



***CITY OF AURORA
TIF QUALIFICATION REPORT
RIVER VINE TIF***

An analysis to assess the likelihood that the area located in the City of Aurora could qualify as a vacant blighted area as defined in the Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act, 65 ILCS 5/11-74.4-3, et seq., as amended.

***Prepared by the City of Aurora, Illinois
in conjunction with
Ryan LLC (formerly Kane, McKenna and Associates)***

FEBRUARY 2023

**PROPOSED RIVER VINE
REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AREA/STUDY AREA
TIF QUALIFICATION REPORT**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kane, McKenna and Associates (now Ryan LLC) (Ryan) has been retained by the City of Aurora, Illinois (the “City”) to conduct an analysis of the potential qualification and designation of certain property located in the City, to be addressed herein as the proposed Redevelopment Project Area (the “Study Area” and/or the “RPA”) and included in the map attached as Exhibit A. Essentially the approximately three (3) acre Study Area includes portions of the City’s Downtown area generally bordered on the west by River Street, on north by Vine Street (as extended east to the Fox River), on the east by the Fox River, and on the south by Cedar Street (as extended east to the Fox River). The Study Area is located within the City’s existing TIF # 5. The City would be required to remove the land that form the Study Area from each of that existing TIF District to qualify their inclusion within the proposed River Vine TIF District. Please note that the qualification review for the Study Area is being carried out pursuant to the Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act, 65 ILCS 5/11-74.4-3, et seq., as amended (the “TIF Act”).

The City is pursuing the Study Area designation as part of its ongoing review of the Downtown area, to assist in the revitalization of the property and the overall improvement of the Downtown. By undertaking the designation, the City will help strengthen the Study Area as a significant contributor to the City’s overall economic base.

Based upon the preliminary analysis completed to date, RYAN has reached the following conclusions regarding the potential qualification of the Study Area as a TIF District:

- 1) *The proposed TIF District could meet the criteria for a “blighted vacant area,” as the term is defined under the TIF Act subject to the provision of additional documentation.* Pursuant to the TIF Act, vacant land is defined, in part, as: “...any parcels or combination of parcels of real property without industrial, commercial, and residential buildings....”
- 2) *Current conditions impede redevelopment* – Without the use of City planning and economic development resources to address certain issues, potential redevelopment activities are not likely to be economically feasible.
- 3) *Viable redevelopment sites could produce incremental revenue* crucial to make successful redevelopment feasible– Within the proposed Study Area, there are parcels which potentially could be redeveloped and thereby produce incremental property tax revenue or other additional revenues to the City. As part of the City’s planning efforts, a strategically critical potential development site is included in the Study Area. Such revenue, used in combination with other much needed private sector investment and other City resources for redevelopment incentives or public improvements, would likely stimulate successful real property investment on parcels that have heretofore lacked such investment associated reinvestment in nearby sites
- 4) *Review of TIF designation* – To mitigate certain conditions and to leverage the City’s investment and redevelopment efforts, the City is proposing a TIF designation to improve existing conditions, including positive aesthetically improvement adjacent to the City riverfront.

I. BACKGROUND

Current Land Use. The Study Area is generally limited to low intensity and accessory land uses (i.e., Downtown parking support) that have help to negate City efforts, over many years, to attract larger scale, mixed land use development projects (especially for potential residential development opportunities Downtown). The City has determined the riverfront land is otherwise suitable for such development, the Study Area suffers from blighting characteristics that heretofore have contributed to the prevention of the attraction of private sector investment required successful mixed-use development. As stated in the Master Plan for Downtown Aurora (2017) (the “Downtown Master Plan”), “...Downtown Aurora residential new construction lagged behind other suburban locations....” Further, one of the key recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan in part states:

“... (The City should) concentrate higher density development on the fringe of the downtown core. Focusing on the fringe of downtown is important because there are fewer bulk and density restrictions, more open space, and fewer historic structures in these areas. There are several redevelopment opportunities and under-developed sites throughout the study area. **Specific locations include parcels on the west bank of the river along River Street near the future pedestrian bridge...These parcels, especially those owned or controlled by the City, should be actively marketed. Utilizing city-owned parcels can make new residential development financially viable....** (Emphasis added)”

The Downtown area continues to be an important area for the community – both symbolically and from a community and economic development standpoint. The redevelopment of the Study Area, given its critical location adjacent the riverfront, is a key part of the overall economic development strategy.

Key findings are summarized below as taken from the Downtown Master Plan.

General Goals/Objectives

- 1) Aurora has one of the lowest crime rates in the nation for a city of its size. A low crime rate doesn’t erase the memory of many from the eighties and nineties and addressing misconceptions about safety still remains a challenge for the City.
- 2) Major gateways into the downtown area lack distinction and appeal. While Aurora has an attractive skyline and central streets, there is little indication for visitors traveling to downtown that they have arrived in the heart of Illinois’ second-largest city. The first impressions along north-south corridors offer views, but limited

signage, of the new RiverEdge Park alongside scrap recycling centers with no sidewalk or strip shopping centers.

- 3) Downtown Aurora has a high number of historic buildings and landmarks which are maintained through various historic preservation initiatives. In the downtown area, there are numerous historic buildings representing a range of architectural styles from Art Deco to Prairie School. There are 20 historic buildings within the Stolp Island National Register Historic District alone, including the Paramount Theatre and the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial.
- 4) Past downtown planning efforts have aimed to create a pedestrian-friendly environment, encouraging access to the Fox River. The FoxWalk Design Guidelines, the RiverEdge Park Master Plan, the Riverfront Vision, Seize the Future, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian plan all emphasize the importance of walkability and the Riverwalk. The Aurora Zoning Ordinance emphasizes pedestrian comfort and walkability in the downtown and provides standards for new developments to maintain pedestrian access and incorporate potential views of the Fox River.
- 5) Aurora has integrated streetscape and signage amenities in the downtown. People who live and work in downtown Aurora already know their favorite dining spots, where they can easily find parking, and where their favorite stores are located. However, many of these amenities are historic in nature and are concentrated on Stolp Island, where business district signage is limited. For newcomers to Aurora, signage and wayfinding could help to make their visit more enjoyable and seamless. Clear and direct paths to the downtown should be more evident and recognizable, particularly for visitors arriving by train.

As a result of the findings, above, several recommendations are noted for the RPA and the wider Downtown area:

- Coordinate with other riverfront communities to create a cohesive wayfinding package to promote redevelopment of downtowns.
- Develop stronger visual and physical links to the riverfront.
- Identify key routes between destinations and important gateways in the Downtown.
- Extend signage and marketing initiatives.
- Identify and prioritize gateway entrances into, and prominent corridors within, downtown.
- Target infrastructural and aesthetic improvements to enhance the sense of place.

- Promote and cultivate the cultural identity of Downtown.
- Establish a broad marketing reach.
- Identify and evaluate common pedestrian routes and parking facilities for safety improvements.
- Identify and activate vacant spaces.
- Promote community engagement and enhanced patrolling techniques.

Source: pages 14 to 23, "A Master Plan for Downtown Aurora" (2017).

The City's interest in the redevelopment of the Study Area reflects a concern for the past underutilized of the land, and its failure to date to attract the type of private sector investment for the installation of the type of mix-used/multi-family residential project desired for the community Downtown.

More specifically, the past impediments to such redevelopment are described in Section IV of this report. Additionally, while the Study Area, as part of Downtown, has potential positive attributes (such as location adjacent to the Fox River), the past and current state of the local and national economy (particularly lingering economic ramifications of both the Great Recession and the ongoing pandemic), characteristics of irregular and limited parcel size, and other redevelopment challenges associated with poor historical platting and land use planning, as well as landlocked status contribute to constraints related to redevelopment of the Study Area. Additionally, the Study Area is adversely impacted by certain deteriorated conditions to both the west and south of the site.

The City has determined that elimination of these adverse conditions and the successful redevelopment of the proposed Study Area could be beneficial to the community. With a redevelopment strategy (and a potential development) in place, the economic base of the Study Area would be stabilized and increased – thereby benefiting the community, in a manner consistent with the Downtown Master Plan.

General Scope and Methodology. RYAN performed its analysis by conducting a series of discussions with City staff, starting in March 2022 and continuing periodically up to the date of this report. The purpose of the review was to gather data related to the preliminary qualification criteria for properties included in the Study Area. These discussions were complemented by field surveys for the entire area to evaluate the condition of the Study Area. The field surveys and data collected have been utilized to test the likelihood that the Study Area could qualify for TIF designation – subject to the ongoing collection of additional documentation and/or review prior to proposed TIF designation by the City.

The qualification factors discussed in this report would assist in the qualification of the Study Area as a blighted vacant area, as the term is defined pursuant to the TIF Act.

For additional information about RYAN's data collection and evaluation methods, refer to Section III of this report.

The conclusions in this report are conditioned on portions of the Study Area being removed from the City's Downtown Tax Increment Financing District 5 prior to designation of the Study Area as a TIF District.

II. QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

With the assistance of City staff, Ryan assessed the proposed Study Area to determine the likelihood that qualifying factors listed in the Act would be present. The relevant provisions of the Act are cited below.

The Act sets out specific procedures which must be adhered to in designating a redevelopment project area (Study Area). By definition, a “redevelopment project area” is:

“An area designated by the municipality, which is not less in the aggregate than 1½ acres and in respect to which the municipality has made a finding that there exist conditions which cause the area to be classified as a blighted area or a conservation area, or a combination of both blighted areas and conservation areas.”

Under the TIF Act, a “blighted area” means any improved or vacant area within the boundaries of a redevelopment project area located within the territorial limits of the municipality where certain conditions are met, as indicated below.

Blighted Vacant Area

In accordance with the TIF Act, RYAN *also* assessed the following factors to determine qualification of a portion of the Study Area as a vacant “blighted area”. Pursuant to the TIF Act, a vacant area is a “blighted area” provided that:

If vacant, the sound growth of the redevelopment project area is impaired by a combination of two (2) or more of the following factors, each of which is (i) present, with that presence documented, to a meaningful extent so that a municipality may reasonably find that the factor is clearly present within the intent of the Act and (ii) reasonably distributed throughout the vacant part of the redevelopment project area:

A) Obsolete Platting. Obsolete platting of vacant land that results in parcels of limited or narrow size or configurations of parcels of irregular size or shape that would be difficult to develop on a planned basis and in a manner compatible with contemporary standards and requirements, or platting that failed to create rights-of-ways for streets or alleys or that created inadequate right-of-way widths for streets, alleys, or other public rights-of-way or that omitted easements for public utilities.

B) Diversity of Ownership. Diversity of ownership of parcels of vacant land sufficient in number to retard or impede the ability to assemble the land for development.

C) Delinquencies. Tax and special assessment delinquencies exist or the property has been the subject of tax sales under the Property Tax Code within the last five (5) years.

D) Adjacent Deterioration. Deterioration of structures or site improvements in neighboring areas adjacent to the vacant land.

E) Environmental Deficiencies. The area has incurred Illinois Environmental Protection Agency or United States Environmental Protection Agency remediation costs for – or a study conducted by an independent consultant recognized as having expertise in environmental remediation has determined a need for – the clean-up of hazardous waste, hazardous substances or underground storage tanks required by State or federal law, provided that the remediation costs constitute a material impediment to the development or redevelopment of the redevelopment project area.

F) Lagging or Declining EAV. The total equalized assessed value of the proposed redevelopment project area has declined for three (3) of the last five (5) calendar years prior to the year in which the redevelopment project area is designated or is increasing at an annual rate that is less than the balance of the municipality for three (3) of the last five (5) calendar years for which information is available or is increasing at an annual rate that is less than the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers published by the United States Department of Labor or successor agency for three (3) of the last (5) calendar years prior to the year in which the redevelopment project area is designated.

Additionally, one (1) or more of the following stand-alone factors may be present in the area under study:

(A) The area consists of one or more unused quarries, mines, or strip mine ponds.

(B) The area consists of unused rail yards, rail tracks, or railroad rights of way.

(C) The area, prior to its designation, is subject to (i) chronic flooding that adversely impacts on real property in the area as certified by a registered professional engineer or appropriate regulatory agency or (ii) surface water that discharges from all or a part of the area and contributes to flooding within the same watershed, but only if the redevelopment project provides for facilities or improvements to contribute to the alleviation of all or part of the flooding.

(D) The area consists of an unused or illegal disposal site containing earth, stone, building debris, or similar materials that were removed from construction, demolition, excavation, or dredge sites.

(E) Prior to November 1, 1999, the area is not less than 50 nor more than 100 acres and 75% of which is vacant (notwithstanding that the area has been used for commercial agricultural purposes within 5 years prior to the designation of the redevelopment project area), and the area meets at least one of the factors itemized in paragraph (1) of this subsection, the area has been designated as a town or Citycenter by ordinance or comprehensive plan adopted prior to January 1, 1982, and the area has not been developed for that designated purpose.

(F) The area qualified as a “blighted area” immediately prior to becoming vacant, unless there has been substantial private investment in the immediately surrounding area.

In order to for an area to have qualified as a “blighted area” immediately prior to becoming vacant such an area must have had present industrial, commercial and residential buildings or improvements the were detrimental to the public safety, health or welfare because of a combination of five (5) or more of the following factors, each of which is (i) present, with that presence documented to a meaningful extent so that a municipality may reasonably find that the factor is clearly present within the intent of the Act and (ii) reasonably distributed throughout the improved part of the redevelopment project area:

- 1) Dilapidation: An advanced state of disrepair or neglect of necessary repairs to the primary structural components of buildings or improvements in such a combination that a documented building condition analysis determines that major repair is required or the defects are so serious and so extensive that the buildings must be removed.
- 2) Obsolescence: The condition or process of falling into disuse. Structures become ill-suited for the original use.
- 3) Deterioration: With respect to buildings, defects including but not limited to major defects in the secondary building components such as doors, windows, porches, gutters and downspouts and fascia. With respect to surface improvements, that the condition of roadways, alleys, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, off-street parking and surface storage areas evidence deterioration, including but not limited to surface cracking, crumbling, potholes, depressions, loose paving material and weeds protruding through paved surfaces.

- 4) Presence of Structures Below Minimum Code Standards: All structures that do not meet the standards of zoning, subdivision, building, fire and other governmental codes applicable to property, but not including housing and property maintenance codes.
- 5) Illegal Use of Individual Structures: The use of structures in violation of applicable federal, State, or local laws, exclusive of those applicable to the presence of structures below minimum code standards.
- 6) Excessive Vacancies: The presence of buildings that are unoccupied or under-utilized and that represent an adverse influence on the area because of the frequency, extent, or duration of the vacancies.
- 7) Lack of Ventilation, Light, or Sanitary Facilities: The absence of adequate ventilation for light or air circulation in spaces or rooms without windows, or that require the removal of dust, odor, gas, smoke or other noxious airborne materials. Inadequate natural light and ventilation means the absence of skylights or windows for interior spaces or rooms and improper window sizes and amounts by room area to window area ratios. Inadequate sanitary facilities refer to the absence or inadequacy of garbage storage and enclosure, bathroom facilities, hot water and kitchens, and structural inadequacies preventing ingress and egress to and from all rooms and units within a building.
- 8) Inadequate Utilities: Underground and overhead utilities such as storm sewers and storm drainage, sanitary sewers, water lines and gas, telephone, and electrical services that are shown to be inadequate. Inadequate utilities are those that are: (i) of insufficient capacity to serve the uses in the redevelopment project area; (ii) deteriorated, antiquated, obsolete or in disrepair; or (iii) lacking within the redevelopment project area.
- 9) Excessive Land Coverage and Overcrowding of Structures and Community Facilities: The over-intensive use of property and the crowding of buildings and accessory facilities onto a site. Examples of problem conditions warranting the designation of an area as one exhibiting excessive land coverage are: (i) the presence of buildings either improperly situated on parcels or located on parcels of inadequate size and shape in relation to present-day standards of development for health and safety; and (ii) the presence of multiple buildings on a single parcel. For there to be a finding of excessive land coverage, these parcels must exhibit one or more of the following conditions: insufficient provision for light and air within or around buildings; increased threat of spread of fire due to the close proximity of buildings; lack of adequate or proper access to a public right-of-way; lack of reasonably required off-street parking; or inadequate provision for loading and service.

- 10) Deleterious Land-Use or Layout: The existence of incompatible land-use relationships, buildings occupied by inappropriate mixed-uses, or uses considered to be noxious, offensive, or unsuitable for the surrounding area.
- 11) Environmental Clean-Up: The Proposed redevelopment project area has incurred Illinois Environmental Protection Agency or United States Environmental Protection Agency remediation costs for – or a study conducted by an independent consultant recognized as having expertise in environmental remediation has determined a need for – the clean-up of hazardous waste, hazardous substances or underground storage tanks required by State or federal law, provided that the remediation costs constitute a material impediment to the development or redevelopment of the redevelopment project area.
- 12) Lack of Community Planning: The Proposed redevelopment project area was developed prior to or without the benefit or guidance of a community plan. This means that the development occurred prior to the adoption by the municipality of a comprehensive or other community plan or that the plan was not followed at the time of the area's development. This factor must be documented by evidence of adverse or incompatible land-use relationships, inadequate street layout, improper subdivision, parcels of inadequate shape and size to meet contemporary development standards, or other evidence demonstrating an absence of effective community planning.
- 13) Stagnant EAV: The total equalized assessed value of the proposed redevelopment project area has declined for three (3) of the last five (5) calendar years prior to the year in which the redevelopment project area is designated, or is increasing at an annual rate that is less than the balance of the municipality for three (3) of the last five (5) calendar years, for which information is available or increasing at an annual rate that is less than the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers published by the United States Department of Labor or successor agency for three (3) of the last five (5) calendar years prior to the year in which the redevelopment project area is designated.

III. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

In evaluating the proposed Study Area's potential qualification as a TIF District, the following methodology was utilized:

- 1) Site surveys of the Study Area were undertaken by representatives from Ryan, supplemented with photographic analysis of the sites. Preliminary surveys were completed of properties located within the Study Area.
- 2) RYAN reviewed the following data: 2016 to 2021 tax information from Kane County, the Aurora Township Assessor, tax maps, aerial photos, site data, local history (including discussions with City staff), and an evaluation of area-wide factors that have historically affected the area's development (e.g., Adjacent instances of deterioration, stagnant or declining EAV, excessive vacancies, and lack of community planning etc.).
- 3) The Study Area was examined to assess the applicability of the different factors required for qualification as a TIF district. Examination was made by reviewing the information and determining how each measured when evaluated against the relevant factors. The Study Area was evaluated to determine the applicability of all vacant "blighted area" factors for qualification for TIF designation under the TIF Act.
- 4) The area was studied in relation to available planning and historical reports, available Sanborn maps spanning from approximately 1897 through the 1950s, flood maps, local history (inclusive of inputs from City staff), and an evaluation of area-wide factors that would have affected the area's development from the 1880 through the 1970s (e.g., lack of community planning, obsolescence, lag in EAV growth, inadequate utilities, etc.). Ryan reviewed the area in its entirety. City redevelopment goals and objectives for the area have also been established and reviewed.
- 5) Structures and plant improvements that occupied the Study Area, prior to it becoming vacant, were examined utilizing historical information related to the long-term operation of the American Well Works company. The evaluation of such records was examined to the best and most reasonable given that the structured would have been completely removed by the 1980s.
- 6) The proposed RPA was examined to assess the applicability of the different factors, for both improved land (i.e., as existed prior to removal of all buildings) and vacant land, required for qualification for TIF designation under the Act. Evaluation was made by reviewing the information and determining how each measured when evaluated against the relevant factors. The previously improved land within the proposed RPA, prior to becoming vacant, was examined to determine the applicability of the thirteen (13) different blighted-improved factors for qualification for TIF designation under this

statute. Vacant land was reviewed to determine the applicability of the six (6) different blighted-vacant factors listed within the Act or the “stand alone” factors set forth in the TIF Act (inclusive of the blighted before becoming vacant stand-alone factor).

IV. QUALIFICATION FINDINGS FOR PROPOSED STUDY AREA

As a result of RYAN's evaluation of each parcel in the proposed RPA, and analysis of each of the eligibility factors summarized in Section II, the following factors are presented to support qualification of the proposed RPA as a blighted area under the TIF Act. These factors are summarized in the table below.

Area within Proposed RPA	Maximum Possible Factors per Statute	Minimum Factors Needed to Qualify per Statute	Qualification Factors Present in Proposed RPA
Blighted Vacant	6	2	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obsolete Platting Growth• Adjacent to Deterioration
Blighted Vacant Area	"stand alone" 13	Blighted prior to becoming vacant 5	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obsolescence• Deterioration• Excessive Vacancy• Lack of Community Planning• Deleterious Land Use and Layout

Findings: Blighted-Vacant Factors – Two out of Six Factors

Within this area, RYAN also identified two blighted-vacant qualification factors. As previously defined in Section II, an area qualifies for blighted-vacant status with the presence of any two of six factors.

Vacant Blighted Area Factors

As a result of RYAN's evaluation of the Study Area with respect to qualification factors pursuant to the Act, in *addition* to the above-described conservation area qualifying factors, the following vacant *blighted area* qualifying factors are *also* present in most of the Calumet Country Club property (the area that excludes the southern-most portion of the property on which four Country Club buildings are present) and could therefore, also support qualification of a portion of the proposed TIF District as a vacant "blighted area".

1. Obsolete Platting

Obsolete platting of vacant land that results in parcels of limited or narrow size or configurations of parcels of irregular size or shape that would be difficult to develop on a planned basis and in a manner compatible with contemporary standards and requirements or platting that failed to create rights-of-ways for streets or alleys or that

created inadequate right-of-way widths for streets, alleys, or other public rights-of-way or that omitted easements for public utilities.

As demonstrated in Exhibit C and Exhibit D, the original, and still existing, platting does not meet the needs of the market conditions and traffic patterns that have changed over the last 150 years. The proposed RPA was historically platted and consolidated with a portion of the property to the north (now part of North River Street Park) for use various lumber yard (before that, icehouse), warehouse and storage facilities land uses that had become vacated and had been demolished by the late 1960's.

However, no recorded action can be found to indicate that the original platting for the parcels had been updated and/or modernized the land's platting at any time after those land uses were eliminated. Further, the original platting does not even appear to accommodate the various structures that were all or partially within the Study Area prior to their likely removal by the mid to late 1960's.

Redevelopment of the land will require recognition for the accommodation of certain public rights-of-way and the institution of easements for public utilities that are lacking today. This is especially relevant since contemplated reuses of the Study Area will require enhancement of substantial vehicle access onto the site (both for parking and service-related purposes) that is not accounted for pursuant to the obsolete platting conditions present on the site.

Additionally, it's critical location along the Fox River will require site use designs to allow the installation of special public features that will be consistent and integrated with public use and access that is currently reflected by the community's recreational use of the riverfront. The obsolete platting for the Study Area does not currently meet such requirements (See Exhibit C for an example of the type of site and plat planning that will be required to accommodate modern day redevelopment of the Study Area).

Additionally, the functional reuse of the land within the Study Area is greatly hindered by the fact that it can no longer be combined with the property to the north, which are now dedicated for public park purposes. By itself, the Study Area parcel is irregular in both size and shape and is not readily suitable for the high density, mixed-use and/or residential development that the City has determined is best for the Aurora community, as identified in the Master Downtown Plan. Further, the diversity in ownership of the land within the Study Area poses additional modern day platting challenges.

In summary, real estate development is driven by the highest and best use of a property at the time the property is developed. Over time, changes in technology, design, and economics may alter the highest and best use of a property causing it to become functionally or economically obsolete. Obsolescence has an overall blighting effect on the surrounding area, detracting from the desirability of the

overall area. The proposed re-use of the parcel, along with the institution of modern-day platting that takes into consideration the irregular size and shape of the parcels, along with the required accommodations for associated public uses, will eliminate the existing obsolete platting; and therefore, eliminate the blighting influences caused by such conditions.

2. Adjacent Deterioration.

Deterioration of structures or site improvements in neighboring areas adjacent to the vacant land

Various degrees of deterioration of site improvements were found to be present on parking lot parcel located to the south of the Study Area. This deterioration was evidence present during RYAN's site visits that included the following conditions: surface cracking, potholes, depressions, weed growth and loose paving materials. Such conditions are consistent with the finding of deterioration for surface improvements as defined by the TIF Act.

Additionally, property located directly to the west of the Study Area at 306 River Street is in deteriorated condition based on standards from the TIF Act. Recent City and RYAN observations that support findings of deterioration for the property include the following:

- Exterior decks with separated ledger boards pulled away from masonry walls.
- Deteriorated and defective handrails located on the property.
- Loose, missing, and defective masonry elements at various portions of the property.
- Condition of rotted and deteriorating window components.
- Loose/defective post and face boards elements present on porches.
- Loose and crumbling concrete elements that pose hazardous conditions.
- Cracking and potholes on driveway/parking areas.
- Decaying, cracking, and defective drywall in areas of the property.
- Leaking water supply lines.
- Broken electrical fixtures with exposed wiring.
- Damaged vent piping.

- Rotting and defective floor coverings, sub-floor, and flooring joists.
- Cracking and defective ceiling elements on property.
- Broken, cracked and defective window glass.

Pursuant to the TIF Act, these findings for obsolete platting for the Study Area, and deterioration present of on adjacent properties to the Study Area, are sufficient for the City to conclude that Study Area meets the requirement for a blighted, vacant property.

Findings: Blighted Area (Prior to Becoming Vacant)

Through the analysis of available historic data and anecdotal information, RYAN has concluded that there were at least implied indications that the old structures present within the Study Area exhibited blighted conditions prior to the Study Area becoming vacant. More specifically, with City staff assistance RYAN has determined (by methods that included but were not limited to, historical photographs, Sanborn Maps from various periods of time, documents that exhibited boundary related maps for the parcels, input and research by City staff) that the proposed RPA would have been found to have evidenced at least five (5) out of the thirteen (13) qualification factors (or the minimum of five (5) factors required) in support of a finding as a “blighted improved area”, as stated in the Act, immediately prior to that site becoming vacant. A summary of findings follows.

1. Obsolescence. The Act states that obsolescence is the condition or process of falling into disuse or structures that have become ill-suited for their original use.

As in part evident from a review of maps, diagrams and ariel photographs provided with Exhibit C, many of the original structures with the Study Area for the 1800s were still present by the late 1950s and early 1960s. By the time of their removal by the late 1960s, the structures would have been very well advanced in age, and well beyond the normal life for any effective functional and economic use.

2. Deterioration of Structures and Site Improvements. Prior to becoming vacant, various degrees of deterioration would have been present within the Study Area via the long-term physical decline and advanced age of the facilities, and the decades of intense industrial land uses applied to facilities from the late 1800s through the late 1960s (in the days prior to the severe decline in industrial uses in Aurora between throughout the 1970s and 1980). A 1963 aerial photo of the site provides some evidence deteriorated conditions of the facilities just a few years prior to the 1967 fire and demolition of the old Cotton Mills structures that were located immediately south of the Study Area. By the time of their own demolition the structures would have been in the later stages of deterioration due to age, and likely disinvestment by that time.

3. Excessive Vacancies. The Act states that this finding is characterized by the presence of unoccupied or “under-utilized” buildings that represent an adverse influence on the area. Prior to their demolition by the late 1960s, the former structures within the Study Area would obviously been vacant, and poor candidates for salvaging for reuse.

4. Lack of Community Planning. According to the Act, an area suffers from a lack of community planning if the area was developed prior to, or without the benefit of, a community plan. This factor must be documented by evidence of adverse or incompatible land-use relationships, inadequate street layout, improper subdivision, overcrowded parcels, parcels of inadequate shape and size to meet contemporary development standards, or other evidence demonstrating an absence of effective community planning.

The structures that previous occupied the Study Area were developed decades prior to the City’s 1957 Comprehensive Plan and prior to the adoption of the updated 1984 Comprehensive Plan. By review of historical data, it is evident that the structures were primarily in place by the late 1800s. There was a period obviously well prior to the Downtown Plan and also represented market conditions and market needs that have shifted through various periods of economic dislocations (including most prominently both the Great Depression and the Great Recession) since the dates of their initial construction. As such, the Study Area would not have had the benefit of modern planning which, among other factors, would not have encourage the existence of the type of industrial uses on within the Study Area (and the former Cotton Mills site to the south) with the development of residential areas immediately to the west. Such land uses would have been deemed incompatible with under modern-day community planning standards.

5. Deleterious Land Use and Layout The TIF Act addresses deleterious layout as the existence of incompatible land-use relationships, buildings occupied by inappropriate mixed-uses, or uses considered to be noxious, offensive or unsuitable for the surrounding area.

Although taken all together and based on a combination of both City efforts and adverse economic conditions over time, there has been an overall decline of incompatible and crashing industrial and residential land uses, in Downtown, the later day presence of the former structures within the Study Area (as well as the Cotton Mills structures) would have become increasingly noxious and unsuitable. This would have been especially true by the late 1960s as evidenced by plans to demolish the Cotton Mills facilities, even before their destruction to fire in 1967. The ongoing efforts (extending from the late 1960s) of the City to attract new private development for desired commercial and residential uses would have been hindered by the presence of the old structures located in and around the Study Area. The industrial land use associated with the site would have existed, and contributed to, conditions of incompatible land use relationships, which would have grown increasingly offensive and unsuitable due, in part, to the lack of more modern-day community planning standards. Though such conditions were eased with the removal of the structures within and adjacent to the Study Area, prior to their removal presence contributed to the creation of blighted conditions.

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS; GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF QUALIFICATION

The following is a summary of relevant qualification findings as it relates to the City's potential designation of the proposed TIF District.

1. The area is contiguous and is greater than 1½ acres in size;
2. The proposed RPA will qualify as a Blighted, vacant area. Further, the blighted vacant factors found in the RPA are present to a meaningful extent and are reasonably distributed throughout the area. A more detailed analysis of the qualification findings is outlined in Section IV of this report;
3. All property in the area would substantially benefit by the proposed redevelopment project improvements;
4. The sound growth of taxing districts applicable to the area, including the City, has been impaired by the factors found present in the area; and
5. The area would not be subject to redevelopment without the investment of public funds, including property tax increments.

In the judgment of RYAN, these findings provide the City with sufficient justification to consider designation of the property as a TIF District.

Exhibit A

Boundary Map

Proposed River Vine TIF District

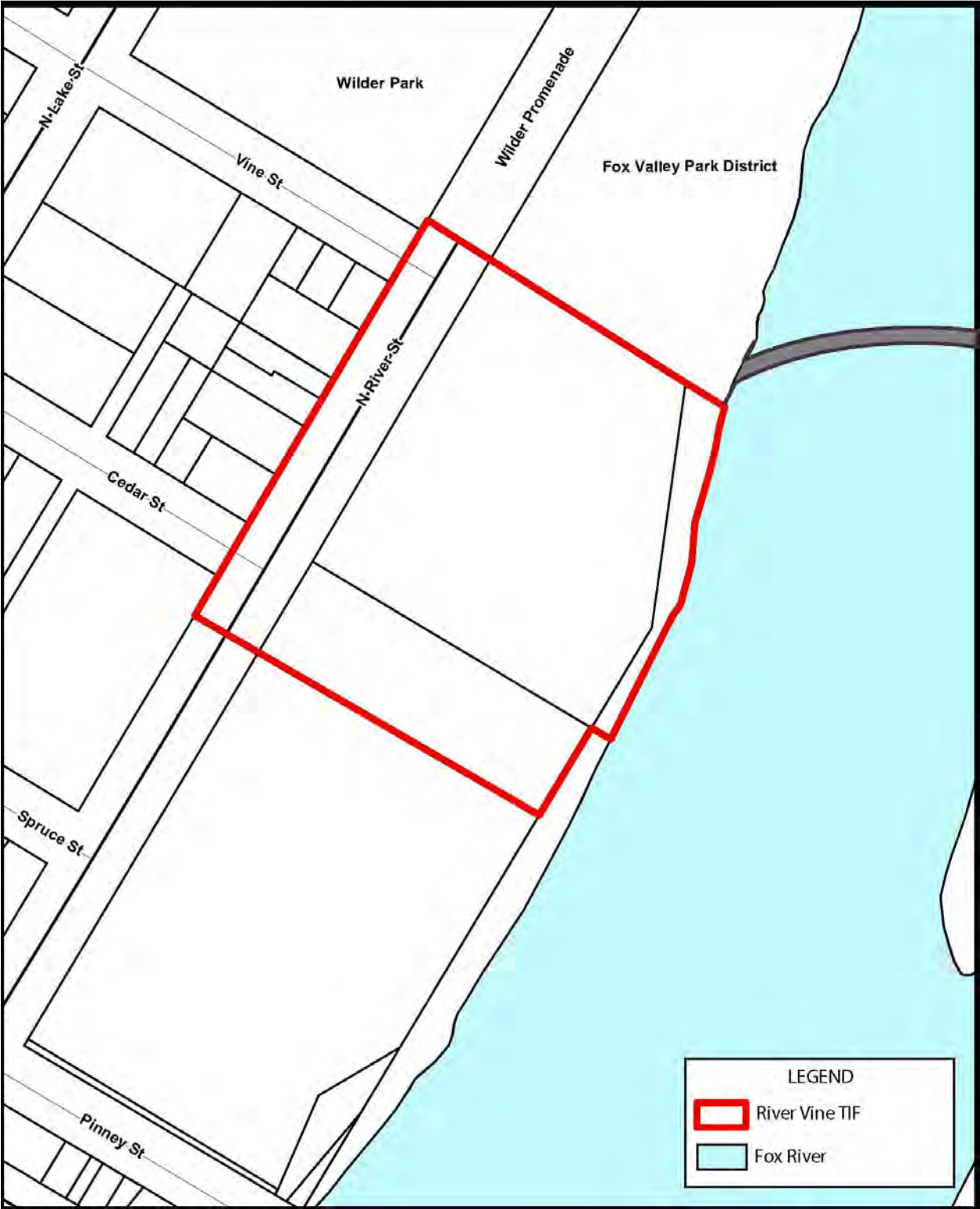


Exhibit B

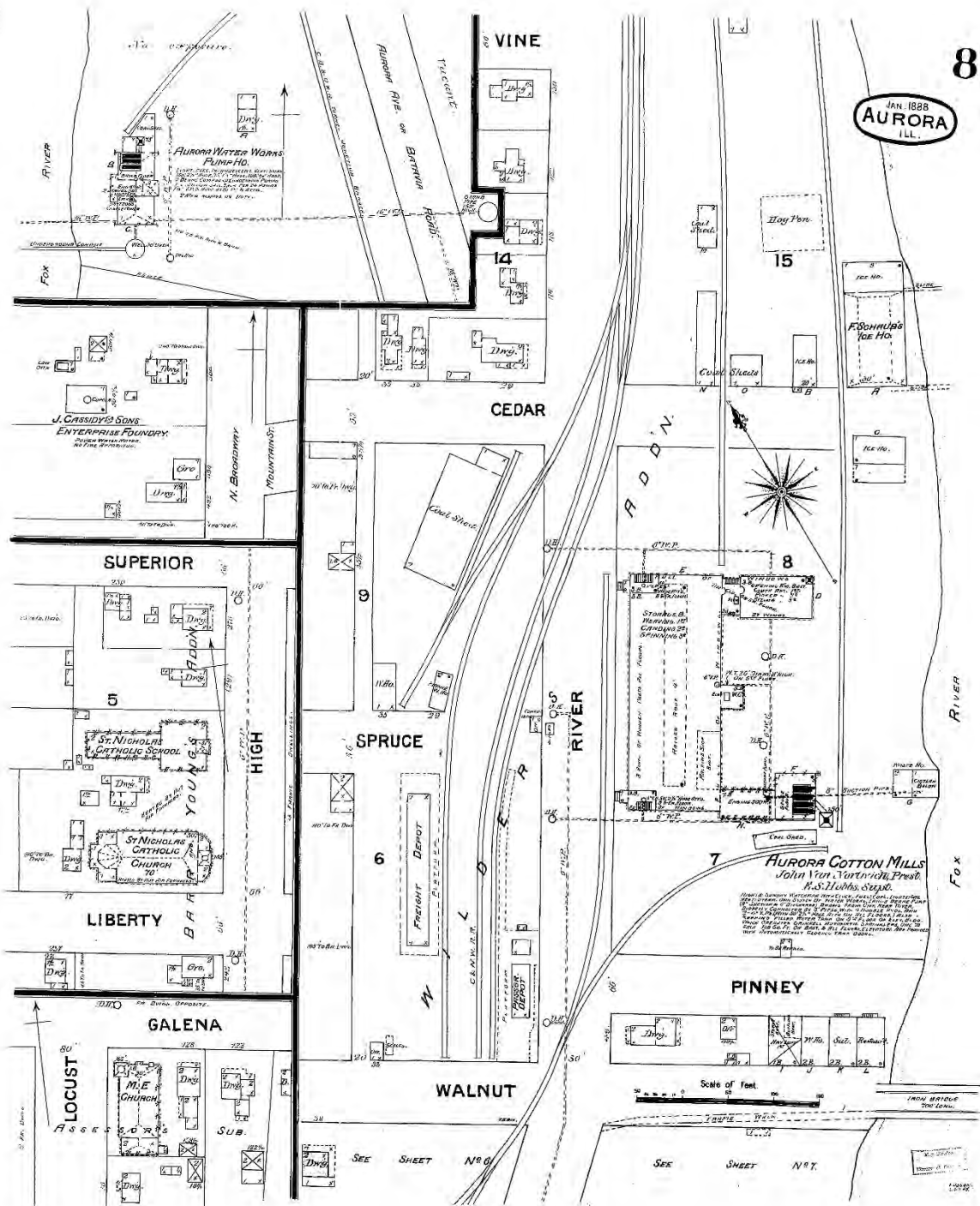
Tax Parcel List

Proposed River Vine TIF

**15-22-178-010 and
15-22-178-012 (northernmost portion only requiring tax parcel subdivision
prior to TIF certification by County)**

Exhibit C

Early Maps and Figures Reflecting Original and Existing Platting/Land Use Configurations



River-Vine Property 1888



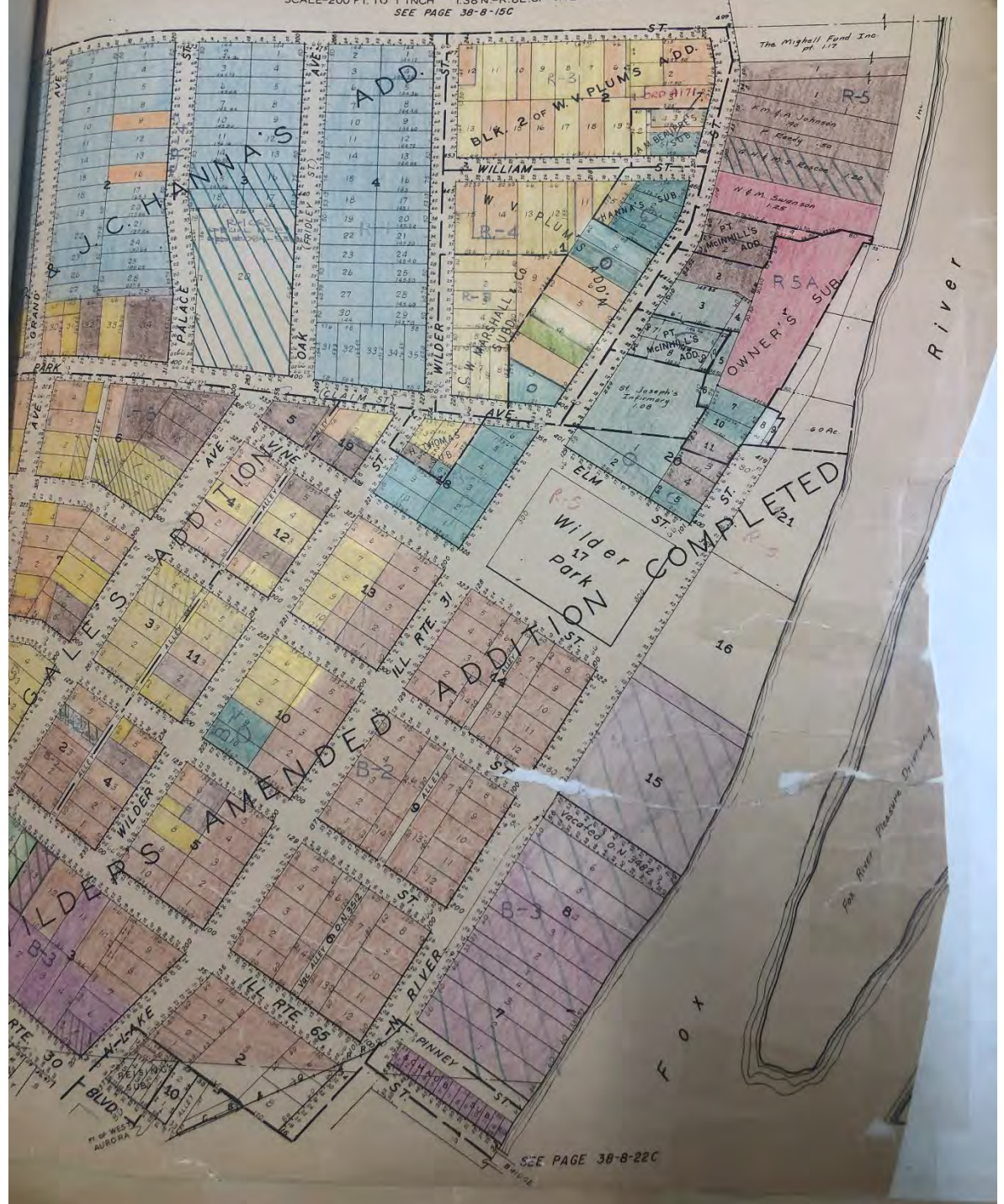
1964 by SIDWELL STUDIO, Inc.
West Chicago, Illinois

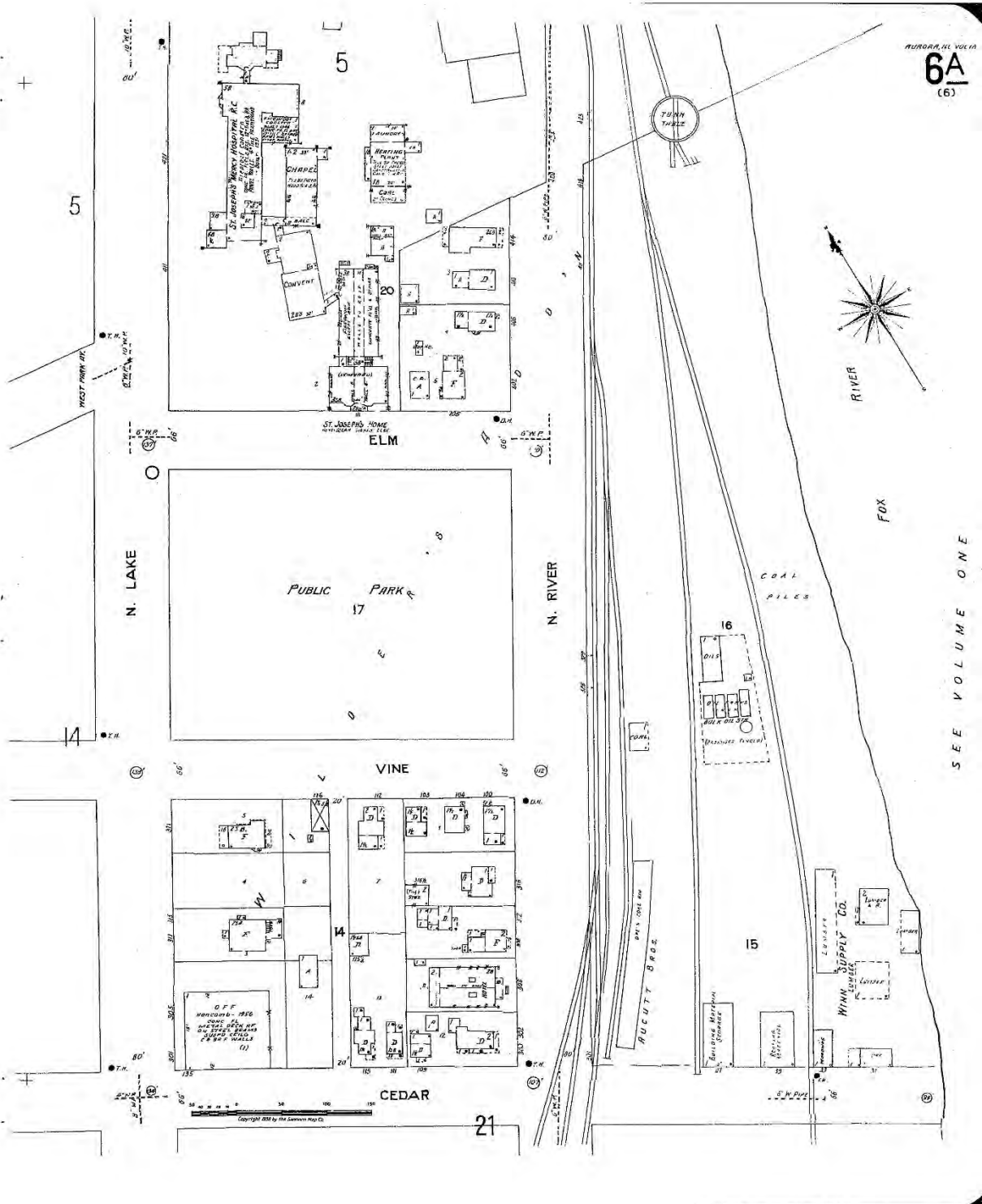
AURORA

N.W. 1/4 SEC. 22 AURORA TWP

SCALE-200 FT. TO 1 INCH T.38 N.-R.8E. OF THE 3RD PM.
SEE PAGE 38-8-15C

38-8-22B





River-Vine Property 1958



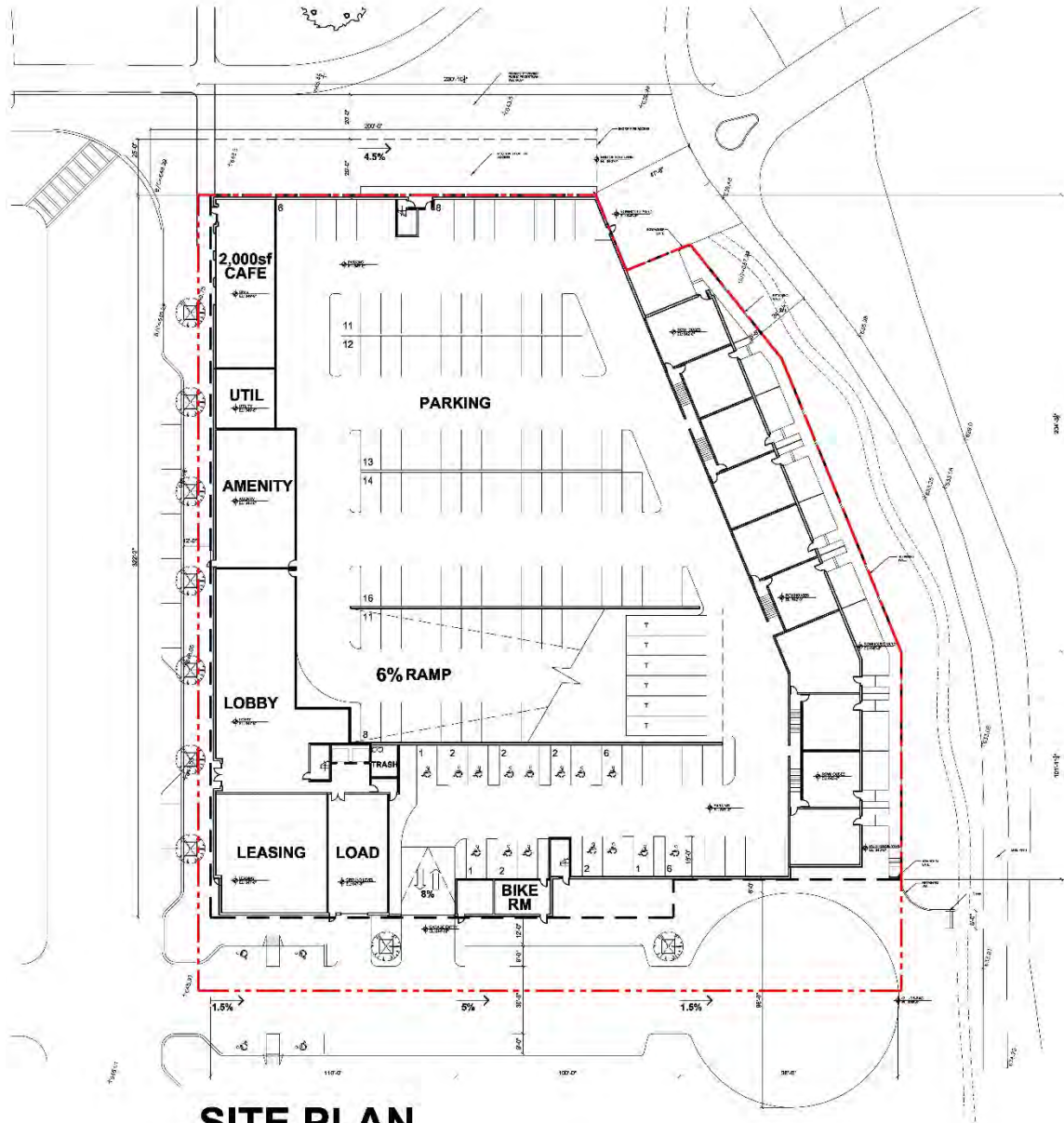
River-Vine Property- 1963



River-Vine Property- 1972

Exhibit D

**Example of Site Plan Reflecting Required
Modern-Day Platting Configurations**



SITE PLAN