

# Light of the Community Neighborhood Action Plan

Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative

City of Aurora, Illinois

Adopted January 2008



Prepared by:







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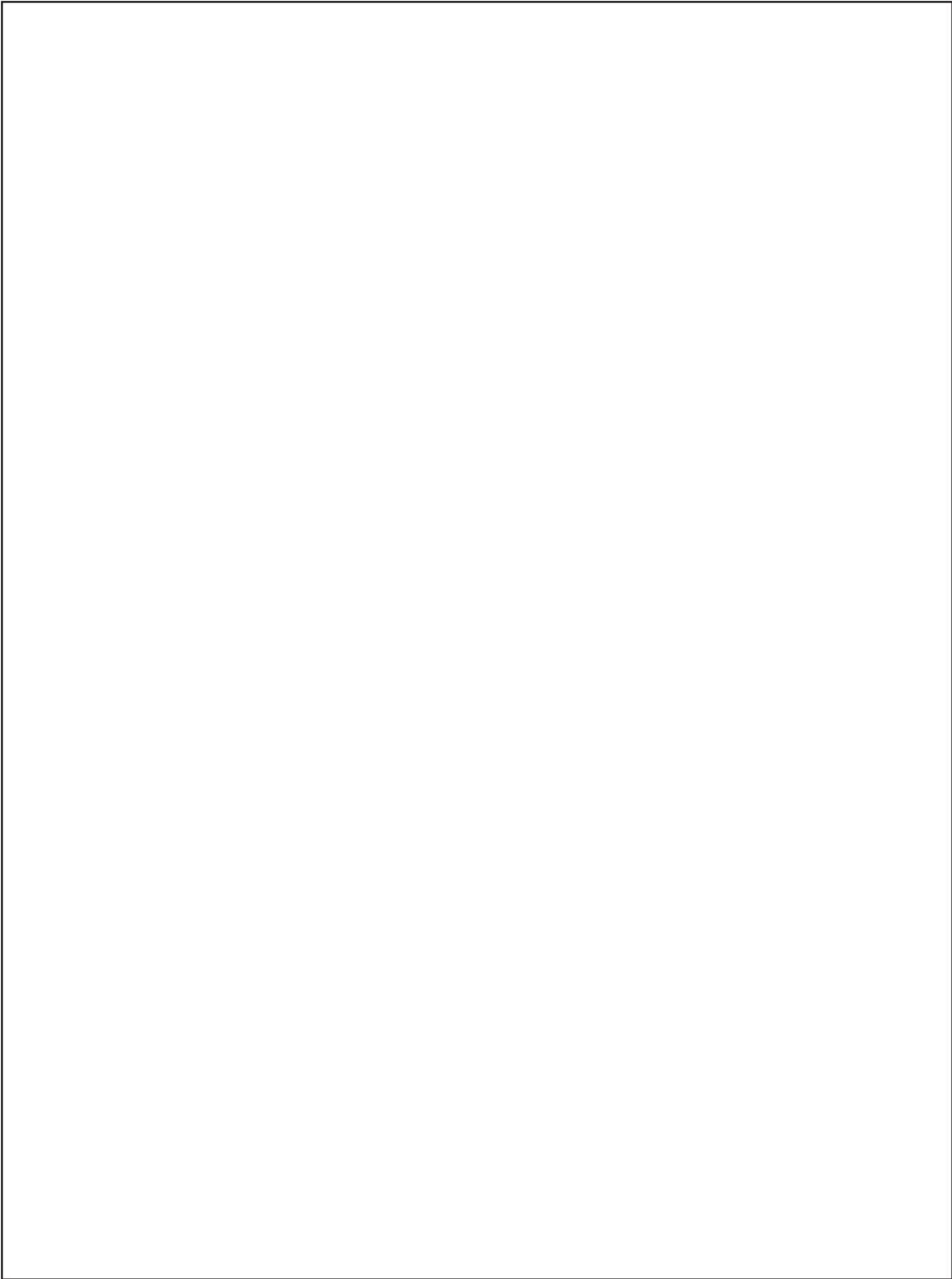
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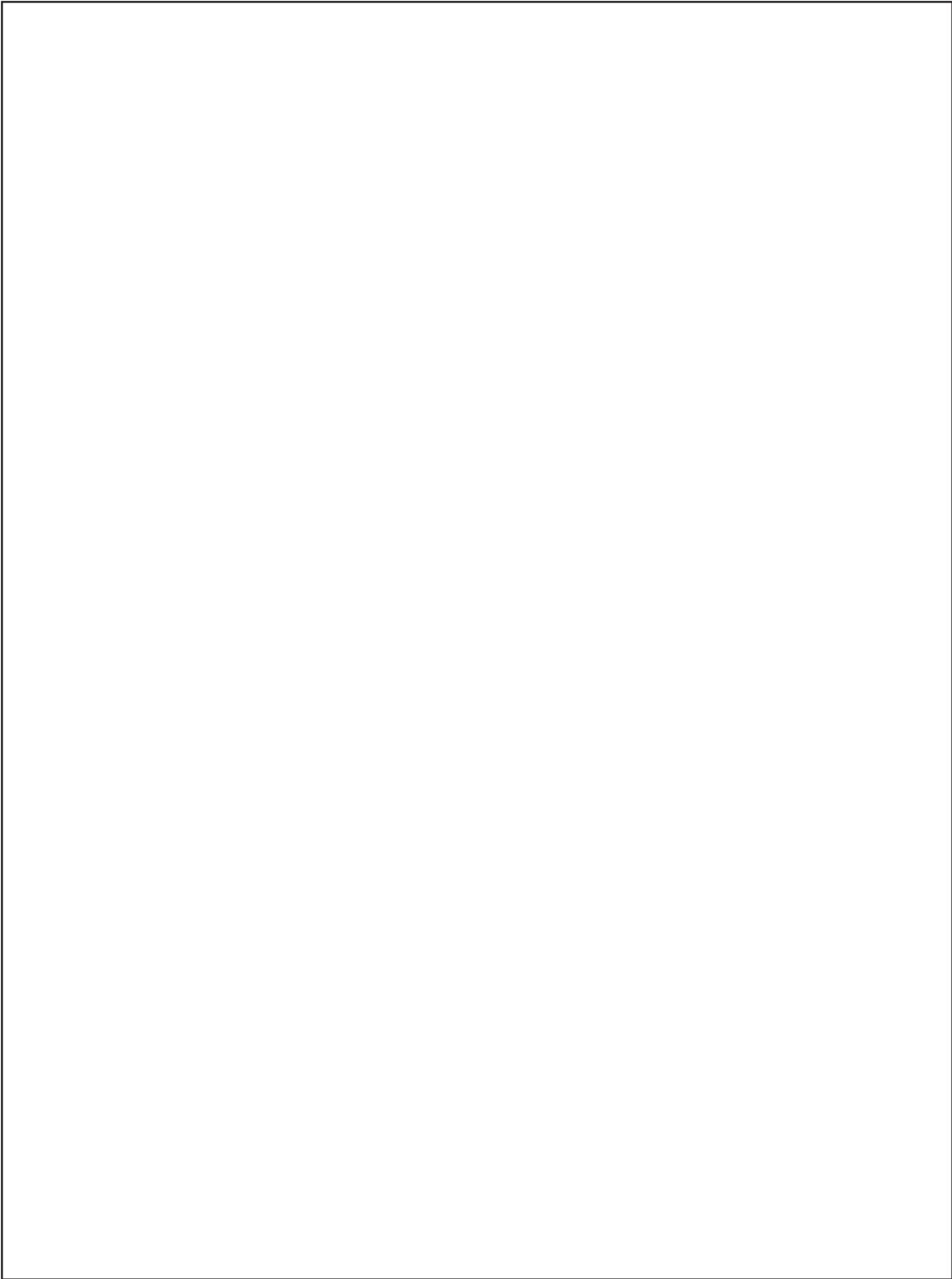






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The Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative (ANPI) is designed to help residents and other local stakeholders (e.g. business owners, employees of local businesses, faculty and staff at local schools, etc) shape the way their neighborhood will grow and change. Located east of Downtown Aurora in the City's historic core, the Light of the Community Neighborhood is the sixth neighborhood to complete the ANPI process.



Located in the heart of Aurora, the Light of the Community Neighborhood is envisioned as a "beacon" within the "City of Lights" as the community is committed to improving the neighborhood's quality of life.

The name "Light of the Community" reflects the community's commitment to improving the neighborhood's quality of life and strengthening its sense of pride. This area is one of the City's oldest, most established neighborhoods. Located near Aurora's original settlement by the McCarty Brothers, the Light of the Community Neighborhood is envisioned as a "beacon" within the "City of Lights", serving to inspire local residents to collaborate with City officials and local organizations to continue with neighborhood improvement efforts and revitalize Aurora's core area. Local neighborhood groups and other organizations have already taken steps towards neighborhood improvement. This Action Plan helps organize these groups into a central neighborhood coalition to continue with their efforts backed by a unified voice.

The neighborhood planning process was characterized by active community participation, without which the ANPI would not be successful. The Light of the Community Neighborhood Planning Team was comprised of City staff, the volunteer Leadership Team, consultants, and, most importantly, residents and local stakeholders who participated in the planning process. A series of neighborhood meetings was organized to gather input and ideas from residents and local stakeholders. Numerous Leadership Team meetings and planning activities also played integral roles in the planning process. Chapter 2 provides more detailed descriptions of the ANPI, Planning Team, and overall neighborhood planning process. Chapter 3 provides a neighborhood profile, including a demographic analysis and descriptions of neighborhood assets.

The diagram in Figure 1 illustrates the general neighborhood planning process used to develop this plan. The initial phases of the planning process were designed to identify the key issues facing the neighborhood. Based on a series of exercises and various discussions with the community, the Planning Team identified the neighborhood's key issues, which are described in more detail in Chapter 4.

Figure 1: Objectives of the Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative



Participants at neighborhood meetings were instrumental in brainstorming ideas to help resolve the neighborhood's key issues, identifying existing methods and programs to assist in neighborhood improvement and suggesting new ones that could be created. Identifying methods and programs for neighborhood improvement helped establish a Framework for Neighborhood Improvement, which is described in Chapter 5. The Framework for Neighborhood Improvement identifies an effective process designed to enact change. This process includes clearly defined Ac-

tion Steps that address each of the neighborhood's high priority issues and a strategy to actively implement those Action Steps. The Organizational Framework primarily focuses on the Task Force(s) and their working relationship with the Aurora Neighborhood Council (ANC), City Council, City staff, and elected officials.

The Light of the Community Neighborhood has four Task Areas which are summarized in Figure 2. This means that the neighborhood could have anywhere between one and four Task Forces. The neighborhood could choose to have four Task Forces, each addressing one of the Task Areas, or choose to have one, two, or three Task Forces which would address a combination of the Task Areas.

Implementation of the Action Steps and tracking progress of neighborhood improvement efforts are described in Chapters 6 and 7, respectively. By working with existing organizations and the City, the Task Force(s) will work towards achieving solutions to the neighborhood's key issues in a focused and managed manner to minimize repetitiveness, maximize effectiveness, and encourage the sharing of ideas and resources.

In addition, the Task Force(s) provide the Light of the Community Neighborhood with a unified voice with which the neighborhood can bring attention to neighborhood issues at the City level and higher levels of government. Constant communication of progress and finding practical solutions to the neighborhood's key issues will not only help foster a sense of community pride, but also potentially encourage other residents and stakeholders to take part in the grassroots efforts of the Task Force(s).

Figure 2: Task Areas to implement the Action Plan



The Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative (ANPI) provided the general framework for the planning process for the Light of the Community Neighborhood. A general overview of the ANPI is provided below. This chapter also provides information on the study area, planning team, and neighborhood planning process.



Formally initiated in 2002, the Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative is one of the first comprehensive neighborhood planning efforts in the region.

**Overview of the Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative (ANPI)**

In 2002, the City of Aurora initiated one of the first comprehensive neighborhood planning efforts in the region. The Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative (ANPI) is being implemented to help residents, business owners, and other stakeholders shape the way their neighborhoods will evolve over the next 20 years and beyond.

Since February 2000, the City of Aurora has taken a proactive stance in working with its neighborhoods to identify common problems and develop solutions. The Neighborhood Revitalization Team (NRT), comprised of neighborhood representatives and City staff, spent several months identifying common issues confronting Aurora's established neighborhoods. At the conclusion of its work, the group formulated a number of recommendations that included sponsorship of two neighborhood-oriented programs:

- The first NRT program would allow ongoing dialogue between the City and its neighborhoods to address a variety of issues. The implementation of this recommendation was the formation of the Aurora Neighborhood Council (ANC), a type of "one-stop shop" for neighborhoods to access City services. The ANC is made up of neighborhood representatives and is served by representatives of each City department.
- The second NRT program was based on the acknowledgment that each of Aurora's neighborhoods has its own character, its own unique set of issues, and, perhaps, its own priorities for improving its quality of life. As such, the NRT proposed a process for ensuring long-term, neighborhood-by-neighborhood planning. The goal of this proposal was to ensure that the distinct needs of various neighborhoods are addressed and that revitalization is an ongoing, joint effort of both residents and City government. The ANPI was started to provide a forum for neighborhoods to collaborate with the City in addressing neighborhood issues through long-range planning.

The objectives of the ANPI program are listed below in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Objectives of the Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative**

- 1** Identify and involve stakeholders;
- 2** Help community stakeholders identify key goals for their neighborhood;
- 3** Involve stakeholders in determining the best ways to achieve neighborhood AND City goals; and
- 4** Create a collaborative and inclusive environment that will foster community building in each neighborhood.



### Light of the Community Neighborhood Study Area

With its location east of Downtown Aurora, the Light of the Community Neighborhood is situated in the City's oldest and most established areas. In addition, the Light of the Community Neighborhood is located directly north of the Bardwell Area Neighborhood and east of the McCarty Burlington Neighborhood, which were the first and fifth neighborhoods, respectively, to complete the ANPI process.



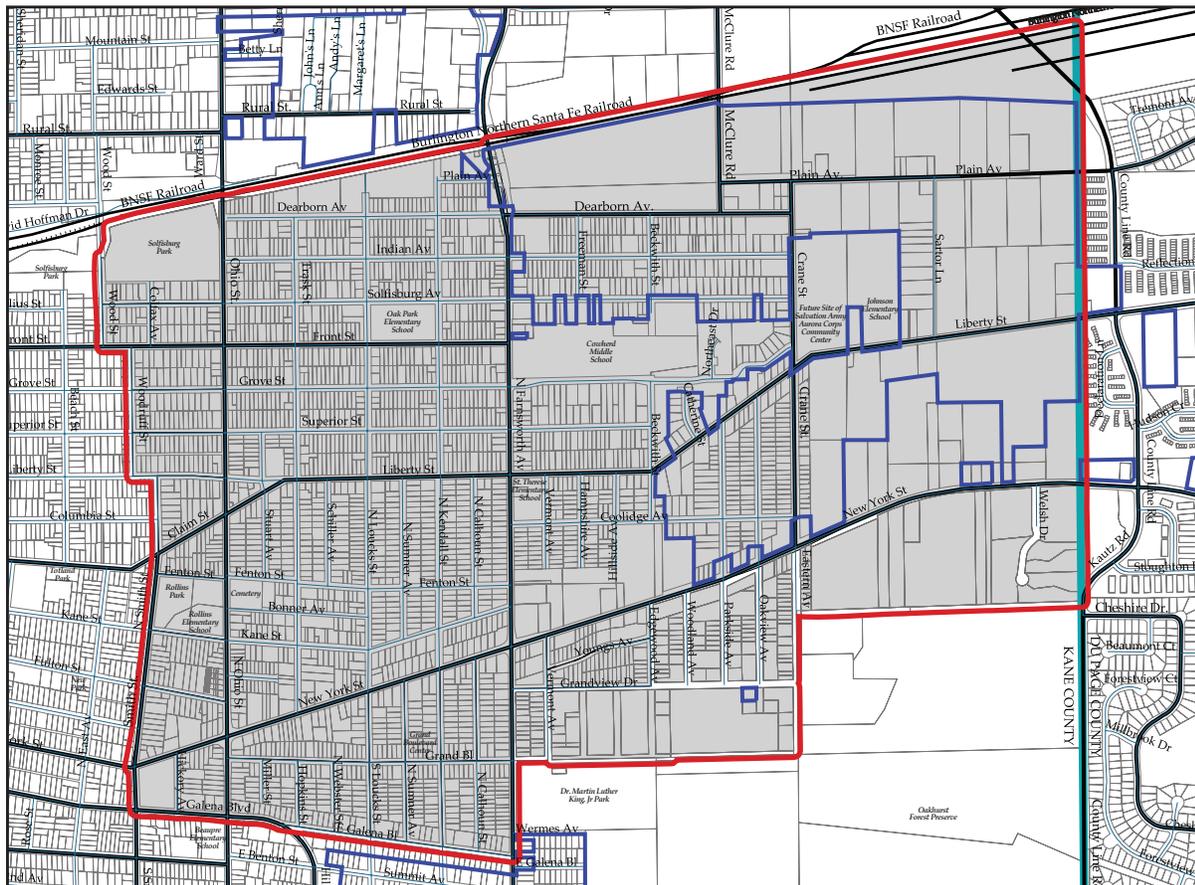
Although they are located outside the neighborhood's study area boundaries, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park and Oakhurst Forest Preserve are two of the community's most prominent points of interest.

As illustrated in the map in Figure 4, the general study area boundaries for the Light of the Community Neighborhood are:

- North: Burlington Northern Railroad
- West: Wood Street, Woodruff Street, and Smith Street
- South: Galena Boulevard and the northern border of Oakhurst Forest Preserve
- East: Kane County/DuPage County line

Residents living outside but in the vicinity of the defined study area were welcome to participate in the planning process since planning efforts will likely impact them. Planning efforts were also cognizant of the significance of other nearby amenities such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park, Oakhurst Forest Preserve, the Downtown area, and other nearby churches, schools, and facilities. The neighborhood is also set completely within City Ward 7.

Figure 4: Study Area Boundaries



### **Light of the Community Neighborhood Planning Team**

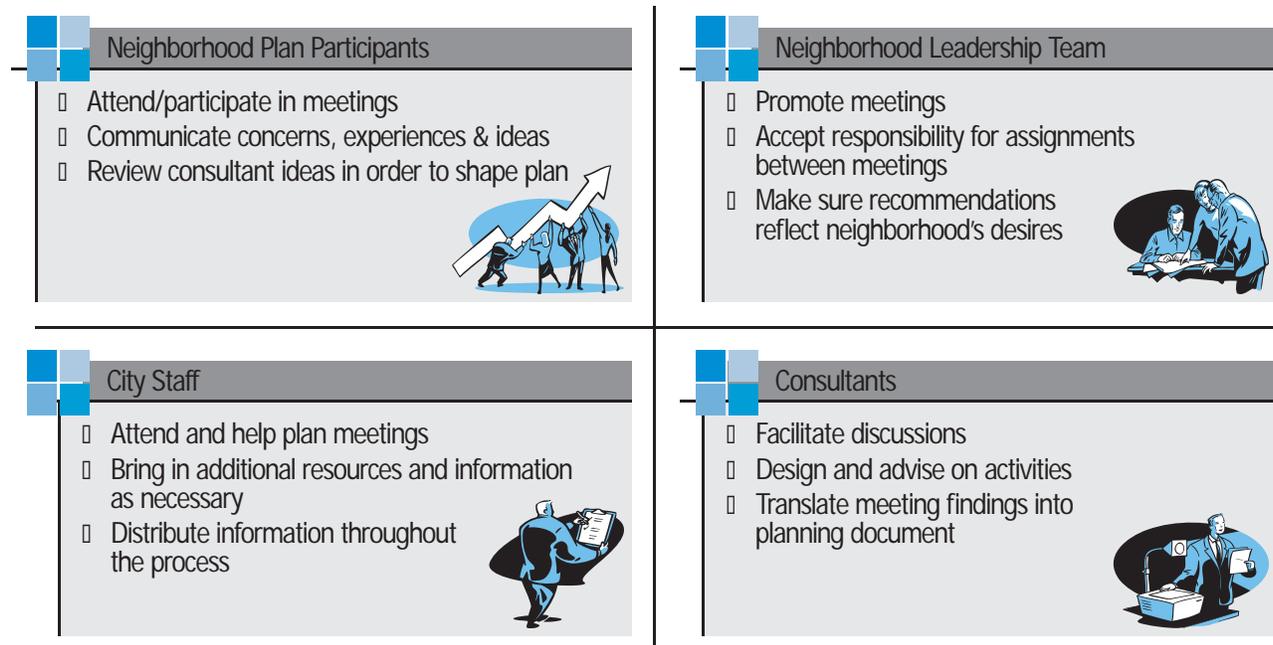
The Light of the Community Neighborhood Planning Team was comprised of City staff, consultants, and, most importantly, residents and other neighborhood stakeholders who participated in the process, including those on the volunteer Leadership Team. Stakeholders are those individuals who have a vested interest in the evolving conditions of the neighborhood, including property owners, business operators, employees, and residents. Figure 5 depicts the members of the Planning Team and summarizes the general responsibilities of each team component. The primary objectives of the Planning Team were to:

- Identify key goals for the neighborhood;
- Determine the best ways to achieve neighborhood and City goals; and
- Create a collaborative and inclusive environment that fosters community building in the neighborhood.

The Leadership Team was comprised of a diverse group of local residents and other stakeholders that focused on the outcomes of neighborhood meetings and input from residents. Working with City staff and consultants, the Leadership Team was instrumental in ensuring that the planning process reflected the community's needs and aspirations. Among its various assignments, the Leadership Team was responsible for the following:

- Promoted the ANPI and neighborhood meetings;
- Appropriately represented the Light of the Community Neighborhood residents;
- Developed and organized Action Steps to address the neighborhood's issues;
- Reviewed the Neighborhood Action Plan.

Figure 5: Neighborhood Planning Team



## Neighborhood Planning Process

Throughout the planning process, a series of meetings was held to give residents, local business owners, and other local stakeholders the opportunity to participate in the planning of their neighborhood. The neighborhood planning process was primarily comprised of three phases, which are summarized in the diagram in Figure 6.

The Light of the Community Neighborhood Action Plan is intended to be a dynamic, living document that will require constant usage by the neighborhood to implement the strategies outlined. Periodic revisions will be needed as the neighborhood evolves and adapts to trends and other influences. In addition, the neighborhood planning efforts described within this plan are not intended to replace existing neighborhood associations or other community organizations. Rather, they are designed to unite the various neighborhood groups and provide them with a stronger unified voice to represent the entire Light of the Community Neighborhood.

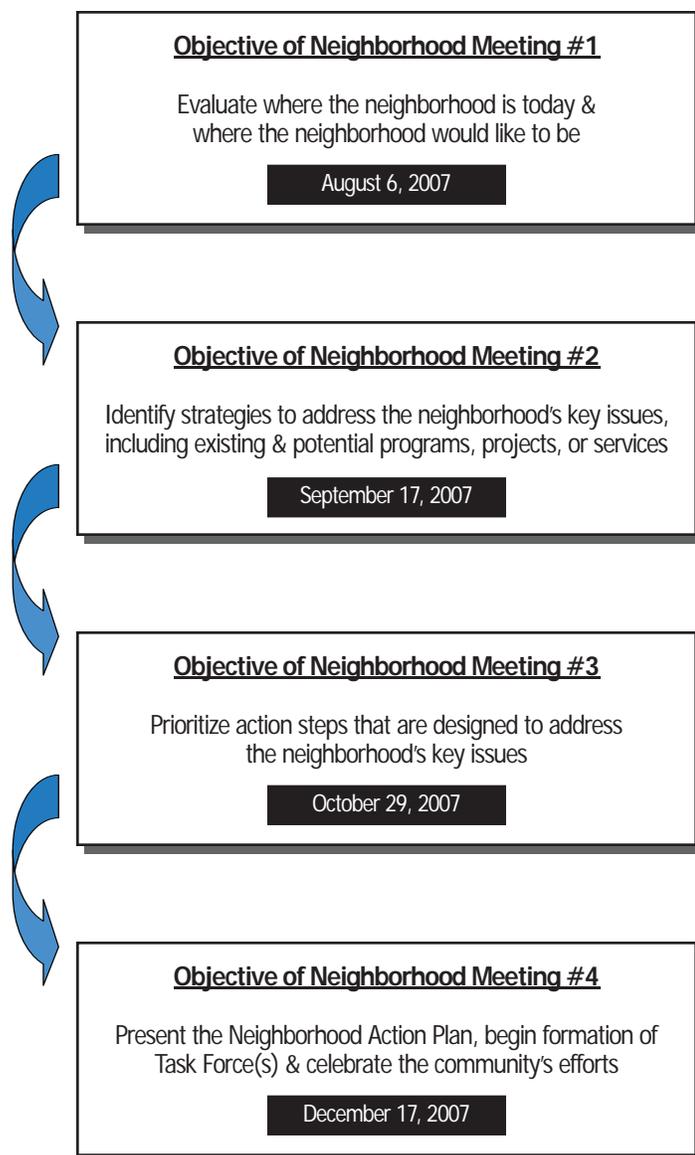
Figure 6: Neighborhood Planning Process

The objective of the first Neighborhood Meeting was to give the Planning Team an idea of how residents not only perceive their neighborhood in its current state but also envision it in the future. A word association exercise and small group discussions helped identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to assess the neighborhood's key issues.

In order to attain the envisioned image and improve upon existing programs of the neighborhood, residents participated in an exercise entitled "How Can I Help My Neighborhood?" at the second Neighborhood Meeting. The exercise allowed residents to help identify strategies and action steps that would address the neighborhood's key issues.

Based on the results from the "How Can I Help My Neighborhood?" exercise, a preliminary set of Action Steps for neighborhood improvements was developed. At the third Neighborhood Meeting, residents were provided with the opportunity to review and prioritize the Action Steps to help shape the Neighborhood Action Plan.

At the fourth and final Neighborhood Meeting, residents were provided with the opportunity to review the Neighborhood Action Plan before it is presented to the City for review and approval. Residents also learned about the Task Areas and related Task Force(s) to help with the implementation process of the Action Plan. The final meeting was also a time to celebrate the community's efforts to this point.



The neighborhood profile includes a quantitative analysis of the demographic composition and character of the Light of the Community Neighborhood. In particular, the neighborhood profile includes an analysis of U.S. Census data to provide insight into local demographic and economic trends, focusing on population, housing, and economic data. Data sets were provided by the Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc (ESRI), which is based on 2000 U.S. Census data and provides forecasts for 2007 and 2012. The neighborhood profile references 2007 estimates to provide a general overview of the demographic and economic composition of the community. The neighborhood profile also includes descriptions of neighborhood assets.

**Population**

The estimated 2007 total population of the Light of the Community Neighborhood is 10,209 residents, which comprises about 5.8% of the City of Aurora's estimated 2007 total population of 176,279 residents. Although the Light of the Community Neighborhood is one of Aurora's oldest, most established neighborhoods, its population is anticipated to continue increasing incrementally as the City's population also continues to grow.

Figure 7: Population

Year	Neighborhood		City	
	Population (residents)	Percent Change	Population (residents)	Percent Change
2000	9,327	-	142,990	-
2007 (estimate)	10,209	9.5%	176,279	23.3%
2012 (estimate)	10,854	6.3%	196,198	11.3%

Source: U.S. Census & ESRI.

Although the neighborhood and City are anticipated to experience some population growth, the amount of growth is forecasted to be less than previous years at both the neighborhood and City levels. More specifically, the neighborhood experienced an estimated 9.5% percent change in population from 2000 to 2007; however, the percent change is expected to decrease to 6.3% from 2007 to 2012. The City follows a similar trend. In addition, the neighborhood's population is anticipated to have a gradually declining composition of the City's overall population from 6.5% in 2000, 5.8% (estimated) in 2007, and 5.5% (estimated) in 2012.

**Population by Race**

Based on race, white residents comprise the highest composition of the neighborhood's population with a percentage of 44.2%, which is significantly less than the 64.6% composition for the entire City. The second highest composition by race is 36.4% of all neighborhood residents that identify themselves as being "some other race" different from those specifically defined by the U.S. Census. Black residents comprise the third highest composition at 14.4%. Multi-racial residents are fourth at 3.8%. All other race categories (American Indian, Asian, and Pacific Islander) each comprise less than 1% of the neighborhood's population.

Figure 8: Population by Race (2007)

Race	Neighborhood		City	
	Population (residents)	Percent of Total	Population (residents)	Percent of Total
White	4,509	44.2%	113,812	64.6%
Black	1,472	14.4%	19,141	10.9%
American Indian	66	0.6%	629	0.4%
Asian	58	0.6%	7,106	4.0%
Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	67	0.04%
Other Race	3,712	36.4%	29,859	16.9%
Two or More Races	392	3.8%	5,665	3.2%
TOTAL	10,209	100.0%	176,279	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census & ESRI.

Residents of Hispanic origin (any race) comprise 78.8% of the neighborhood's population, which is more than double in size of the 37.7% composition for the entire City. In other words, almost 8 out of 10 residents in the Light of the Community Neighborhood are of Hispanic origin. This is a major contrast from the Hispanic composition of the entire City where only 4 out of 10 residents are of Hispanic origin.

Furthermore, the Hispanic composition of the Light of the Community Neighborhood's population increased from 71.4% in 2000 to an estimated 78.8% in 2007; this upward trend is anticipated to continue with an estimated 82.1% composition by 2012. The entire City is experiencing a similar upward trend.

### Population by Age

The Light of the Community Neighborhood is home to many young families, which is evident by the fact that two-thirds (66.5%) of neighborhood residents are age 34 years or younger. Also, about 40% of neighborhood residents are age 19 years or younger, which means the neighborhood has a significant group of school-age children and teenagers.

Although the age composition of the neighborhood follows fairly closely to the City's overall age composition, the neighborhood is generally younger than the entire City. This is accentuated by the neighborhood's median age of 25.9 years, which is about 4 years younger than the City's median age of 30.6 years.

A neighborhood with so many young families benefits from having a wide array of community amenities like schools, parks, and shopping opportunities located in close proximity. Located within Aurora's historic core that developed as a traditional neighborhood with a variety of amenities close to residential areas, the Light of the Community Neighborhood does include options for education, recreation, business, shopping, public transportation, and personal care. However, there is room for improvement, particularly for a neighborhood that has evolved

Figure 9: Population by Hispanic Origin (2007)

Origin	Neighborhood		City	
	Population (residents)	Percent of Total	Population (residents)	Percent of Total
Hispanic Origin (any race)	8,044	78.8%	66,391	37.7%
No Hispanic Origin	2,165	21.2%	109,888	62.3%
TOTAL	10,209	100.0%	176,279	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census & ESRI.

Figure 10: Population by Age (2007)

Age	Neighborhood		City	
	Population (residents)	Percent of Total	Population (residents)	Percent of Total
0 to 4 years	1,140	11.2%	18,133	10.3%
5 to 19 years	2,947	28.9%	44,009	25.0%
20 to 34 years	2,694	26.4%	39,927	22.6%
35 to 44 years	1,323	13.0%	30,287	17.2%
45 to 54 years	972	9.5%	20,585	11.7%
55 to 64 years	609	6.0%	12,469	7.1%
65+ years	524	5.0%	10,869	6.1%
TOTAL	10,209	100.0%	176,279	100.0%
Median Age	25.9 years		30.6 years	

Source: U.S. Census & ESRI.



While the Grand Boulevard Youth Center (left) offers space for educational and recreational activities for neighborhood children, the center is open for use by all age groups. For example, the Taking Back Our Community (TBOC) neighborhood group holds its meetings at the youth center. The Leadership Team meetings for this planning process were also held at the youth center. With its demographic characterized by young families, the Light of the Community Neighborhood should offer other venues, amenities, and opportunities like the youth center to provide spaces and programs for different age groups.



Solfisburg Park provides baseball diamonds for Little, Pony, and Legion Leagues, offering recreational space for different age groups.

significantly over time in both physical and demographic character. For example, the neighborhood does have a system of parks, but some residents feel that they aren't well distributed throughout the neighborhood. As another example, the neighborhood is served by Pace buses; however, families that have jobs that deviate from the traditional "9 to 5" work schedule do not always have bus schedules that match their non-traditional schedules.

As a neighborhood of young families that has evolved over time, it is important to ensure the Light of the Community Neighborhood provides adequate options for education, recreation, business, shopping, public transportation, and personal care within close proximity to meet the diverse needs and interests of the community. For example, age-specific amenities such as playgrounds and daycare centers are appropriate for a community with young families; however, amenities such as athletic playing fields cater to sports leagues for different age groups. Striking the right balance is key to fostering a community that meets the needs and interests of all of its residents.

**Households**

Located in the Aurora's historic core, the Light of the Community Neighborhood is one of the densest residential areas in the entire City. Physically, residential lots are generally smaller, creating smaller yards and shorter distances between homes in comparison to newer residential areas. In terms of demographics, the neighborhood's population can also be classified as "dense" in that the average household size is 4.21 residents per household, which is significantly greater than the City's overall average household size of 3.07 residents per household. In other words, the average household in the Light of the Community Neighborhood houses 1 resident more than the average household in the entire City.

**Figure 11: Households (2007)**

Households	Neighborhood	City
Number of Households	2,422	56,858
Average Household Size	4.21	3.07

Source: U.S. Census & ESRI.

The physical density of residential structures is one contributing factor to the neighborhood's higher average household size. Another factor is overcrowding (too many people living in a single housing unit), which is a concern in the community. The neighborhood should collaborate with the City to alleviate overcrowding to not only ensure residents properly follow the City's property standards for occupancy but also help improve safety and public health conditions within housing units. While it is important to adhere to the City's regulations, it is also important to ensure residents maintain safe and healthy living environments.

**Housing Occupancy**

A great majority (93.4%) of the neighborhood's 2,594 total housing units are occupied. The 172 unoccupied housing units translates to a 6.6% vacancy rate in the neighborhood, which is slightly less than the City's 6.9% vacancy rate. Any neighborhood, even one as densely populated as the Light of the Community Neighborhood, will likely face some vacancies. Moreover, when a neighborhood has an aging housing stock like the one in the Light of the Community Neighborhood,

**Figure 12: Housing Occupancy (2007)**

Housing Unit	Neighborhood		City	
	Number of Housing Units	Percent of Total	Number of Housing Units	Percent of Total
Occupied Units	2,422	93.4%	56,858	93.1%
Vacant Units	172	6.6%	4,215	6.9%
TOTAL	2,594	100.0%	61,073	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census & ESRI.

there will be strong potential for vacant residential structures, particularly if they are dilapidated.

An occupancy rate of over 90% is still considered good, particularly for an older, more established neighborhood. With qualities like affordable homes, strong schools, proximity to downtown, and access to public transportation options, the Light of the Community Neighborhood will likely maintain a high occupancy rate. Rehabilitation of aging and dilapidated residential structures could help lower the vacancy rate. General neighborhood improvements could also help by enriching the neighborhood's quality of life, which in turn would improve the Light of the Community Neighborhood's stake as a desirable place to live.



At almost 94%, the housing occupancy rate in the Light of the Community Neighborhood is on par with the City's overall rate and considered good for one of Aurora's oldest, most established neighborhoods.

**Housing Tenure**

About 71.6% of all occupied housing units in the neighborhood are owner occupied. The remaining 28.4% are renter occupied housing units, which take different forms such as apartment buildings and converted single family homes accommodating multiple units. The neighborhood's composition of owner and renter occupied housing units is very similar to the City's overall composition, which has 72.4% owner occupied and 27.6% renter occupied housing units.

Figure 13: Housing Tenure (2007)

Housing Unit	Neighborhood		City	
	Number of Housing Units	Percent of Total	Number of Housing Units	Percent of Total
Owner Occupied	1,733	71.6%	41,144	72.4%
Renter Occupied	689	28.4%	15,714	27.6%
TOTAL	2,422	100.0%	56,858	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census & ESRI.

Although the neighborhood is primarily a community with owner occupied housing, its renter occupied housing units help diversify the neighborhood's housing stock, particularly for a community of mixed incomes and housing needs.



About 28% of the neighborhood's housing stock is comprised of renter occupied housing units, which are generally scattered throughout the neighborhood and include apartment buildings (left) and converted single family houses for multiple living units.

The key is to ensure the neighborhood's housing stock is truly reflective of the community's needs. While some households may only be able to afford rental housing, encouraging homeownership is also important to not only boost the neighborhood's owner occupied composition but also empower residents with the privileges and responsibilities that accompany homeownership.

**Income**

The neighborhood has a median household income of \$48,811, which is significantly less than the City's median household income of \$70,489. Similarly, the neighborhood's per capita income (\$13,278) is less than half of the City's per capita income (\$30,299). This disparity is accentuated even more by the fact that the increases in the neighborhood's household income values from 2000 to 2007 were not as high as the increases for the entire City. Specifically, from 2000 to 2007, the neighborhood's median household income and per capita income increased by 22.2% and 14.8%, respectively. In comparison, the City's median household income and per capita income increased by 28.5% and 36.9%, respectively.



The disparity between neighborhood and City income values indicates that low- to middle-income households have settled in Aurora's older, more established neighborhoods that offer greater affordability in housing options. On the other hand, higher income households are generally dispersed to other parts of the City, particularly into newer developments beyond the historic central city.

Figure 14: Income (2007)

Income	Neighborhood			City		
	2000	2007	% Change	2000	2007	% Change
Median Household Income	\$39,951	\$48,811	22.2%	\$54,861	\$70,489	28.5%
Per Capita Income	\$11,565	\$13,278	14.8%	\$22,131	\$30,299	36.9%

Source: U.S. Census & ESRI.

Although general economic inflation will account for some of the increases in median household income and per capita income over time, the community can provide greater influence on its income values by boosting the neighborhood's quality of life to attract households covering a wider range of income levels. Combined with its diverse community amenities, location near downtown, access to major transportation routes, and proximity to transit options, neighborhood improvement efforts offer the potential to enhance the neighborhood's quality of life.

## Neighborhood Assets

Neighborhood assets are community resources such as local buildings, services, recreational areas, and other community-related uses that residents visit, use, or need on a regular basis. The Light of the Community Neighborhood is served by a variety of local assets, which are described below and illustrated on the Neighborhood Assets Map on page 19. Some assets are located within the study area while others are located outside but within close proximity to the neighborhood.

- **Schools:** The Light of the Community Neighborhood is home to five schools, including four elementary schools (Oak Park Elementary School, Rollins Elementary School, St. Therese Elementary School, and Johnson Elementary School) and Cowherd Middle School. Beaupre Elementary School is also located just outside the study area south of Galena Boulevard. In addition, East Aurora High School is located a few blocks southwest of the neighborhood's study area. For higher education options, the Aurora campus of Waubensee Community College is located further west on Stolp Island in the downtown area.
- **Churches:** The Catholic Parish of St. Therese of Jesus, Mount Olive Church of God in Christ, and Tabernacle de Luz are the three primary churches located within the study area. Several other churches are located in close proximity, including St. Nicholas Church, Iglesia Bautista Emanuel, Sacred Heart Church, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, St. Mary's Church, First Methodist Church, First Presbyterian Church, St. Paul's Church, Trinity Church, and Emmanuel Evangelical Church.
- **Parks, Open Spaces & Recreational Facilities:** A few parks and open spaces are located within the study area, including Marie Wilkinson Park, Bishop William H. Bonner Park, Solfisburg Park, Rollins Park, Cowherd Park, and small open spaces within residential areas. Solfisburg Park has undergone major improvements in the past few years and will soon be the new home for the Aurora University Spartans baseball team, which previously did not have a home field in Aurora. Through a partnership of the Aurora University and the City of Aurora, the baseball fields will be brought up to NCAA standards in 2008 translating into further improvements and more use of this open space. Though located just south of the study area, the neighborhood is also served by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Park and Oakhurst Forest Preserve, which are considered to be two of the most prominent parks/open spaces in the area. Parks are maintained by the Aurora Department of Parks and Recreation and the Fox Valley Park District. The Forest Preserve District of Kane County maintains Oakhurst Forest Preserve.



Cowherd Middle School is one of the five schools located within the neighborhood study area.



St. Therese Church is one of the neighborhood's Christian places of worship. St. Therese also provides a place for learning via its elementary school.



The Light of the Community Neighborhood is home to four elementary schools, including Oak Park Elementary School (left), Rollins Elementary School (right), St. Therese Elementary School, and Johnson Elementary School. Beaupre Elementary School (center) is also nearby at the Ohio Street/Galena Boulevard intersection.



Primarily providing space for youth programs, the Grand Boulevard Youth Center also serves as a meeting space for community meetings and activities.



With its proposed site along Liberty Street, the Salvation Army Aurora Corps Community Center will offer recreational and educational programs for the community.



While many businesses are located along New York Street and Farnsworth Avenue, some businesses like the Bubble Queen laundromat are located in other sections of the neighborhood.

Schools and some churches also provide recreational spaces such as playgrounds, ball fields, and gymnasiums. For example, Cowherd Middle School provides a running track, basketball courts, gymnasium, and soccer field. The Grand Boulevard Youth Center provides a place for meetings and youth activities. The Marie Wilkinson Child Development & Day Care Center is another facility providing recreational space and educational programs for local youth.

The Salvation Army Aurora Corps Community Center is another recreational facility that is currently being planned at the intersection of Liberty Street and Crane Street (east of Johnson Elementary School).

□ **Retail Businesses:** The neighborhood is served by various retail businesses that provide goods and services to the community. While most retail businesses are located along the neighborhood's two primary road corridors (New York Street and Farnsworth Avenue), some businesses such as laundromats and contractor services are located within residential areas within stand-alone structures or as home-business operations.

□ **Public Transit:** The Aurora Transportation Center, which is located near downtown along Broadway, provides a public transportation hub for the City and surrounding neighborhoods, offering Pace bus, Metra commuter train, and Greyhound passenger bus services. Some of Pace's bus routes directly serve the Light of the Community Neighborhood.

□ **Neighborhood Organizations:** The neighborhood is also served by three resident-based organizations that are dedicated to improving and enhancing the quality of life in the neighborhood: the Taking Back Our Community (TBOC), Making A Difference (MAD), and Inner Circle (IC) neighborhood groups. The Neighborhood Groups Map on page 21 illustrates the general coverage area of each group.

The Light of the Community Neighborhood greatly benefits from the work and dedication of these three neighborhood organizations and other active residents. Continued active participation throughout the ANPI planning process will prove invaluable to the implementation of the Action Plan. Both places and people help define the character of the community, and they are all considered neighborhood assets. The strengths and benefits offered by these neighborhood assets are essential for the Light of the Community Neighborhood to maintain a high quality of life.

The Light of the Community Neighborhood is served by parks of varying size and type. Some parks such as Marie Wilkinson Park (left) and Bishop William H. Bonner Park (right) are managed by the Aurora Department of Parks and Recreation. Others such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Park (center) are managed by the Fox Valley Park District.





# Light of the Community Neighborhood

Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative

Vicindario del Luz de la Comunidad  
Iniciativa de Planificación de los Vecindarios de Aurora

## Neighborhood Assets Map Mapa de Recursos del Vecindario

### LEGEND | LEYENDA

- Study Area Boundary | Límite de Área del Estudio
- City Limits | Límites de Ciudad
- Churches | Iglesias
- Schools | Escuelas
- Parks | Parques
- City Open Space
- Oakhurst Forest Preserve
- Grand Boulevard Center | Centro de Boulevard de Grand
- Salvation Army Community Center (future site)
- Centro de Comunidad de Ejército de Salvación (sitio futuro)
- Railroads | Ferrocarriles
- Road Centerlines | Líneas Centrales del Camino
- Major Roads | Caminos Principales
- County Line | Línea de Condado
- Parcels | Propiedades
- Study Area (color) | Área del Estudio (color)

### What is a neighborhood asset?

Neighborhood assets are community resources that include buildings, services, recreational areas, and other community-related uses that residents visit, use, or need on a regular basis. These assets may also include opportunities for neighborhood improvement through redevelopment of vacant or underutilized land.

### ¿Cuáles son los recursos del vecindario?

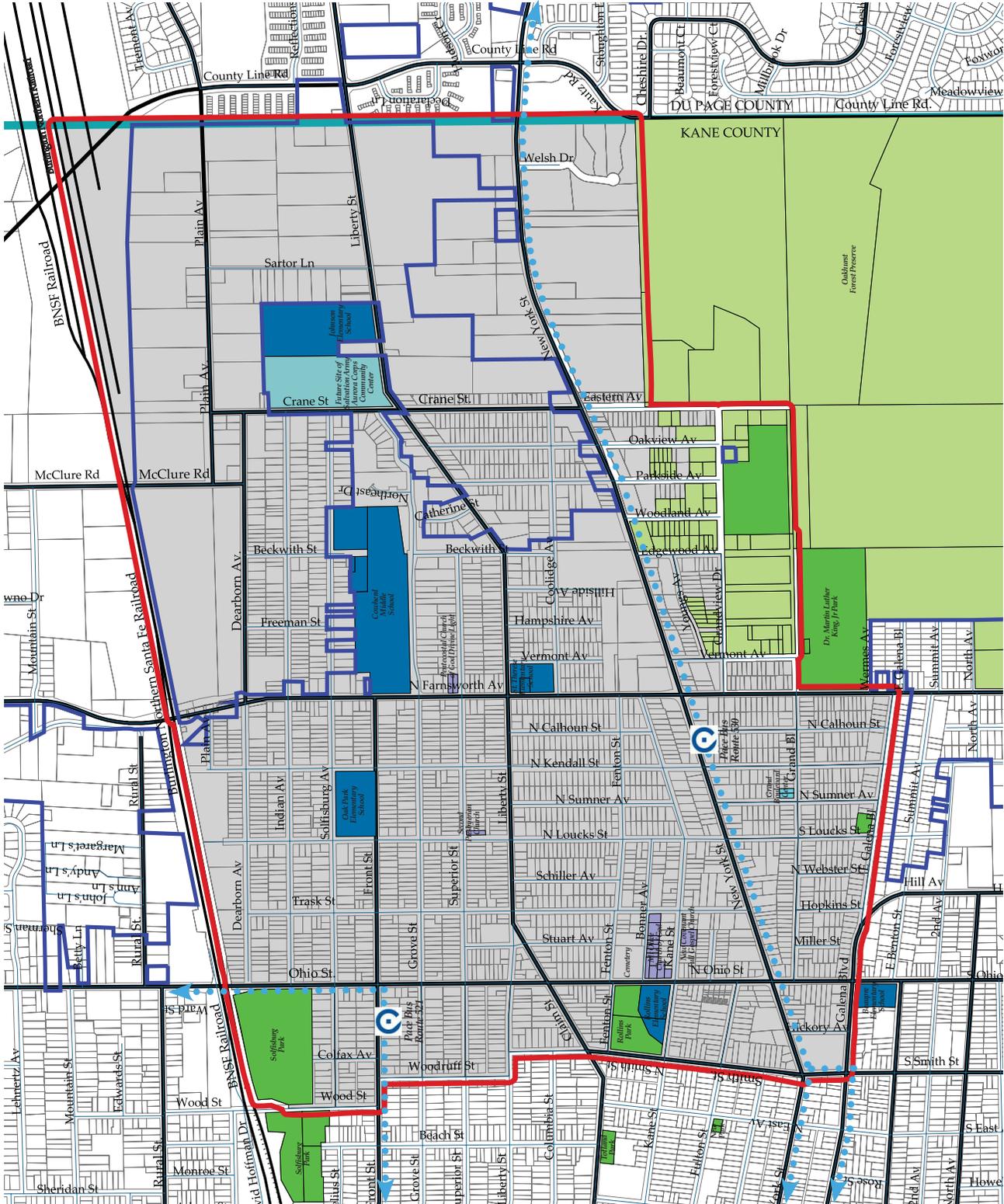
Recursos del barrio son recursos de la comunidad que incluyen edificios, servicios, áreas recreativas, y otros usos de comunidad-relacionados con lo que los residentes visitan, usan, o necesitan en una base regular. Estos recursos también pueden incluir oportunidades para mejorar los barrios a través de reconstrucción de terreno disponible o bajo-utilizados.



August 2007 | Agosto de 2007

GIS map data provided by City of Aurora GIS Department

Map prepared by Teska Associates, Inc.





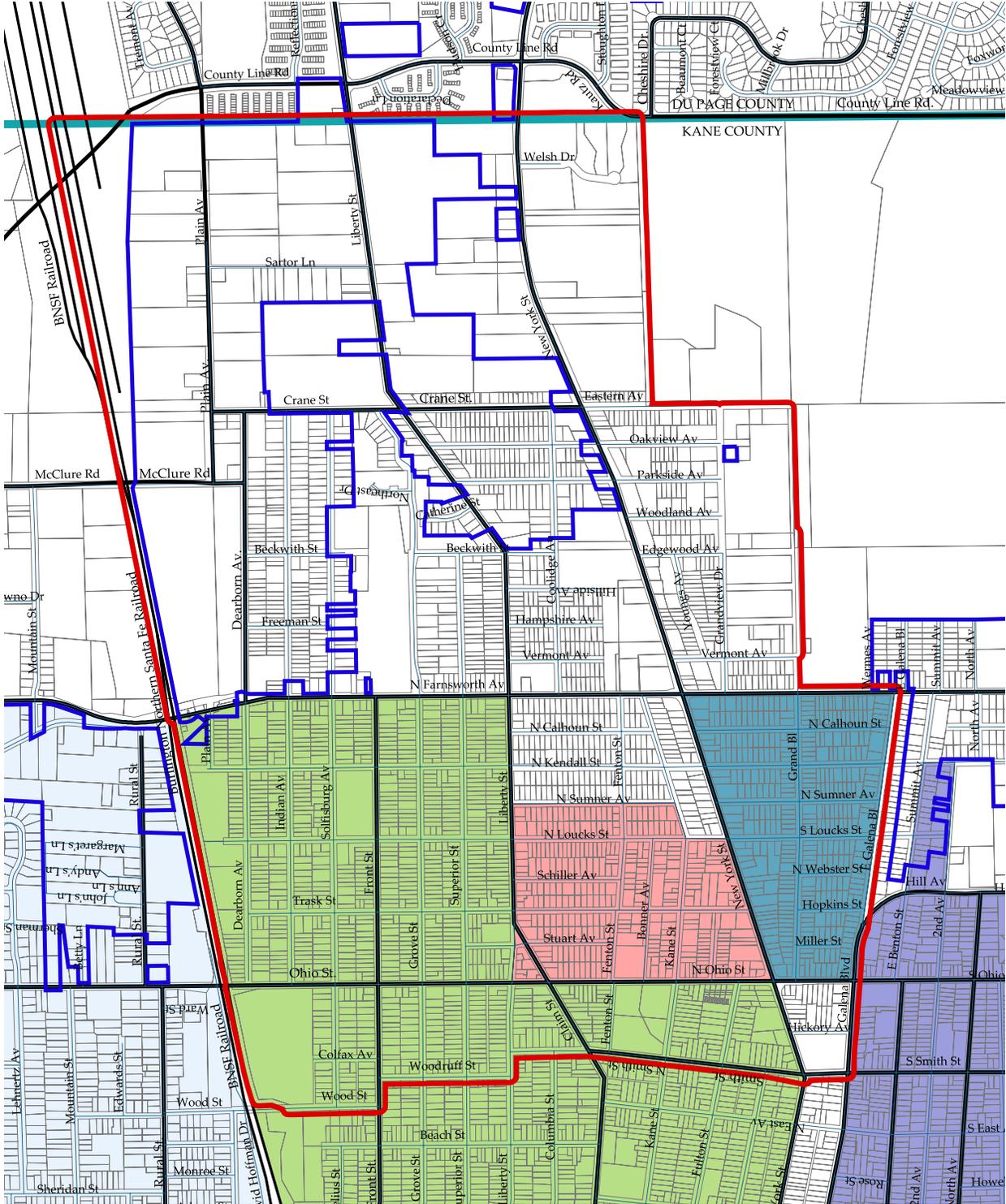
# Light of the Community Neighborhood

Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative  
 Vecindario del Luz de la Comunidad  
 Iniciativa de Planificación de los Vecindarios de Aurora

## Neighborhood Groups Map Mapa de Grupos del Vecindario

### LEGENDA | LEYENDA

- Study Area Boundary | Límite de Área del Estudio
- City Limits | Límites de Ciudad
- Railroads | Ferrocarriles
- Road Centerlines | Líneas Centrales del Camino
- Major Roads | Caminos Principales
- County Line | Línea de Condado
- Parcels | Propiedades
- Making A Difference (MAD) Neighborhood Group
- Taking Back Our Community (TBOC) Neighborhood Group
- Inner Circle (IC) Neighborhood Group
- South East Neighbors (SENA) Neighborhood Group
- Pigeon Hill Neighbors (PHN) Neighborhood Group



August 2007 | Agosto de 2007

GIS map data provided by City of Aurora MIS Department

Map prepared by Teska Associates, Inc.

Blank area for neighborhood profile content.



As the community prepared itself for neighborhood improvement, it was necessary to evaluate existing conditions and perceptions of the Light of the Community Neighborhood, taking inventory of the positive and negative elements that shape the neighborhood. In addition to understanding the present state of the neighborhood, it was equally important to recognize how the community envisions itself in the future. Analysis of existing conditions and determination of desired conditions for neighborhood improvement both relied on a thorough understanding of the key issues facing the neighborhood and determination of the most effective methods to address these issues.

During the First Neighborhood Meeting, meeting participants took part in a series of exercises to offer their initial thoughts and perceptions of the neighborhood. These exercises included a “one-word” exercise and an “Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood” exercise. The exercise results provided the Planning Team with a thorough compilation of ideas and concerns from which a set of key neighborhood issues was derived. Exercise results are summarized below and on the following pages (complete results are provided in the Appendix).

**“One-Word” Exercise:  
Understanding How the Neighborhood is Perceived Today & In the Future**

To help kick off the neighborhood planning process, participants at the First Neighborhood Meeting took part in a “one-word” exercise allowing them to use one word to identify how they perceive the Light of the Community Neighborhood “as it is today” and “as they want it to be”. The “one-word” exercise was designed to gain an understanding of how residents and local stakeholders perceived the neighborhood today and how they envision it in the future. The results from this two-part exercise are summarized in Figure 15.

Figure 15: Results from the “One-Word” Exercise



Each participant at the First Neighborhood Meeting was asked to provide one word to describe her/his perception of the Light of the Community Neighborhood “as it is today” and “as I want it to be” in the future.

The neighborhood as it is today . . .	The neighborhood as I want it to be . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sub-standard</li> <li>- Over-commercialized</li> <li>- Insecure</li> <li>- Lost</li> <li>- Ever-changing</li> <li>- Diverse</li> <li>- Under-served</li> <li>- Better</li> <li>- Troubled</li> <li>- Good lighting</li> <li>- Good Park District</li> <li>- Traffic</li> <li>- Children at risk</li> <li>- Overcrowded</li> <li>- Bad rap</li> <li>- Poor perception</li> <li>- Promise</li> <li>- City interest</li> <li>- Lack of trust (of city)</li> <li>- Unorganized</li> <li>- Parked cars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Crime-free</li> <li>- Inviting</li> <li>- A model community</li> <li>- More communication</li> <li>- Open/peaceful</li> <li>- Less race discrimination</li> <li>- Well serviced (grocery, library)</li> <li>- More programs beyond school</li> <li>- More affordable youth programs</li> <li>- More programs beyond school</li> <li>- Better information on being a good neighbor</li> <li>- Fines for poor maintenance</li> <li>- Childcare</li> <li>- More green areas</li> <li>- Safe &amp; secure</li> <li>- Improved housing</li> <li>- Better looking</li> </ul>

Notes: Responses are listed in no particular order. Responses to the “As It Is Today” part of the exercise reflect personal perceptions of individual meeting participants. Additional research and discussion were conducted to evaluate the validity of these responses.

**“Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood” Exercise:  
Identifying the Neighborhood’s Key Issues & Opportunities**

After the “one-word” exercise, participants at the First Neighborhood Meeting then took part in small group discussions as part of an exercise entitled “Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood”. The neighborhood indicators exercise was designed to encourage meeting participants to think about a variety of neighborhood elements, some of which may exist today and some that may be lacking or non-existent.

By identifying the neighborhood's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, the exercise results provided insight into the key issues that characterize the Light of the Community Neighborhood. Figure 16 summarizes the 16 common neighborhood elements that were reviewed and discussed during the neighborhood indicators exercise.

Since the exercise was conducted in a series of small groups, the findings collected from each group were analyzed collectively to determine patterns and note any inconsistencies in order to gain an overall perspective of the issues facing the neighborhood. Based on patterns and similarities, the exercise findings were organized under 4 primary issue categories as defined in Figure 17.

Given the large amount of data collected from the neighborhood indicators exercise, a complete summary of exercise findings is provided in the Appendix. However, the exercise findings provided the basis for the summary of the neighborhood's key issues, which are summarized on the next page and compiled in Figure 18.

Figure 16: Common Neighborhood Elements

- Landmarks/focal points
- Identifiable entries/gateways
- Pedestrian-friendly streets
- Access to public transportation
- Safe environment
- Diversity
- Recreational opportunities
- Educational opportunities
- Employment opportunities
- Diverse housing options
- Well-maintained properties
- Variety in businesses
- Opportunities for development
- Youth programs/activities
- Community involvement
- Community services

Figure 17: Primary Issue Categories



**Neighborhood Identity**

See Figure 19 on page 26 for summary of key issues

I

The Neighborhood Identity category includes issues relating to the physical appearance of the neighborhood as well as the perceptions of the neighborhood by residents and visitors.



**Neighborhood Transportation**

See Figure 19 on page 27 for summary of key issues

T

The Neighborhood Transportation category includes issues relating to transportation access, circulation, and safety throughout the neighborhood.



**Neighborhood Safety**

See Figure 19 on page 28 for summary of key issues

S

The Neighborhood Safety category includes issues relating to safety and protection from crime.



**Neighborhood Opportunities**

See Figure 19 on page 29 for summary of key issues

O

The Neighborhood Opportunities category includes issues relating to various opportunities that have the potential to enhance the neighborhood's quality of life.



### **Summary of the Neighborhood's Key Issues**

The findings from the “Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood” exercise were consolidated and evaluated to determine patterns and connections between related issues. This process of consolidation and evaluation generated a more refined list of the neighborhood's key issues, which are summarized in Figure 19. The neighborhood's key issues were assembled to prepare for the Second Neighborhood Meeting, at which meeting participants were given the opportunity to participate in an exercise entitled “How Can I Help My Neighborhood?”, which was designed to generate and discuss ideas about how the neighborhood can resolve its key issues.



#### **Key Neighborhood Issues**

The neighborhood's key issues were determined from a series of activities, including results from the “One-Word” exercise, findings from the “Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood” exercise, and general discussions with City staff, residents, and local stakeholders.

Rather than wait for others to take action, residents and stakeholders can be proactive and take steps to resolve neighborhood issues. While residents and stakeholders are not expected to resolve all issues by themselves, they are encouraged to partner with City departments, neighborhood groups, schools, churches, and other local organizations to identify and utilize tools and programs that most effectively address the issues at hand. Certain steps may seem small at first, but they help initiate activity and demonstrate to neighbors that the community cares about the state of the neighborhood. Also, enough small steps can add up to significant results. Rather than taking a reactive approach where issues are resolved as they arise, residents and stakeholders are encouraged to take a proactive approach, which stimulates getting to the root of a problem and formulating solutions aimed at not only solving the current issue but also preventing others from arising in the future.

### **Formulating Action Steps to Address the Neighborhood's Key Issues**

The results from the “How Can I Help My Neighborhood?” exercise generated over 125 ideas that could help resolve the neighborhood's key issues listed in Figure 18 (complete results from the “How Can I Help My Neighborhood?” exercise are provided in the Appendix). The multitude of ideas is an indication that the neighborhood's key issues can be resolved in one way or another. While some methods or programs require more resources and effort than others, it was clear that the neighborhood believes that its issues are not insurmountable and can be resolved.

Similar to the evaluation of the findings from the neighborhood indicators exercise, the results from the “How Can I Help My Neighborhood?” exercise were evaluated to identify patterns and connections between related ideas to generate a consolidated set of Action Steps designed to address the neighborhood's key issues and provide greater focus to the Action Plan. As the consolidated set of Action Steps was generated, some Action Steps were designed to address one specific issue while others were designed to address multiple related issues. Chapter 6 provides a summary of the Action Steps, particularly describing how the Action Steps were prioritized by the neighborhood at the Third Neighborhood Meeting. Prioritizing the Action Steps helped guide the development of a series of Implementation Worksheets designed to guide neighborhood improvement efforts throughout the Action Plan's implementation process.



#### **Action Steps**

An Action Step is an activity or process designed to address one of the neighborhood's key issues. As depicted on the Implementation Worksheets in Chapter 6, an Action Step is comprised of a series of tasks that are aimed at resolving an issue through action and collaboration.

Figure 18: Summary of the Neighborhood's Key Issues



## Neighborhood Identity

The Neighborhood Identity category includes issues relating to the physical appearance of the neighborhood as well as the perceptions of the neighborhood by residents and visitors.

The findings from the "Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood" exercise were compiled as a list of key issues organized into the following sub-categories relating to neighborhood identity: (1) landmarks, (2) image, (3) community involvement, and (4) property maintenance.

\*See Appendix for complete exercise results

### Landmarks

- Neighborhood landmarks include schools, churches, parks, Marie Wilkerson Center, and Grand Blvd Youth Center
- Pattersonville: welcome sign exists but there should be a plaque/sign indicating why it is a landmark
- Black history museum (art history) at 5th Ave and Kendall St was crafted years ago but is not commemorated (offers opportunity for neighborhood)

### Image

- Neighborhood diversity (ethnicity, economics)
- Neighborhood is not presented very well during the winter time (e.g. streets like Smith St, Downer St, Galena Blvd, and Grand Blvd are not plowed as well as other parts of the city)
- Division between City & unincorporated areas affect delivery of City services
- Reinvestment is lacking in the neighborhood (neighborhood sales taxes go outside the area)
- Neighborhood affordability is lacking (gas prices in Aurora higher than other communities)

### Community Involvement

- There is some community involvement but it is uneven across the community
- Community involvement requires organization, active participation & a common goal
- Residents don't always know what neighborhood groups/organizations are available
- Need more neighborhood reporting of main issues
- Neighbors must walk the neighborhood
- Intercommunication among schools

### Property Maintenance

- Property maintenance not uniform (some areas are better maintained than others)
- City programs/grants for property maintenance are available but application process is not easy and not everyone is aware of the programs
- Need education about public health and safety issues across all cultures
- Overcrowding
- Improper disposal of trash/junk (e.g. junk cars on property; garbage dumping under railroad bridge)
- Lack of upkeep in mom and pop shops
- Businesses operating out of home (e.g. auto body shop in home in Kane St/Kendall St area)

Note: All responses provided for the "Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood" exercise from the First Neighborhood Meeting and the "How Can I Help My Neighborhood?" exercise from the Second Neighborhood Meeting reflect the personal viewpoints of individual meeting participants and may not accurately reflect the viewpoints of the entire neighborhood. Additional analysis of the meeting summaries were conducted to gain a more thorough understanding of the neighborhood's issues, particularly when drafting the Action Steps in Chapter 6.

Figure 18 (continued): Summary of the Neighborhood's Key Issues



## Neighborhood Transportation

T

The Neighborhood Transportation category includes issues relating to transportation access, circulation, and safety throughout the neighborhood.

The findings from the "Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood" exercise were compiled as a list of key issues organized into the following sub-categories relating to neighborhood transportation: (1) speeding, (2) parking, (3) pedestrian circulation, and (4) public transportation.

\*See Appendix for complete exercise results

### **Speeding**

- Speeding is a major problem along Farnsworth Ave, Simmons St, and near schools
- Need better monitoring of speeding, especially during school hours
- Lack of stop signs in certain areas, particularly along streets between Grove St and Galena Blvd (including Loucks St, Kendall St, and Calhoun St)

### **Parking**

- Too many cars parked on street make it unsafe for kids to play in neighborhood
- Liberty St is congested and has cars parked on both sides of street

### **Pedestrian Circulation**

- Some areas lack sidewalks
- Sidewalks are not continuous in certain areas (e.g. along Farnsworth Ave)
- Busy streets like Farnsworth Ave hard to cross
- Pedestrian walkability blocked when cars park across sidewalks or residents don't shovel snow
- Crosswalks and "Walk" signs at street crossings are present but not always followed (by either pedestrians or cars); people cross wherever convenient
- Safe routes to school program

### **Public Transportation**

- Lack of bus shelters
- Need more stops for bus routes (bus service used to be better; Pace cut backs)
- Bus services stop running too early (need longer hours)
- Poor access to taxis (only at train station and casino)
- Affordability of transportation (overpriced taxis and gas)
- Access for senior citizens: safety, accessibility, ADA regulated
- Need for point-to-point transportation service for local trips

Note: All responses provided for the "Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood" exercise from the First Neighborhood Meeting and the "How Can I Help My Neighborhood?" exercise from the Second Neighborhood Meeting reflect the personal viewpoints of individual meeting participants and may not accurately reflect the viewpoints of the entire neighborhood. Additional analysis of the meeting summaries were conducted to gain a more thorough understanding of the neighborhood's issues, particularly when drafting the Action Steps in Chapter 6.

Figure 18 (continued): Summary of the Neighborhood's Key Issues



## Neighborhood Safety

S

The Neighborhood Safety category includes issues relating to safety and protection from crime.

The findings from the "Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood" exercise were compiled as a list of key issues organized into the following sub-categories relating to neighborhood safety: (1) crimes/transgressions/safety issues, (2) police, and (3) safety measures.

\*See Appendix for complete exercise results

### **Crimes/Transgressions/Safety Issues**

- Burglary
- Gangs (especially at night)
- Child abuse
- Alcohol: drinking and driving; public drinking (on porches, late night parties, unwelcome comments)
- Late night liquor sales (as late as 1:00 to 2:00 am)
- Public decency (men walking around without shirts)
- Lots of loose dogs
- Drag racing
- Homelessness
- Vacant buildings (commercial and residential) attract inappropriate activities

### **Police**

- Not enough police presence (police only there when called)
- Kane County police annex nearby along Farnsworth Ave
- Police need to be more accessible and engaging with residents (hard to interact with police when in their patrol cars; possible walking/bike patrols)
- Police activity not reflective of police presence (it is apparent that police are present but crime remains an issue in the neighborhood)
- Fear to call police - need trust in police
- Public unaware of police process of taking calls and responding (911, neighborhood complaints)

### **Safety Measures**

- Need better street lighting
- Need more bilingual information about community safety
- Safety workshops sponsored by churches and schools
- New police station site might be positive
- Need for noise ordinance/mitigation, particularly near railroad
- Need to impose fines for vacant buildings that pose potential danger

Note: All responses provided for the "Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood" exercise from the First Neighborhood Meeting and the "How Can I Help My Neighborhood?" exercise from the Second Neighborhood Meeting reflect the personal viewpoints of individual meeting participants and may not accurately reflect the viewpoints of the entire neighborhood. Additional analysis of the meeting summaries were conducted to gain a more thorough understanding of the neighborhood's issues, particularly when drafting the Action Steps in Chapter 6.



Figure 18 (continued): Summary of the Neighborhood's Key Issues



## Neighborhood Opportunities

0

The Neighborhood Opportunities category includes issues relating to various opportunities that have the potential to enhance the neighborhood's quality of life.

The findings from the "Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood" exercise were compiled as a list of key issues organized into the following sub-categories relating to neighborhood opportunities: (1) recreational opportunities, (2) educational opportunities, and (3) business/shopping/service opportunities.

\*See Appendix for complete exercise results

### **Recreational Opportunities**

- Need better distribution of parks/recreation areas so residents have convenient access and don't have to travel far for recreation
- Need youth programs: "A busy kid is a good kid"
- Two parents working need help with youth programs
- Need recreation center (Salvation Army community center planned)
- Church sports leagues
- Need more sports and Spanish programs offered by Park District

### **Educational Opportunities**

- Need for bilingual vocational programs
- Need for adult education programs (home maintenance, job training)
- No library branch in neighborhood (book mobile available)
- Church programs like children's program at Tabernacle de Luz
- Need to offer art and computer classes at reasonable prices
- Need to demonstrate consistency and dedication to programming to build community trust (educators/programs need to keep promises and "be in it for the long haul")
- Trust in programs is important, especially for illegal citizens
- Programs can't be intimidating – need to feel "Welcome"/"Bienvenidos" when participating

### **Business/Shopping/Service Opportunities**

- Need variety in retail businesses (e.g. groceries, clothing, home goods)
- Need more chain stores (Jewel, Wal-Mart; too many mom and pop shops)
- Need variety in ethnic food/restaurants and family dining (less fast food)
- Need for social service facilities (childcare, healthcare, senior services)
- Too much external push for Hispanic businesses (grocery stores, restaurants) to locate in neighborhood/East Side
- Too many similar businesses locating next to each other (clustering)
- Non-Latino residents unaware of what Latino stores sell because of language barrier
- Many residents travel out of the neighborhood and/or out of Aurora for work
- Vacant and under-utilized properties provide opportunities for redevelopment

Note: All responses provided for the "Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood" exercise from the First Neighborhood Meeting and the "How Can I Help My Neighborhood?" exercise from the Second Neighborhood Meeting reflect the personal viewpoints of individual meeting participants and may not accurately reflect the viewpoints of the entire neighborhood. Additional analysis of the meeting summaries were conducted to gain a more thorough understanding of the neighborhood's issues, particularly when drafting the Action Steps in Chapter 6.



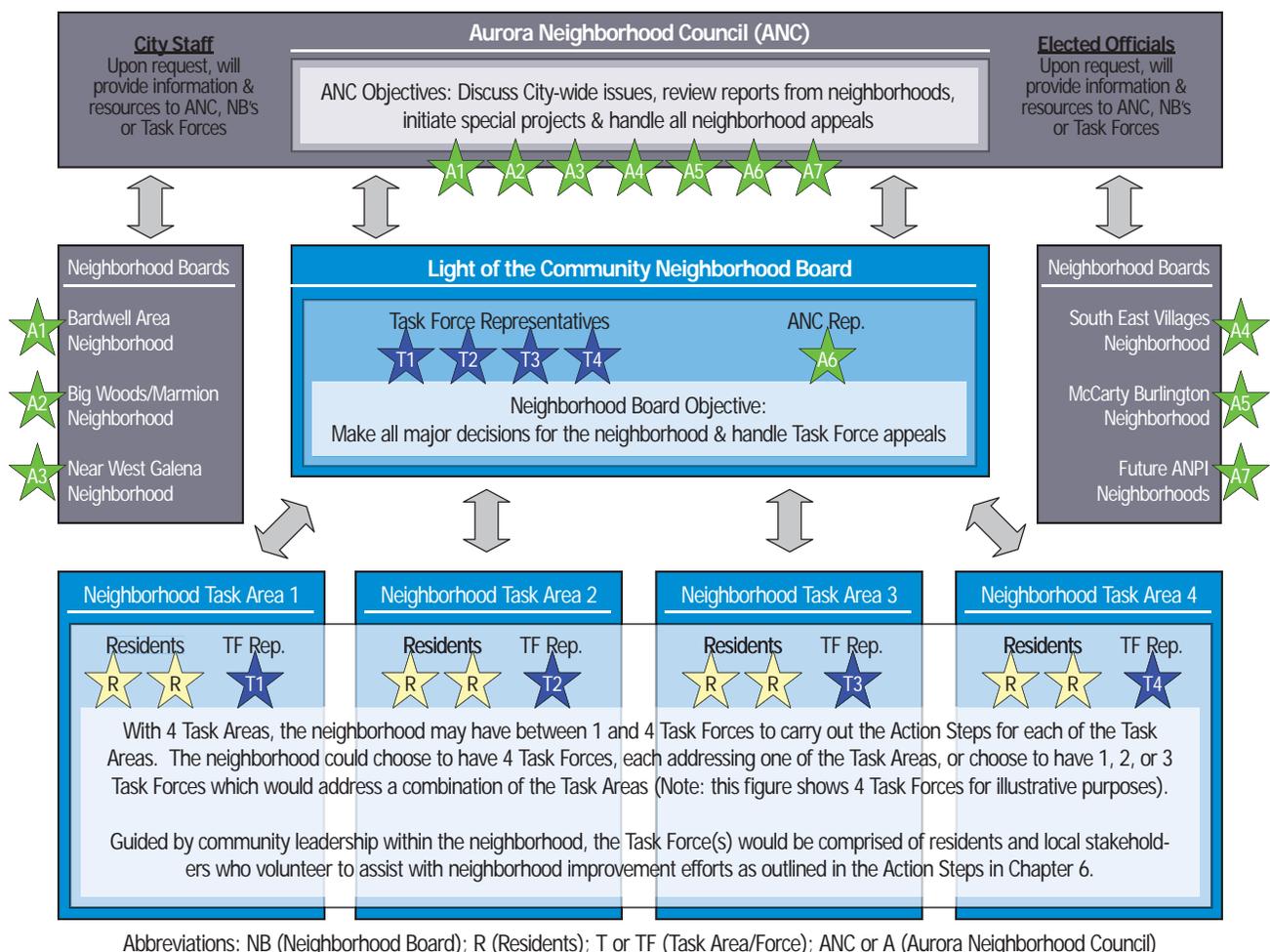
# Chapter 5 Framework for Neighborhood Improvement

The Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative was designed to provide residents and other local stakeholders with a community-based planning approach to improving the City as a whole and its distinct neighborhoods. As a result, the neighborhood has been preparing itself to assume responsibility for certain aspects of developing and implementing the Neighborhood Action Plan.

## Organizational Framework

To create a strong foundation for the Light of the Community Neighborhood Action Plan, an Organizational Framework has been established to capitalize on existing human capital (i.e. the skills, knowledge, and expertise of residents, business owners, and other local stakeholders) which builds upon the work of existing neighborhood groups and local organizations. The Organizational Framework also allows the neighborhood to collaborate with the City to more efficiently manage available resources. Collaboration with the Aurora Neighborhood Council (ANC), City staff, and elected officials are imperative for the Action Plan to carry out the neighborhood improvement strategies outlined in this Action Plan. Figure 19 illustrates the general structure of the Organizational Framework. The Light of the Community Neighborhood Board, Task Areas, and the ANC are described in more detail in the following pages.

Figure 19: General Structure of the Organizational Framework



## Neighborhood Board

Each neighborhood that has participated in the ANPI process has established a Neighborhood Board to serve as the central neighborhood coalition that is responsible for making all major decisions for the neighborhood as they relate to their respective Action Plan established via the ANPI process. As illustrated in Figure 19, the Light of the Community Neighborhood Board will be comprised of representatives from the neighborhood's Task Force(s), which will carry out the Action Steps for the neighborhood's 4 Task Areas as defined in greater detail in Chapter 6.

It is important to note that the Light of the Community Neighborhood Board is not meant to replace or overrule any existing neighborhood groups. Plan participants and the Leadership Team are sensitive to the resources already offered by the City and existing neighborhood organizations. For instance, the Light of the Community Neighborhood is currently served by three active neighborhood groups: Taking Back Our Community (TBOC), Making A Difference (MAD), and Inner Circle (IC). These groups participated in the ANPI planning process and will prove to be valuable assets to the implementation of the Action Plan.

The Neighborhood Board allows for existing neighborhood groups, residents, and other local stakeholders to work together to provide the neighborhood with a unified voice when lobbying the City or other organizations for assistance or resources.

Also, the Neighborhood Board helps prevent the duplication of work by providing a mechanism to share resources among the neighborhood's various groups and organizations as well as the Task Force(s) described on the next page.

Figure 20: Task Areas to focus Neighborhood Improvement



### Neighborhood Identity Task Area

This Task Area focuses on the implementation of Action Steps designed to ensure that the community sustains a well-maintained physical appearance of the neighborhood and promotes a positive image for residents and visitors alike. Stewardship, collaboration, and effective communication among residents, businesses, the City, neighborhood groups, and other local groups are essential to fostering a neighborhood that upholds a strong identity through promotion, activism, and maintenance.



### Neighborhood Transportation Task Area

This Task Area focuses on the implementation of Action Steps designed to ensure that residents and visitors are provided with convenient and safe transportation access and circulation throughout the neighborhood. Cooperation and effective communication with the City, Counties, public transportation providers, and other relevant groups are essential to maintaining a convenient and safe transportation system for the neighborhood.



### Neighborhood Safety Task Area

This Task Area focuses on the implementation of Action Steps designed to improve safety and address the perceptions and incidents of crime in the neighborhood. Coordination with the City and County police is essential in establishing a safe community monitored by both police and residents.



### Neighborhood Opportunities Task Area

This Task Area focuses on the implementation of Action Steps designed to ensure the community capitalizes on its opportunities, particularly to enhance the neighborhood's system of recreation, education, business, shopping, and other services. Cooperation and effective communication with local schools, businesses, service providers, non-profit groups, park districts, the City, the Counties, and other relevant groups are essential for the neighborhood to take advantage of its opportunities to enhance its overall quality of life.

## Task Areas & Task Force(s)

The Task Areas and Task Force(s) are the core of the Light of the Community Neighborhood Board. Just as the neighborhood's key issues were organized into four primary issue categories (see Chapter 4 for more detail), strategies for neighborhood improvement, which take the form of Action Steps as outlined in Chapter 6, are organized into four Task Areas that mirror the four issue categories. Figure 20 summarizes the four Task Areas that provide focus to the implementation of the Action Plan.



To continue developing and maintaining a lighting program for the neighborhood, the Task Force(s) could follow the lead of the Taking Back Our Community (TBOC) neighborhood group, which has been successful in procuring street lights for the Pattersonville area (above).

In order to commence with neighborhood improvement efforts via the Action Steps outlined in the next chapter, the Neighborhood Board will establish between 1 and 4 Task Forces. As illustrated in Figure 23 at the end of this chapter, each Task Area is comprised of its own set of Action Steps.

As a result, the Neighborhood Board may choose to have 4 Task Forces, one for each of the Task Areas. Alternatively, the Neighborhood Board may choose to have 1, 2, or 3 Task Forces which would address a combination of the four Task Areas. The number of Task Forces is solely the decision of the Neighborhood Board with the only requirement being that all four Task Areas are adequately addressed during neighborhood improvement efforts.

The Task Force(s) will be guided by community leadership and comprised of residents and local stakeholders who volunteer to assist with neighborhood improvement efforts. Figure 21 provides a general overview of the Task Force(s) and their general duties.

Figure 21: General Overview of the Task Force(s)

 <p><b>Task Force(s)</b> To implement the Neighborhood Action Plan</p> <p>The intent of the Task Force(s) is to maintain a system of community-led meetings to sustain the momentum from the ANPI process and translate the planning efforts into action. It is also important to continually attract new Task Force members and raise heightened awareness of the work and progress of the Task Force(s).</p> <p>The Task Force(s) can also collaborate with other neighborhood organizations to lobby the City and act as a "community watchdog" to track the work and progress of the City in addressing the neighborhood's issues.</p> <p>The Task Force(s) work together to provide a stronger voice for the Light of the Community Neighborhood at all levels of government.</p> <p>Figure 23 at the end of this chapter summarizes the Action Steps that pertain to each of the 4 Task Areas.</p>	<p><b>Task Force Duties</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Initiate implementation steps to address priority issues as outlined in Chapter 4</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Report to neighborhood groups and the ANC regarding progress, obstacles, and activities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintain a cooperative relationship with City staff that allows for collaborative work and successful lobbying to City leaders</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explore all avenues for neighborhood improvement relative to the Task Force focus (i.e. employ an attitude of "thinking outside the box")</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Promote the work of the Task Force to recruit new members and expertise</li> </ul>
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If multiple Task Forces are established, they may either work on Action Steps independent of each other or collaborate to provide each other with insights and suggestions on their planning efforts. They should also coordinate efforts to communicate their progress to the at-large community, which is outlined in more detail in Chapter 7: Tracking Progress. Communication of progress on addressing issues will help foster a sense of pride and accomplishment and potentially encourage other residents and stakeholders to join the Task Force(s) to assist with neighborhood improvement efforts.

Since the Task Force(s) represent everyone in the neighborhood, it is important to note that the Task Force(s) allow the neighborhood to speak as a unified voice that can call attention to its diverse set of issues at the City and at higher levels of government. In the end, the City will be encouraged to act on an issue raised and supported by the collective neighborhood instead of just a few residents.

### **Aurora Neighborhood Council (ANC)**

Upon approval of the Action Plan, the City will accept responsibility for the continued support of certain activities as described throughout this document. As the main City board directly related to neighborhood planning, the Aurora Neighborhood Council (ANC) will play a primary role in assisting with the neighborhood improvement efforts of the Task Force(s) as needed. As a neighborhood-focused roundtable discussion group acting as a council of resources and expertise, the ANC will provide assistance to the Task Force(s) if they face obstacles or are unsure of the appropriate courses of action to address certain issues. Figure 22 provides an overview of the ANC.



Common neighborhood issues such as property maintenance can be discussed at Aurora Neighborhood Council (ANC) meetings.

Like any other physical or organizational structure, a neighborhood requires ongoing management and maintenance. Even though the City and the ANC can play a significant role in providing valuable resources, implementing many plan recommendations, and monitoring their progress, ultimately it is the residents and other local stakeholders who must make a strong commitment to hold themselves and the City accountable. This commitment is placed in the hands of the Neighborhood Board and its Task Force(s).

Figure 22: General Overview of the Aurora Neighborhood Council (ANC)

**Aurora Neighborhood Council**



The Aurora Neighborhood Council (ANC) is a roundtable discussion group in which neighborhood related policies and issues can be evaluated in a mutually supportive setting to develop viable and comprehensive solutions.

As an important resource for neighborhoods participating in the ANPI process, the ANC provides a forum for neighborhoods to gain insight and guidance from each other, particularly on issues that may share common solutions.

Functions of the ANC include (but are not limited to):

- Receive and review input from neighborhood groups
- Develop solutions within the multi-disciplinary group to ensure thorough evaluation and rationale
- Encourage active and regular input from neighborhood residents and organizations to ensure priorities, plans, and solutions are community-based
- Formulate comprehensive solutions for issues that are widespread and have frequent occurrences affecting multiple neighborhoods
- Make recommendations to the City Council on ANC-sponsored amendments to municipal codes or policies

\* ANC Membership: 4 residents at-large + 1 representative from each ANPI neighborhood (1 selected individual or rotated)

Figure 23: Action Steps pertaining to each Task Area



### Task Area: Neighborhood Identity (I)

The **Neighborhood Identity (I) Task Area** focuses on the implementation of Action Steps designed to ensure that the community sustains a well-maintained physical appearance and promotes a positive image of the neighborhood for residents and visitors alike. Stewardship, collaboration, and effective communication among residents, businesses, the City, neighborhood groups, and other local groups are essential to fostering a neighborhood that upholds a strong identity through promotion, activism, and maintenance.

ID	Action Step	Priority
I-1	Create a network of "block captains" throughout the neighborhood to act as the liaisons between different neighborhood blocks, the Task Force(s), and the City	High
I-2	Explore solutions to prevent the disposal of trash in inappropriate areas	High
I-3	Create a "Welcome to the Neighborhood" packet with information on City services, local businesses, local programs and activities, and a map of various points of interest to keep new residents informed about their new community	High
I-4	Coordinate with the City to educate the neighborhood about the City's property inspection program to ensure residents become familiar with property maintenance regulations and enforcement procedures	High
I-5	Continue to schedule periodic block clean-up days to promote neighborhood stewardship and interaction	Low
I-6	Evaluate the significance of the black history museum to determine its long-term place in the neighborhood	Low
I-7	Educate the neighborhood on the availability of City, County, State, and Federal programs and relevant application processes	Low
I-8	Establish an informational plaque/kiosk for the Pattersonville neighborhood to identify the history and significance of the Patterson family in the community	Low
I-9	Collaborate with the City and Counties to resolve flooding issues in the area near the County line	Low
I-10	Improve the local system of directional signage to ensure residents and visitors can clearly navigate through the neighborhood and find main points of interest	Low
I-11	Appoint a media liaison who maintains a collaborative relationship with local media outlets to help promote neighborhood activities and advocate for neighborhood issues	Low
I-12	Collaborate with the Kane County Forest Preserve District to ensure Oakhurst Forest Preserve receives adequate maintenance	Low
I-13	Continue to target property inspection areas and coordinate with the City to implement the property inspection program	Low

#### Notes:

- The 4 Task Areas cover 37 total Action Steps.
- Of the 37 total Action Steps, the 17 Action Steps receiving the most votes are regarded as the High Priority Action Steps.
- The other 20 Action Steps receiving less votes are regarded as the Low Priority Action Steps.
- Complete voting results are summarized in the Appendix.
- See Chapter 6 for description of prioritization of Action Steps and detailed Implementation Worksheets for the High Priority Action Steps.

Figure 23 (continued): Action Steps pertaining to each Task Area



### Task Area: Neighborhood Transportation (T)

The **Neighborhood Transportation (T) Task Area** focuses on the implementation of Action Steps designed to ensure that residents and visitors are provided with convenient and safe transportation access and circulation throughout the neighborhood. Cooperation and effective communication with the City, Counties, public transportation providers, and other relevant groups are essential to maintaining a convenient and safe transportation system for the neighborhood.

ID	Action Step	Priority
T-1	Coordinate with Pace to provide more public input into the development of bus routes and schedules and provision of handicap accessibility	High
T-2	Collaborate with the City, local schools, and bus/van/cab companies to explore and provide for alternative public transportation options for students, senior citizens, and the general population	High
T-3	Collaborate with local schools and churches to improve the crossing guard system to include all street crossings that carry significant pedestrian traffic	High
T-4	Collaborate with the City and Counties to evaluate potential implementation of stop/yield signs and traffic calming devices to help reduce speeding in known high speed areas	High
T-5	Collaborate with the City and Counties to evaluate the provision of new sidewalks and crosswalks and the repair of damaged sidewalks to promote a safer, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood	Low
T-6	Collaborate with the City and its Motor Vehicle Parking System Division to develop a neighborhood parking plan that evaluates current parking conditions and needs and identifies solutions to improve parking	Low

#### Notes:

- The 4 Task Areas cover 37 total Action Steps.
- Of the 37 total Action Steps, the 17 Action Steps receiving the most votes are regarded as the High Priority Action Steps.
- The other 20 Action Steps receiving less votes are regarded as the Low Priority Action Steps.
- Complete voting results are summarized in the Appendix.
- See Chapter 6 for description of prioritization of Action Steps and detailed Implementation Worksheets for the High Priority Action Steps.



Figure 23 (continued): Action Steps pertaining to each Task Area



## Task Area: Neighborhood Safety (S)

The **Neighborhood Safety (S) Task Area** focuses on the implementation of Action Steps designed to improve safety and address the perceptions and incidents of crime in the neighborhood. Coordination with the City and County police is essential in establishing a safe community monitored by both police and residents.

ID	Action Step	Priority
S-1	Continue to coordinate with the Aurora Police Dept and County sheriff depts to identify and properly address properties that house known criminal activity and vacant buildings that may pose potential threats	High
S-2	Continue to develop and maintain a lighting program to facilitate a well-lit & safer neighborhood	High
S-3	Continue to coordinate with the Aurora Police Dept and County sheriff depts to maintain regular beat patrols to enhance police presence and responsiveness	High
S-4	Continue to develop a community safety information program to educate the community about crime prevention and mediation methods, particularly for gangs, drugs, and alcohol	High
S-5	Continue to maintain regular contact between the neighborhood's block captains, Aurora Police Dept, and County sheriff depts to encourage an open line of communication	High
S-6	Continue to implement nuisance abatement programs to resolve safety issues, deter crimes, and impose strict fines for City and County code violations	High
S-7	Continue to promote and utilize community policing and safety programs offered by the Aurora Police Dept and County sheriff depts	High
S-8	Continue to coordinate with the Aurora Police Department and County sheriff departments to encourage the potential for walking/biking patrols to enhance community interaction	Low
S-9	Continue to coordinate with local social service organizations to provide information on assistance/rehabilitation programs for issues such as alcohol, drugs, prostitution, etc	Low

Notes:

- The 4 Task Areas cover 37 total Action Steps.
- Of the 37 total Action Steps, the 17 Action Steps receiving the most votes are regarded as the High Priority Action Steps.
- The other 20 Action Steps receiving less votes are regarded as the Low Priority Action Steps.
- Complete voting results are summarized in the Appendix.
- See Chapter 6 for description of prioritization of Action Steps and detailed Implementation Worksheets for the High Priority Action Steps.

Figure 23 (continued): Action Steps pertaining to each Task Area



### Task Area: Neighborhood Opportunities (O)

The **Neighborhood Opportunities (O) Task Area** focuses on the implementation of Action Steps designed to ensure the community capitalizes on its opportunities, particularly to enhance the neighborhood's system of recreation, education, business, shopping, and other services. Cooperation and effective communication with local schools, businesses, service providers, non-profit groups, park districts, the City, the Counties, and other relevant groups are essential for the neighborhood to take advantage of its opportunities to enhance its overall quality of life.

ID	Action Step	Priority
O-1	Develop, continually update, and publicize a calendar of all community activities and venues offered by local schools, churches, City, park districts & other groups	High
O-2	Coordinate with the City and relevant property owners to identify potential opportunities for redevelopment or re-use	High
O-3	Coordinate with local schools and other providers of education programs to identify different payment options to ensure programs are affordable for all residents/families	Low
O-4	Plan a continuing series of public education workshops to educate the community on various topics (home care, homeownership, fire safety, healthcare, personal finance, etc)	Low
O-5	Develop an inventory of parks, recreation facilities, and recreation programs to evaluate distribution, site conditions, and needs and identify recommendations for improvement	Low
O-6	Draft and conduct a community survey to determine the community's interest in establishing new businesses and services (or expanding current ones) to diversify the neighborhood's offerings	Low
O-7	Prepare an inventory of existing childcare facilities/services in the neighborhood and evaluate potential locations and opportunities for new or expanded facilities/services	Low
O-8	Prepare an inventory of existing healthcare facilities/services in the neighborhood and evaluate potential locations and opportunities for new or expanded facilities/services	Low
O-9	Prepare an inventory of existing senior facilities/services in the neighborhood and evaluate potential locations and opportunities for new or expanded facilities/services	Low

#### Notes:

- The 4 Task Areas cover 37 total Action Steps.
- Of the 37 total Action Steps, the 17 Action Steps receiving the most votes are regarded as the High Priority Action Steps.
- The other 20 Action Steps receiving less votes are regarded as the Low Priority Action Steps.
- Complete voting results are summarized in the Appendix.
- See Chapter 6 for description of prioritization of Action Steps and detailed Implementation Worksheets for the High Priority Action Steps.



Throughout the planning process, the Light of the Community Neighborhood was represented by a diverse group of residents and other community members who participated in identifying the neighborhood's key issues, prioritizing those issues, and prioritizing a series of Action Steps to address the issues. As described in the previous chapter, community participation and collaboration with the City will need to continue for the Action Plan to succeed. The implementation process will utilize the Organizational Framework developed in the previous chapter. Specifically, significant community participation is imperative for the Task Force(s) to adequately address each set of Action Steps.

### **Action Steps**

Based on the prioritization of issues and discussions with the Planning Team, a series of Action Steps was developed which the community can implement to address the neighborhood's key issues and forge a path towards ongoing neighborhood improvement. The Action Steps will be handled by the Task Force(s) outlined in the previous chapter. At the Third Neighborhood Meeting, the Action Steps were presented to the neighborhood for feedback and to outline a general idea of the amount of community participation and cooperation with the City and other entities necessary to make the Action Plan successful.



Credit: Village of Glen Carbon, IL

Improved transportation options is one of the neighborhood's highest priorities. Para-transit service such as a shuttle bus for senior citizens (above) would provide more transportation options for local seniors. Similar options should be explored for school students and other groups.

The Third Neighborhood Meeting also provided the community with the opportunity to prioritize the Action Steps, keeping in mind some of the following matters:

- **“Quick wins”**: Some Action Steps are easier to achieve than others, requiring less time, effort, and/or resources for achievement. Sometimes a community likes to notch a “quick win” under its belt to demonstrate to the City and skeptical residents that the Action Plan is effective in addressing the neighborhood's issues. In turn, this may attract other residents to join a Task Force or assist in general neighborhood improvement efforts. The City will also recognize that the neighborhood is making progress and putting forth a concerted effort to address its issues.
- **Immediacy**: The timeliness of addressing certain issues is very important, particularly if delaying any action will exacerbate an issue or create new ones. As a result, certain Action Steps require immediate attention while others are not as sensitive to time and are not as likely to worsen if assigned a lower priority.
- **Availability of resources**: Some Action Steps may require extra time to collect information, conduct proper studies or research, or find available resources (e.g. funding, time, data, etc). The availability of resources may not necessarily place a certain Action Step at a lower priority, but it does demonstrate that it takes time to properly address certain issues.

Results from the prioritization of Action Steps are provided in Figure 25 on page 43 (complete voting results from the prioritization exercise from the Third Neighborhood Meeting are provided in the Appendix). Although some Action Steps were assigned a higher priority than others, this does not disregard or diminish the importance of the lower priority Action Steps. Once the Task Force(s) have made progress on the high priority Action Steps,

they are encouraged to commence with the lower priority Action Steps. Also, new issues may arise over time. In the case that a new issue is not directly related to one of the Task Force focuses, the neighborhood can discuss the merits of either forming a new Task Force or pooling together the resources and expertise of the existing Task Force(s) to adequately address the new issue. It is imperative that the Light of the Community Neighborhood always stay organized and prepared to ensure that future issues do not escalate to a point where they are detrimental to the community's improvement efforts and quality of life in the neighborhood.

### **Implementation Worksheets**

Implementation worksheets for the high priority Action Steps and are provided on the next several pages. The Task Force(s) can use the worksheets to guide neighborhood improvement efforts throughout the implementation process.

Each worksheet describes the nature of each Action Step and indicates the party/parties responsible for initiating the work and maintaining progress of the work. Each worksheet also outlines a series of tasks that should be carried out to achieve the objective of each Action Item. Formulating each worksheet with a step-by-step process allows the Task Force to properly allocate resources, assign certain tasks to Task Force members (particularly to match tasks with available skills, knowledge, and expertise), and present progress reports to the ANC and other relevant community groups.

Each Action Step is also listed with related Task Areas (indicated by the Task Area abbreviations) to encourage collaboration and pooling of resources. The worksheets are meant to be dynamic and flexible, allowing the Task Force(s) to add or revise tasks as necessary to achieve the objectives of the Action Steps. Space is provided on each worksheet for Task Force members to write in the scheduled initiation and completion dates to encourage work to progress in a timely manner. Figure 24 lists additional tips to consider when completing the implementation worksheets.

Figure 24: Tips for Completing the Implementation Worksheets



#### **Collaborate with others and maintain relationships**

When completing the Action Steps, it is important to utilize the relationships that have been formed to complete the remaining high priority Action Steps, address the low priority Action Steps, and respond to any new issues that may arise. City staff, the ANC, and other community development resources are available to provide assistance throughout the implementation process. A listing of various community development resources, including funding sources and incentive and assistance programs, is provided starting on page 60.



#### **Complete the Action Steps in any order**

The Action Steps do not need to be completed in the exact order presented in this document. For instance, Action Step I-1 was voted as High Priority #11; however, the neighborhood may choose this Action Step as one of the first to complete since establishing a network of block captains may be necessary before completing some of the other Action Steps.



#### **Build upon the work completed via the ANC**

Some Action Steps resemble those being pursued by other neighborhoods that have previously participated in the ANPI process. For example, Action Step I-4 on page 59, which relates to the City's property inspection program, was identified as a high priority for the Light of the Community Neighborhood as well as 4 of the 5 other ANPI neighborhoods (Bardwell Area Neighborhood, Near West Galena Neighborhood, South East Villages Neighborhood, and McCarty Burlington Neighborhood). As described in Chapter 5, Aurora Neighborhood Council meetings provide a forum for neighborhoods to share ideas, resources, and solutions to address issues that affect multiple neighborhoods. To help complete the implementation worksheets, the Light of the Community Neighborhood is encouraged to utilize knowledge gained and work already accomplished via the ANC.



Figure 25: High Priority Action Steps to Address the Neighborhood's Key Issues

Priority	ID	Action Step	Votes	% of Votes	Worksheet Page #
1	S-1	Continue to coordinate with the Aurora Police Department and County sheriff departments to identify and properly address properties that house known criminal activity and vacant buildings that may pose potential threats	47	7.6%	page 44
2	S-2	Continue to develop and maintain a lighting program to facilitate a well-lit & safer neighborhood	45	7.2%	page 45
3	T-1	Coordinate with Pace to provide more public input into the development of bus routes and schedules and provision of handicap accessibility	35	5.6%	page 46
4	S-3	Continue to coordinate with the Aurora Police Dept & County sheriff departments to maintain regular beat patrols to enhance police presence and responsiveness	35	5.6%	page 47*
5	S-4	Continue to develop a community safety information program to educate the community about crime prevention and mediation methods, particularly for gangs, drugs, and alcohol	35	5.6%	page 48
6	S-5	Continue to maintain regular contact between the neighborhood's block captains, Aurora Police Department, and County sheriff departments to encourage an open line of communication	32	5.2%	page 47*
7	T-2	Collaborate with the City, local schools, and bus/van/cab companies to explore and provide for alternative public transportation options for students, senior citizens, and the general population	30	4.8%	page 49
8	T-3	Collaborate with local schools and churches to improve the crossing guard system to include all street crossings that carry significant pedestrian traffic	26	4.2%	page 50
9	O-1	Develop, continually update, and publicize a calendar of all community activities and venues offered by local schools, churches, City, park districts & other groups	26	4.2%	page 51
10	T-4	Collaborate with the City and Counties to evaluate potential implementation of stop/yield signs and traffic calming devices to help reduce speeding in known high speed areas	23	3.7%	page 52
11	I-1	Create a network of "block captains" throughout the neighborhood to act as the liaisons between different neighborhood blocks, the Task Force(s), and the City	21	3.4%	page 53
12	O-2	Coordinate with the City and relevant property owners to identify potential opportunities for redevelopment or re-use	20	3.2%	page 54
13	S-6	Continue to implement nuisance abatement programs to resolve safety issues, deter crimes, and impose strict fines for City and County code violations	19	3.1%	page 55
14	I-2	Explore solutions to prevent the disposal of trash in inappropriate areas	18	2.9%	page 56
15	S-7	Continue to promote and utilize community policing and safety programs offered by the Aurora Police Department and County sheriff departments	18	2.9%	page 57
16	I-3	Create a "Welcome to the Neighborhood" packet with information on City services, local businesses, local programs and activities, and a map of various points of interest to keep new residents informed about their new community	16	2.6%	page 58
17	I-4	Coordinate with the City to educate the neighborhood about the City's property inspection program to ensure residents become familiar with property maintenance regulations and enforcement procedures	16	2.6%	page 59

**Notes:**

- Of the 37 total Action Steps, the 17 Action Steps receiving the most number of votes are regarded as the High Priority Action Steps.
- The other 20 Actions Steps receiving less number of votes are regarded as the Low Priority Action Steps.
- Complete voting results and the Low Priority Action Steps are summarized in the Appendix.
- Due to similar characteristics, Action Steps S-3 and S-5 share the same Implementation Worksheet on page 47.
- Abbreviations: I = Neighborhood Identity; T = Neighborhood Transportation; S = Neighborhood Safety; O = Neighborhood Opportunities.



**Action Step S-1**

Issue Category: Neighborhood Safety (S)



Continue to coordinate with the Aurora Police Department and County sheriff departments to identify and properly address properties that house known criminal activity and vacant buildings that may pose potential threats

▶ #1 High Priority [7.6% of total votes]

<b>Description:</b> While City and County police patrol the neighborhood and respond to calls, it is also important for them to know which properties may house known criminal activity or which vacant buildings may pose potential threats. Since some criminal activities or threats may not be readily apparent from a patrol car or walk through the neighborhood, it is important for City and County police to coordinate with residents and business owners, who can act as a second set of eyes and ears for the police, to identify these criminal activities or threats in a safe, anonymous manner and properly address them to ensure any dangers or lingering threats are eliminated.		Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
		Neighborhood, Aurora Police Department & County Sheriff Department	Neighborhood, Aurora Police Department & County Sheriff Department	0
Tasks: What work will be done?		Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1	Draft a map or list of properties that house known criminal activity or that may pose potential threats	Neighborhood		
2	Meet with the Aurora Police Department (APD) and County sheriff departments to review the map/list from Task 1 and determine appropriate courses of action that addresses the issues while maintaining anonymity of residents who report crimes/threats	Neighborhood, Aurora Police Department & County Sheriff Department		
3	Follow-up with the APD and County sheriff departments to evaluate the success of actions against criminal activities or threats and prepare additional courses of action (as necessary)	Neighborhood, Aurora Police Department & County Sheriff Department		
4	Repeat Tasks 1 through 3 as other criminal activities or threats are identified (as necessary)	Neighborhood		

\* This Action Step may be coordinated with Action Steps S-3 and S-5.





## Action Step S-2

Issue Category: Neighborhood Safety (S)



Continue to develop and maintain a lighting program to facilitate a well-lit and safer neighborhood

▶ #2 High Priority [7.2% of total votes]

Description:		Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
		<p>Certain streets and blocks were identified as needing better lighting. Improved lighting would brighten dark spots and create a sense of safety in the neighborhood. In some cases, lighting could also be used as a crime deterrent, perhaps incorporating motion sensed lights in places (e.g. parks, schools, etc) where loitering is unwanted. In addition to the installation of lights, a lighting program could also entail community activities that promote lighting of the neighborhood.</p>		Neighborhood
Tasks: What work will be done?		Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1	Walk through the neighborhood to identify dark spots, tree infringement, and broken, dim, or missing lights	Neighborhood		
2	Prepare a map identifying problem areas	Neighborhood		
3	Identify contacts with ComEd, park districts, and local businesses, schools, churches, and other facilities to maintain working relationships	Neighborhood		
4	Develop a step-by-step process for reporting lighting issues	Neighborhood		
5	Promote a "Bright Nights" program to encourage the use of porch lights in conjunction with neighborhood and City events and activities	Neighborhood		
6	Meet with the City to present the map of problem areas and discuss appropriate lighting improvement methods	Neighborhood & City		
7	Determine timing and availability of City funding for lighting improvements	City		
8	Research other funding sources (e.g. grants, Special Service Areas, Tax Increment Financing, etc)	Neighborhood & City		
9	Issue Request for Proposals (RFPs) for lighting installation or other lighting projects (as necessary)	Neighborhood, City, Park Districts & Others		



**Action Step T-1**

Issue Category: Neighborhood Transportation (T)



Coordinate with Pace to provide more public input into the development of bus routes and schedules and provision of handicap accessibility

▶ #3 High Priority [5.6% of total votes]

Description:		Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
		Although Pace provides bus service to the neighborhood, some residents feel that bus routes and schedules do not always coordinate well with their personal schedules and needs. This is particular true for residents who work early/late shifts but do not have bus service to conveniently access their jobs. Cabs and other para-transit are available, but they are not always affordable or might only be available in limited cases (if available at all). As a result, improving an existing system like the Pace bus service is a viable option while other para-transit options are concurrently explored (see Action Step T-2).		Neighborhood & Pace
Tasks: What work will be done?		Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1	Obtain or draft a map that identifies all current Pace bus service routes and schedules	Neighborhood		
2	Identify major employers, shopping opportunities, service providers, and other major destinations within and in the vicinity of the neighborhood	Neighborhood		
3	Meet with Pace to present the findings from Tasks 1 and 2 to identify any bus service gaps and evaluate potential improvements to service routes or schedules	Neighborhood & Pace		
4	Organize a letter writing campaign to State legislators to garner support for potential improvements to Pace bus service routes and schedules (as necessary)	Neighborhood		
5	Collaborate with Pace as improvements to service routes or schedules are implemented	Neighborhood & Pace		
6	Evaluate the effectiveness of improved service routes or schedules by surveying (formally or informally) residents who use the route	Neighborhood		
7	Repeat Tasks 1 through 6 to identify and implement additional improvements (as necessary)	Neighborhood		

\* This Action Step may be coordinated with Action Step T-2.





Action Step S-3 (combined with Action Step S-5)

Issue Category: Neighborhood Safety (S)



Maintain regular contact between the neighborhood's "block captains", Aurora Police Department, and County sheriff departments to encourage an open line of communication and maintain regular beat patrols to enhance police presence and responsiveness

- ▶ #4 High Priority [5.6% of total votes]
- ▶ #6 High Priority [5.2% of total votes]

<p><b>Description:</b> Increased police presence and better communication between the neighborhood and the Aurora Police Department (APD) and County sheriff departments are important to the neighborhood. Although maintaining a more visible and frequent police presence in the neighborhood is one way to deter crime, it is also important for the neighborhood to maintain a working relationship with the City and County police to foster a sense of trust and understanding in the community. Coordination between the City and County police and the neighborhood's block captains provides a central group of residents with whom police officers can communicate.</p>	Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
	Neighborhood, Aurora Police Department & County Sheriff Department	Neighborhood, Aurora Police Department & County Sheriff Department	I
Tasks: What work will be done?	Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1 Meet with the Aurora Police Department (APD) and County sheriff departments to determine the frequency of police patrols in the neighborhood	Neighborhood, Aurora Police Department & County Sheriff Department		
2 Form a rapport with City and County police officers by coordinating meetings between the neighborhood's block captains and police officers who either have regular patrols in the neighborhood or live in/near the neighborhood	Neighborhood, Aurora Police Department & County Sheriff Department		
3 Draft and present a list or map of problem areas to City and County police and identify appropriate methods of policing	Neighborhood		
4 Maintain open lines of communication between the block captains and City and County police to keep them informed of actual crimes and problem areas that have high potential for crimes	Neighborhood		
5 Invite APD officers or County sheriff officers to sponsor periodic seminars or presentations in the neighborhood to educate the community about crime prevention, community policing programs, and other safety-related matters  (coordinate with Task 4 of Action Step S-4)	Neighborhood, Aurora Police Department & County Sheriff Department		

\* Action Steps S-3 and S-5 are related to Action Step I-1. Although Action Steps S-3 and S-5 were voted as higher priority (#4 and #6, respectively) than Action Step I-1 (#11), they need to occur after Action Step I-1.



**Action Step S-4**

Issue Category: Neighborhood Safety (S)



Continue to develop a community safety information program to educate the community about crime prevention and mediation methods, particularly for gangs, drugs, and alcohol

▶ #5 High Priority [5.6% of total votes]

Description: While the police respond to crimes via their regular patrols and calls from the community, many crimes can be prevented before the potentially dangerous activities escalate to real threats to the neighborhood. Educating the public about crime prevention and mediation methods is one way residents and business owners can take back their neighborhood. Knowing what to do, where to find information, and who to seek for help are all important in the crime prevention and mediation process.		Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
		Neighborhood & Aurora Police Department	Neighborhood & Aurora Police Department	I
Tasks: What work will be done?		Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1	Coordinate with the Aurora Police Department (APD) to assist with and review APD's forthcoming pamphlet on crime prevention methods	Neighborhood & Aurora Police Department		
2	Identify existing crime prevention and mediation programs offered by other local social service organizations and County sheriff departments and determine how they could be incorporated into APD's pamphlet	Neighborhood, County Sheriff Departments & Local Social Service Organizations		
3	Disseminate APD's pamphlets throughout the neighborhood via coordination with local schools, churches, businesses, and other organizations	Neighborhood		
4	Invite APD officers, County sheriff officers, or representatives from local social service organizations to sponsor periodic seminars or presentations in the neighborhood to educate the community about crime prevention, community policing programs, and other safety-related matters  (coordinate with Task 5 of Action Step S-3/S-5)	Neighborhood, Aurora Police Department, County Sheriff Departments & Local Social Service Organizations		
5	Coordinate with APD to revise the pamphlets as programs and information are updated or new ones are established (as necessary)	Neighborhood & Aurora Police Department		





## Action Step T-2

Issue Category: Neighborhood Transportation (T)



Collaborate with the City, local schools, and bus/shuttle/van/cab companies to explore and provide for alternative public transportation (para-transit) options for students, senior citizens, and the general population

► #7 High Priority [4.8% of total votes]

Description:		Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
		<p>While Pace provides bus service to the neighborhood, there was some community concern about the need for improved bus options for school students and the potential for para-transit shuttle service for other groups such as senior citizens and employees who work in other parts of the City but can't always use fixed-route Pace service (e.g. work late/early shifts, don't live near bus stop, etc). The neighborhood is encouraged to collaborate with local schools, local social service organizations, and bus/shuttle/van/cab companies to explore and provide for alternative public or group transportation (para-transit) options to serve the traveling needs of different segments of the population.</p>		Neighborhood
Tasks: What work will be done?		Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1	Draft a list of all public, private, and non-profit groups that offer transportation services (bus, shuttle, van, cab, etc) to the general public, identifying type of service, service hours, and any applicable fees or eligibility requirements	Neighborhood		
2	Draft a list of people (e.g. students, senior citizens, employees, etc) who would benefit from the provision of alternative para-transit options	Neighborhood		
3	Compare the lists from Tasks 1 and 2 to identify any service gaps and determine potential solutions to provide alternative para-transit options	Neighborhood		
4	Collaborate with local schools, local social service organizations, and companies that offer bus, shuttle, van, or cab service to discuss the feasibility of providing alternative para-transit options	Neighborhood, Local Schools, Other Local Social Service Organizations & Para-Transit Companies		
5	Implement alternative para-transit options that are deemed feasible, fill a service gap, and meet the needs of the community	Neighborhood, Local Schools, Other Local Social Service Organizations & Para-Transit Companies		
6	Evaluate the effectiveness of new para-transit options and identify/report any needs for improvements	Neighborhood		
7	Update the lists from Tasks 1 and 2 if new service gaps are identified and repeat Tasks 3 through 6 (as necessary)	Neighborhood		

\* This Action Step may be coordinated with Action Step T-1.



Action Step T-3

Issue Category: Neighborhood Transportation (T)



Collaborate with local schools and churches to improve the crossing guard system to include all street crossings that carry significant pedestrian traffic

▶ #8 High Priority [4.2% of total votes]

Description:		Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
		While the neighborhood's schools and churches utilize crossing guards to help residents, particularly children, safely cross the street, some residents believe there is room for improvement. In particular, the crossing guard system could be expanded to include streets that are not currently served by a crossing guard. By working together with schools and churches, the neighborhood can not only identify specific areas for expanded service but also evaluate the feasibility of expanding crossing guard personnel.		Neighborhood, Schools & Churches
Tasks: What work will be done?		Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1	Walk/drive the neighborhood to identify streets that carry significant pedestrian traffic to and from local schools and churches	Neighborhood		
2	Draft a map illustrating the findings from Task 1	Neighborhood		
3	Meet with school and church officials to present the map from Task 2 and discuss potential needs to expand/improve the crossing guard system	Neighborhood, Schools & Churches		
4	Identify funding and personnel needs to expand/improve the crossing guard system	Neighborhood, Schools & Churches		
5	Expand/improve the crossing guard system as identified in the previous tasks	Neighborhood, Schools & Churches		
6	Evaluate the effectiveness of the expanded/improved crossing guard system and report any needs for additional improvements to the schools and churches	Neighborhood		
7	Update the map from Task 2 if additional expansion/improvements are needed and repeat Tasks 3 through 6 (as necessary)	Neighborhood		





## Action Step O-1

Issue Category: Neighborhood Opportunities (O)



Develop, continually update, and publicize a calendar of all community activities and venues offered by local schools, churches, the City, park districts, and other groups

► #9 High Priority [4.2% of total votes]

Description:		Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
		<p>A neighborhood with multiple schools, churches, parks, neighborhood and community groups, and other organizations is bound to have a variety of activities serving the needs and interests of the community. For some residents, though, it can be difficult to determine when and where certain activities will be held. Also, some residents may not find any activities within the neighborhood that piques their interests or meets their needs. A master calendar of all community activities would provide a centralized place for residents to find information on when and where activities will be occurring and, if necessary, to propose new activities to meet unmet needs or untapped interests.</p>		Neighborhood
Tasks: What work will be done?		Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1	Develop an inventory of all planned community activities and programs offered by the local park districts, schools, churches, and other organizations	Neighborhood		
2	Organize the inventory from Task 1 into a calendar format, listing the name, day and time, and venue for each activity/program  [Note: The calendar should be organized by month or season to ensure opportunities for periodic updates.]	Neighborhood		
3	Present draft calendar to the local park districts, schools, churches, and other organizations for review and to make final revisions	Neighborhood		
4	Seek assistance or sponsorship from the City, park districts, schools, churches, or private or non-profit groups to help fund the production and distribution of the calendars	Neighborhood		
5	Disseminate calendars throughout the neighborhood via coordination with local schools, churches, businesses, and other organizations	Neighborhood		
6	Update the calendar each month/season to ensure activities and programs stay current (see Task 2 to coordinate the frequency of updates)	Neighborhood		



## Action Step T-4

Issue Category: Neighborhood Transportation (T)



Collaborate with the City and Counties to evaluate potential implementation of stop/yield signs and traffic calming devices to help reduce speeding in known high speed areas

▶ #10 High Priority [3.7% of total votes]

Description:		Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
		Residents stated that speeding was a significant problem at certain locations throughout the neighborhood. While posting a stop sign or yield sign was viewed as the most straightforward method to reduce speeding, other traffic calming devices such as speed bumps, traffic circles, choke points, raised crosswalks, etc are also worth exploring. Collaboration with the City and Counties is important to evaluate the feasibility of installing any traffic calming measure.	Neighborhood, City & Counties	Neighborhood, City & Counties
Tasks: What work will be done?		Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1	Obtain traffic counts and moving violation information from the City and Counties	Neighborhood		
2	Walk/drive the neighborhood to identify streets that are known for speeding and intersections that lack stop/yield signs	Neighborhood		
3	Draft a map illustrating the findings from Tasks 1 & 2	Neighborhood		
4	Meet with the City and Counties to present the map from Task 3 and discuss appropriate traffic calming measures	Neighborhood, City & Counties		
5	Identify funding for traffic calming measures and incorporate into the capital improvements budgets for the City and/or Counties	Neighborhood, City & Counties		
6	Issue RFP's for installation of traffic calming measures (as necessary)	City & Counties		
7	Evaluate the effectiveness of new traffic calming measures and report any needs for improvements to the City and/or Counties	Neighborhood		
8	Update the map from Task 3 if new problem areas are identified and repeat Tasks 4 through 7 (as necessary)	Neighborhood		





## Action Step I-1

Issue Category: Neighborhood Identity (I)



Create a network of "block captains" throughout the neighborhood to act as the liaisons between different neighborhood blocks, the Task Forces, and the City

▶ #11 High Priority [3.4% of total votes]

Description:		Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
		<p>While the neighborhood is served by the Ward 7 alderman, three neighborhood groups, and the Task Force(s) established by this plan, residents expressed interest in establishing a network of "block captains" to represent smaller groups or "blocks" of homes and businesses. Working at a micro scale, a network of block captains would provide a liaison to a small group of residents and business owners to voice their concerns and ideas to the larger groups (i.e. aldermen, neighborhood groups, and Task Forces). The Aurora Police Department's block captain program provides a strong basis from which to build the neighborhood's network of block captains.</p>		Neighborhood
Tasks: What work will be done?		Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1	Evaluate the Aurora Police Department's block captain program to determine the structure for the neighborhood's network of block captains	Neighborhood		
2	Establish a set of roles and responsibilities to be upheld by the block captains and determine the process for final appointments (i.e. what are the criteria for candidacy? who makes the final appointments? etc)	Neighborhood		
3	Create a map partitioning the neighborhood into a series of "blocks"  [Note: A "block" may consist of a single block of homes or multiple blocks as long as it has an appropriate size that is manageable by a block captain.]	Neighborhood		
4	Identify and contact all potential leaders throughout the community to identify potential candidates for block captains, ensuring all blocks identified from Task 2 are represented	Neighborhood		
5	Meet with all block captain candidates to make final appointments, review the roles and responsibilities, and finalize the neighborhood's network of block captains (per the criteria & process established in Task 1)	Neighborhood		
6	Hold the first official block captain meeting to establish a meeting schedule, share initial thoughts and ideas, and determine how the block captains can help carry out any of the Action Steps in this plan	Neighborhood		
7	Hold periodic block captain meetings as established in Task 6	Neighborhood		

\* Action Step I-1 is related to Action Steps S-3 and S-5. Although this Action Step was voted as a lower priority (#11) than Action Steps S-3 (#4) and S-5 (#6), it needs to occur before Action Steps S-3 and S-5.



**Action Step O-2**

Issue Category: Neighborhood Opportunities (O)



Coordinate with the City and relevant property owners to identify potential opportunities for redevelopment or re-use

▶ #12 High Priority [3.2% of total votes]

Description: As one of Aurora's oldest, most established neighborhoods, the Light of the Community Neighborhood is mostly built out and developed. However, like any neighborhood new or old, there are vacant or under-utilized properties that offer opportunities for redevelopment or re-use. The neighborhood should be proactive in identifying these redevelopment or re-use opportunities, particularly determining how they meet the community's needs and fit its character.		Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
		Neighborhood & City	Neighborhood & City	CI
Tasks: What work will be done?		Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1	Walk/drive through the neighborhood to identify properties that have the potential for redevelopment or re-use	Neighborhood		
2	Identify draft recommendations for redevelopment or re-use, ensuring compatibility with the character and needs of the neighborhood	Neighborhood & City		
3	Collaborate with the City to identify and meet with property owners to propose recommendations for redevelopment or re-use	Neighborhood & City		
4	Evaluate availability and potential need for incentives to developers to help induce development	Neighborhood & City		
5	Collaborate with the City to participate in the RFP process to garner redevelopment/re-use proposals [Note: Only for property owners willing to participate in redevelopment efforts.]	Neighborhood, City & Property Owners		
6	Plan neighborhood "ribbon cutting" ceremony to celebrate the opening of new developments, particularly noting the neighborhood's efforts and involvement	Neighborhood, City & Developers		





## Action Step S-6

Issue Category: Neighborhood Safety (S)



Continue to implement nuisance abatement programs to deter crimes, resolve safety issues, and impose strict fines for City and County code violations

▶ #13 High Priority [3.1% of total votes]

Description:		Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
		<p>Nuisance abatement programs can help deter crimes or resolve safety issues by levying fines or penalties on violations of municipal ordinances. For example, a noise abatement program would impose a fine to residents or property owners who violate the City's noise ordinance. While the City, Counties, and their departments currently enforce certain nuisance abatement programs, it may be necessary to recommend new programs to meet the neighborhood's needs.</p>	Neighborhood, City, Counties & City/County Police	Neighborhood, City, Counties & City/County Police
Tasks: What work will be done?		Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1	Identify all current nuisance abatement programs managed by the City, Counties, and their respective police departments and evaluate their effectiveness in the neighborhood	Neighborhood, City, Counties & City/County Police		
2	Research other nuisance abatement programs from other communities (local or national) that may be effective in the neighborhood	Neighborhood		
3	Collaborate with the City and Counties to suggest improvements to existing nuisance abatement programs and recommend establishment of new programs	Neighborhood, City, Counties & City/County Police		
4	Coordinate with the City and Counties to provide informational pamphlets on their nuisance abatement programs to increase community awareness	Neighborhood, City, Counties & City/County Police		
5	Evaluate the effectiveness of the nuisance abatement programs and report any suggested improvements to the City and Counties	Neighborhood		



## Action Step 1-2

Issue Category: Neighborhood Identity (I)



Explore solutions to prevent the disposal of trash in inappropriate areas

▶ #14 High Priority [2.9% of total votes]

Description:		Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
		<p>There are concerns in the neighborhood about inappropriate disposal of trash. Some concerns relate to what is being disposed (e.g. old furniture, broken home appliances, other large items that do not fit in typical trash receptacles, etc) while others relate to where items are being disposed (e.g. at dead end streets, in residential areas that have little to no lighting, etc). Although trash pick up service is provided by the City, the neighborhood would benefit from exploring effective solutions to provide proper means (i.e. trash receptacles, disposal instructions for large items, etc) for appropriate trash disposal. Proper trash disposal would improve public health standards as well as enhance the overall quality of life in the neighborhood.</p>		Neighborhood, City & Counties
Tasks: What work will be done?		Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1	Walk/drive through the neighborhood to identify areas that are commonly but inappropriately used for the disposal of trash	Neighborhood		
2	Draft a map or list summarizing the findings from Task 1, making particular note of specific locations and types of items that are not properly disposed	Neighborhood		
3	Present the map/list from Task 2 to the City and Counties and discuss potential solutions for proper trash disposal	Neighborhood, City & Counties		
4	Identify funding for selected trash disposal methods and incorporate into the capital improvements budgets for the City and/or Counties	Neighborhood, City & Counties		
5	Issue RFP's for implementation of trash disposal methods (as necessary)	City & Counties		
6	Evaluate the effectiveness of new trash disposal methods and report any needs for improvements to the City and/or Counties	Neighborhood		
7	Update the map/list from Task 2 if new problems are identified and repeat Tasks 3 through 6 (as necessary)	Neighborhood		



**Action Step S-7**

Issue Category: Neighborhood Safety (S)



Continue to promote and utilize community policing and safety programs offered by the Aurora Police Department and County sheriff departments

▶ #15 High Priority [2.9% of total votes]

Description: The Aurora Police Department and Kane and DuPage County sheriff departments all play an important role in ensuring the safety of the neighborhood. Residents can also play a key role in maintaining the security of the neighborhood by mobilizing themselves to take back their community by participating in community policing and safety programs offered by the City and County police.		Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
		Neighborhood, Aurora Police Department & County Sheriff Departments	Neighborhood, Aurora Police Department & County Sheriff Departments	I
Tasks: What work will be done?		Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1	Review community policing and safety programs offered by the Aurora Police Department (APD) and Kane and DuPage County sheriff departments as well as other communities (locally and nationally)	Neighborhood		
2	Develop a summary of community policing and safety programs that would be most effective in the Light of the Community Neighborhood	Neighborhood		
3	Collaborate with APD and County sheriff departments to establish community policing and safety programs in the neighborhood	Neighborhood, Aurora Police Department & County Sheriff Departments		
4	Publicize the community policing and safety programs through pamphlets, fliers, and other outreach methods to build interest and participation in the programs	Neighborhood, Aurora Police Department & County Sheriff Departments		
5	Maintain lines of communication with APD and County sheriff departments to monitor the progress of the programs and report any resource needs  (coordinate with Action Step S-5)	Neighborhood		



Action Step 1-3

Issue Category: Neighborhood Identity (I)



Create a "Welcome to the Neighborhood" packet with pertinent community information to keep new residents informed about their new community

▶ #16 High Priority [2.6% of total votes]

Description:		Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
		<p>Although the Light of the Community Neighborhood is one of Aurora's oldest neighborhoods, new residents still establish their homes here by buying a home or renting a residential unit. Providing a "Welcome to the Neighborhood" packet containing pertinent community information keeps new residents informed about their community. The packet may include information relating to City services, local businesses, local programs and activities, and a map of various points of interest throughout the neighborhood. Having important community information at the onset of moving into the neighborhood gives new residents a "jump start" in getting acclimated to the neighborhood and understanding where to go to find more information or assistance.</p>		Neighborhood
Tasks: What work will be done?		Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1	Draft a list of all pertinent community information relating to topics such as City services, schools, churches, businesses, programs and activities, parks and recreational facilities, and points of interests	Neighborhood		
2	Review similar "Welcome to the Neighborhood" packets currently provided by churches and other organizations to identify ways to share information	Neighborhood		
3	Create an informational packet that summarizes the information obtained in Tasks 1 and 2	Neighborhood		
4	Seek City assistance or sponsorship from private or non-profit groups to help fund the production of the information packets	Neighborhood		
5	Distribute the information packets at final closing (for new homeowners) and rental contract signing (for new renters)	Neighborhood, Local Realtors & Landlords		
6	Distribute the information packets at local schools, churches, businesses, and other locations that provide information kiosks	Neighborhood		
7	Revise the information packet as programs and information are updated or new ones are established (as necessary)	Neighborhood		





## Action Step 1-4

Issue Category: Neighborhood Identity (I)



Coordinate with the City to educate the neighborhood about the City's property inspection program to ensure residents become familiar with property maintenance regulations and enforcement procedures

► #17 High Priority [2.6% of total votes]

Description:		Who will be responsible for INITIATING this work?	Who will be responsible for MAINTAINING progress of this work?	Related Task Area(s)
		Neighborhood & City	Neighborhood & City	CI
Tasks: What work will be done?		Who will do it?	Initiation Date	Completion Date
1	Review the City's existing property maintenance and inspection policies and resources to determine the characteristics that are the most influential in improving the physical conditions of the neighborhood	Neighborhood & City		
2	Meet with the City's Division of Property Standards (DPS) to evaluate and learn the property inspection process	Neighborhood & City		
3	Evaluate the property maintenance and inspection policies and resources from Task 1 to determine potential amendments to the City's property maintenance and inspection policies (as necessary)	Neighborhood & City		
4	Recommend and adopt amendments to the City's property maintenance and inspection policies (as necessary)	Neighborhood & City		
5	Develop a pamphlet or information packet summarizing the City's property maintenance policies, inspection policies, and the step-by-step inspection process	Neighborhood & City		
6	Provide the pamphlet or information packet to new and current residents, landlords, and property owners via mailings, postings on City and neighborhood websites, and information kiosks at the Aurora Community Center, churches, and schools	Neighborhood & Division of Property Standards		
7	Invite DPS officials to sponsor periodic seminars or presentations in the neighborhood to educate the community about property maintenance, inspections, code violations, and other related matters	Neighborhood & Division of Property Standards		

## **Community Development Resources**

In order to provide the Task Force(s) with a jump start to help them achieve their goals, the remaining pages in this chapter provide descriptions of a variety of community development resources, which are listed by category in Figure 26.

Many of the Action Steps within this Action Plan will require funding or financial support of some level in order to succeed. The type and amount of funding or financial resources available will vary and may only be available to certain qualified people, such as property owners, low-to-moderate income residents, etc.

In addition to funding or financial resources, the Task Force(s) may wish to consider participating in community development programs to address certain issues such as crime prevention and property maintenance. Descriptions, contacts, and meeting times for City and community programs are also provided for reference.

The resource listings below and in the following pages are not an exhaustive list; however, the Task Force(s) are encouraged to research and seek information or assistance from other programs and organizations as necessary. Also, some listings provide an “online resource” reference, indicating a website with additional information. Please note that website addresses were accurate at the time of final preparation of this document (website addresses occasionally change, so please be aware that web content may still be available but just at a different address).

### **Incentive & Assistance Programs**

- **Landlord Training Program**: The Aurora Police Department conducts this program which provides information and assistance on leases, evictions, background checks, etc. The program is free and voluntary. Training is held 4 times per year and provides participants with a printed manual to use as a reference guide.
- **Re-conversion Incentive Program**: The City's Division of Neighborhood Redevelopment provides a grant incentive (up to \$28,000 per housing unit and \$75,000 per parcel) to encourage the restoration of multiple family dwelling units to their original single family or duplex residential uses. Priority is given to properties that can demonstrate a significant impact on the neighborhood by the re-conversion process. The grant program helps subsidize the costs associated with the re-conversion process and loss of rental income.
- **Assist Program**: The City's Division of Neighborhood Redevelopment provides lower-rate interest and monies for down payment and/or closing cost assistance to first time homebuyers. A list of participating lenders is available.
- **Mortgage Credit Certificate Program**: Through the Mortgage Credit Certificate Program (MCCP), the City's Division of Neighborhood Redevelopment provides first time homebuyers with an income tax credit equal to one-fourth of the annual interest paid for the life of the mortgage. Maximum annual credit is \$2,000. A list of participating lenders is available.
- **Real Estate Transfer Tax Rebate Program**: Offered to participants in the Assist or MCCP programs who purchase property in one of the City's targeted neighborhoods, the City's Division of Neighborhood Rede-

**Figure 26: Community Development Resources**

- Incentive & Assistance Programs
- Funding Sources & Grants
- Property Maintenance Programs
- Community Policing Programs
- Other Community Development Programs
- City Contact Information & Meeting Times



velopment will refund its portion of the real estate transfer tax to the buyer. This is a seller expense but a buyer's benefit, and it averages around \$200 after closing.

- Dead/Dying Tree Removal Program: The City's Division of Neighborhood Redevelopment will provide financial assistance for the cost of removing a dead or dying tree on private property. The level of financial assistance is based on household income. Property owned by an investor is also eligible but requires filing of a lien for the total amount of assistance. To qualify, the Division of Property Standards must identify the tree as a code violation and deem it an immediate threat to health and safety. To qualify under the owner-occupied benefits, the applicant must provide evidence that the property is their primary residence and proof of the total household income.
- CDBG Funding: Through the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, the City's Division of Neighborhood Redevelopment provides CDBG funding made available through a grant writing process for communities seeking to perform a variety of community development activities directed toward neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and the provision of improved community facilities and services. The City established its Block Grant Writing Committee to encourage citizen participation in the decision making and priority setting process for distribution of CDBG funding. Some CDBG programs include, but are not limited to, acquisition of real property, relocation and demolition, rehabilitation of residential and non-residential structures, and construction of public facilities and improvement

### **Funding Sources & Grants**

- Capital Improvements Plan (CIP): The City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) provides funds for long-term infrastructure and capital project needs. For a project to be included in the CIP, it must involve the creation or purchase of a tangible asset of at least \$25,000 and a useful life of at least one year.
- The Aurora Foundation: Serving Aurora, TriCities, Kendall County, and the Fox River Valley, the Aurora Foundation is comprised of individual funds and resources provided by local citizens to enhance and support the area's quality of life. As a tax-exempt public charity allowing individuals, businesses, and other non-profit organizations to establish permanent endowment and temporary funds within the confines of one large foundation, the Aurora Foundation provides grants to non-profit organizations and offers scholarship opportunities to local students.
- Fund for Illinois' Future Grant Program: The State of Illinois offers its Fund for Illinois' Future grant program, which provides for infrastructure improvements including, but not limited to, park and recreational projects, community facilities, bike paths, transportation infrastructure, and water and sewer systems costs.
- Other Resources: The State of Illinois, Kane County, and Federal government provide a variety of other grant programs and funding resources. Two online resources, The Foundation Center and Donors Forum of Chicago, provide comprehensive online listings of community foundations at the national and state levels. They also provide tools and resources for communities seeking grant assistance.



#### Online Resources

Online listings of grant programs & other funding resources

- The Foundation Center  
<http://foundationcenter.org/>

- Donors Forum of Chicago  
<http://www.donorsforum.org>

## Property Maintenance Programs

- “Be A Good Neighbor” Program: The City’s Division of Property Standards offers its “Be A Good Neighbor” program that provides helpful tips and guidelines for neighbors to properly maintain their yards, houses, and general property to preserve a healthy and clean neighborhood. Bilingual informational pamphlets are available for distribution.
- Rental Licensing Program: Through its Rental Licensing Program, the City’s Division of Property Standards offers annual inspections of rental apartment buildings having 2 or more units to assure code compliance. In addition to being proactive in ensuring rental properties comply with City’s codes, the licensing program also educates residents and landlords about the prevention of blight of their homes and properties. Rental dwelling units are inspected on an annual basis.
- Weed Abatement Program: The City’s Weed Abatement Program protects residential properties by mandating that grass and weeds may not exceed 8 inches in height. Violations and enforcement issues should be addressed to the City’s Division of Property Standards. For those properties that are in violation of this height mandate, the City is authorized to trim excessive grass and weeds and charge the cost of trimming and any escalating fines to the property owner.
- Junk & Trash Removal Program: The City’s Junk & Trash Removal Program monitors the proper disposal of junk and trash such as worn tires, cans, bottles, rotten wood, paper, and vehicle parts. Violations and enforcement issues should be addressed to the City’s Division of Property Standards. For those properties that are in violation of the City’s junk and trash removal regulations, the City is authorized to trim excessive grass and weeds and charge the cost of trimming and any escalating fines to the property owner.
- Occupancy Standards: The City’s Division of Property Standards maintains occupancy standards for residential structures to ensure the safety and well-being of housing occupants as well as protect the quality of life for the overall neighborhood. Occupancy standards are listed in the “Be A Good Neighbor” informational pamphlet and are available on the City’s website.
- Parking Standards: The City’s Division of Property Standards maintains parking standards to ensure residents properly and safely park their vehicles to protect residents’ safety and the neighborhood’s quality of life. Parking standards are referenced in the “Be A Good Neighbor” informational pamphlet and are available on the City’s website.
- Home Owner Maintenance Empowerment (HOME) Program: The City’s Division of Neighborhood Redevelopment offers a grant of up to \$5,000 to eligible Aurora residents for home maintenance improvements to help repair deficiencies in their homes. Repairs may include mechanical systems, electrical upgrades, plumbing improvements, roof repairs, and structural modifications to comply with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards.
- Other Resources: The City’s Division of Property Standards provides additional information through a collection of forms and brochures available on the City’s website (see box to the right).



### Online Resources

Online resources provided by the City of Aurora Division of Property Standards

[http://www.aurora-il.org/neighborhood-standards/property\\_standards/forms.asp](http://www.aurora-il.org/neighborhood-standards/property_standards/forms.asp)



## Community Policing Programs

- APD Crime Prevention Programs: The Aurora Police Department (APD) provides a variety of crime prevention programs, many of which are geared towards community activism and neighborhood improvement. Please contact APD for information on any of these programs.
- Press Release of Nuisance Properties: The City posts press releases that identify possible nuisance properties whose owners have received notification of alleged illegal activities. Under State law, the State may seek civil action against the owners of houses, apartments, or buildings that qualify as a nuisance. The building may then be subject to a lien and sold to pay unsatisfied judgments.



### Online Resources

Crime prevention programs offered by the Aurora Police Department (APD)

<http://www.aurora-il.org/policedepartment/crimeprevention/index.asp>

## Other Community Development Programs

- Aurora Cares Corporation: The Aurora Cares Corporation is a broad-based community group working to reduce crime in the City. One of its accomplishments is the administration of a City youth initiative grant to prevent gang violence through a collaborative effort with the Fox Valley United Way.
- Association for Individual Development (AID): Aurora's Association for Individual Development (AID) is a partner of Chicago's CeaseFire program, which encourages strategic community-based efforts to stop violence through street-level outreach, public education, and community mobilization.
- Lights On Afterschool! Program: The Lights On Afterschool! Program is a national program designed by the After School Alliance which calls attention to the importance of afterschool programs for children, families, and communities. Afterschool programs keep kids safe, help working families, and inspire learning beyond the classroom. The website for the Lights On Afterschool! Program also provides a comprehensive listing of its supporting organizations, which may provide other resources for community development (see box to the right). Some schools in Aurora participate or have participated in the Lights On Afterschool! Program.
- Boys II Men: Sponsored by the East Aurora Weed & Seed Program through the U.S. Department of Justice, the Boys II Men program was founded by its director Clayton Muhammad to serve as a service fraternity for Latino and African-American teens who may be at risk with gang involvement. Emphasizing its five core principles (discipline, education, culture, brotherhood, and service), the Boys II Men program encourages teens to excel in their development through service, peer tutoring, and community involvement.
- Historic Preservation Award Program: The City's Mayor's office established a Historic Preservation Award program to honor the efforts of citizens efforts to preserve Aurora's older homes and structures. By recognizing citizens' excellence in restoration of Aurora's historic properties, the award honors property owners who make significant restorations while maintaining the historic character of their buildings. Award recipients receive a plaque and are formally recognized at the annual Mayor's Awards Ceremony in May.



### Online Resources

Online listing of supporting organizations for the Lights On Afterschool! Program

[http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights\\_on/sup\\_org.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/sup_org.cfm)

Qualifying properties should be at least 50 years old or designated as historic by the City of Aurora. The Aurora Preservation Commission oversees the nomination process.

- Fox Valley United Way:** The mission of the Fox Valley United Way is to measurably improve lives in the communities in which it serves. By partnering with other local community organizations such as the Aurora Cares Corporation, the City of Aurora, and local schools, the Fox Valley United Way helps strengthen the community and provide adequate services and programs where needed. The Fox Valley United Way website provides a comprehensive listing of local community development and service organizations (see box to the right).



**Online Resources**

Online listing of local community service & community development organizations (compiled by the Fox Valley United Way)

[http://www.uwfoxvalley.org/in\\_need\\_search\\_results.php?cname=Aurora&serve=1&id\\_community=1](http://www.uwfoxvalley.org/in_need_search_results.php?cname=Aurora&serve=1&id_community=1)

- Joseph Corporation:** As a community-based nonprofit organization funded by the United Way and serving the Aurora area, Joseph Corporation addresses affordable housing issues by focusing on homeownership, lending, and real estate development. Lead by professional and bilingual staff, the mission of the Joseph Corporation is to empower individuals, stabilize families, and revitalize neighborhoods through a variety of economic and social initiatives. Through public education and counseling for first-time homebuyers, Joseph Corporation enhances opportunities for homeownership and provide quality, affordable housing through rehabilitation of distressed properties and by developing rental housing.

**City Contact Information & Meeting Times**

The listings below list general City contact information and meeting times for the City's various boards/committees. The City's website provides a calendar of board/committee meetings with times, locations, and contact information. Agendas and meeting minutes are also provided for certain boards/committees. Although the boards/committees try to keep a regular meeting schedule as listed below, please check the online calendar for any changes.



**Contact the City**

To contact the City on any issues, or to find out more about any of the aforementioned programs, call:

**(630) 264-INFO**

**▶ City Information**

City Hall 44 East Downer Place Aurora, IL 60507 phone: (630) 264-4636 fax: (630) 892-0741	<table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Planning Division</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(630) 844-3614</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neighborhood Redevelopment Division</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(630) 264-3060</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Division of Property Standards</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(630) 897-4589</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Police Department</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(630) 859-1700 (non-emergency) -or- 911 (emergency)</td> </tr> </table>	Planning Division	(630) 844-3614	Neighborhood Redevelopment Division	(630) 264-3060	Division of Property Standards	(630) 897-4589	Police Department	(630) 859-1700 (non-emergency) -or- 911 (emergency)	
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**▶ Meeting Times for City Boards/Committees** For more information, visit: [www.aurora-il.org](http://www.aurora-il.org)

Aurora Neighborhood Council	Meets first Thursday of month	5:30 pm @ 5th Floor Conf Room, City Hall
Planning Council	Meets every Tuesday	5:00 pm @ Aldermen's Office
Planning Commission	Meets every first & third Wed of month	7:00 pm @ Council Chambers, City Hall
Zoning Board of Appeals	Meets every first & third Wed of month	6:30 pm @ Council Chambers, City Hall
Planning & Development Committee	Meets on Thursday preceding COTW	4:00 pm @ 5th Floor, City Hall
Committee of the Whole (COTW)	Meets every first & third Tuesday of month	5:00 pm @ 5th Floor Conf Room, City Hall
City Council	Meets every second & fourth Tue of month	6:00 pm @ Council Chambers, City Hall



For the neighborhood planning process to sustain itself, the Task Force(s) must be part “cheerleader” and part “task master”. As “cheerleader”, Task Force(s) must keep the community informed and involved, even recruiting additional Task Force members as planning efforts progress and interest grows. As “task master”, Task Force(s) must monitor the progress of projects and programs to ensure that all parties are fulfilling their agreements. The Task Force(s) must establish a method to track progress on projects and programs and will be responsible for making quarterly reports to the ANC about current activities and progress in plan implementation.



Periodic updating and publicizing of a calendar of all community activities, such as school events (above), is one action item that should be continually monitored by the Task Force(s) to inform neighbors of what activities are available as well as when and where they will take place.

From time to time, Task Force members will want to ask each other the following questions to track progress:

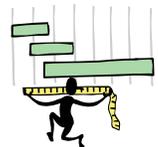
- Do we adequately represent the Light of the Community Neighborhood? Have conditions or the character of the neighborhood changed since we developed our Action Plan?
- Do we have correct information? Is our initial information current or out-of-date? If we need updated information, what sources should we consult?
- Have neighborhood improvements achieved via our planning efforts produced the results we hoped for? Why or why not?
- Do we need to re-negotiate our agreements within our community partnerships? Have political or economic conditions changed? If so, have they altered the nature of our partnerships?
- Are we taking appropriate actions? Are they having the desired effects?
- Are we engaging the neighborhood and receiving adequate community participation? Do we need to strengthen our leadership or add to our Task Force membership?
- Are our physical and financial resources adequate? If not, what other resources are available?

### **“State of the Neighborhood” Meetings**

Answers to these questions (and others that will inevitably arise as neighborhood improvement efforts continue) should be communicated to the entire neighborhood at periodic “State of the Neighborhood” meetings. Whether it’s annual, semi-annual, or quarterly, the Neighborhood Board shall determine the frequency of these meetings to ensure the entire neighborhood is kept up-to-date on the progress of Action Plan implementation. Figure 27 lists general objectives for these meetings.

Figure 27: “State of the Neighborhood” Meeting Objectives

- Celebrate accomplishments -- no matter how small -- that are serving to improve the quality of life in the Light of the Community Neighborhood.
- Enlist neighborhood stakeholders in assessing the relevance of the original Action Plan document and making adaptations as necessary.



A summary of the “State of the Neighborhood” meeting and any proposed actions or changes should be submitted to all of the original groups that approved the Action Plan: ANC, Planning Commission, and City Council.

### **Action Plan Updates**

In addition to the periodic “State of the Neighborhood” meetings, the neighborhood should prepare an update to the original Action Plan approximately every three years. The frequency of updates may be higher as situations and issues warrant; however, updating the Action Plan every couple of years will ensure that the Task Force(s) are staying on task with the Action Step implementation worksheets and accomplishing the goals set forth in the Plan. Funding from City programs will be made available based on these periodic updates which should employ a collaborative and interactive approach similar to the process described in the ANPI Neighborhood Planning Handbook.

Depending on conditions in the neighborhood, the plan update process could be accomplished in one neighborhood-wide meeting or in several meetings scheduled for a specified time frame. A document describing the plan update process for the Light of the Community Neighborhood should be submitted to the ANC, Planning Commission, and City Council for review every three years (or each time the Action Plan is updated, depending on the frequency of updates). The document should address the elements listed in Figure 28.

**Figure 28: Document Outlining the Action Plan Update Process**

The document outlining the Action Plan update process should be submitted to the ANC, Planning Commission, and City Council for review. The document should address the following elements:

- Process and neighborhood involvement used to conduct the Action Plan update
- Accomplishments since the adoption of the Action Plan
- Items that were not accomplished and the reasons why
- Changes in the neighborhood that necessitate re-direction of activities, programs, and/or resources
- New initiatives including the explanation of need
- Updates to the implementation worksheets



Appendice	Page
Complete Results from Neighborhood Meeting #1 (August 6, 2007) .....	66
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- Results from "Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood" Exercise .....	68
Complete Results from Neighborhood Meeting #2 (September 17, 2007) .....	76
- Results from "How Can I Help My Neighborhood?" Exercise .....	76
Complete Results from Neighborhood Meeting #3 (October 29, 2007) .....	81
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# Light of the Community Neighborhood Plan

## Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative

### Neighborhood Meeting #1

Monday, August 6, 2007, 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Beaupre Elementary School | 954 E. Benton St, Gymnasium

### Meeting Summary

---

#### Large Group Exercise

Describe the Neighborhood “As It Is Today” and “As I Want It To Be”

---

#### What was the goal of the exercise?

This exercise was designed to encourage meeting participants to think about how they perceive the neighborhood in the present (“as it is today”) and in the future (“as I want it to be”). As the first exercise in the planning process, responses from meeting participants helped identify an initial set of issues facing the neighborhood.

#### How was the exercise organized?

Meeting participants were asked to provide one-word responses to the following two questions:

- How do I perceive the neighborhood “as it is today”?
- How do I perceive the neighborhood “as I want it to be” in the future?

#### What were the results of the exercise?

Results from the large group exercise are summarized on page 2 of this summary.

#### What are the next steps in the planning process?

The next steps in the planning process are to identify any consistencies/conflicts in responses with the results from the small group exercise (“Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood”), which is summarized on pages 3 through 10 of this summary. With the assistance of the Leadership Team, the results from the two exercises will be evaluated to produce a consolidated list of the neighborhood’s key issues. This list will then be presented to the whole neighborhood at the next meeting, which is scheduled on Monday, September 17, 2007. At this meeting, meeting participants will help identify methods to resolve the neighborhood’s key issues.



**Large Group Exercise (continued)**

Describe the Neighborhood "As It Is Today" and "As I Want It To Be"

**How do I perceive the neighborhood "as it is today"?**

Responses from meeting participants included:

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| ▪ Sub-standard        | ▪ Good Park District      |
| ▪ Over-commercialized | ▪ Traffic                 |
| ▪ Insecure            | ▪ Children at risk        |
| ▪ Lost                | ▪ Overcrowded             |
| ▪ Ever-changing       | ▪ Bad rap                 |
| ▪ Diverse             | ▪ Poor perception Promise |
| ▪ Under-served        | ▪ City interest           |
| ▪ Better              | ▪ Lack of trust (of city) |
| ▪ Troubled            | ▪ Unorganized             |
| ▪ Good lighting       | ▪ Parked cars             |

**How do I perceive the neighborhood "as I want it to be" in the future?**

Responses from meeting participants included:

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| ▪ Crime-free               | ▪ Childcare                                   |
| ▪ Inviting                 | ▪ More green areas                            |
| ▪ Pride                    | ▪ Well serviced (grocery, library)            |
| ▪ A model community        | ▪ More programs beyond school                 |
| ▪ More communication       | ▪ More affordable youth programs              |
| ▪ Open/peaceful            | ▪ Better information on being a good neighbor |
| ▪ Safe & secure            | ▪ Improved housing                            |
| ▪ Better looking           | ▪ Fines for poor maintenance                  |
| ▪ Less race discrimination |   |

**Notes**

*Responses are listed in no particular order.*

*Responses to the "As It Is Today" question reflect the personal perceptions of individual meeting participants and may not accurately reflect actual conditions or characteristics of the neighborhood. Additional research and discussion will be conducted to evaluate whether these perceptions truly reflect reality.*

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### **Small Group Exercise**

#### Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood

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#### **What was the goal of the exercise?**

This exercise was designed to encourage meeting participants to think about different elements of the neighborhood, some of which may currently exist today and some that may be lacking or non-existent. Identifying the lack or weaknesses of common neighborhood elements will help determine the neighborhood's key issues, particularly building upon the initial set of issues compiled from the earlier large group exercise.

#### **How was the exercise organized?**

Meeting participants were organized into two small groups. Each small group was led by a set of facilitators who assisted meeting participants identify neighborhood elements and led a discussion on concerns with the lack or weaknesses of certain elements. The facilitators utilized a display board depicting a matrix of 16 common neighborhood elements to guide and stimulate discussion (see pages 9 and 10 for the completed matrix for each of the two small groups). While responses were recorded in the matrix on the display board, general comments were also recorded on large note pads to ensure all issues were documented.

#### **What were the results of the exercise?**

Results from the small group exercise are summarized on pages 4 through 10 of this summary.

#### **What are the next steps in the planning process?**

The next steps in the planning process are to identify any consistencies/conflicts in responses with the results from the large group exercise ("Describe the Neighborhood..."), which is summarized on pages 1 through 2 of this summary. With the assistance of the Leadership Team, the results from the two exercises will be evaluated to produce a consolidated list of the neighborhood's key issues. This list will then be presented to the whole neighborhood at the next meeting, which is scheduled on Monday, September 17, 2007. At this meeting, meeting participants will help identify methods to resolve the neighborhood's key issues.



**Small Group Exercise (continued)**  
Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood

The completed matrices for each of the two small groups are provided on pages 9 and 10. Comments for each of the 16 neighborhood elements are recorded below.

*Notes*

*Comments are listed in no particular order.*

*Comments for the small group exercise reflect the personal perceptions of individual meeting participants and may not accurately reflect actual conditions or characteristics of the neighborhood. Additional research and discussion will be conducted to evaluate whether these perceptions truly reflect reality.*

**(1) Landmarks/Focal Points**

- Oak Park Elementary School, Beaupre Elementary School
- Cowherd Middle School (Cowherd family)
- Pattersonville: welcome sign exists but there should be a plaque/sign indicating why it is a landmark; "tell a story" about the history of Pattersonville
- Churches
- Black history museum (art history) at 5<sup>th</sup> Ave and Loucks St was crafted years ago but is not commemorated (offers opportunity for neighborhood)
- Parks

**(2) Identifiable Entries/Gateways**

- Neighborhood is not presented very well during the winter time (e.g. streets like Smith St, Downer St, and Galena Blvd are not plowed as well as other parts of the city)

**(3) Pedestrian-Friendly Streets**

- Liberty St is congested and has cars parked on both sides of street
- Speeding is a major problem along Farnsworth Ave, Simmons St, and near schools
- Need better monitoring of speeding, especially during school hours
- Most neighborhood is 25 mph speed limit (except main roads are 45 mph)
- Some areas lack sidewalks
- Farnsworth Ave hard to cross
- Pedestrian walkability blocked when cars park across sidewalks
- Too many cars parked on street makes it unsafe for kids to play in neighborhood
- Crosswalks and "Walk" signs at street crossings are present but not always followed (by either pedestrians or cars); people cross wherever convenient
- Lack of safety due to neighbors
- Residents don't shovel snow
- No stop signs along many streets between Grove St and Galena Blvd (including Loucks St, Kendall St, and Calhoun St)

**Small Group Exercise (continued)**  
Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood

**(4) Access to Public Transportation**

- Lack of bus shelters
- Bus services stop running too early
- Bus service used to be better; Pace cut backs
- Poor access to taxis (only at train station and casino)
- Access for senior citizens: safety, accessibility, ADA regulated
- Need for point-to-point transportation service for local trips
- Need longer hours and more stops for bus routes

**(5) Safe Environment**

- Poor lighting
- Crimes: burglary, gangs (especially at night), drugs, child abuse
- Drinking and driving
- Homelessness
- Not enough police presence (police only there when called)
- Kane County police annex nearby along Farnsworth Ave
- Police need to be more accessible and engaging with residents (hard to interact with police when in their patrol cars; possible walking/bike patrols)
- Police activity not reflective of police presence (it is apparent that police are present but crime remains an issue in the neighborhood)
- Vacant buildings (commercial and residential) attract inappropriate activities; need fines
- Need trust in police
- Public drinking on porches/late night parties
- Public drinking = unwelcome comments
- Men walking around without shirts
- Lack of stop signs
- Lots of loose dogs
- Bar at Dearborn Ave/Farnsworth Ave with lack of police presence
- Drag racing and no police presence in Dearborn Ave/Ohio St area
- Drug activity in Dearborn Ave/Farnsworth Ave area and New York St/Farnsworth Ave area
- More information about community safety available in Spanish
- Workshops sponsored by churches and schools
- New police station site might be positive
- Fear to call police
- Need for noise ordinance/mitigation, particularly near railroad

**(6) Diversity**

- Neighborhood is ethnically diverse but not quite economically diverse



**Small Group Exercise (continued)**  
Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood

**(7) Recreational Opportunities**

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park is good
- Need better distribution of parks/recreation areas so residents have convenient access and don't have to travel far for recreation
- Simmons vs. Beaupre: playground area
- Need youth summer programs (academics, athletics, nature)
- "A busy kid is a good kid"
- Two parents working need help with programs
- Need recreation center (Salvation Army community center planned)
- Church sports leagues
- Lack Park District Spanish programs

**(8) Educational Opportunities**

- Need for vocational programs
- Need for adult education programs (home maintenance, job training)
- No library branch in neighborhood
- Book mobile available
- Good schools
- Need to demonstrate consistency and dedication to programming to build community trust (educators/program providers need to keep promises and "be in it for the long haul")
- Trust in programs is important, especially for illegal citizens
- Programs can't be intimidating
- Need to feel "Welcome"/"Bienvenidos" when participating in programs
- Lack of educational opportunities for adults
- Need Spanish vocational training

**(9) Employment Opportunities**

- Many residents work in Chicago, Elburn, Joliet, and Elburn
- Many residents hold service industry jobs (e.g. hotels, factories, restaurants, stores, etc)
- Not many residents work at casino

**(10) Diverse Housing Options**

- Lots for sale
- Neighborhood offers choices in certain areas

**Small Group Exercise (continued)**  
Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood

**(11) Well-Maintained Properties**

- Maintenance not uniform (some areas are better maintained than others)
- Board of Health: need more strict standards for cleanliness, safety, and appearance
- Health code: vendors
- City programs/grants for property maintenance are available but application process is not easy and not everyone is aware of the programs
- Fire Department: safety inspections, education initiatives
- Need education about public health issues
- Food nutrition
- Leaky oil on street
- Garbage in back yards
- Overcrowding (particularly along Dearborn Ave, west of Farnsworth Ave)
- Sleeping on the porch
- Junk cars on property
- Garbage dumping under railroad bridge at Farnsworth Ave
- Businesses operating out of home (e.g. auto body shop in home in Kane St/Kendall St area)
- Lack of upkeep in mom and pop shops

**(12) Variety in Businesses**

- Lack of grocery stores
- Lack of chain stores (Jewel, Wal-Mart)
- Too many mom and pop shops
- Clothing/home goods stores too far to travel
- More variety in ethnic food (not just tacos)
- Less fast food, more family dining

**(13) Opportunities for Development**

- Home at Fenton St/Kendall St (drug house)
- Vacant lots at Kendall St/Liberty St (park)
- Downtown vacancies affect the neighborhood

**(14) Youth Programs/Activities**

- More sports (Park District)
- Art and computer classes at reasonable prices
- Tabernacle de Luz (8-12, M-F day programs for children, breakfast, arts and crafts)



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**Small Group Exercise** (continued)  
Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood

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**(15) Community Involvement**

- The Taking Back Our Community (TBOC) neighborhood group and Beaupre Elementary School have been working together to make the neighborhood safer and better
- Neighborhood has some community involvement but it is uneven across the community
- Community involvement requires organization, active participation, and a common goal
- Need more neighborhood reporting of main issues
- Safe routes to school program
- Neighbors must walk the neighborhood
- ANPI process needs more participation, better promotion of meetings
- Promote via local radio (WBIG, WERV, LA LEY) and newspaper (El Conquistador) outlets to reach out to Hispanic community
- Intercommunication among schools
- Door-to-door/car-pooling opportunities
- Meeting announcements at churches, school district flyers

**(16) Community Services**

- Need for public health education across all cultures
- Need grocery store
- Need physician offices for healthcare
- More education for health and wellness
- Reinvestment is lacking in the neighborhood (city taxes are reinvested in neighborhood, sales taxes go outside the area)
- Senior services needed in neighborhood
- Neighborhood affordability is lacking (gas prices in Aurora higher than other communities)
- Need childcare facilities
- Division between City and unincorporated areas affect delivery of City services (crime, animal control, animal abuse)

**Exercise: Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood**

**Group 1 Exercise Results**

**Ejercicio: Indicadores de un vecindario saludable**

Neighborhood Element	Does it exist?		If it EXISTS, how strong is its presence?			If it DOES NOT EXIST or it is UNCERTAIN, what is missing?	Elementos del vecindario
	Yes	No	Strong	In the middle	Weak		
Landmarks/focal points	X						Lugares de interés histórico o turístico
Identifiable entries/gateways		X					Entradas claramente identificadas/portales
Pedestrian-friendly streets		X					Calles accesibles para los peatones
Access to public transportation		X					Acceso al transporte público
Safe environment		X					Ambiente seguro
Diversity (ethnic, age, economic)	X						Diversidad (étnica, generacional, económica)
Recreational opportunities		X					Oportunidades recreativas
Educational opportunities	X						Oportunidades educativas
Employment opportunities		X					Oportunidades de empleo
Diverse housing options		X					Opciones diversas de vivienda
Well-maintained properties		X					Propiedades bien mantenidas
Variety in businesses		X					Variedad de negocios
Opportunities for development		X					Oportunidades de desarrollo
Youth programs/activities		X					Programas para la juventud/actividades
Community involvement	X						Participación de la comunidad
Community services (healthcare, social services, daycare, etc)		X					Servicios comunitarios (salud, servicios sociales, guarderías, etc)
	Sí	No	Fuerte	En el medio	Débil		
	¿Existe?		Si existe, ¿cuán fuerte es su presencia?				Si no existe o parece incierto, ¿qué le falta?

Comments recorded on large note pads (see pages 3 through 8 for summary)

Vecindario del Luz de la Comunidad | Iniciativa de Planificación de los Vecindarios de Aurora  
Primera Reunión de Vecindarios - Lunes, 6 de Agosto de 2007

Light of the Community Neighborhood | Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative  
Neighborhood Meeting #1 - Monday, August 6, 2007



**Exercise: Indicators of a Healthy Neighborhood**      **Group 2 Exercise Results**      **Ejercicio: Indicadores de un vecindario saludable**

Neighborhood Element	Does it exist?		If it EXISTS, how strong is its presence?			If it DOES NOT EXIST or it is UNCERTAIN, what is missing?	Elementos del vecindario
	Yes	No	Strong	In the middle	Weak		
Landmarks/focal points	X			X			Lugares de interés histórico o turístico
Identifiable entries/gateways							Entradas claramente identificadas/portales
Pedestrian-friendly streets	X			X			Calles accesibles para los peatones
Access to public transportation	X			X			Acceso al transporte público
Safe environment		X			X		Ambiente seguro
Diversity (ethnic, age, economic)							Diversidad (étnica, generacional, económica)
Recreational opportunities							Oportunidades recreativas
Educational opportunities	X				X	Comments recorded on large note pads (see pages 3 through 8 for summary)	Oportunidades educativas
Employment opportunities	X		X				Oportunidades de empleo
Diverse housing options							Opciones diversas de vivienda
Well-maintained properties		X		X			Propiedades bien mantenidas
Variety in businesses		X			X		Variedad de negocios
Opportunities for development	X		X				Oportunidades de desarrollo
Youth programs/activities		X			X		Programas para la juventud/actividades
Community involvement		X					Participación de la comunidad
Community services (healthcare, social services, daycare, etc)		X			X		Servicios comunitarios (salud, servicios sociales, guarderías, etc)
	Si	No	Fuerte	En el medio	Débil		
	¿Existe?		Si existe, ¿cuán fuerte es su presencia?				Si no existe o parece incierto, ¿qué le falta?

Light of the Community Neighborhood | Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative  
 Neighborhood Meeting #1 - Monday, August 6, 2007

Vecindario del Luz de la Comunidad | Iniciativa de Planificación de los Vecindarios de Aurora  
 Primera Reunión de Vecindarios - Lunes, 6 de Agosto de 2007

# Light of the Community Neighborhood Plan

## Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative

### Neighborhood Meeting #2

Monday, September 17, 2007, 7:00 – 8:40 pm  
Cowherd Middle School | 441 N. Farnsworth Ave, Library

### Meeting Summary

Small Group Exercise: "How Can I Help My Neighborhood?"

#### **What was the goal of the exercise?**

Group facilitators led a series of small group discussions to generate ideas about how residents and stakeholders can help the neighborhood resolve its key issues. Rather than wait for others to take action, residents and stakeholders can be proactive and take proper steps to resolve neighborhood issues. While residents and stakeholders are not expected to resolve issues by themselves, they are encouraged to partner with City departments, neighborhood groups, schools, churches, and other local organizations to identify and utilize tools and programs that most effectively address the issues at hand. Certain steps may seem small at first, but they help initiate activity and demonstrate to neighbors that you care about the community. Also, enough small steps can add up to significant results. Rather than taking reactive approach where you resolve issues as they arise, residents and stakeholders are encouraged to take a proactive approach, which stimulates getting to the root of an issue and formulating solutions aimed at not only solving the current issue but also preventing future issues.

#### **How was the exercise organized?**

The small group exercise was divided into 4 sessions, each covering one of the 4 key issue categories that were identified from Neighborhood Meeting #1:

1. Neighborhood Identity
2. Neighborhood Transportation
3. Neighborhood Safety
4. Neighborhood Opportunities

A group facilitator was assigned to each group to lead discuss the key issues and generate ideas about how residents and stakeholders can help the neighborhood resolve the issues. The allotted time for discussion was 20 minutes per issue category (total 80 minutes for the entire exercise).

#### **What were the results of the exercise?**

The results from the small group exercise are summarized on the following pages.

#### **What are the next steps in the planning process?**

The next steps in the planning process are to identify any consistencies/conflicts in responses, evaluate the feasibility of suggested actions/programs, and draft a consolidated list of recommendations (actions, programs, and activities) that will most effectively address the neighborhood's key issues. This list will then be presented to the neighborhood at the next meeting on October 29, 2007.



Neighborhood Meeting #2 – Monday, September 17, 2007  
Meeting Summary – Small Group Exercise: “How Can I Help My Neighborhood?”

### Neighborhood Identity

The Neighborhood Identity category includes issues relating to the physical appearance of the neighborhood as well as the perceptions of the neighborhood by residents and visitors. Primary issues include: Landmarks, Image, Community Involvement, and Property Maintenance.

#### Landmarks: What can be done to improve the visibility of landmarks?

- Improve or remove black history museum
- Pattersonville: plaque description, Piquaw Hill
- Better directional signs
- Sign for Pattersonville should have brief historical description
- Lake within Oakhurst Forest Preserve recently renamed Lake Patterson (highlights local significance of Patterson family)
- Littering along road and at undesignated areas within residential areas
- Availability of waste/recycling containers in well-lit areas would help reduce fly dumping

#### Image: What can be done to improve the neighborhood's image?

- Block clean-up: publicity, positive
- Newline - newspaper

#### Community Involvement: What can be done to improve community involvement?

- New neighbor welcoming along w/ pamphlet of issues/meetings in neighborhood
- Letters to all neighbors outlining issues of the neighborhood (from meetings)
- Spanish papers, get on WBYG radio
- School leadership, announcements at PTA
- Need to walk the neighborhood; promotes vigilance and getting to know your neighbors
- Need more opportunities to get involved

#### Property Maintenance: What can be done to improve property maintenance?

- Improved property maintenance
- Grass trimmings being thrown on street, clogging up drains (implement fines)
- Public marketing of 264-INFO (City customer service phone line)
- How to upkeep your home workshop held every so often for new residents and those that do not know
- Shorter light poles, trimming of trees by street lights
- Oakhurst Forest Preserve stop cutting grass
- Education: Public Health Dept, fire home inspections, safety in multi-family residential areas, training how to take care of homes
- Fly dumping – City/County boundary
- Clean and safe businesses (laundromats, grocery stores)
- Flooding issues in neighborhoods between Eastern Ave and County line (low topographical areas combined with excess stormwater runoff from newer DuPage County residential subdivisions to the east; flooding wasn't a major issue before subdivisions were built)
- Need more City/County collaboration to resolve flooding issues
- Upkeep of Forest Preserve (need to mow more often)
- Need to plow snow more often
- West Side of City taken better care of than East Side
- County properties: different set of maintenance standards
- Need information about where to find maintenance standards
- Commercial maintenance: physical appearance important for business

2

*\*Note: All responses listed within this summary reflect the personal viewpoints of individual meeting participants and may not accurately reflect the viewpoints of the entire neighborhood. Additional analysis of the meeting summary will be conducted to produce a consolidated list of recommendations (actions, programs, and activities) that will most effectively address the neighborhood's key issues.*



Neighborhood Meeting #2 – Monday, September 17, 2007  
Meeting Summary – Small Group Exercise: “How Can I Help My Neighborhood?”

### Neighborhood Transportation

The Neighborhood Transportation category includes issues relating to transportation access, circulation, and safety throughout the neighborhood. Primary issues include: speeding, parking, pedestrian circulation, and public transportation.

#### **Speeding: What can be done to reduce speeding in the neighborhood?**

- Need stop signs at following intersections: Fenton St/Kendall St, Claim St/Stuart Ave
- Yield sign at Coolidge Ave/Oakview Ave intersection not respected
- Drag racing along Dearborn Ave
- Speeding cameras
- Speed bumps for speeding
- 50/50 sidewalk program – City partnership w/ private companies (fill in sidewalk gaps)
- Speeding along Eastern Ave, New York St, Farnsworth Ave
- Speed limit signs
- Need more police presence along high-speed areas
- Speed mitigation techniques: speed bumps are effective; roundabouts can get expensive and cumbersome; electronic speed limit board not effective; speed mitigation techniques need to be cost-effective and easily removable if they are not working

#### **Parking: What can be done to improve parking in the neighborhood?**

- Cars and trucks parked along Dearborn Ave due to auto/towing businesses
- Too many cars parked at auto shop
- Parking on sidewalk along Liberty St
- Commercial work vehicles parked in driveways
- City shovels snow onto parked cars causing issues
- Overcrowding in homes leading to too many parked cars
- Forcing cars onto driveway/garage (street parking permits)
- Document which cars are registered to which home
- Parking issues along Liberty St (redirect to one side?)
- Business parking spilling over onto residential streets
- Forest Preserve parking spilling over onto residential streets – signs have been proposed but are still needed; main access to Forest Preserve as at south side along 5<sup>th</sup> Ave but visitors still park and access at north end through residential areas

#### **Pedestrian Circulation: What can be done to improve safety and circulation for pedestrians?**

- Better sidewalks
- Need sidewalks along Schiller Ave, Kendall St, Oakview Ave, Eastern Ave, Farnsworth Ave, Liberty St, New York St (east of Farnsworth Ave), Solfisburg Ave
- No crossing guard across Farnsworth Ave at Liberty St, particularly during church services at St. Therese Church
- Leafs and snow impede walkability (fines for property owners)
- Parking over sidewalk big problem for walkability (children)
- Need better sidewalk maintenance (“mud jacking”); well-maintained sidewalks helps reduce potential for litigation for any accidents
- Need crosswalks in areas that connect residential neighborhoods to key points of interest
- Kids walk on street when no sidewalks available (safety issue)

3

*\*Note: All responses listed within this summary reflect the personal viewpoints of individual meeting participants and may not accurately reflect the viewpoints of the entire neighborhood. Additional analysis of the meeting summary will be conducted to produce a consolidated list of recommendations (actions, programs, and activities) that will most effectively address the neighborhood's key issues.*



Neighborhood Meeting #2 – Monday, September 17, 2007  
Meeting Summary – Small Group Exercise: “How Can I Help My Neighborhood?”

**Public Transportation: What can be done to improve public transportation?**

- Local public transit routes sent to homes w/ water bills
- Post map and time schedule at bus stops
- Dropped bus routes
- Handicap access to bus service
- Senior access
- Bus cut-off at 6:00 pm – desire to extend hours to accommodate employee schedules
- Busing for school children – schools on East Side served by City buses while schools on West Side served by school buses

**Neighborhood Safety**

The Neighborhood Safety category includes issues relating to safety and protection from crime. Primary issues include: crimes/transgressions/safety issues, police, and safety measures.

**Crimes/Transgressions/Safety Issues: What can be done to fight crime?**

- Loud music and chaotic around Liberty St/Schiller Ave area
- Prostitution around New York St/Kendall St area
- Overcrowding
- Drug concerns in area north of middle school and area near Grand Blvd Youth Center
- Alcohol problems around New York St/Farnsworth Ave area
- Need to identify businesses that are housing illegal activities or exacerbating crimes (i.e. selling drug paraphernalia)

**Police: What can be done to enhance police presence in the neighborhood? What can be done to improve the relationship between the neighborhood and police?**

- Police Dept good
- Be more discrete
- Don't pester those reporting crimes
- Bike/foot patrol – more intimate and get to know local patrol officers
- Need regular beat patrols
- Police cadets – could walk the neighborhood to interact with the community
- Programs in churches, etc
- Responsiveness of police is good
- Need more police presence
- Tend to see more County police than City police (County facility nearby)
- Police response not as fast for County properties
- Need equitable distribution of safety facilities (Fire Dept facility in newer part of City built secondary building while some older neighborhoods don't have a facility)

**Safety Measures: What can be done to improve safety in the neighborhood?**

- Better lighting/sidewalks
- Need more lighting along Oakview Ave
- Property Standards sweep of vacant homes
- Keep limits on music volume (backyard parties)
- Lack of fines/repercussions for loud music
- Prostitution – upon arrest, give them options as community service
- Block captains good to identify identify/target problematic houses (neighbors must unite to approach problematic houses)

4

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Neighborhood Meeting #2 – Monday, September 17, 2007

Meeting Summary – Small Group Exercise: “How Can I Help My Neighborhood?”

- Need more lighting along Eastview Ave
- Lighting
- Enforce noise ordinance
- Neighborhood watch
- Need more activities to keep kids/residents active

### Neighborhood Opportunities

The Neighborhood Opportunities category includes issues relating various opportunities that have the potential to enhance the neighborhood's quality of life. Primary issues include opportunities for: Recreation, Education, Employment, Business/Shopping/Services, Housing, and Development.

#### **Recreational Opportunities:** What recreational opportunities are needed in the neighborhood?

- Youth sports programs
- Not enough practice fields
- Teams must be from Aurora to practice
- Only place to practice is Jericho/Orchard, especially during weekends
- Sports/youth activities not well publicized
- Pamphlet to know about sports/youth opportunities
- Park District flyers must be in Spanish and distributed to neighborhoods
- Sports
- Programs needed for middle to high school students
- Youth Center: vocational, recreation
- Would be nice to have various activities available within the neighborhood but activities are also available close by and generally accessible (Eola Community Center nearby)
- Need more areas for indoor recreation (Salvation Army community center would provide those opportunities)

#### **Educational Opportunities:** What educational opportunities are needed in the neighborhood?

- Public health education: nutrition, property maintenance, bilingual, health/dental
- Language, particularly beyond basic ESL
- Affordability
- Fire safety
- Library: Main branch downtown and Eola Road branch not too far away; bookmobile also visits neighborhood
- Library fee is expensive for non-City residents

#### **Business/Shopping/Service Opportunities:** What opportunities are needed?

- Groceries – pay too much for cost of convenience (local stores)
- Too many El Guero, Cermack produce (more diversity)
- Community interest survey (bring in new stores)
- Need large grocery
- Culturally diverse businesses
- Childcare/healthcare
- Need senior services (transportation to services)
- Neighborhood is accessible to Fox Valley Mall (10 minute drive) and downtown
- More mom and pop stores (encourages entrepreneurship)
- Neighborhood is well built out – limited development opportunities
- Local volunteer fire crew (Moecherville)

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## Light of the Community Neighborhood Plan

Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative

### Neighborhood Meeting #3

Monday, October 29, 2007, 7:00 – 8:30 pm  
Cowherd Middle School | 441 N. Farnsworth Ave, Library

### Meeting Summary

Small Group Exercise: Prioritizing Action Steps

#### What was the goal of the exercise?

In small groups, meeting participants were given the opportunity to review, comment on, and prioritize a series of Action Steps designed to address the neighborhood's key issues. Action Steps were based on the results from the "How Can I Help My Neighborhood?" exercise, which was conducted at Neighborhood Meeting #2 on September 17, 2007.

#### How was the exercise organized?

First, meeting participants reviewed and provided comments on the Action Steps, which related to the following 4 issue categories: (1) Neighborhood Identity, (2) Neighborhood Transportation, (3) Neighborhood Safety, and (4) Neighborhood Opportunities. Meeting participants reviewed the Action Steps first as a large group and then in their small groups.

Second, meeting participants placed voting stickers on a series of voting boards to prioritize the Action Steps. The voting/prioritizing process included a set of 16 dot stickers which enabled meeting participants to vote for their highest priority Action Steps.

#### What were the results of the exercise?

The results from the small group exercise are summarized on the following pages.

#### What are the next steps in the planning process?

The voting boards were tabulated to determine the neighborhood's high priority Action Steps. Although some Action Steps received lesser votes and are considered lower priorities, it is important to point out that they will not be excluded from the Neighborhood Action Plan. Detailed worksheets will be created for the high priority Action Steps to outline a series of tasks designed to accomplish the Action Steps. Low priority Action Steps will be listed for future consideration by the neighborhood.

#### - Monday, November 19: Leadership Team Meeting #4

- The Leadership Team will review and discuss the framework for neighborhood improvement, which will be established to provide an organizational structure for the Action Step. The framework will be guided by a Neighborhood Team comprised of neighborhood leadership, Task Force Areas, and detailed implementation worksheets.

#### - Monday, December 17: Neighborhood Meeting #4

- The full draft Action Plan document will be presented to the neighborhood, including a finalized structure of the Neighborhood Team. Meeting participants will be provided the opportunity to volunteer to be part of any of the Neighborhood Team and participate in one of the Task Force Areas to assist with neighborhood improvement efforts. As this is the final meeting for the planning process, it is also a time to celebrate the community's efforts and commence the implementation process of the Action Plan.

Neighborhood Meeting #3 – Monday, October 29, 2007  
 Meeting Summary – Small Group Exercise: Prioritizing Action Steps

### **Prioritized Action Steps**

The Action Steps were prioritized based on total number of votes. Of the 37 total Action Steps, the 17 Action Steps receiving the most number of votes are regarded as the High Priority Action Steps. The remaining 20 Action Steps receiving lesser votes are regarded as the Low Priority Action Steps. The results from the prioritization exercise are summarized on the next page.

It is important to keep in mind that prioritization of the Action Steps in no way diminishes the need to address the Low Priority Action Steps. Based on the availability of resources and need to create a manageable Action Plan for neighborhood improvement, prioritization of the Action Steps demonstrates the community's desire to address certain issues (i.e. the High Priority Action Steps) at the onset and then handle other issues (i.e. the Low Priority Action Steps) as the Action Plan progresses and resources become available.

### **Additional Comments**

Note: Comments reflect the personal perceptions and feelings of individual meeting participants and may not accurately reflect actual conditions or characteristics of the neighborhood. Additional research or discussion will be conducted to evaluate whether these perceptions truly reflect reality.

- Some churches already have "Welcome to the Neighborhood" flyers
- Bonner Park improve lighting
- Identify local sexual predators
- Property standards in County
- Eastwood lighting
- Housing development next door (grass cutting)
- Police ticketing - Century Lane
- Majority of meeting attendees heard of meeting via mailings; others through flyers and word of mouth
- Bus Route 525 needed for children
- Too much noise
- Two empty units – squatters
- Century Lane - Mark & Kim landlords
- Trask between Liberty & Benton - more street lighting
- Consistent in parking enforcement
- Century Lane - handicap sign, dead end sign hidden, Trask property driveway access?
- Eastern Ave – no lighting and no sidewalks and a lot of kids = dangerous
- Post schedule for City garbage trucks that stay in one place for a day so residents can toss out beds and other large items



### Prioritized Action Steps

- \* Action Steps prioritized by total votes received.  
 \* High Priority Action Steps shaded in white (priorities 1 through 17).  
 \* Low Priority Action Steps shaded in gray (priorities 18 through 37).

Priority	ID	Action Step	Total Votes	Percent of Votes
1	S-4	Continue to coordinate with the Aurora Police Department and County sheriff departments to identify and properly address properties that house known criminal activity and vacant buildings that may pose potential threats	47	7.6%
2	S-8	Continue to develop and maintain a lighting program to facilitate a well-lit and safer neighborhood	45	7.2%
3	T-5	Coordinate with Pace to provide more public input into the development of bus routes and schedules and provision of handicap accessibility	35	5.6%
4	S-2	Continue to coordinate with the Aurora Police Department and County sheriff departments to maintain regular beat patrols to enhance police presence and responsiveness in the neighborhood	35	5.6%
5	S-6	Continue to develop a community safety information program to educate the community about crime prevention and mediation methods, particularly for gangs, drugs, and alcohol	35	5.6%
6	S-1	Continue to maintain regular contact between the neighborhood's "block captains", Aurora Police Department, and County sheriff departments to encourage an open line of communication	32	5.2%
7	T-6	Collaborate with the City, local schools, and bus/van/cab companies to explore and provide for alternative public transportation options for students, senior citizens, and the general population	30	4.8%
8	T-3	Collaborate with local schools and churches to improve the crossing guard system to include all street crossings that carry significant pedestrian traffic	26	4.2%
9	O-2	Develop, continually update, and publicize a calendar of all community activities and venues offered by local schools, churches, the City, park districts, and other groups	26	4.2%
10	T-1	Collaborate with the City and Counties to evaluate potential implementation of stop/yield signs and traffic calming devices to help reduce speeding in known high speed areas	23	3.7%
11	I-1	Create a network of "block captains" throughout the neighborhood to act as the liaisons between different neighborhood blocks, the Task Forces, and the City	21	3.4%
12	O-9	Coordinate with the City and relevant property owners to identify potential opportunities for redevelopment or re-use	20	3.2%
13	S-9	Continue to implement nuisance abatement programs to resolve safety issues, deter crimes, and impose strict fines for City and County code violations	19	3.1%
14	I-5	Explore solutions to prevent the disposal of trash in inappropriate areas	18	2.9%
15	S-5	Continue to promote and utilize community policing and safety programs offered by the Aurora Police Department and County sheriff departments	18	2.9%
16	I-8	Create a "Welcome to the Neighborhood" packet with information on City services, local businesses, local programs and activities, and a map of various points of interest to keep new residents informed about their new community	16	2.6%
17	I-11	Coordinate with the City to educate the neighborhood about the City's property inspection program to ensure residents become familiar with property maintenance regulations and enforcement procedures	16	2.6%
18	O-4	Coordinate with local schools and other providers of education programs to identify different payment options to ensure programs are affordable for all residents/families	14	2.3%
19	I-6	Continue to schedule periodic block clean-up days to promote neighborhood stewardship and interaction	13	2.1%
20	O-3	Plan a continuing series of public education workshops to educate the community on various topics (home care, homeownership, fire safety, healthcare, personal finance, etc)	13	2.1%
21	T-2	Collaborate with the City and Counties to evaluate the provision of new sidewalks and crosswalks and the repair of damaged sidewalks to promote a safer, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood	12	1.9%
22	I-2	Evaluate the significance of the black history museum to determine its long-term place in the neighborhood	11	1.8%
23	I-9	Educate the neighborhood on the availability of City, County, State, and Federal programs and relevant application processes	10	1.6%
24	I-3	Establish an informational plaque/kiosk for the Pattersonville neighborhood to identify the history and significance of the Patterson family in the community	9	1.4%
25	I-10	Collaborate with the City and Counties to resolve flooding issues in area near County line	9	1.4%
26	S-3	Continue to coordinate with the Aurora Police Department and County sheriff departments to encourage the potential for walking/biking patrols to enhance community interaction	9	1.4%
27	O-1	Develop an inventory of parks, recreation facilities, and recreation programs to evaluate distribution, site conditions, and needs and identify recommendations for improvement	9	1.4%
28	T-4	Collaborate with the City and its Motor Vehicle Parking System Division to develop a neighborhood parking plan that evaluates current parking conditions and needs and identifies solutions to improve parking	8	1.3%
29	O-5	Draft and conduct a community survey to determine the community's interests in establishing new businesses and services (or expanding current ones) to diversify the neighborhood's offerings	8	1.3%
30	I-4	Improve the local system of directional signage to ensure residents and visitors can clearly navigate through the neighborhood and find main points of interest	6	1.0%
31	O-6	Prepare an inventory of existing childcare facilities/services in the neighborhood and evaluate potential locations and opportunities for new or expanded facilities/services	6	1.0%
32	S-7	Continue to coordinate with local social service organizations to provide information on assistance/rehabilitation programs for issues such as alcohol, drugs, prostitution, etc	5	0.8%
33	I-7	Appoint a media liaison who maintains a collaborative relationship with local media outlets to help promote neighborhood activities and advocate for neighborhood issues	4	0.6%
34	I-13	Collaborate with the Kane County Forest Preserve District to ensure Oakhurst Forest Preserve receives adequate maintenance	4	0.6%
35	I-12	Continue to identify target property inspection areas and coordinate with the City to implement the property inspection program	3	0.5%
36	O-7	Prepare an inventory of existing healthcare facilities/services in the neighborhood and evaluate potential locations and opportunities for new or expanded facilities/services	3	0.5%
37	O-8	Prepare an inventory of existing senior facilities/services in the neighborhood and evaluate potential locations and opportunities for new or expanded facilities/services	3	0.5%
			621	100.0%

#### ID Abbreviations

- I = Neighborhood Identity  
 T = Neighborhood Transportation  
 S = Neighborhood Safety  
 O = Neighborhood Opportunities