

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) is to establish the Terms/Parameters by which the City of Aurora (“City”) and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (“CMAP”) will amend the Seize the Future Master Plan for Downtown to incorporate walkability and art and culture elements.

Areas of Understanding

CMAP/COA Relationship

1. Scope of work for staff will be jointly determined by CMAP and COA.
2. CMAP shall assign staff to work with local governments and community groups as part of the Local Technical Assistance program (“LTA Staff”).
3. COA shall assign a lead person to be the main point of contact for LTA Staff (“City Contact”).
4. All work performed by LTA Staff must be related to work plan – the majority should be directly referenced within work plan, but some indirectly related activities are also permitted.
5. Within overall scope of work, day-to-day reporting on activities will be to the City Contact but LTA Staff are CMAP employees and CMAP is responsible for evaluating their performance.
6. Periodic check-ins (frequency to be determined based on need) may occur between COA and CMAP management
7. CMAP will determine which of the relevant LTA Staff will be assigned to work on the project (based on availability, skills, familiarity with the COA community, and COA preferences)

Access to Resources

1. LTA Staff will have full access to CMAP data and other resources, including specialized staff based at CMAP (for advanced mapping, data, outreach, communications, or topic-specific expertise).
2. COA will provide access to relevant staff who will need to be involved in the project, and will ensure that they allocate appropriate time.
3. COA will provide access to all relevant internal data, reports, and other information.
4. COA’s leadership (key staff, planning commissioners, board members, other elected officials, other decision-makers) will commit to participate in the project and allocate sufficient time at meetings (Plan Commission meetings, council meetings, etc.) to ensure a successful project.



Attachment A
Local Technical Assistance (LTA) project scope:
City of Aurora STF Downtown Master Plan

The following is a proposed outline of steps to develop an amendment to the Seize the Future (STF) Downtown Master Plan for the City of Aurora as part of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning’s (CMAP) Local Technical Assistance program. The plan amendment will have strong components of walkability, arts & culture, and sustainability. Through this program, CMAP will provide staff assistance to complete this project.

Approximate timeline

The following scope of work is designed to be completed in approximately 12-15 months; however, the timeline can change as the project progresses. The remainder of this document describes the schedule and timeline in more detail.

Phase	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July
	2015								2016						
Phase 1 Project Orientation															
Phase 2 Assess Existing Conditions															
Phase 3 Draft the Comprehensive Plan															
Phase 4 Public Review & Adoption															

Steering committee

CMAP recommends that a steering committee or similar oversight group be created to assist in guiding the development of the comprehensive plan. This group can be an existing group, but would ideally have Seize the Future and city staff, representatives of transportation agencies, people knowledgeable about walking and biking in Aurora, people from the arts community, as well as people knowledgeable about sustainability, stormwater and environmental issues. Throughout this scope of work, this group is referred to as the “steering committee.” The exact makeup of this group will be determined early in the planning process.

Deliverables

The final deliverable of this project will be a goal-oriented comprehensive plan for Aurora’s downtown that will be presented to the City Council for formal adoption. Interim deliverables, including an existing conditions report, a memo on key recommendations, and a draft plan, will also be produced during the study process. Interim deliverables will go to the Planning and Development Committee. The Final Plan

will go to the planning commission, have a public hearing, Planning and Development Committee, Committee of the Whole (COW), and then to City Council for approval.

Background

In 2006, the City of Aurora approved the STF Master Plan for Downtown Aurora, which provided a 10-year plan and long term vision for the downtown with a focus on neighborhoods and economic development. This was a private endeavor completed to entice developers to downtown Aurora. It was released at the same time as the Riverfront Vision Plan. The two documents complemented each other and brought environmentalists and pro-business interests together in support of the two plans. Since 2005, Seize the Future has shifted its role and expanded its focus citywide; it is now a non-profit public-private partnership that has replaced the City's Economic Development division. As the city approaches the tenth anniversary of the plan, there is a desire to complement and enhance it with a component dedicated to developing the transportation opportunities and the walkability of the downtown. The City and developers are interested in seeing a new, fresh look to the plan. The City would also like to broaden the focus of the plan by addressing walkability, sustainability, and livability. Accommodating a growing arts community in the downtown area is also a goal, by incorporating recommendations from the CMAP Arts & Culture Toolkit, will address some of these goals.

Proposed tasks

Pre-kickoff work

Before the project formally kicks off, there are several steps that CMAP will go through with the City. These include:

- The City Council will need to adopt a resolution expressing support for the project and authorizing staff to participate. CMAP will provide a sample resolution, to be modified as necessary. This will need to be passed before the project begins.
- A project steering committee or similar oversight group will be formed. The membership of the steering committee will be determined through discussions between CMAP and City staff before the project formally begins.
- CMAP will prepare a draft outline of the outreach strategy and discuss with the City before the project is initiated. The City will be asked to identify relevant stakeholder groups to include in the public engagement activities and to help CMAP make contacts locally.
- The activities above will necessitate at least one (possibly more) in-person meeting between CMAP and City staff as well as continual communication during the period immediately before project initiation.

These activities will occur prior to the "formal" kickoff meeting in Month 1.

Phase 1 – project initiation

The planning process will begin in Month 1 with meetings between CMAP staff and appropriate City staff, commissions, committees, and other groups. Likely meetings include:

- Meeting with City staff. This may include staff other than those involved in the pre-kickoff work (e.g. directors from other departments, Seize the Future, the development department, etc.). This meeting will include discussion of near-term timelines, as well as discussion of existing plans, studies, reports, and GIS and other data.
- Presentations at meetings of the City Council and/or other commissions or committees. The purpose of these meetings is to introduce the project to key decision-makers. This may occur at

the same meeting as the adoption of the required resolution (see the pre-kickoff section) or at another meeting.

- Initial Steering Committee meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to introduce the steering committee members to each other, as well as to discuss the committee's expectations for the project.

A primary goal of all CMAP's projects is to elevate community engagement in planning – particularly focusing on engaging populations that are typically underrepresented in previous planning processes. The outreach strategy outlines the goals and methods for the public participation on each project. The steering committee and community leaders' full participation in this process is vital to the success of the plan.

The draft outreach strategy will be discussed in general terms with City staff in the pre-kickoff stage and developed in more detail after that point. Some potential community engagement ideas include:

- Use of an interactive website (MetroQuest) allowing public input (for an example of its use, see <http://elmwoodparkp1.metroquest.com/>).
 - Kiosks with Metroquest installed set up in the new library (opening in June)
- Booth or kiosk presence at community events, festivals, concerts
- Interactive visioning display at the Roundhouse (could include blackboard/chalk to write ideas for Aurora consider, or a sentence completion board: "To increase walkability in downtown Aurora, I would like to see more..." or "I want more _____ types of cultural events in downtown Aurora." Or a neighborhood post-it note / sticker board (inspired by Candy Chang's [Neighborland](#))
- Events or activities with Waubensee Community College
- Three public meetings, including an initial public introduction to present the existing conditions report and visioning will occur in Month 5 or 6, a second public meeting to discuss ideas for strategies in Month 7 or 8, and an open house to present the draft plan in Month 13 or 14 (all dates approximate).
- Key person interviews with individuals, tenants, property owners, institutions, and organizations.
- Focus groups with particular segments of the City's population, including but not limited to employers, active community groups, business community, and /or visitors to Aurora.
- Updates at Boards/Advisory Committee meetings, or other relevant meetings.
- Other ideas, to be added following discussion with City staff.

Deliverable: A project outreach strategy which lays out key stakeholders and outreach methods for the length of the project. As the project progresses and the activities are completed, the document will be updated to describe the results of the outreach, so that it functions as a report on the results of work completed.

These activities will occur during months 1 – 3.

Phase 2 – existing conditions analysis

An important interim product in the development of the comprehensive plan is the "existing conditions report." This report will describe current conditions in the area, and look at how things have changed since the 2006 STF Master Plan was adopted. A draft of the report will be prepared between Month 3 and Month 7 and will be presented to staff and the steering committee in Month 7. The report will

describe existing conditions in the municipality, and will present information to inform final plan. This will include information on:

- History
 - A brief overview of downtown Aurora’s history and summaries of recent planning efforts
- Trends
 - A section showing recent trends in demographics, economic conditions, land use and development, and housing using Census data, City records on businesses and vacancy rates, and other data sources.
- Walkability
 - This section will cover transportation options and infrastructure, ridership trends and information. While focused on walkability, biking, transit, driving and parking will also be discussed.
- Sustainability
 - This section will be more limited than the Walkability section and will include information on the natural environment, green infrastructure, and parks and their role in a sustainable downtown.
- Livability
 - This section will focus on recreational aspects of life in downtown Aurora, including arts-related information & cultural activities, as well as housing options.
- Brief comparison to similar communities
 - We will compare the demographic trends with similar communities and try to understand why nearby communities have done better, or not as well as Aurora. This section may be just for our purposes or it could be included in the final deliverable. This will be up to City staff.
- Summaries of outreach information
 - While the outreach activities will continue through the duration of the project, this section will document findings to date, common themes and trends, and a records of the number of people who participated.

Deliverable: An “existing conditions and opportunities report” which includes charts, maps, and other graphics to support the text description of the topics listed above. It is a stand-alone product which will be an appendix to the final report.

Phase 3 – plan development

Visioning (months 7 & 8)

The purpose of this step is to develop a shared vision of the downtown Aurora’s future. This will be informed by the existing conditions report and previous public engagement (including key stakeholder interviews, MetroQuest results, the introductory meeting held in Month 5). The public workshop held in Month 7 will also be used in part for the purposes of refining the vision. The vision statement will not contain specific recommendations for action, but will provide general principles to be accomplished through the project.

Deliverable: A vision statement which provides general vision, goals, and objectives. This document will be no more than 4 pages in length, and will be included as one of the chapters of the final plan.

Key recommendations (months 8 & 9)

Before the final plan is drafted, CMAP will prepare a memo describing the key recommendations that are expected to be contained in the final plan. This document will be provided to City staff and the steering committee for review and discussion in Month 9. Based on feedback received, the draft plan will begin to be prepared. The purpose of this step is to provide the steering committee members with a summary of key recommendations before much time is spent writing them up in detail; if there are significant problems with any elements of the plan, they should surface at this point.

Deliverable: A memo summarizing key recommendations that will be made in the plan to achieve the vision, based on existing conditions findings and stakeholder involvement. It will be approximately 4 pages in length. This will be an internal working document containing initial ideas, and is not meant for public distribution.

Plan preparation (months 9-12)

The next step, after reaching consensus on the key recommendations, is to put together the draft plan. This will occur primarily between Month 9 and Month 12, with a draft expected to be sent to City staff and steering committee members for review in Month 12. This draft plan will be revised based on City staff and steering committee comments, creating a revised plan.

Deliverable: The plan will include text recommendations for action, with support from graphics and maps. It also will include language concerning implementation, including descriptions of actions that should be taken within the next two years to advance its recommendations.

Phase 4 – adoption

The revised plan described above will then go through the community's approval process. This will likely involve a series of meetings, including an initial presentation to the Steering Committee, an open house for community feedback, and finally, consideration of adoption by the City Council. The exact order and timing of these steps will depend on the City's preferences and standard practice. The revised plan will be revised if necessary based on discussion at each meeting to create a final plan. This will likely occur between Month 13 and Month 15.

Deliverable: The format of the final plan will be the same as that of the draft plan, except with a higher quality of graphics.

Phase 5– implementation

After the plan is adopted, CMAP will remain involved for a period of two years after its completion, with the purpose of monitoring and encouraging progress on the implementation actions specified in the plan. This will be a much lower level of involvement, but will include meeting periodically with City staff, tracking and monitoring progress in accomplishing the plan's recommendations, assisting with applications for funding for plan implementation, and similar activities.

Deliverable: Following this two year period, CMAP will assess the work that has been accomplished to date and provide the City with advice on potential next steps for the following two years.