.0 Residential Development/Housing

To insure the provision of decent housing and a quality living environment for every resident of Aurora

21.0 Housing Opportunities

To promote and plan for residential development, redevelopment and rehabilitation in order to provide a wide range of quality housing opportunities for purchase or rent throughout the City for all segments of the population

21.1 Policies

- (1) To promote access to housing opportunities for all economic, racial, religious, ethnic and age groups
- (2) To promote a wide variety of housing types
- (3) To promote housing in all price ranges for purchase or rent
- (4) To use the scattered site concept for the provision of low and moderate income housing throughout the City of Aurora
- (5) To promote, through the use of available subsidies a low and moderate income composition in excess of 30 units
- (6) To require developers of proposed rental apartment complexes in excess of 30 units to apply for HUD Section 8 funding.
- (7) To cooperate with township and other agencies in promoting a supply of temporary housing for emergency situations.
- (8) To actively promote and support open housing opportunities for all income groups throughout the NIPC region especially where adequate opportunities do not exist.
- (9) To encourage the location of housing for elderly in close proximity to shopping and public transportation
- (10) To work with the Aurora Land Clearance Commission in selecting appropriate locations and quality design for scattered site low and moderate-income housing.

22.0 Neighborhood Enhancement

To promote the social and economic stability of residential neighborhoods so as to enhance their living environment

22.1 Policies

- (1) To achieve appropriate zoning protection for residential areas designated in the land use plan
- (2) To protect designated areas of existing conventional single-family development from inappropriate highly intensive land uses.
- (3) To consider conversions of old Aurora homes to higher densities only in areas where housing standards would be met and where the neighborhood would not be negatively impacted
- (4) To direct public improvements and services so as to conserve and improve the quality of residential neighborhoods.
- (5) To recognize the unique characteristics of individual neighborhoods and promote their positive attributes
- (6) To cooperate with, and support the establishment and development of, neighborhood improvement and conservation groups seeking to improve their living environment
- (7) To work toward federal, state and/or local designation of significant properties as landmarks, historic districts and/or conservation districts.

23.0 Housing Quality

To provide that the construction of new housing and the conservation and rehabilitation of existing housing will be safe, attractive and cost efficient.

23.1 Policies

- (1) To enforce and continually evaluate ordinances that bear on the quality of housing in the City.
- (2) To maintain and develop housing regulations, ordinances, and standards that promote quality and lower construction, maintenance and operating costs
- (3) To encourage quality design and practicable innovations in both housing structures and site development
- (4) To promote the conservation rehabilitation of housing through private investment and, where appropriate, public financial and technical assistance
- (5) To work to prevent the conversion of residential structures to higher densities where such housing does not satisfy applicable lot size requirements and does not provide sufficient living and parking space for each dwelling unit.
- (6) To encourage private removal of deteriorated housing that cannot be economically rehabilitated and further replace it with construction of quality new housing
- (7) To encourage that adaptive reuse of commercial and industrial structures to housing where such conversions are economically feasible, supportive of revitalization efforts, and consistent with the land use plan.
- (8) To provide direction for those seeking federal, state and regional funding for new and existing housing
- (9) To insure that each residence in the City is provided with the highest affordable level of municipal services
- (10) To promote the provision of paved roads, sidewalks, utilities and other public works and improvements to each residence within the City through subdivision requirements or special assessments.
- (11) To require that private streets cross section vehicles and be constructed in conformance with standard specification for improvements so that dedication could be considered at a future date.

30.0 Commercial Development

To develop and maintain an adequate supply of properly zoned areas for commercial facilities to serve existing and future population needs.

31.0 Commercial Hierarchy

To promote and plan for the location of commercial centers, based on their functions and interrelationships, in order to provide a balanced distribution of commercial facilities that are conveniently accessible to all segments of the population.

31.1 Policies

- (1) To promote the concept of a hierarchy of commercial development consisting of regional, community and neighborhood commercial centers supported by requisite population levels, which influence to location, scale and type of commercial development and redevelopment.
- (2) To concentrate the more intensive business and commercial activity in the Downtown and Fox Valley Center
- (3) To promote the development of commercial facilities in existing or planned commercial areas.
- (4) To encourage the development of multiple use commercial, employment and service centers.
- (5) To promote the vitality of existing commercial centers within the commercial hierarchy
- (6) To promote through comprehensive rezoning the availability and adequate distribution of a sufficient variety of convenience-type retail good and service areas to serve the daily needs of all city residents.
- (7) To require the provision of convenient and adequate pedestrian vehicular and bicycle access from residential areas to commercial areas,
- (8) To (promote/encourage) higher density residential uses in and around developing regional, community and neighborhood commercial centers so as to enhance their vitality and to conserve energy

32.0 Commercial Design and Appearance

To enhance the positive and minimize the negative impacts and relationships that the location, design and appearance of commercial activities have on traffic patterns and on the stability and vitality of surrounding neighborhoods, other commercial centers, and the City as a whole.

32.1 Policies

- (1) To discourage new strip commercial development and prevent the intrusion of inappropriate commercial activity into residential areas by providing for the clustering of commercial activities in existing or planned commercial areas.
- (2) To limit expansion of existing strip commercialization and to prevent creation of strip commercial and office development along major streets, unless recommended by the land-use plan.
- (3) To minimize the adverse effects of commercial activity on neighboring development, particularly residential and open space areas through the provision of buffering land uses and/or screening
- (4) To enhance the quality of the visual and physical environment of the City through the provision for landscaping in commercial development
- (5) To provide for adequate parking facilities at all commercial areas and to promote the use of joint parking facilities between adjacent commercial uses and other uses.

33.0 The Downtown

To promote the rejuvenation and revitalization of the Downtown as a multi-use center

33.1 Policies

- (1) To plan for and promote the Downtown as a center for financial, institutional, governmental, office, general retail, specialized commercial, conference, hotel, residential, cultural, recreational and entertainment functions.
- (2) To insure that the Downtown continues to serve as the multi-modal transportation center for the City by redeveloping the Roundhouse facility and providing for an efficient movement of pedestrians with a shuttle bus system.
- (3) To actively promote the retention of existing business and offices and the infusion of new businesses and offices to the downtown.
- (4) To provide for adequate, efficient, convenient, attractive and accessible parking to stimulate revitalization within the Downtown.
- (5) To actively seek new office and high density residential uses to create a viable commercial market
- (6) To promote the intense and frequent use of the Downtown by encouraging high density residential uses within the Downtown through multi-use buildings and through residential development, redevelopment and appropriate conversions, with consideration given to parking requirements
- (7) To exchange transportation and circulation alternatives that would promote increased pedestrian traffic in the Downtown.
- (8) To promote efficient traffic flow patterns and access to parking
- (9) To preserve and restore the Architectural, cultural and historical heritage of the Downtown
- (10) To promote the better appearance of the Downtown through landscaping, open spaces, plazas, quality signage, the provision of street furniture and the exterior renovation of buildings, and quality new construction
- (11) To promote the Fox River as one of the most significant resources of the downtown through cultural and recreational development and restoration along its banks
- (12) To promote an adequate physical infrastructure to support revitalization
- (13) To develop a special downtown zoning district which will foster quality development and promote a more rapid rate of development.

40.0 Industrial, Office and Office Research Development

To plan and promote industrial, office, office-research development in areas suited to such development and to minimize the negative impacts of industries on surrounding land uses and the environment

41.1 Policies

- (1) To attract and encourage industrial, office and office-research development to planned sites where requisite public facilities are either present or proposed.
- (2) To promote a balanced distribution of industries within the City.
- (3) To encourage the location of industrial, office and office-research development near transportation facilities designed to provide adequate and efficient linkages to sources of labor, production materials and markets
- (4) To promote the use by rail-oriented industries of suitable sites to adjacent to, or in close proximity to, rail corridors
- (5) To plan and promote the extension of the office and office-research corridor along the tollway in the City of Aurora
- (6) To promote attractive, well-maintained industrial and office-research areas through landscaping and site design
- (7) To encourage improvements in existing industrial areas that minimize industrial blight and reduce incompatibilities with neighboring land uses.

- (8) To promote a quality environment through the enforcement of industrial performance standards

50.0 Economic Development

To promote sound, diversified and organized industrial, office and commercial growth within the City to widen employment opportunities and strengthen the economic base.

51.1 Policies

- (1) To support federal, state and regional policies and programs that will enhance the economic competitiveness of the North-eastern Illinois metropolitan region
- (2) To coordinate and actively support sound business and industrial development and expansion within the City through public and private programs related to industrial/commercial promotion
- (3) To actively promote and pursue the retention of businesses and industries presently located within the City of Aurora
- (4) To encourage business and industrial growth and expansion within the City through Industrial Revenue Bonds and local financial institution support
- (5) To encourage high-technology and labor intensive industries that contribute to diversification of the industrial base
- (6) To promote the location and expansion of commercial activities within the City consistent with the Comprehensive Plan

60.0 Transportation Studies

To structure and coordinate transportation systems that promotes safe, efficient, and convenient access within the City and the surrounding region while protecting and enhancing the City's social, economic and natural environment

61.0 Transportation Inter-relationships

To promote a transportation system that efficiently integrates city streets, major highways, railroads, and terminal facilities

61.1 Policies

- (1) To develop and maintain a street hierarchy system, consisting of expressway, arterials and collectors, that provides a safe and efficient traffic flow
- (2) To coordinate city transportation plans and projects with township, county, state and other transportation programs
- (3) To promote the orderly improvement and development of the Aurora Municipal Airport

62.0 Transportation Design

To promote a street and highway system that will encourage sound community development

62.1 Policies

- (1) To maintain the Downtown as a transportation center via the Roundhouse development
- (2) To promote adequate off-street parking in commercial and industrial areas with the appropriate access to major streets so as to lessen or eliminate conflict with traffic on local residential streets
- (3) To concentrate through traffic on major streets thereby minimizing vehicular activity on local streets thereby protecting residential neighborhoods
- (4) To give priority to the maintenance and improvement of arterial streets so as to enhance circulation and reduce congestion

- (5) To coordinate development in the vicinity of major intersections and interchanges with the design of street and highway facilities so as to maintain safe and efficient traffic movement
- (6) To coordinate the spacing of curb cuts with street functions
- (7) To promote the dedication of adequate street right-of-way widths that are consistent with proposed street functions

63.0 Supportive Transportation Systems

To support the provision and use of non-automotive modes of travel throughout the City.

63.1 Policies

- (1) To promote an integrated pedestrian circulation system in the City.
- (2) To promote a bicycle circulation system in the City.
- (3) To promote local and regional public transit
- (4) To promote access to major activity centers via public transportation.
- (5) To support programs that enhances the mobility of people dependent on public transportation.

70.0 Public Services and Facilities

To provide the best services possible within the City through the provision and improvement of public utility systems and community facilities

71.1 Policies

- (1) To locate and direct urban growth to areas where municipal services are available or proposed
- (2) To develop a capital improvement and public facilities plan that would coordinate future public investments
- (3) To work toward accomplishing complete utilities, including water mains and separated storm and sanitary sewer in all parts of the City.
- (4) To locate utility line and structures so there is compatibility with existing or planned developments and sensitivity to the protection of natural resources
- (5) To provide for the public ownership and operation of wastewater and water supply systems
- (6) To compel connection to public sewer and water facilities and to require the landowners to pay the costs and expenses involved in accordance with the Subdivision Control Ordinances
- (7) To encourage the provision of underground utility line
- (8) To give priority to the multiple use of existing utility corridors.

80.0 Open Space and Recreation

To promote adequate and convenient open space and recreation facility for all segments of the City's population

81.1 Policies

- (1) To cooperate with the Fox Valley Park District, the school districts and the County Forest Preserve Commission in meeting the open space and recreational needs of the City of Aurora
- (2) To reserve sufficient open space to serve future population growth
- (3) To require the adequate provision of useable open space in areas of new development
- (4) To promote the acquisition and development of open space adjacent to shorelines
- (5) To encourage the use of non-acquisition techniques, such as scenic easements, to supplement the public ownership of existing or planned open space

- (6) To plan for and promote convenient accessibility to open space to enhance the effective use of open space and recreational facilities in and around the City.
- (7) To promote the development of the public recreational potential of the Fox River and other water-oriented areas
- (8) To promote the coordinated use of drainage and retention facilities with existing or planned open space
- (9) To promote the coordinated use of drainage and retention facilities with existing or planned open space
- (10) To discourage the installation of utility lines or other public improvements where such installation would disrupt or infringe upon acquired or designated open space in a manner that leaves such open space unsuitable for its intended purpose.
- (11) To encourage the development of a variety of recreational facilities and to encourage the multiple uses of those facilities where appropriate

90.0 Environmental Quality and Natural Resources

To assure the protection, conservation and improvement of the quality of air, water, land and aesthetic resources within the City.

91.0 Protection of Natural Resources

To enhance the quality of the environment by identifying, protecting, and preserving those natural resources elements that serve important environmental functions and contain valuable or unique natural features

91.1 Policies

- (1) To assist in the maintenance and enforcement of Federal and State environmental quality standards
- (2) To reduce to acceptable levels noise, air and water pollution from mobile and stationary standards.
- (3) To encourage the maintenance of flood plains and wetlands in order to protect water quality, retain storm and flood water detention capabilities, provide open space and protect natural habitats and aesthetic qualities
- (4) To protect flood plains and wetlands from encroachment to preserve their storm and flood water detention capacities
- (5) To protect drainage ways and potential reservoir sties to provide for management of storm water runoff, over bank flooding, and ground water recharge
- (6) To protect aquifers and streams from pollutants by promoting reduction in the amount of eroded earth materials, fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides and other physical, chemical or biological substances carried into water courses by storm water runoff
- (7) To preserve streams and other bodies of water, as well as unique vegetation and wildlife habitats for their ecological, recreational and aesthetic values
- (8) To cooperate with other state and county authorities to identify potential sites for solid waste disposal based on suitable geologic topographic, hydrologic and soil conditions.

92.0 Environmentally Sensitive Growth

To encourage urban development that is sensitive to environmental conditions

92.1 Policies

- (1) To discourage the unnecessary removal of trees during construction
- (2) To encourage construction procedures that minimize erosion so as to enhance air and water quality
- (3) To enhance air and water quality by controlling erosion during construction
- (4) To define flood plains and to work toward the elimination of flood damage potential

- (5) To protect flood plains and to work toward the elimination of flood damage potential
- (6) To maintain lands having a high groundwater recharge potential by developing such areas as low intensity uses or as public open space
- (7) To discourage development in and to restrict municipal utility extension to areas where soils display characteristics that make development unfeasible
- (8) To control development on steep slopes

93.0 Enhancement of the Visual Environment

To enhance the visual and aesthetic environment throughout the City.

93.1 Policies

- (1) To encourage the use of aesthetically pleasing urban design, architectural styles, and landscape architecture
- (2) To work toward improved signage and street furniture
- (3) To encourage the preservation of natural views along the Fox River and its tributaries
- (4) To encourage tree plantings throughout the City of Aurora
- (5) To encourage the use of natural or landscaped buffer zones between different land uses
- (6) To encourage the use of natural or landscaped setbacks along streets and highways
- (7) To encourage good maintenance and upkeep of City owned property.

100.0 Energy Conservation through building and Site Design

To encourage design, construction and remodeling of buildings, building complexes, and building sites that effectively and efficiently maximize the conservation of all forms of energy

101.1 Policies

- (1) To study and recommend energy conservation building standards
- (2) To seek alternative to fossil fuels and to utilize where possible renewable sources of energy
- (3) To incorporate the application of energy conservation techniques with housing rehabilitation assistance programs
- (4) To promote the application of energy conservation techniques in the rehabilitation of residential, commercial and industrial properties
- (5) To promote building shapes and designs that minimize the proportion of outside surface area to the bulk or floor area
- (6) To investigate the potential for using earth-sheltered structures as a means of reducing energy needed for heating and cooling
- (7) To encourage overall site design and building design and orientation that strives to effectively utilize natural lighting and reduce the effects of exposure to extreme weather conditions
- (8) To promote the protection of access to direct solar radiation for structures designed to actively or passively utilize solar energy
- (9) To encourage the use of landscape materials to reduce the adverse effects and to maximize the positive effects of weather conditions