



CITY OF AURORA, ILLINOIS

FOXWALK OVERLAY DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES UPDATE

**Building, Zoning and Economic
Development (BZE) Committee**

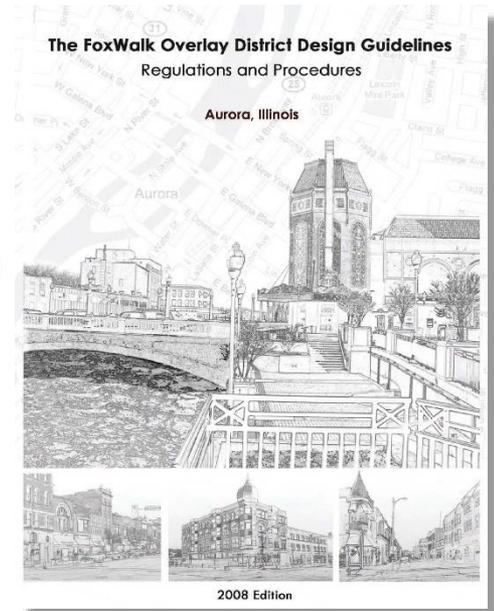
November 15, 2023



PURPOSE OF FOXWALK OVERLAY DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINE

What is the FoxWalk Overlay District?

- One of the City's historic overlay districts.
- Approved by City Council in 1993.
- Promotes and guides redevelopment of downtown buildings and vacant lots while protecting its character as a historic center city.
- Per the Aurora Zoning Ordinance, each overlay district is required to have design guidelines.
- The FoxWalk Design Guidelines represent appropriate design standards that fit the context, character, and intended physical appearance of Aurora's historic downtown.
- Design Guidelines support recommendations from the City's planning documents, like the Downtown Master Plan and the Riverfront Vision Plan.



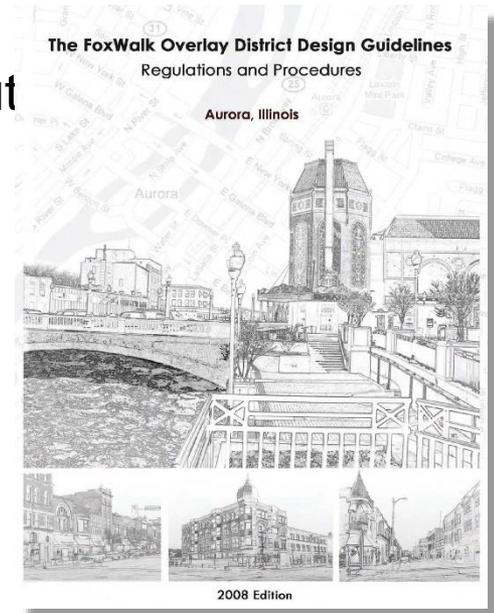


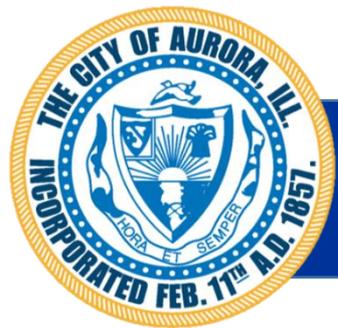
PURPOSE OF FOXWALK OVERLAY DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINE

Approved in 1993 and last updated in 2008, the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Guidelines grew out of a 30+ year collaborative effort to draft a series of plans and regulations to guide the design and redevelopment of Downtown Aurora.

This decades-long process included the following elements that informed the 2008 Design Guidelines:

- Creation of the FoxWalk Overlay District, encompassing the Downtown Core (DC) and Downtown Fringe (F) zoning districts
- Design guidelines for the restoration of existing structures
- Design and development guidelines for new sites and buildings
- Design specifications for the FoxWalk





PURPOSE FOR THE UPDATE

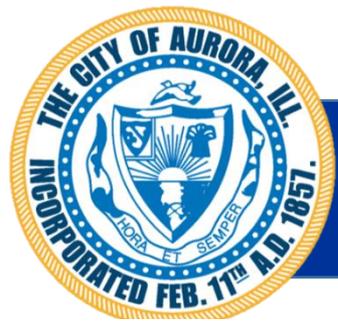
About 15 years later, the original 2008 FoxWalk Overlay District Design Guidelines is undergoing an update process intended to:

- Provide clarity on the City's design expectations
- Respond to significant changes to certain sites and roadways
- Be more equitable to people of all abilities and transportation choice
- Provide guidelines that respond to relevant and emerging topics in urban planning and design
- Support redevelopment efforts in Downtown Aurora



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**FOXWALK OVERLAY DISTRICT
DESIGN GUIDELINES UPDATE**

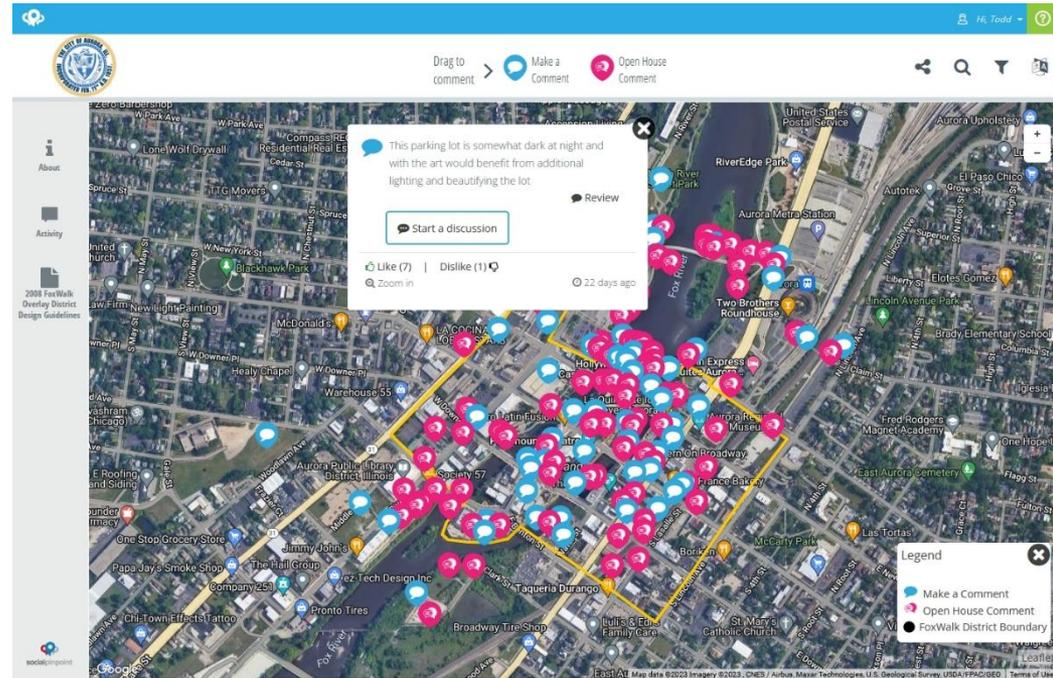


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As part of the City of Aurora's process to update the 2008 FoxWalk Overlay District Design Guidelines, the community was engaged for their input through different activities, including an open house in the spring, interactive web-based comment map, interactions with stakeholders, and meetings with the FoxWalk Design Review Committee. Community feedback plays a key role in informing the updated design guidelines to ensure they meet community expectations, ideas, and concerns.

A compiled summary of community comments from the open house and comment map is provided on the right.

View all comments in full on the comment map on the project website:
<https://tinyurl.com/foxwalkdg/map#>



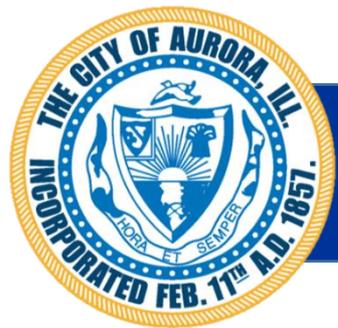
GENERAL



DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

1. General Information
2. Design Guidelines and Regulations for Maintenance and Alterations to Existing Structures
3. Design Guidelines and Regulations for Additions and New Construction
4. Commercial Design Guidelines for Signage
5. Design Guidelines and Regulations for Site and Setting
6. Design Guidelines and Regulations for Demolition
7. Specifications for Public Improvements
8. Administrative Provisions
9. Accomplishments

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION



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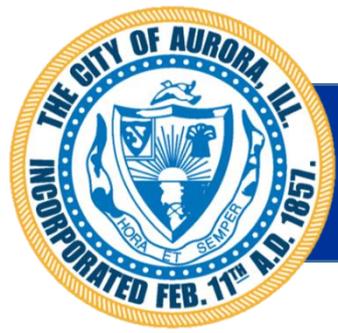
FOCUS OF SECTION 1

This section provides an overview of the FoxWalk Overlay District, including the topics listed below.

TOPICS COVERED

- :: Resolutions and ordinances
- :: Maps
- :: Legal description
- :: Underlying zoning
- :: Definitions
- :: History and character of district
- :: Purpose and goals of district
- :: Current and past plans
- :: Land use survey
- :: Community engagement





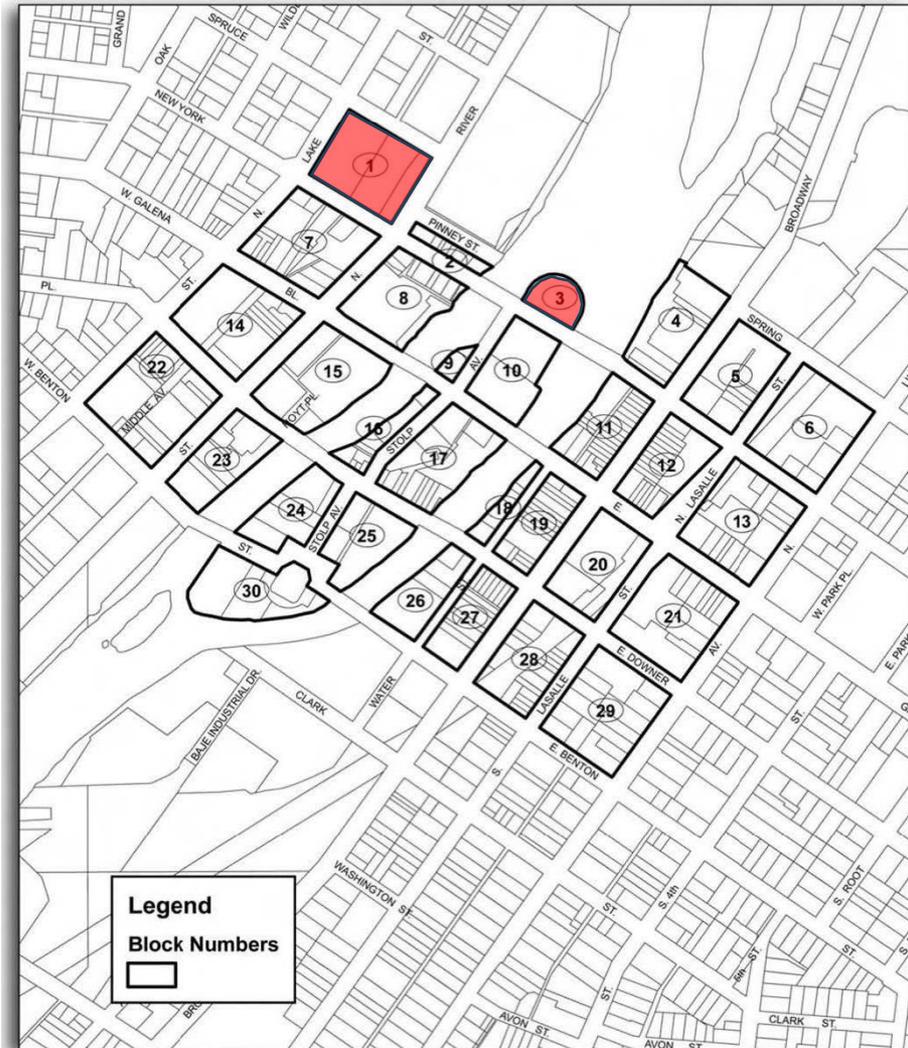
SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 1

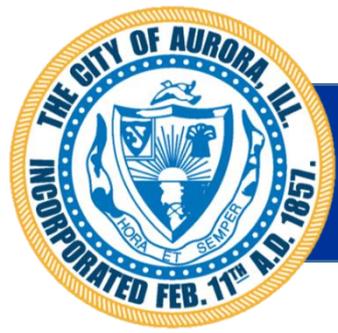
SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

Updated details regarding current uses and development opportunities for each of the 30 blocks comprising the FoxWalk District

- **Block 1:** Removed from district since current use of site is more consistent with more modern development planned along riverfront
- **Block 3:** Updated to reflect plan to relocate casino outside downtown area and consider future reuse of the site



**SECTION 2:
DESIGN GUIDELINES AND
REGULATION FOR MAINTENANCE
AND ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING
STRUCTURES**



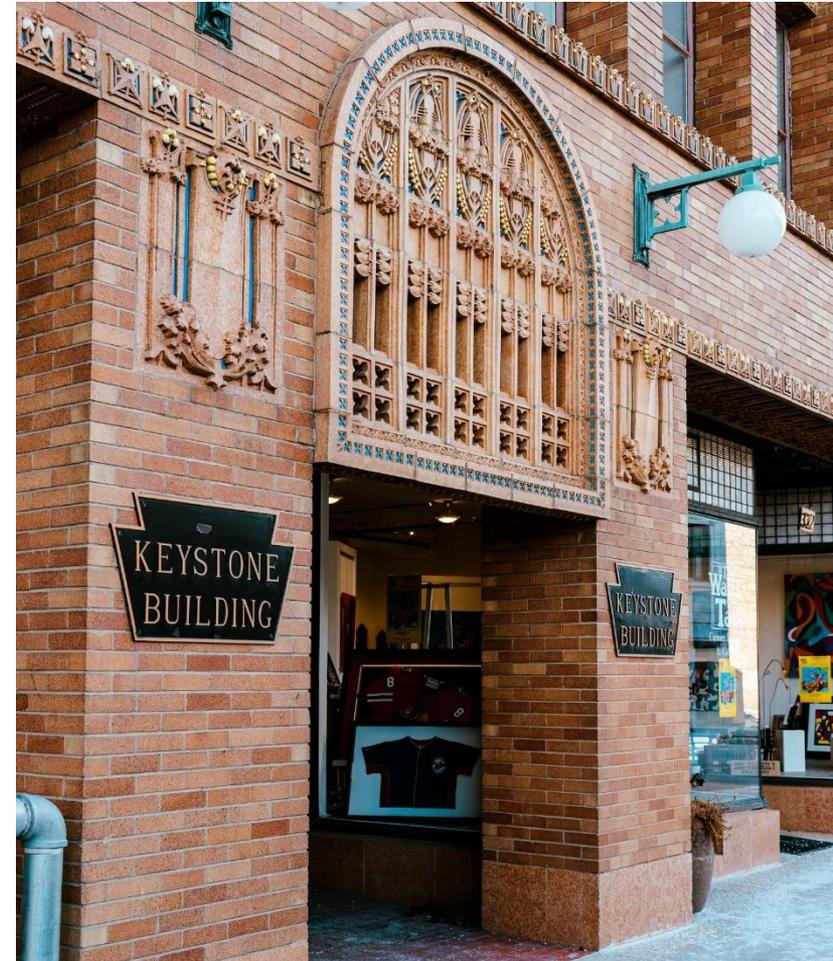
SECTION 2: REGULATION FOR EXISTING STRUCTURES

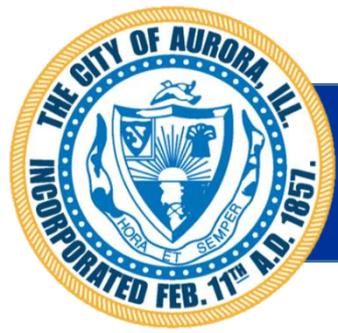
FOCUS OF SECTION 2

This section focuses on design guidelines for the maintenance and alterations of existing structures, particularly recognizing the importance to support a distinct, cohesive image and character for the FoxWalk Overlay District.

TOPICS COVERED

- :: Provisions for exterior renovations
- :: Ground floor uses
- :: Building materials, scale, details
- :: Maintenance of exteriors
- :: Alterations to exteriors
- :: Adaptive reuse of buildings





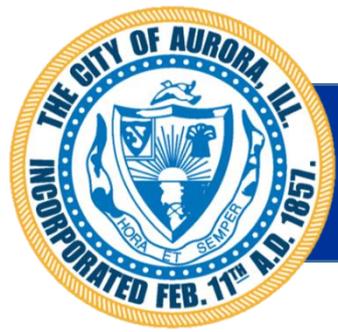
SECTION 2: REGULATION FOR EXISTING STRUCTURES

WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 2

SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

- Provided flexibility for contemporary alternate materials that replicate the historic material
- Updated door and window standards
- Added standards for:
 - :: Blank façades
 - :: Major alterations
 - :: Trash enclosures
 - :: HVAC, utility, and mechanical equipment
 - :: Maintenance of exteriors
 - :: Winter vestibules and enclosures
 - :: Outdoor dining
 - :: Rooftop decks





SECTION 2: REGULATION FOR EXISTING STRUCTURES

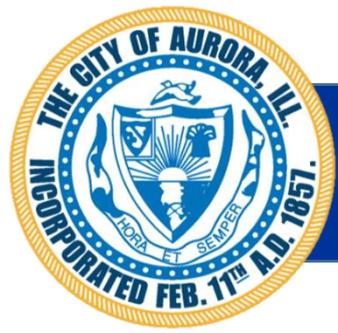
WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 2

SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

Added new section regarding the emerging trend of restaurants and businesses adding ***decorative garage or patio doors***, including standards covering:

- :: Location on side or rear of building
- :: Style, branding, and signage
- :: Sidewalk and ADA access
- :: Noise control





SECTION 2: REGULATION FOR EXISTING STRUCTURES

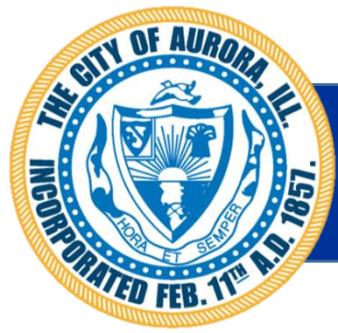
WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 2

SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

Added new section regarding **lighting** in the FoxWalk Overlay District, including standards covering:

- :: Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)
- :: Original light fixtures
- :: Security lights, flood lights, and foot lights
- :: Spotlighting on blank façades
- :: Downward spotlighting on the sidewalk





SECTION 2: REGULATION FOR EXISTING STRUCTURES

WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 2

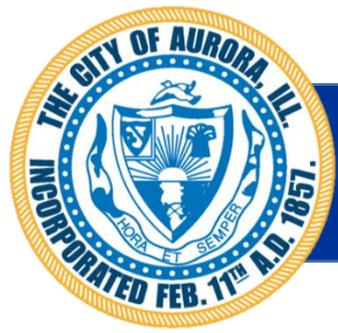
SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

Added new section regarding ***outdoor dining***, including standards covering:

- :: Allowance on patios, sidewalks, and parklets
- :: Furniture (e.g., tables, chairs, benches)
- :: Fencing
- :: Heating lamps and fire pits
- :: Greenery and eco-friendly materials
- :: Shade (e.g., umbrellas, pergolas, shade sails)



**SECTION 3:
DESIGN GUIDELINES AND
REGULATIONS FOR ADDITIONS
AND NEW CONSTRUCTION**



SECTION 3: ADDITIONS AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

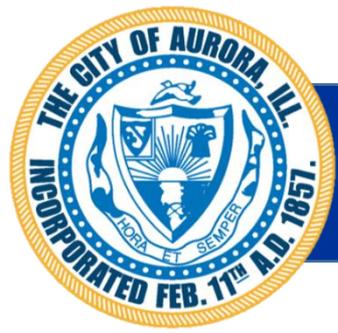
FOCUS OF SECTION 3

This section focuses on design guidelines and regulations for new construction and additions to existing structures.

TOPICS COVERED

- :: Building façade design
- :: Buildings facing the street or river
- :: Service areas and loading docks
- :: Building height and massing
- :: Roof design
- :: Building materials, scale, details
- :: Lighting
- :: Outdoor dining
- :: Sustainability





SECTION 3: ADDITIONS AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 3

SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

- Required DRC approval for all new construction
- Added language about how new construction on larger vacant lots that are not adjacent to historic buildings has the opportunity to create new landmarks and be designed more modern while still respecting the downtown's historic character
- Followed lighting and outdoor dining guidelines outlined in Section 2
- Added standards for:
 - Roof gardens
 - Large glass windows
 - Appropriate building materials





SECTION 3: ADDITIONS AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

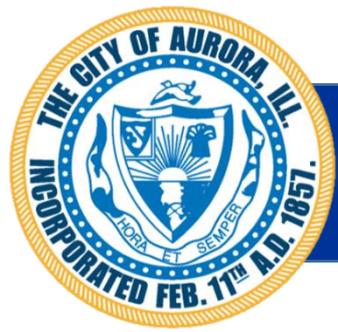
WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 3

SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

Added new guidelines to advance the City's commitment to ***sustainability***, including standards covering:

- :: Air sealing and ventilation
- :: Window energy efficiency
- :: Alternative energy sources (e.g., wind, solar, EVs)
- :: Vegetative roof systems (i.e., roof gardens)





SECTION 3: ADDITIONS AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 3

SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

Added new guidelines to advance the City's commitment to *sustainability*

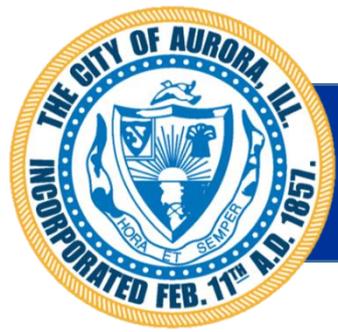


CITY'S LEGACY OF SUSTAINABILITY

- :: 2009 and 2019 Sustainability Plans
- :: Mayor's Sustainable Aurora Advisory Board
- :: Sustainability events like GreenFest and GreenTown
- :: Fox Valley Sustainability Network (founding member)
- :: Sustainability-minded Zoning Code revisions
- :: Rain barrel and rain garden programs
- :: Gold SolSmart designation (solar-friendly community)
- :: Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations initiative
- :: Ongoing Green Infrastructure Implementation Project (improve water quality in Fox River)



**SECTION 4:
DESIGN GUIDELINES AND
REGULATION FOR SIGNAGE**



SECTION 4: SIGNAGE

FOCUS OF SECTION 4

This section focuses on design guidelines and regulations for signage.

TOPICS COVERED

- :: General provisions
- :: Prohibited signage
- :: Sign lighting
- :: Historic signage
- :: Non-conforming signage
- :: Off-premises signage





SECTION 4: SIGNAGE

WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 4

SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

Updated guidelines for *fascia and wall signs*:

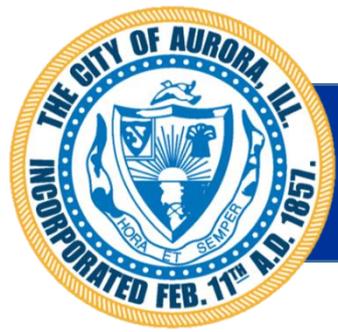
- :: Allowed increased sign size
- :: Allowed on primary façade or over primary entrance if entrance faces rear or alley
- :: Prohibited: cabinet signs, fabric signs, banners, temporary signs made to look permanent, vinyl stickers, plastic, and plastic core sign

EXAMPLE OF PREVIOUS REGULATIONS CREATING SIGNAGE THAT IS TOO SMALL



EXAMPLE: FASCIA SIGN NOT CURRENTLY PERMITTED





SECTION 4: SIGNAGE

WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 4

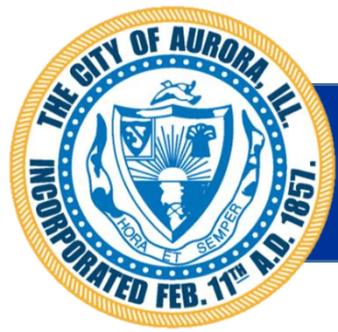
SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

Added new guidelines for *digital message boards*:

- DRC approval required
- Modernize and enhance attraction of downtown
- Limited to certain uses to prevent proliferation
- Permitted only for live entertainment venues, parking garages, or city facilities
- Only allowed on non-contributing or non-primary façades of historic buildings
- Avoid impacts on historic structures



**SECTION 5:
DESIGN GUIDELINES AND
REGULATION FOR SITE AND
SETTING**



SECTION 5: SITE AND SETTING

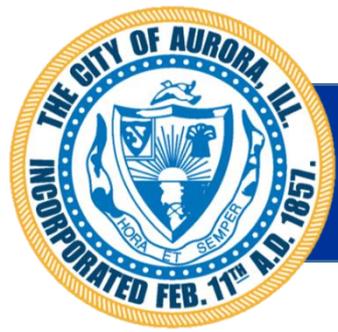
FOCUS OF SECTION 5

This section focuses on guidelines relating to potential alterations or improvements to a property's site and setting that could affect the appearance and character of the FoxWalk Overlay District.

TOPICS COVERED

- :: Fences and walls
- :: Fire escapes and secondary exits
- :: Parking
- :: Landscaping
- :: Barrier-free accessibility



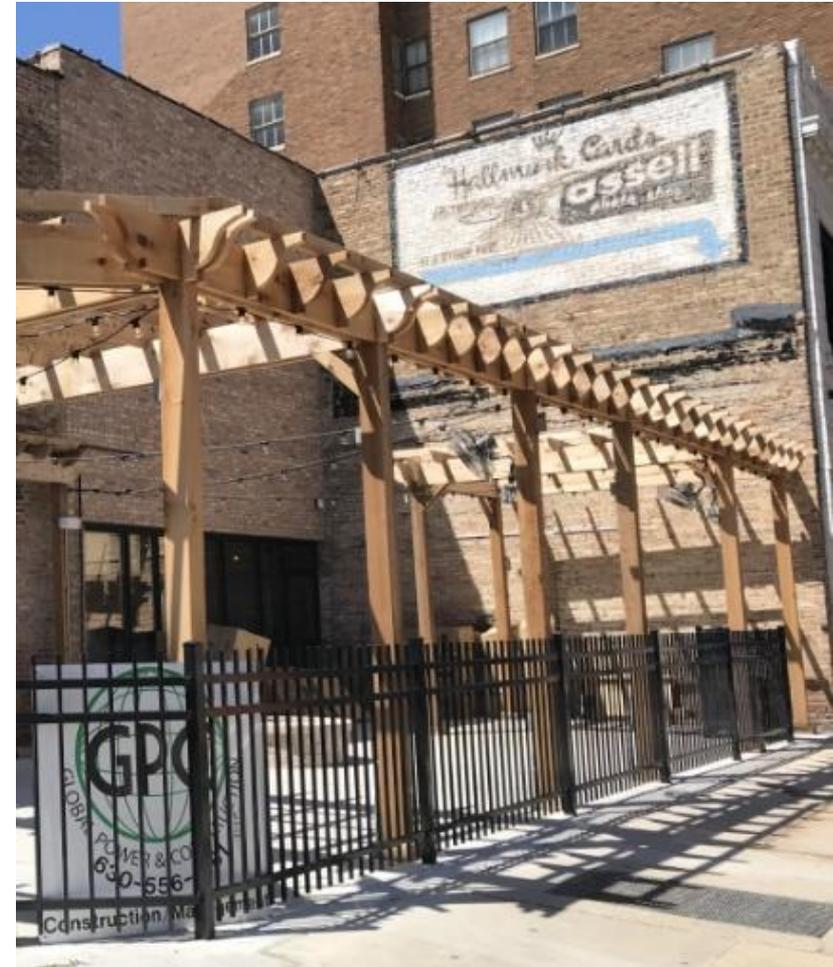


SECTION 5: SITE AND SETTING

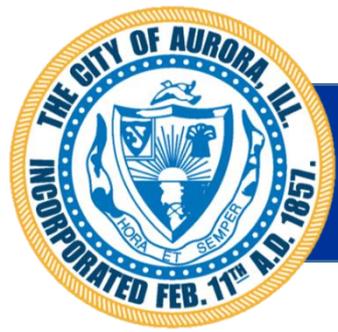
WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 5

SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

- Defined acceptable and prohibited materials to construct fences and walls
- Clarified acceptable siting of fire escapes
- Updated guidelines for on-street and off-street parking
- Added new guidelines for bike parking, landscaping, and barrier-free accessibility



**SECTION 6:
DESIGN GUIDELINES AND
REGULATION FOR DEMOLITION**



SECTION 6: DEMOLITION

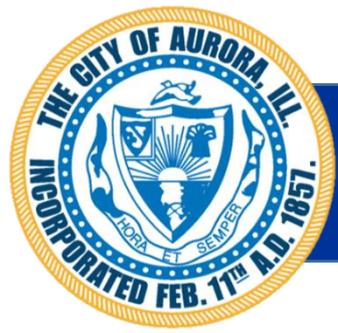
FOCUS OF SECTION 6

This section focuses on guidelines and regulations for demolition.

TOPICS COVERED

- :: Demolition considerations
- :: Demolition procedures





SECTION 6: DEMOLITION

WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 6

SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

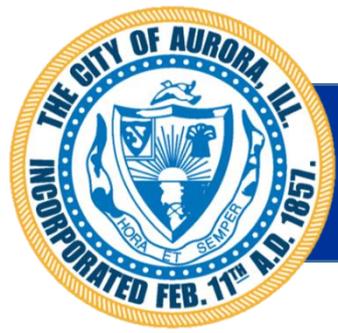
Demolition may be acceptable if:

- 75% or more of exterior materials or structural elements are substantially deteriorated.
- Structure does not contribute to the historical or architectural character of the district.
- Applicant demonstrates that all other alternatives were considered.

Demolition requires a FCOA and must be approved by the DRC



**SECTION 7:
SPECIFICATIONS FOR PUBLIC
IMPROVEMENTS**



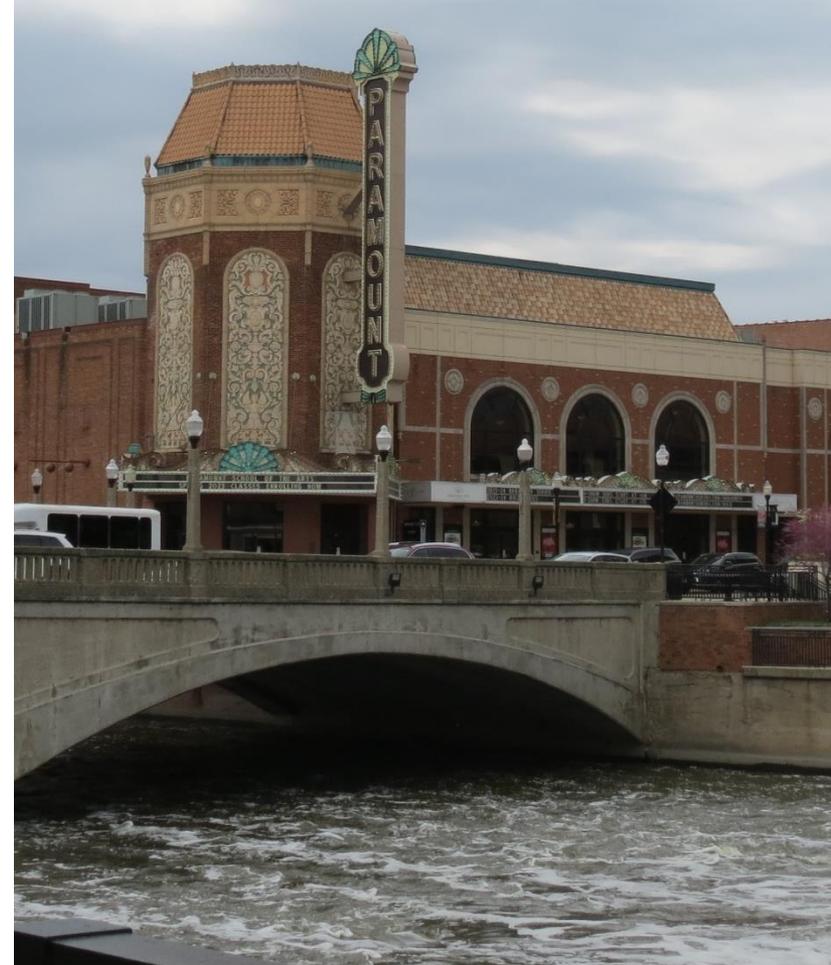
SECTION 7: SPECIFICATIONS FOR PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

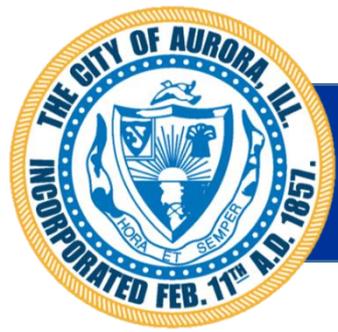
FOCUS OF SECTION 7

This section focuses on design guidelines for elements in the public right-of-way, including the sidewalk, river, and railroad.

TOPICS COVERED

- :: Street furniture and other amenities
- :: Signage
- :: Sidewalks and paving
- :: Bridge maintenance and restoration
- :: Riverfront
- :: BNSF railway viaduct





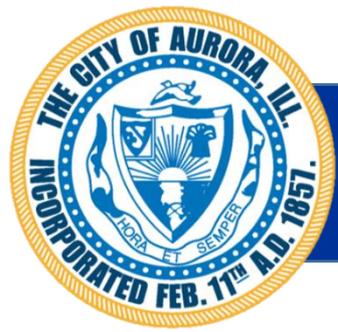
SECTION 7: SPECIFICATIONS FOR PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 7

SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

- Updated guidelines for the design and paving materials for sidewalks
- Provided updated standards for bridge maintenance and restoration





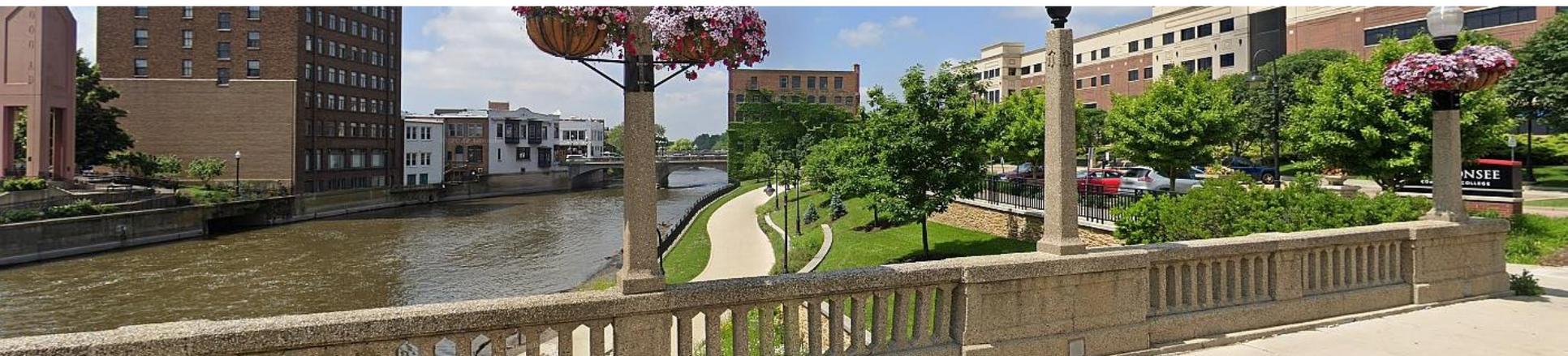
SECTION 7: SPECIFICATIONS FOR PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 7

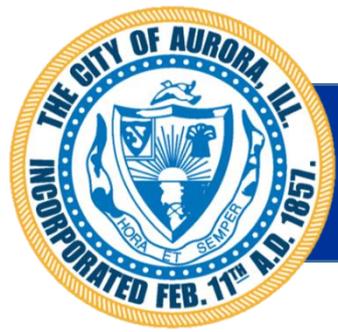
SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

Added new design guidelines to enhance *visual and physical connectivity to the riverfront*.

- :: Access to and views of the riverfront
- :: Access for all ages and abilities
- :: Support for expansion of the pathway system
- :: Public spaces along the riverfront
- :: Cohesive riverfront design theme
- :: Flood resilience and river flow



SECTION 8: ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS



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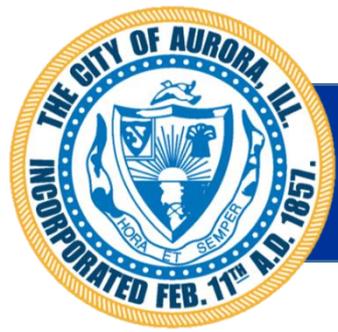
FOCUS OF SECTION 8

This section focuses on procedures to administer the Design Guidelines, including the review and approval process of proposed projects or improvements.

TOPICS COVERED

- :: Design Review Committee (DRC)
- :: Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)





SECTION 8: ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

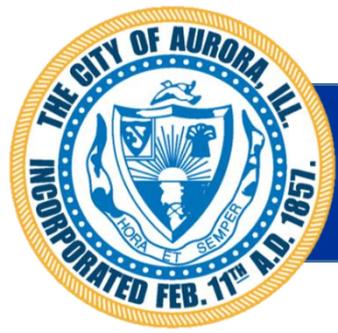
WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 8

SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

- Clarified duties of the Design Review Committee
- Updated procedures to approve or deny a Certificate of Appropriateness
- Updated procedures for preliminary and final review
- Added existing standards regarding the procedure for murals, which were approved in 2016



SECTION 9: ACCOMPLISHMENTS



SECTION 9: ACCOMPLISHMENTS

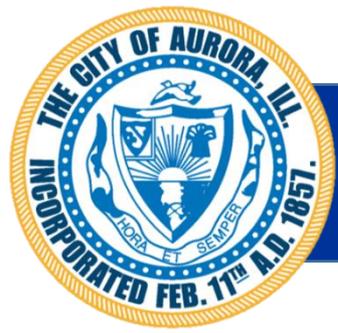
FOCUS OF SECTION 9

This section focuses on key accomplishments that have occurred within the FoxWalk Overlay District, particularly adding more recent accomplishments since the 2008 version of the Design Guidelines.

TOPICS COVERED

- :: Riverwalk
- :: Public amenities
- :: Policies and programs





SECTION 9: ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WHAT'S NEW IN SECTION 9

SPECIFIC ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

- Public art and murals
- New pocket parks
- Conversion of one-way streets to two-way streets
- Creation of a Special Service Area (SSA)

