Aurora, Missouri

Downtown Revitalization & Economic Assistance for Missouri

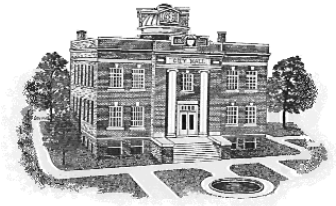
Building and Streetscape Design Guidelines

April 2012

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR MISSOURI
D·R·E·A·M
INITIATIVE

PGAV PLANNERS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



CITY OF AURORA

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Business District of Aurora that developed during the late 19th and early 20th century was made up of traditional street front commercial facades and had a significant role in the history and growth of the community. In 1880 Aurora consisted of general stores and groceries, churches and a physician. In 1885 galena was discovered in Aurora and a mining company was formed to mine the ore. Numerous businessmen set-up businesses out of tents and wagons to serve the influx of prospectors; railroads and major industry followed. The City continued to grow throughout the early 1900's. The Downtown buildings lined the main streets and developed architectural significance. These buildings provided a unity of materials, scale, and style. Because of their similarities in design, Downtown Aurora's streets had an appearance of rhythm and order. Similar patterns and elements were repeated giving any façade a visual connection with its neighbors that is still evident today.

Commercial façades in Aurora are typically one, two, or three story masonry with a high level of detail incorporated in the exposed upper façade masonry. Masonry details included corbelled recessed window panels, stone window sills, arched windows, and corbelled cornices. The corbelled upper façade recessed window panels are a feature unique to Aurora and were probably developed by a local architect or mason. Many buildings also featured painted pressed metal cornices with rich architectural details. The history of some Downtown building's are displayed with the year of construction and building name.

The storefronts, in contrast to the upper façade, are typically very delicate in appearance with large areas of glass framed with wood or metal. Large display windows help bring light into the shops and show off the wares. Usually centered in the storefront is a recessed entrance door. This recessed feature highlights the store entrance and provides a customer the opportunity to exit the pedestrian pathway and perhaps gain a bit of shelter. Storefronts are also generally framed with a transom.

In some cases, the historical character of a building in Downtown Aurora has been drastically altered; affecting the character and integrity of the building significantly. In other cases, entire buildings have been removed and replaced with new buildings that fail to account for the existing context of Downtown.

Examples of metal cornice and brackets.

Aurora, Missouri

Downtown Aurora's street grid developed with a traditional alignment to the cardinal directions, but was also influence by the rail line just to the north of Downtown. Additionally, the Courthouse Square is a Harrisonburg Square where two approaches enter the square in the middle of the street (Madison Avenue) and the other streets enter the Square at the corners (Pleasant and College Streets). The Downtown Aurora Courthouse Square is a very attractive activity center. The City of Aurora has undertaken an ambitious, multi-phase plan to install streetscape elements. Historic light poles, street furnishings, and landscaping are being added to replace out-of-scale cobra-head fixtures and poles. Collectively, these changes to the built environment of Downtown Aurora should enhance its aesthetic appeal greatly and attract businesses that will serve visitors and residents alike.

Examples of Downtown Aurora buildings that exhibit significant historic character and architectural details.

1.2 Intent of Guidelines

Downtown Aurora has many outstanding attributes upon which to build. This document is a guide to recapturing the charm and feel of historic Aurora while promoting appropriate new development. All elements of Downtown should have the look and feel of belonging in the same composition. This design composition begins with an appreciation of the original Downtown architecture, but also includes newer buildings and structures.

The design concepts in this report will help guide the City, Main Street Aurora, and the Aurora Historical Society as they seek to bring back the vitality of Downtown. For revitalization efforts to succeed, proposed projects and new development must respect the tradition of rhythm and unity that originally existed and not try to create an exact copy of the past. Working within the existing fabric of Downtown buildings, City leaders should be able to develop a sensible approach to renewing Downtown that includes removing inappropriate materials, encouraging new construction to adhere to design concepts, and developing additional streetscape improvements.

The building facades along with the sidewalks and street make up the outdoor living room of Downtown Aurora. This space is at the center of the community, alive with activities and events. As such, the responsibility of redevelopment falls on the community as well as individual property owners and the City. Individual building facades are owned and maintained by private property owners, while street improvements, utilities, and sidewalks are the responsibility of the City. An individual owner cannot be expected to invest in redeveloping his building without the City commitment to restore the streetscape and the City cannot be expected to undertake large, primarily aesthetic, public investments without support from affected property owners. Both aspects of Downtown must be redeveloped at a similar pace for successful revitalization.

The City of Aurora has undertaken an ambitious multi-phase streetscape improvement plan. This is a well-designed plan for improvements along Madison Avenue from Olive Street to Church Street. The City should continue with this public investment, however the streetscape design concepts in this report should provide additional support and enhancements. Downtown's private property owners should be encouraged by the City's public investment and seek to rehabilitate their buildings in a complementary manner. The City may take steps to encourage private investment including expanding the existing Business Assistance Loan Program and developing a companion Building Façade Improvement Program. Additionally, Main Street Aurora and the Aurora Historical Society should promote the benefits of historic rehabilitation and work to catalog the historical resources found in Downtown. At one point, a historic district was considered, but property owners did not support that effort. Main Street Aurora and the Aurora Historical Society should not force such a district, but can certainly promote how historic rehabilitation enhances property values, preserves important features, and strengthens the structural integrity of buildings. All of these aspects can combine to help change future attitudes toward historic preservation and building design guidelines.

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2.0 BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

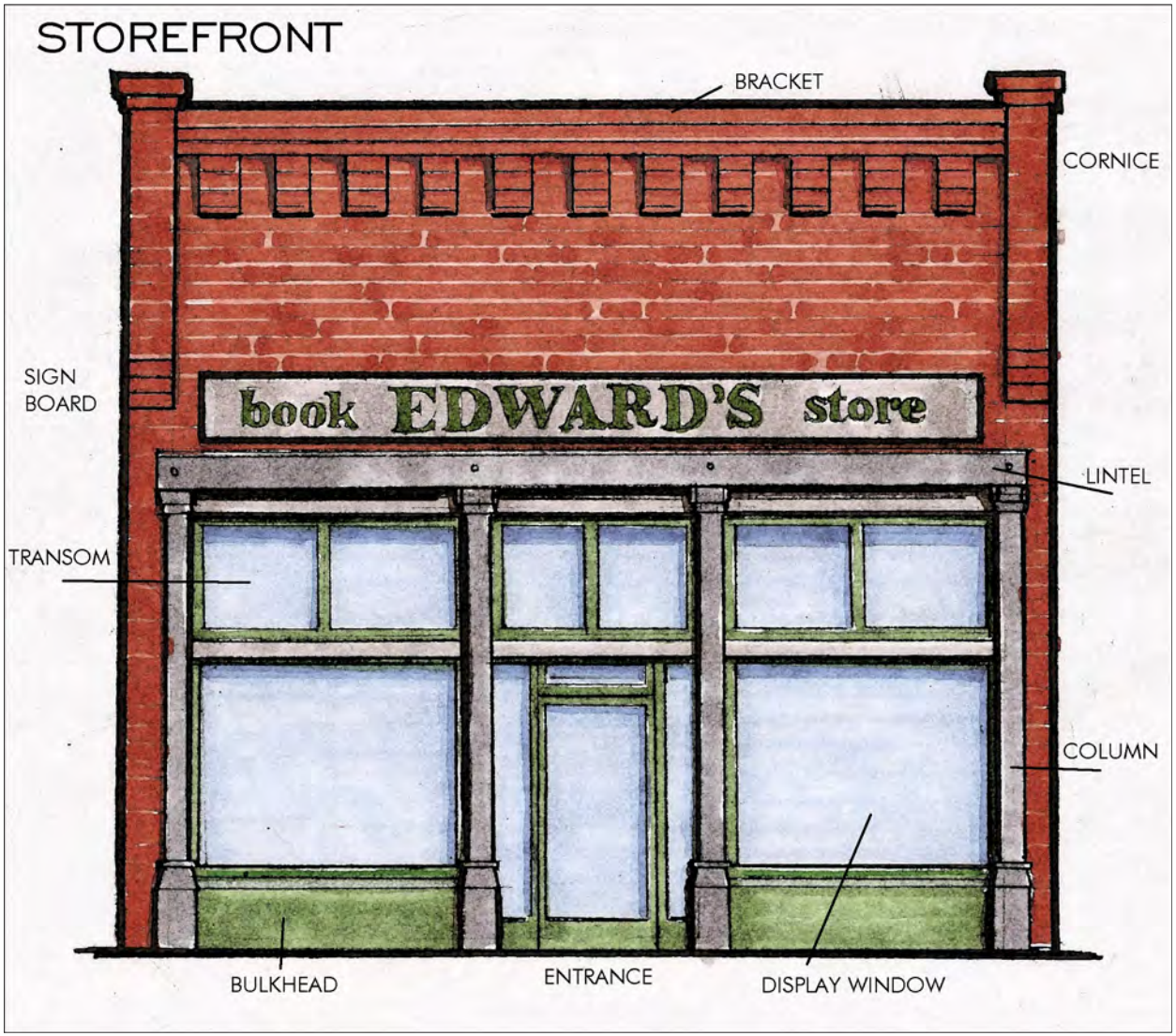
2.1 Downtown Fabric of Buildings

While these guidelines are written for Downtown Aurora, the design recommendations are sound advice that might be applicable elsewhere in the community. The design concepts are written for commercial uses and are not intended for residential areas. In many cases, the principles discussed can be altered and adapted for other areas of the City, but care should be taken that Downtown remains unique in character.

To successfully support the revitalization of Downtown Aurora, the Downtown property owners, City staff, elected officials, and other community organizations will have to change the way they think about Downtown and make a long-term commitment to an overall unifying theme, feel, and sense of atmosphere. Downtown revitalization will not happen overnight, in a week, nor in a month, nor in a year. Aurora will not wake up one morning and be "finished" with the establishment of the downtown place. This will be an ongoing effort that will evolve, pick-up speed, slow down, be applauded, and be criticized. The one constant should be the desire to slowly adjust the downtown core to an atmosphere that is attractive to Aurora residents and its visitors. In this overall "fabric of downtown" there will be three types of structures; those that contribute to the integrity of Downtown, those that detract, and those that do neither. The objective of these building design concepts is to maximize contributing Downtown elements and minimize detracting elements, over time.

2.2 Building Zones

Improvements to individual Downtown buildings will be discussed in the context of three distinct 'zones'; the **Storefront**, the **Upper Façade**, and the **Rear Elevation**. Some building elements of the Storefront are depicted in this diagram.



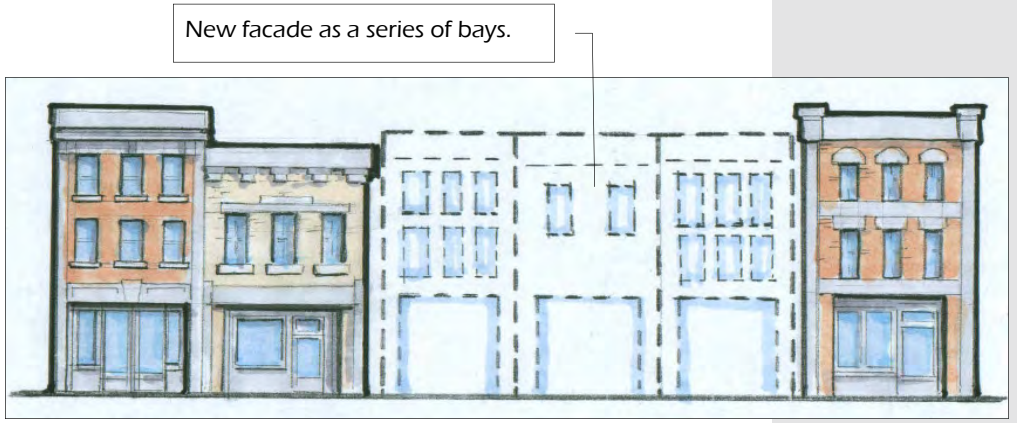
2.3 Façade Elements

The various elements of a facade must be balanced. Appropriate massing, building and floor heights, proportions, roof lines, materials, and setbacks are critical considerations in new construction. Any future development should be encouraged to implement a design that contributes to the fabric of Downtown by complimenting existing Downtown buildings.

Other aspects like architectural details, colors, and cornices are more important to the restoration of historic buildings, but can be used effectively in new construction as well. Developing a balance of all building elements can allow a building to be very individual in its character, but at the same time be a complementary thread woven into the overall fabric and feel of Downtown.

2.4 Rhythm

The defined rhythm of Downtown Aurora should be maintained along a street frontage by adhering to uniform lot widths, building widths, and window spacing. New infill buildings and structures should maintain this rhythm through proper repetition of architectural details and orientation to the street. Additionally, vertical elements, entrances, lighting, and other street furnishings can also help develop the rhythm of a specific block.



2.5 Alterations

Encourage removal of alterations or additions that disrupt the fabric of the Storefront zone. It is possible that non-historic and new construction can complement the building fabric that has developed, therefore some alterations may not need to be removed. Decks, structures providing access for people with disabilities, and other 'detachable' alterations can be used, but should be as unobtrusive as possible and located on the rear or sides of the building.

As a rule, any and all alterations or additions to the Upper Façade should be removed. Alterations in this zone can significantly change the overall appearance of the building. Signage and lighting should be carefully considered, as these elements should generally be restricted to the Storefront zone. Avoid removing or altering any historic material or significant architectural features. Care should be taken during the removal process to avoid damage to original elements hidden behind the alterations. When disassembly of a historic element is necessary, use methods that minimize damage to the original materials.

Original design.

Minor alterations.

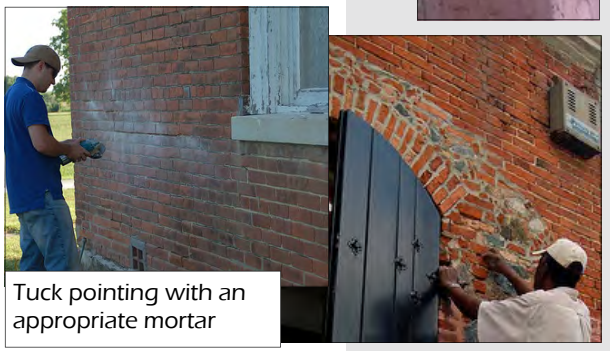
Storefront is lost.

Significant alterations.

2.6 Masonry

Masonry is typically the preferred façade material for Downtown. Most existing construction will utilize some masonry. In most instances metal and wood siding is not a suitable choice for Downtown buildings. These siding materials provide harsh lines, stark contrast, and no relief or warmth to the buildings. If wood was the historic material, it may be restored. Effective recommendations related to the treatment of masonry façades, include:

Inappropriate patching to cheaply repair brickwork.



Tuck pointing with an appropriate mortar

- Maintain the original color and texture of masonry walls. Materials such as stucco or paint should not be removed if this was the historic covering and only applied if it was the historic covering. If painted or stained masonry is going to be returned to its original state, a minimally intrusive removal process should be used.
- Clean masonry and mortar only when necessary to limit deterioration or to remove heavy soiling. Avoid techniques such as sandblasting, caustic chemical solutions, and high-pressure water blasting as they may erode the surface and accelerate deterioration.
- Masonry restoration, particularly on historic structures, should be done by professionals.
- Damaged bricks and stone should be repaired or replaced with similar color, texture, and style masonry products. Re-point masonry walls when there is evidence of disintegrating mortar, cracks in mortar joints, loose bricks, or moisture retention in the walls. New mortar should duplicate the old mortar in composition, bonding strength, profile, color, and texture. Do not use cement mortar in brick construction as it is too hard and will result in spalling and cracking of the softer bricks.
- Portland cement as a patch for masonry is unacceptable.
- If a historic façade has been covered with metal or wood siding it should be removed. Exposing the underlying brick masonry will help re-establish the character of the building and contribute to the visual continuity of the block. Metal cladding or siding can hide interesting details and may be easy to remove. If, after removing the covering material, portions of the original façade must be replaced, use a material similar to the original in color and texture.
- Regular maintenance of foundations is required to prevent structural and water damage. Any water-proofing methods for foundations should be applied beneath the finished grade or inside the structure.

2.7 Awnings and Canopies

Awnings used in the Storefront zone provide shade for merchandise, shelter for pedestrians, and bring a colorful accent to the building front that can be changed frequently and without great expense. Canopies are more permanent structures built onto the front of the building and may include lighting for the sidewalk in front of the store. Upper window awnings provide shade and help establish rhythm along the street. The following suggestions enhance appropriate use of awnings and improve Downtown aesthetics:

- Mount the top edge of awnings to align with the top of the transom, or to align with the framing that separates the transom from the main display window. This will help strengthen the visual continuity of store fronts.
- Roll-up awnings were a common site on historic storefronts and can be used following a similar approach to the original application. If a roll-up awning is not operable, the awning should follow the shape of an operable awning.
- Awnings should be installed over the original storefront opening and not extend beyond.
- Awning colors should coordinate with the color scheme for the entire building and complement any overall color palette established for Downtown buildings. Awnings on upper windows should match the storefront awning in color and material.
- Awning signage or lettering should not be allowed where another flush-faced sign exists and may be limited to the vertical front flap of the storefront awning only; not the upper floor awnings. Signboards under the awning to assist pedestrians should be of a limited, uniform size and complement the awning and building.
- Awnings will wear and this aspect should be acknowledged as an operating cost of doing business which can be changed every few years for a fresh look.
- Aluminum, steel, and wood shingle awnings and canopies are typically not original building elements and tend to detract from the overall appeal of Downtown façades. These structures should be removed and the original building exposed and repaired.

Examples of awnings and canopies found in Downtown Aurora

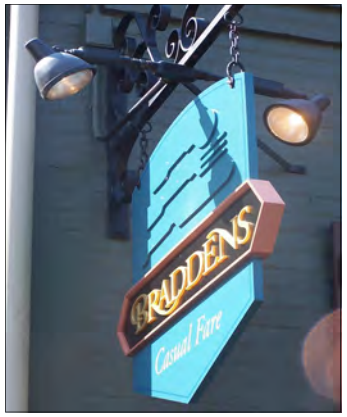
2.8 Building Lighting

Buildings should be interesting to view at night, as well as by day, and creates a positive impression about Downtown. Suggestions to help enhance the attractiveness and safety of Downtown Aurora building lighting include:

- Use lighting as a design element to draw attention to the overall building. Emphasizing architecture in the Upper Façade and Rear Elevation zones can provide attractive highlights.
- Warm-colored lighting of the storefront should accent the entrance, flush-mounted signage, and any architectural elements, as well as provide light for safety and security.
- Light fixtures should be of a simple and non-intrusive design in a style that matches the period of the building. Neon lights and cool fluorescent lights should not be used. Sign lighting should be balanced in color and intensity, with light in display windows.
- Lighting on rear façades should be similar to the lighting on the front of the building and provide illumination at the entry door and along the pedestrian path from the parking area.
- Encourage lighting that incorporates sustainable design concepts as noted in **Section 3.0** on **page 27**.

Inappropriate style of lights & too high of a wattage (Columbia, Illinois)

Lighting can help highlight building entrances

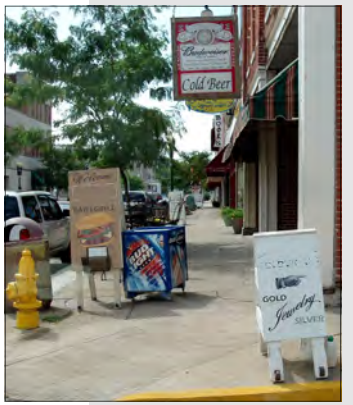


Lighting illuminates the doorway & Spot lights for entrance signage (St. Charles, Missouri)

2.9 Business Signage

For a successful business environment, each store must have its own identity while at the same time maintaining the continuity of a unified downtown. Effective signage identifies the business without detracting from the architecture of the building and distracting the pedestrian. Sign types and their locations should be kept simple and consistent for ease of public awareness. Signage should be restricted to the Storefront zone sign band. The following guidelines will help enhance this aspect of Downtown Aurora:

- The size of the sign should be of an appropriate scale for the building and street. Large signs are not needed because Downtown signage is oriented to the pedestrian, not the motorist.
- Rooftop, blade, pole, neon, electronic message boards, flashing or otherwise moving or animated signs, signs playing music or sounds, and billboard signage should not be allowed if possible; and severely restricted if allowed at all. Signs illuminated by external lighting are preferable to internal, box-type plastic panel signs.
- A business sign should be a part of the building design and not hide architectural features or details. Encourage flush mounted signs that fit within the outer edges of the building front and in the sign band. This type of signage helps reinforce horizontal lines along the street.
- The material and color of the sign should complement other building and façade materials. Clashing colors and too many types of materials can cause visual distress in the viewer or customer. Well thought-out and professionally designed signs are best and, often, simpler is better.
- Select high-quality materials as signs are exposed to extreme weather conditions. Good craftsmanship will pay off in longer service for a sign and conveys a stronger image to the customer. A deteriorating sign presents a poor image. Abandoned signs should be removed.
- The message of the sign should be simple and easy to understand. The name, logo, and type of business or symbol should be sufficient.
- Place signs near the entrance, to guide a customer's eyes to the door.
- Where several businesses share a building, encourage coordination of signs by aligning smaller signs or grouping them onto a single directory panel with similar forms or backgrounds that tie together visually and make each sign easier to read.



Too many signs can clutter the view of the street

Examples of existing business signage in Downtown Aurora

2.10 Bicycles

Downtown should not only be pedestrian friendly, but bicycle friendly as well. The City of Aurora should make bicycle travel an enjoyable means of transportation. Downtown plans should implement bicycle facilities which can be used by local citizens and visitors. The City should identify opportunities for future bicycle facilities in Downtown and throughout the community. Such facilities may include:

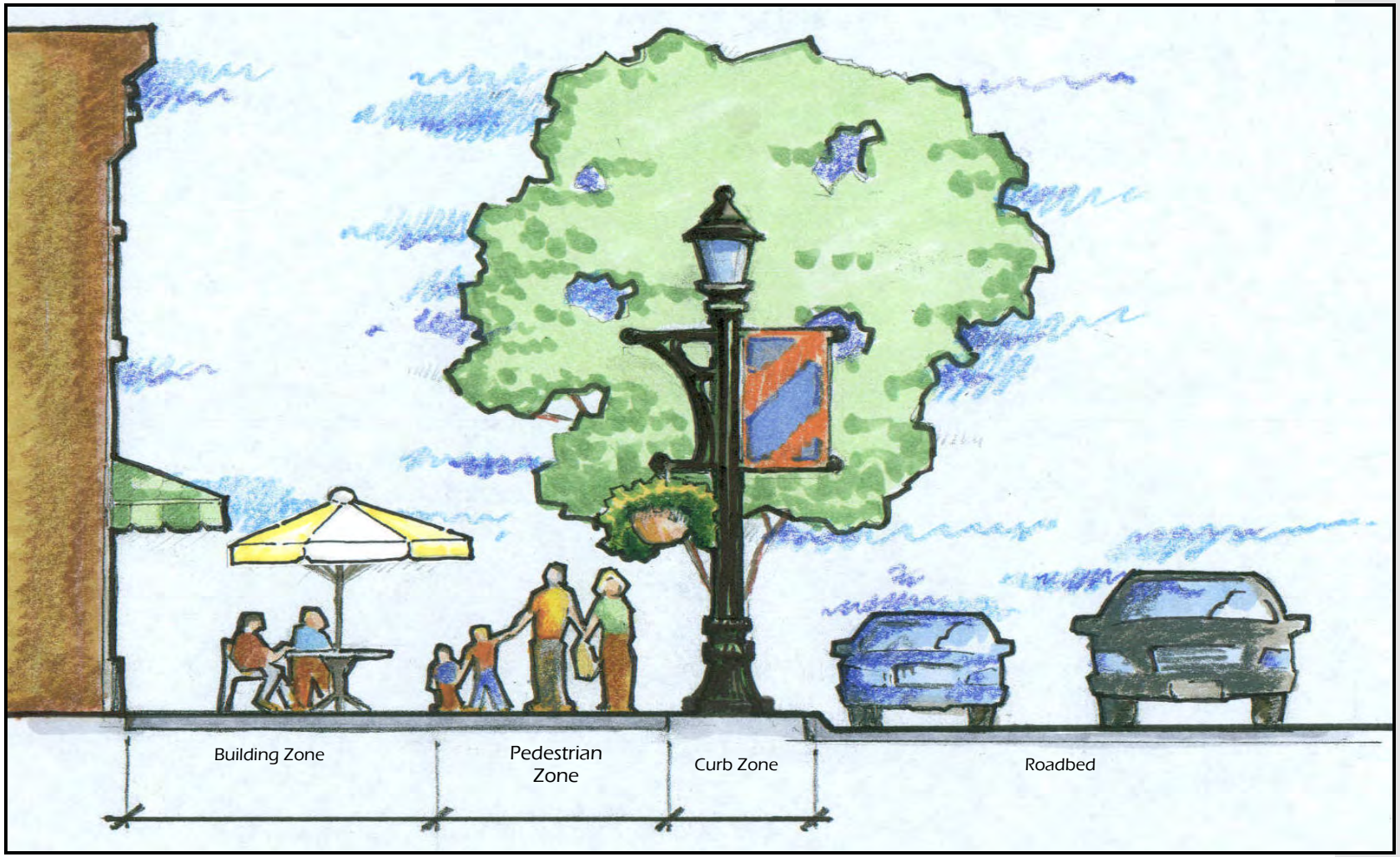
- Bicycle racks which should have the uniform design of materials, color and style as other Downtown site furnishings.
- Directional and regulatory street signage which identifies local streets as bike routes and share-the-road routes.
- Wayfinding signage to direct cyclists to destinations within Downtown.
- Public restrooms and drinking fountains.
- Dedicated bicycle lanes on streets, where feasible and possible.

The City of Aurora should promote the use of cycling. The City could work to develop a Bicycle Network Plan to identify local streets as defined bike routes. This Plan should provide a safe and well-organized system for cyclists and automobile drivers to understand. Implementing bicycle facilities will provide an alternative means of transportation and another recreational experience for visitors and locals to enjoy.

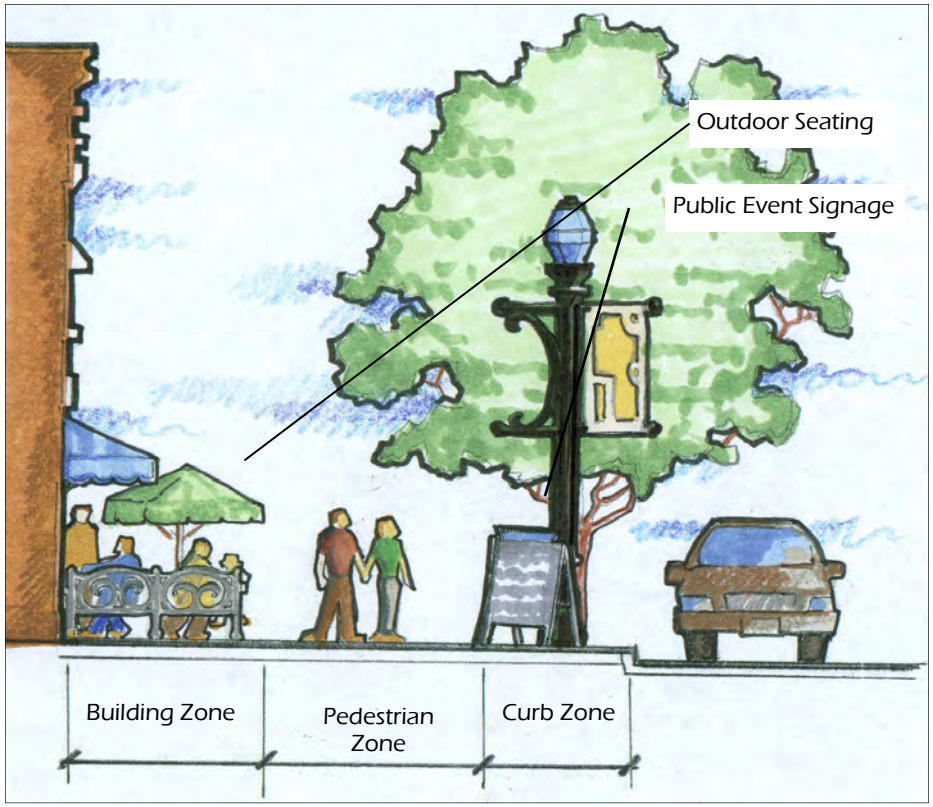
Bicycle racks.
(Webster Groves, Missouri)

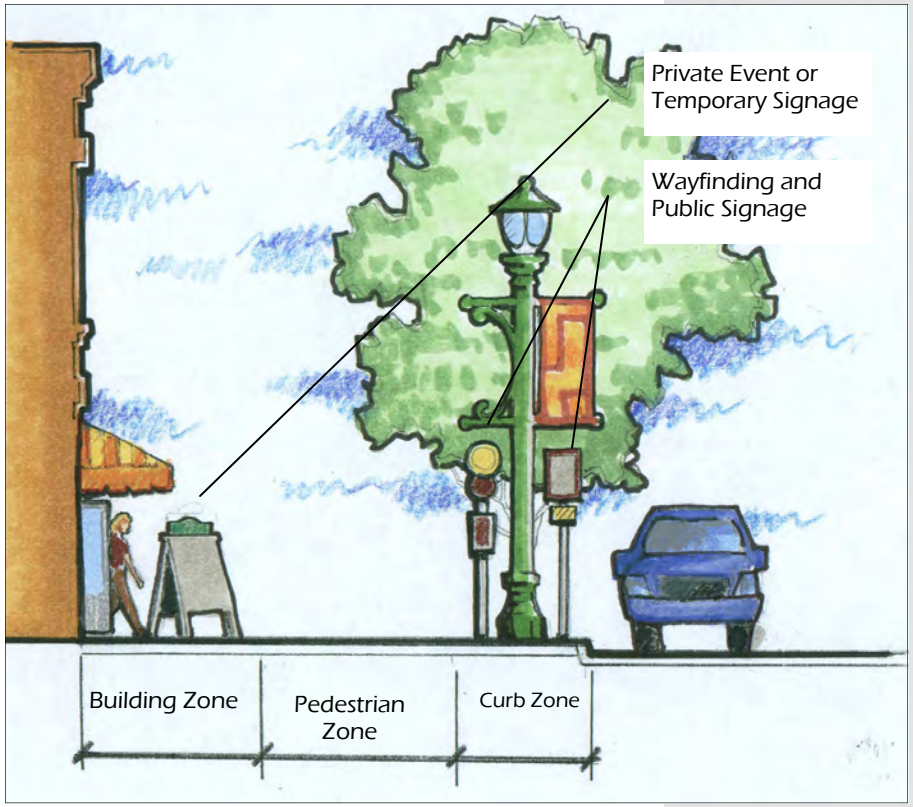
2.11 Sidewalk Zones

Appropriate zones in front of a building should be maintained. The Building Zone, Pedestrian Zone, and Curb Zone all have unique characteristics that should be regulated to ensure that private elements do not adversely impact public improvements. These are also important aspects of the streetscape to be discussed later in this document.

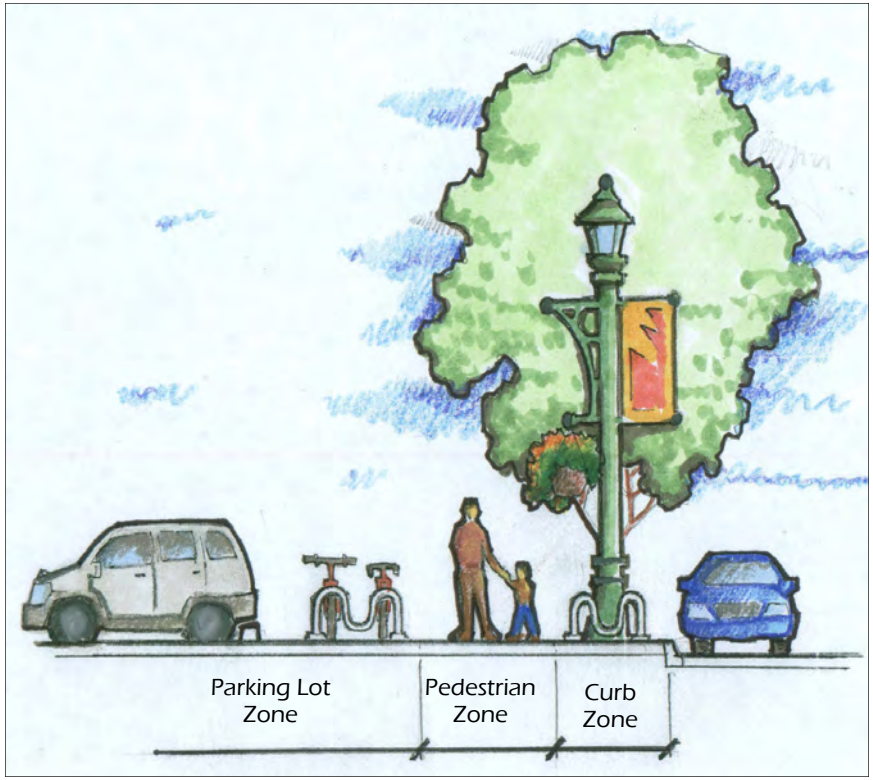


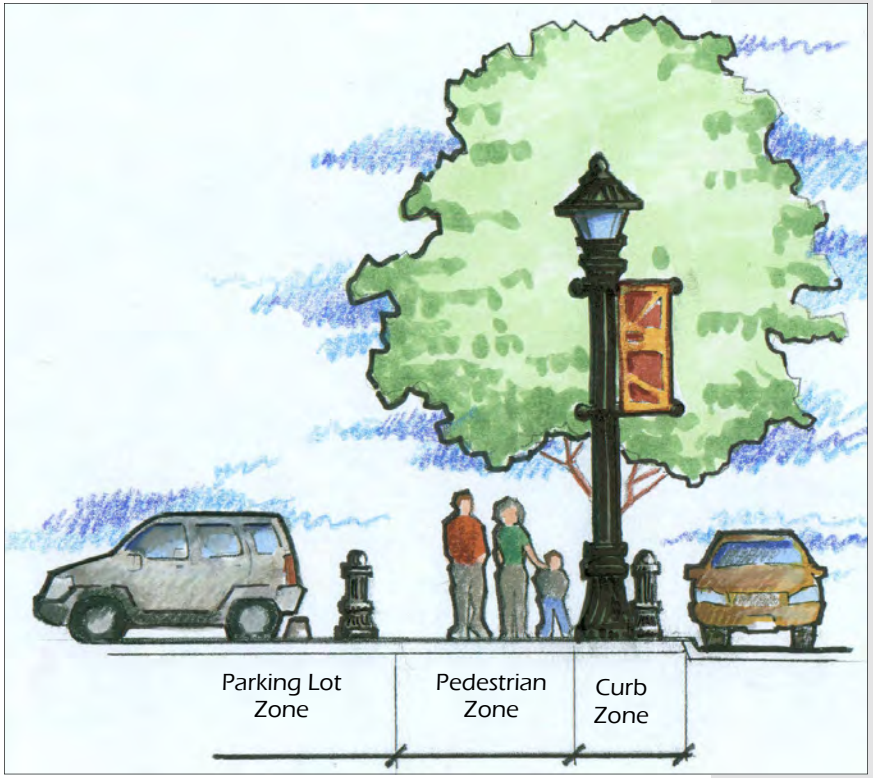
- Aside from ADA accessible pavement improvements, Streetscape Amenities should remain clear of the Pedestrian Zone and allow for free movement of pedestrians. These elements will enhance the pedestrian experience, but must not obstruct them.
- Businesses should be informed on the importance of maintaining Sidewalk Zones. Each business should care for the zones within their building's street frontage.





- Items such as bicycle racks, bollards, and benches can add to the streetscape.
- Businesses should consider providing and maintaining such elements within their Building or Parking Lot Zones to enhance service to their patrons.

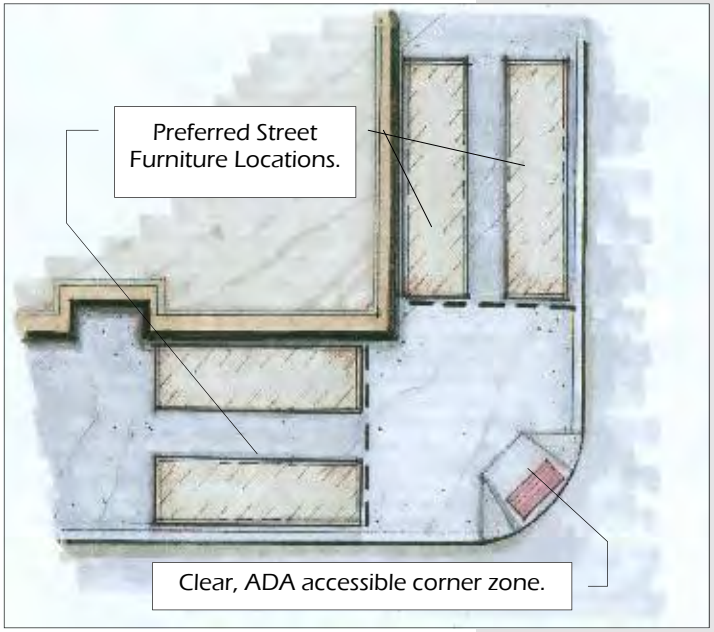




2.12 Outdoor Café Seating

Outdoor Café or sidewalk seating is a good option for Downtown restaurant and business patrons that contributes to the atmosphere of the street. The City of Aurora should encourage well-designed sidewalk cafés and properly monitor such seating areas. Suggestions include:

- Seating areas should be located in an area fronting the restaurant or along a side street if the restaurant is located in a corner building. The seating areas should be clearly defined and connected to the restaurant and must not block the restaurant access.
- Allow a clear and unencumbered path along the sidewalk for pedestrian traffic or be located close enough to the building. In either case the sidewalk must maintain compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). The restaurant owner is responsible for ensuring this compliance.
- The restaurant should be encouraged to use umbrellas or other patron covering in a uniform color, complementary with the building colors, and with only the restaurant name. Any other wording or message should not be allowed to avoid a cluttering effect.
- Temporary outdoor seating must be kept in top condition to provide an attractive image for the restaurant and Downtown Aurora. Such furnishings should be durable, weatherproof, and sturdy enough to prevent movement by wind. Plastic furnishings should be avoided. Furnishings should be stored inside or off-site during the winter months.



Proper location of outdoor seating is important for safety, access, and service.

An example of outdoor café seating in St. Louis, Missouri.

An example of outdoor café seating in University City, Missouri.

2.13 Maintenance of Façades

Facades, particularly restorations, may need extra care and maintenance. The city should encourage proper maintenance through code and nuisance enforcement. In addition, if the city has implemented any sort of incentive for facade work a requirement should be proper maintenance according to city standards. An example would be the ability to utilize a revolving loan should the facade fall into disrepair.

A well restored and maintained façade in Downtown Aurora.

2.14 Accessibility

Design guidelines should not prevent or inhibit compliance with accessibility laws.

- All new construction shall comply completely with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Owners of historic properties also should comply with the ADA to the fullest extent, while also preserving the integrity of the character defining features of their building.
- Special provisions for historic buildings exist in the law that allow some alternative solution in meeting the ADA guidelines.
- Consult with the City of Aurora and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources for more information regarding compliance or alternative solutions in meeting the ADA.

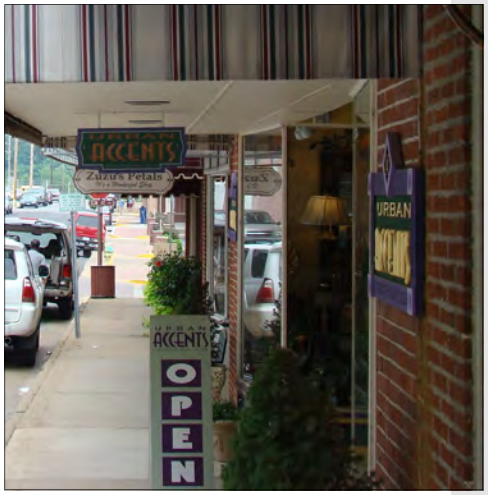
Great example of a facade with intricate details well restored and maintained.

2.15 Historic Buildings

2.15.1 Original Elements

Any original element or material that still exists, particularly on the storefront, should be retained if possible. Original elements provide a historic value that can not be replaced. Prism glass in transom windows or a decorative wooden door with beveled glass would be an examples of original materials.

Replacement of missing architectural elements should be based on accurate duplications of original features. When an entire detail must be reconstructed the new material should match the original in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Where reconstruction of an element is impossible because of a lack of historical evidence, then a new design that relates to the building in general size, scale and material may be considered. Use design elements that reflect the building's style. A simplified interpretation of similar features on comparable buildings may be acceptable.



Recessed Entrances align with sidewalk edge (Washington, Missouri)

2.15.2 Storefront

<u>Entrance:</u>

- The entrance door should be recessed to emphasize the entry, provide a bit of shelter and remove the open door from the path of pedestrians on the sidewalk. These areas also repeat rhythm of shaded areas along the street helps to identify business entrances.
- If the original recessed entry has been removed, consider establishing a new one.
- The recessed entrance door should also be ADA compliant.
- The door should provide a view into the building as well as a sense of openness. Solid doors should be avoided.
- Consider using an accent color on the door.

Well designed & coordinated storefront (St. Charles , Missouri)

Windows:

- Preserve any of the large panes of glass that make-up the original store front if they still exist. These transparent surfaces allow pedestrians to see goods and activities inside.
- Any new or replacement storefront should be built of similar materials compatible with the original facade design and craftsmanship.
- Wood framing similar to the original is preferred but metal framing with the appropriate historic profile is acceptable.
- Clear insulated glass with low 'E' coating is a good choice for replacement storefronts.
- Tinted or reflective glass and interior reflective films should not be used on the storefront.

Attractive display windows in Downtown Aurora

Spandrel Panels:

- Maintaining the original spandrel panel, if it exists, is preferable but if the panel is missing, reconstruction using old photographs as a guide is acceptable.
- Coordinate the color scheme of the spandrel panel with other facade elements.
- If original design information is not available, another option is to design a simplified panel using appropriate materials such as painted wood or metal.

Recessed entrance with detailed kick plates creates an inviting experience for the consumer (Washington, Missouri)

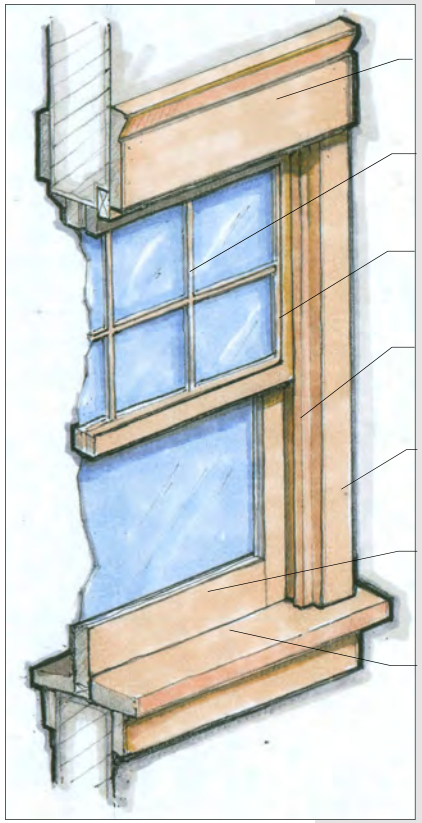
Historic Storefront (St. Charles, Missouri)

Transoms:

- These bands of glass are found on many buildings and they often align at the same height in a block. Maintaining this line will help to reinforce a sense of visual continuity for the street.
- When transoms are covered and original moldings and window frame proportions are concealed, the impact of the store front is weakened. If the interior ceiling is now lower than this glass line, move the dropped ceiling back from the window to maintain its historical dimensions.
- Some transoms have hinged panels to allow natural ventilation. Restore these to working order where feasible. Used in combination with ceiling fans these operable transoms can be very effective in improving comfort levels when full air-conditioning is not as necessary.

Examples of buildings which preserve the transom.

2.15.3 Upper Façade



Windows:

- Typical upper windows are vertically oriented and uniformly spaced across the building front. This rhythm of upper story windows is an important unifying feature of downtown, because it is repeated on most buildings.
- Any windows covered by masonry infill, wood panels, or mismatched windows should be removed.
- If the original window still exists, it should be restored to serviceable condition when possible.
- Replace only missing portions of original elements where feasible. Sometimes trim elements and other materials must be removed in order to repair or refinish them. Always devise methods of replacing the disassembled materials in their original configuration. Code trim pieces, for example, so you can replace them accurately.
- Installation of interior storm windows should be considered.
- If the existing window is beyond repair an appropriate replacement window of the same size and profile should be installed.
- Use design elements that reflect the building's style. A simplified interpretation of similar features on comparable buildings may be considered.
- Window shades or curtains in colors that coordinate with accent trim should be encouraged.
- If the ceiling is lower than the window head, pull the ceiling back from the window to keep the original height at the window.

Cornice and Architectural Details:

- Replacement of missing cornices or architectural elements should be based on accurate duplications of original features. In some cases, an entire detail must be reconstructed. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the original in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Photographic evidence is a good source for research.
- If the cornice is missing, a similar cornice of like size and scale should be installed.
- If no evidence exists as to form and detail, the reconstructed cornice should be as simple and non-intrusive as possible.
- If the cornice is intact it should be repaired and maintained as required.
- Where architectural details have been removed, look at photos for details to use as patterns for new designs.
- Where exact reconstruction of details is not feasible, consider developing a simplified interpretation of the original, in which its major form and line is retained.

Cornice example from (St. Charles, Missouri)

Shutters (or blinds) are encouraged on upper level windows. They should be proportioned that if closed they would completely cover the window. Shutters can also provide accent color that ties in with street level design. (Washington, Missouri)

Rehab that preserved ornamental cornice work at the top of the building. (Neosho, Missouri)

2.15.4 Rear Elevation

The rear elevation typically faces an alley and provides access for deliveries and pick-up. In some cases customer parking is provided behind a building and entry to the business through the rear elevation is desirable. Attention to the appearance of the rear elevation can be extremely important to the quality of the customers' shopping experience. Consider how image can be improved here, while accommodating service functions.

Rear Entrance & Upper Rear Facade are well cared for and inviting (St. Charles, Missouri)

Good rear entrance and landscaping (St. Charles, Missouri)

Entry Door:

- The rear door will no longer be just for service but should project a sense of openness and welcome.
- Customers might also feel a loyalty or sense of 'special access' by using this door and the business can build on this loyalty by catering to that customer and improving that experience.
- A new door and hardware with a large area of glass may be considered, along with a small canopy or awning to provide some shelter.

Upper Rear Elevation:

The upper rear elevation elements should be treated similar to the front. Too often this is a building face that is neglected and allowed to deteriorate.

- Windows should be restored or replaced.
- Gutters and downspouts should be in good repair and painted.
- Use materials and colors that coordinate with the front of the building so customers recognize both entrances are related to the same business.
- Use a smaller version of the front sign to identify the rear entrance.
- Upper floors can obtain access stairs in the rear of a building. Encourage installing new stairs that comply with current building codes.

Fences:

- Fences should be designed to harmonize with the surrounding structures in both scale and color.
- Some materials which may be appropriate include masonry, wood and wrought-iron. Chain-link should not be a permitted material.

2.16 Existing Non-Historic Buildings & New Construction

Some buildings in Downtown do not have historic features or ornamentation; Many were built with simple fronts and no concern for exiting buildings. Recommendations to help new construction complement existing buildings include:

- New construction should incorporate traditional storefront elements described in these guidelines or on nearby historic buildings.
- Designs for elements should be simple with three basic elements; a unified paint and color scheme, an awning, and non-intrusive signage in the sign band. Horizontal features should be encouraged to align with other buildings.
- Encourage highlighting a simple cornice, a band of color, a sign panel or an awning edge that can line up with similar elements on nearby buildings.
- Some newer Downtown buildings are set back farther from the street, with space in front for parking. These buildings relate to cars more than pedestrians and should not be allowed Downtown. Landscaping can be used to soften such existing lots.

Block that follows same basic design principles (St. Charles, Missouri)

Example of color choice (Washington, Missouri)

2.17 Color Guidelines

Some of the most noticeable improvements are achieved with a fresh paint job. The most effective and economical schemes often start with the natural colors of the building materials, such as the native red of many brick buildings. Techniques for color include:

- Use only one base color for the majority of the background wall surface, but use a different color for accents. Do not paint a building entirely one color. Base colors should be muted earth tones or pastels.
- Look for features of the facade that can be highlighted with an accent color. Window frames, sills, moldings, and cornices are potential elements to dramatize with a contrasting color. Consider accent colors for signs, awnings and entrance doors.
- Use bright colors only in small amounts in the Storefront zone to attract the customer's eyes.
- Earth tones will hold their color well, as will darker pastels. Check for color stability in ultra-violet light; some colors, such as red, tend to be unstable and will shift in hue over time.

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3.0 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The construction of sites and buildings have a significant impact on the natural environment. The operations of a site and a building, can also affect the air, land and soil of the downtown. Sustainable Design measures seek to lessen the impact on the natural and built environment. Such design efforts also aim to increase the efficiency at which buildings operate, in regards to energy use and operating costs. The design process is comprehensive, beginning with site selection and orientation; through specification of sustainable materials to energy efficient operating systems.

Downtown Aurora is a built environment of many historic buildings, modern buildings, public streets, parking lots, a few vacant lots and open space. Sustainable Design measures can be applied to both existing buildings and new buildings. The U. S. Green Building Council (USGBC) has become the leading organization in developing standards for sustainable design and operations of buildings. USGBC's certification system is known as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). The majority of LEED designated buildings are new construction projects, however the USGBC has also developed standards for the upgrade of existing buildings.

Sustainable design is a broad and encompassing initiative which strives to create a built environment which is good for both man and nature. The following recommendations only introduce the basic fundamentals of sustainable design regarding downtown buildings and environments. For additional information beyond these guidelines, numerous resources exist, such as:

- U. S. Green Building Council (USGBC) www.usgbc.org
- Whole Building Design Guide www.wbdg.org
- American Society for Testing and Materials International (ASTM). ASTM E2432— Standard Guide for General Principles of Sustainability Relative to Buildings www.astm.Standards.e2432.htm

Permeable pavers for parking area allow stormwater to percolate back into the soil and groundwater.

Interior flooring fabricated from bamboo, a rapidly renewable resource.

3.2 Fundamentals

Sustainable design measures are constantly changing, however there are six fundamental principles which constitute sustainability:

1) **Optimal Site Potential:** Consider site selection, building orientation and existing natural features of a site including topography, drainage, landscape and natural habitats. The rehabilitation and reuse of existing buildings should always be evaluated as an alternative to new building construction.

2) **Efficient Use of Water:** The design and use of water systems in a building maximize efficiency and recycle water for on-site use when feasible. Site design should seek to reduce stormwater run off from the site. Use best management practices (BMP) to limit stormwater run off, clean stormwater and trap pollutants in the water before discharging into the sewer system.

3) **Environmental Materials and Resources:** Utilize building materials with a high percentage of recycled content or contain rapidly renewable materials such as cork flooring, bamboo cabinetry, wool carpeting, etc. Specify or use materials or items which are manufactured within proximity to the project site. Ideally, this proximity is no more than 500 miles.

4) **Optimal Energy Use:** The operation of a site and building identify methods for increased energy efficiency or use renewable resources such as solar or geo-thermal energy.

5) **Interior Environmental Quality:** Identify methods for creating a healthy environment, and increasing the comfort of building users. Proper ventilation, use of natural light, and moisture control are a few methods to ensure a quality interior space.

6) **Optimal Operations and Maintenance Methods:** Utilize building systems, furnishings and finishes which will have minimal operations and maintenance needs. Such systems will require less energy, less water and can be maintained with natural cleaners which are not toxic to the environment or occupants.

"Green Roofs" reduce stormwater runoff, reduce heat gain and provide aesthetics for viewing/experiencing by building users.

Solar panels provide an additional energy source for building power needs.

3.3 Elements

Sustainable design elements are extensive. The following list seeks to introduce only a few recommendations which are applicable to Downtown Aurora:

- Parking and Service Areas: Minimize stormwater runoff by using pervious pavement materials such as pervious paver systems or pervious concrete. Such systems will allow stormwater to percolate into the soil and not into the public stormwater sewer system.
- Building Materials: Utilize materials which are composed of recycled materials or manufactured from rapidly renewable materials, which are made from plants that are typically harvested within a 10 year cycle. Examples include bamboo flooring, linoleum flooring (made of wheat flour and linseed oil) cotton batt insulation and wheatboard cabinetry. Recycled bricks from demolished buildings should also be used for new building construction or restoration projects.
- Alternative Transportation: Provide secure bicycle storage and changing facilities for employees.
- Solar Energy Alternatives: Install solar panels to supplement the power system for commercial and residential buildings. Utilize prefabricated solar water heaters to provide the majority of the hot water needs for buildings.
- Stewardship: New wood products, including construction lumber, should be certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, which promotes responsible forest management.
- Lighting: Develop a lighting plan for public spaces which minimizes excessive lighting, which affects night sky viewing and the migratory patterns of birds. Flags which require lighting should be lit from the top shining down on the flags instead of being lit from the ground, projecting light into the sky.
- Operations: Use timers on public fountains and lights in non-essential areas to shut off lights after 1:00 a.m., in order to reduce energy consumption.
- Landscaping: Plant native landscape materials which can survive on natural rainfall.
- Street Furnishings: Specify site furnishings such as benches, waste receptacles, bollards, and planters which are made from recycled plastic materials.
- Water Conservation: For building exteriors capture rain water runoff from roofs in rain barrels for irrigation use or direct to rain gardens on site. Consider waterless urinals or low flow water closets to limit potable water use inside buildings.

Permeable pavement system installation.

Rain garden with native landscape plants.

Solar water heater.

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4.0 BUILDING DESIGN EXAMPLES

4.1 106-108 Madison Avenue

Existing Conditions

- Remove siding & shingles
- Restore original 2nd floor windows
- Restore original entrances
- Restore 2nd floor entrance
- Remove metal & shingled awnings
- Utilize canvas/fabric awnings
- Streetscape of lights, trees & site furnishings

4.2 West Side of Square

Existing Conditions

- Remove metal canopies
- Restore original 2nd floor windows
- Restore original entrances & storefront windows
- Use more compatible paint colors
- Remove paint from masonry facade
- Utilize canvas/fabric awnings
- Streetscape of lights, trees & site furnishings

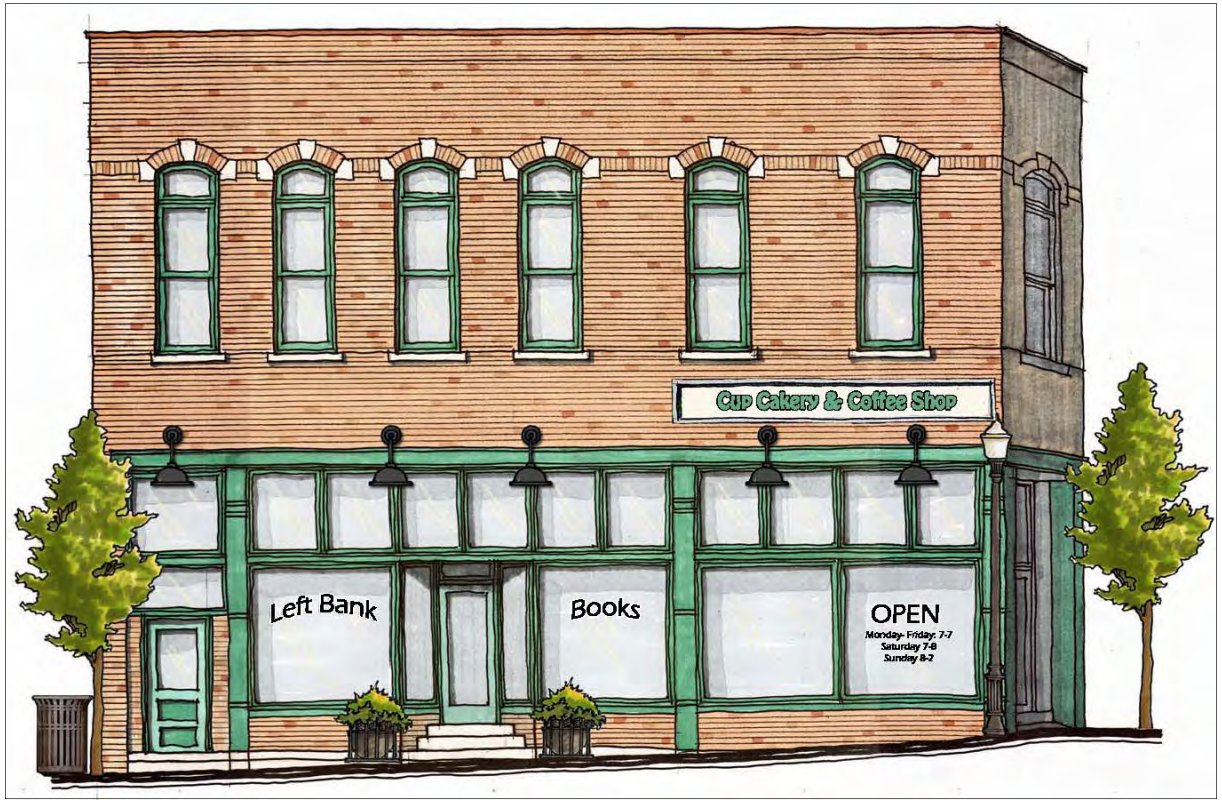
4.3 1-13 W. Olive Street

Existing Conditions

- Remove frame & metal canopies
- Restore original 2nd floor windows
- Restore original entrances & storefront windows
- Use more compatible paint colors
- Utilize canvas/fabric awnings
- Streetscape of lights, trees & site furnishings

4.4 228 S. Madison Avenue

Existing Conditions



- Remove wood from transom & brick
- Restore original 2nd floor windows
- Restore original entrances & storefront windows
- Restore transoms
- Restore 2nd floor entrance
- Streetscape of lights, trees & site furnishings

5.0 STREETSCAPE DESIGN GUIDELINES

The term Streetscape typically refers to exterior public spaces located between the building facades on one side of the street and the building facades on the other side of the street. An organized streetscape with combined lighting and way-finding signage is more efficient and user-friendly for visitors to Downtown Aurora.

5.1 Street Improvements

To create a friendly pedestrian atmosphere conducive to a civic and retail presence, the vehicular traffic around the square may require calming efforts. A review of existing streets and traffic lanes may yield areas where widths can be reduced and landscaping elements added. These techniques will help pedestrians to feel much safer crossing the street, as well as, quieting the street activity in consideration of outdoor strolling and dining.

5.2 Design Coordination

A comprehensive design approach to the Downtown will result in a more successful project. A district can display a sense of order and rhythm through the repetition of design elements on buildings and street furnishings. A sense of arrival should exist upon entering the Downtown.

- Downtown should have well lighted and maintained streets and sidewalks. Special attention should be given to the main entries and corridors as these will be the first impressions of Downtown.
- Good, clear directional signage provides an invitation to enter, navigate Downtown, and visit attractions.
- Establishing uniformity in streetscape furnishings helps to give a visual cohesiveness to Downtown.

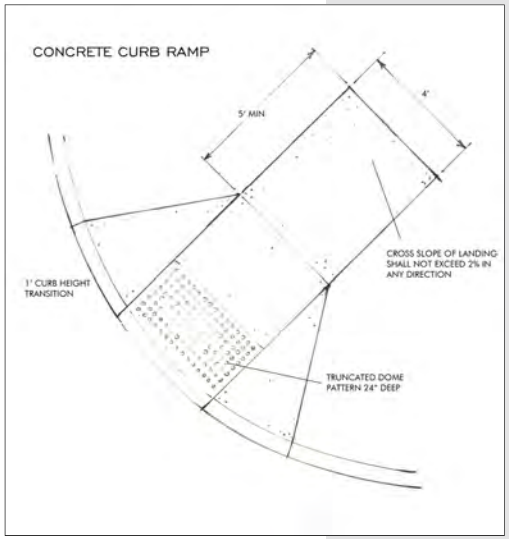
5.3 Infrastructure

- Curbs should be in good repair and a consistent material along the street. There should be no gaps or areas of uneven elevation along the curb line. All street intersections should be ADAAG compliant.
- Poorly working or non-existent storm drains can create an undesirable situation at street intersections when stormwater runoff collects in pools, making pedestrian access virtually impossible.
- A public works project should be considered in connection with any other work such as sidewalk, curbs or street pavement to minimize street closings and maximize cost savings through economies of scale.
- Overhead electrical and telephone lines may pose a visual distraction from the overall unity of Downtown. Although costly, relocation of overhead utilities should be considered, especially with each new development/ redevelopment project.

5.4 Accessibility

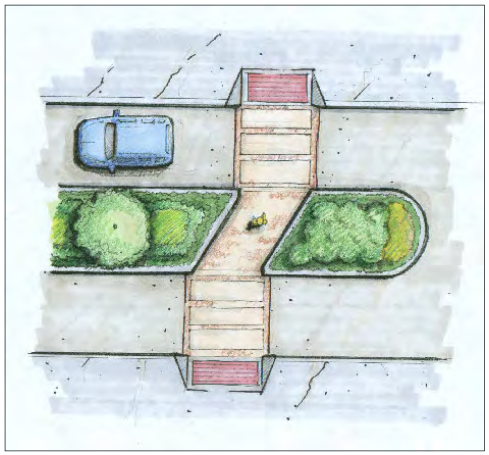
Accessibility on public sidewalks is required by law, as per the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). Without the required curb ramps, sidewalk travel in urban areas is dangerous, difficult, and in some cases impossible for people who use wheelchairs, scooters, and other mobility aids. Curb ramps allow people with mobility impairments to have access to sidewalks and buildings.

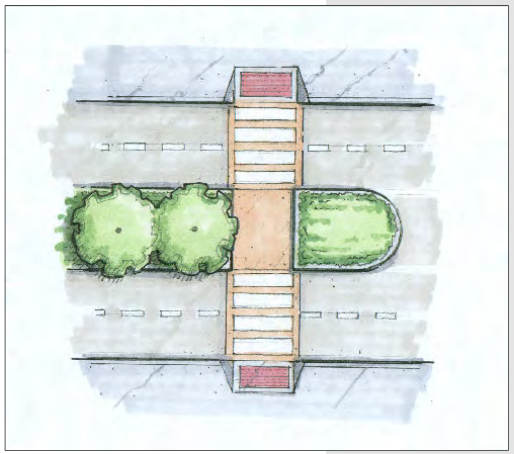
When streets and roads are newly built or altered, they must have ADAAG compliant ramps wherever there are curbs or other barriers to entry from a pedestrian walkway. Likewise, when new sidewalks are built or altered, they must contain compliant curb ramps wherever they intersect with streets or roads.



5.5 Pedestrian Access and Sidewalks

- A clean, clear, and well lighted pathway for pedestrians should be provided from any remote parking area to Downtown. This pathway will should be ADAAG compliant throughout its length.
- Sidewalks should run continuously through an entire block to create a clearly defined pedestrian pathway that minimizes conflicts between people and vehicles.
- All roadway crosswalks should be clearly marked with signage and striping.





Illustrations to suggest sidewalk alignment and ramp construction.

5.6 Fountains

The introduction of fountains could enhance Downtown by creating mini-plazas. These fountains could be simple bubblers out of the sidewalk that provide a refreshing respite in the summertime. Downtown fountains should only include natural water (no coloring), be included on a routine maintenance schedule, and be located in highly visible areas.

Examples of fountains

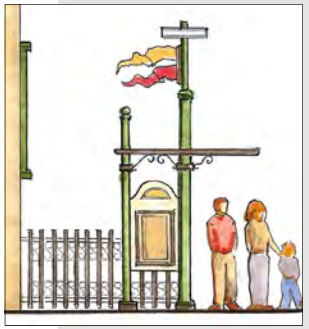
5.7 Signs and Banners

Signage should be used to identify, define, and promote Downtown and its activities. Individual building and business signage discussed in Section 2.9 and wayfinding techniques will be addressed in Section 6.0. Basic guidelines for effective usage of street signs and banners includes:

- Street name signs should be chosen and installed that are distinctively different from the street name signs located in the rest of the community. This will reinforce a "feeling of place" in Downtown. The style of the street name and street address signs should complement if not match completely. The style, font, and colors of these signs should be easily read.
- A historic plaque building address sign can provide a very elegant touch. Merchants can be encouraged to adopt the same type of address plaque.
- Murals on buildings should be reviewed by the City to ensure quality of composition and specification.
- Regulation & Directional Signage should be combined when possible.
- Temporary banners should be restricted as to size, prevalence, and length of display. Seasonal banners or decorations approved by the City can create seasonally festive streets. Brackets on light poles are the preferred method of installation of banners. These banners can also add a sense of excitement while providing information about upcoming events or festivals. The banner brackets used for these banners should be maintained by the City and only for use by the City. Banners should be well designed and are most effective with a simple design, repeated throughout Downtown, minimal lettering, and no sponsor panels. Banners should be changed on a regular schedule and replaced as needed. Banners which have been faded or worn due to long term use, should be replaced.

Examples of existing Aurora street signage

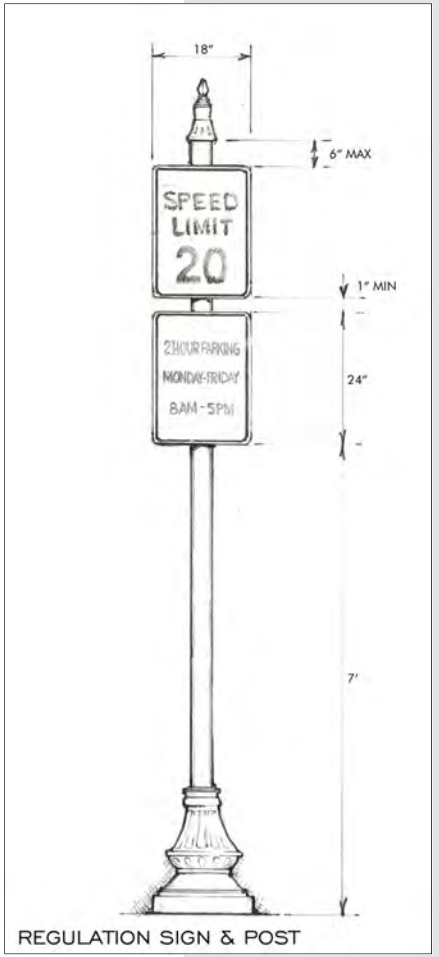
Illustration of a celebratory street banner



5.8 Parking and Service Areas

- Adequate parking to support Downtown business and retail tenants must be provided. Street parking will accommodate some, but likely not all, of the required parking spaces.
- Well lit and landscaped parking lots on previously vacant property near Downtown is a good solution for additional parking spaces.
- Provide planting buffers at the edges of parking lots or use decorative paving to define the lot. Wayfinding signage and clear message regarding a public parking lot are also required.
- Include landscape islands throughout the lot. This will improve the aesthetics as well as minimize stormwater runoff.
- Side or rear locations off of the main streets are preferred for parking lots. Clear, well lighted pathways for pedestrians from these lots should be provided.
- The street, alley and sidewalk pavement should be in good condition with no tripping hazards for pedestrians.
- Crosswalks should be clearly marked and free of landscaping and other obstacles to provide a clear view for traffic.
- Care must also be taken that lots are policed in the evening as they will tend to become a security concern from some patrons.

Buffer the edges of parking lots with landscaping

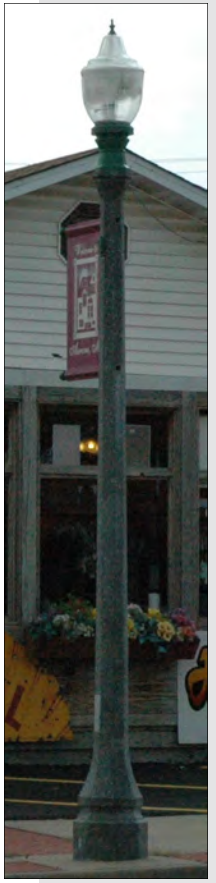


REGULATION SIGN & POST

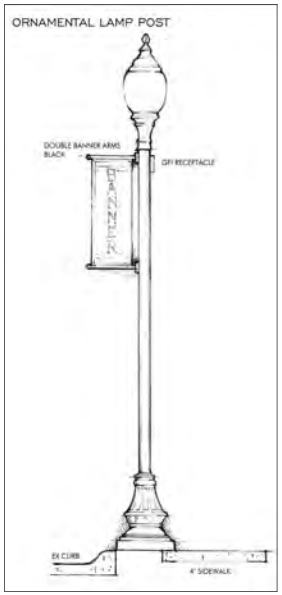
5.9 Lighting

Downtown street lighting should provide the minimum illumination required by the Missouri Department of Transportation for the road surface which it is lighting. Lighting should also enhance the pedestrian and nighttime image of Downtown Aurora. Some guidelines for Downtown lighting include:

- The sidewalks should be provided with pools of light at a higher level of illumination than the roadway. Street lighting should be on a pedestrian height pole and project light down onto the sidewalk, not out into second floor windows.
- An overall lighting design strategy should be developed to ensure proper lighting levels. Such a plan should not neglect parking areas, rear entrances, or alleys.
- Lighting should be uniform in style, type, height, and brightness throughout Downtown. The style used in the current streetscape plans should be continues as a theme throughout Downtown Aurora.
- Storefront lighting can add to the pedestrian walkway illumination, but care must be taken that this lighting does not conflict with the street lighting.
- Light poles with brackets for banners or electrical outlets are effective in displaying temporary or seasonal, City approved, banners and decorations.



Current Downtown Aurora Street Lighting

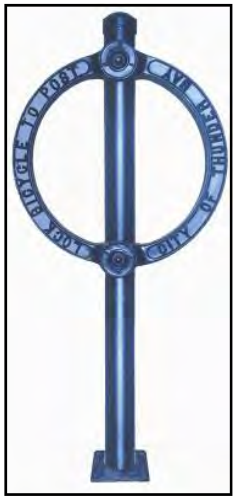


5.10 Site Furnishings

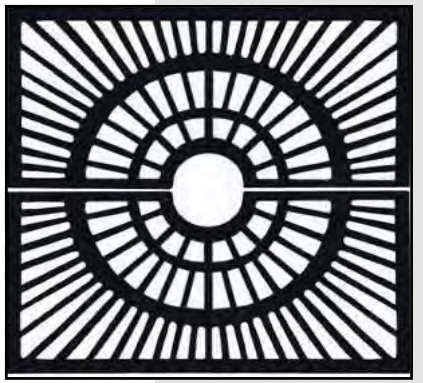
- Furnishing should be coordinated with light and sign poles to present a unified theme. Furnishings will invite people to walk around and linger in Downtown. Grouped together, site furnishing will enhance Downtown and provide a gathering place for pedestrians.
- Benches within the streetscape should strike a balance between encouraging social interaction (facing the street) and encouraging shopping (facing the stores).
- Planters and window boxes provide color and can be a volunteer opportunities if maintained by a local club or organization.
- Public art and sculpture can provide an inspirational atmosphere which people enjoy.
- Trash receptacles provide a place to dispose of potential litter, helping keep Downtown clean and tidy.





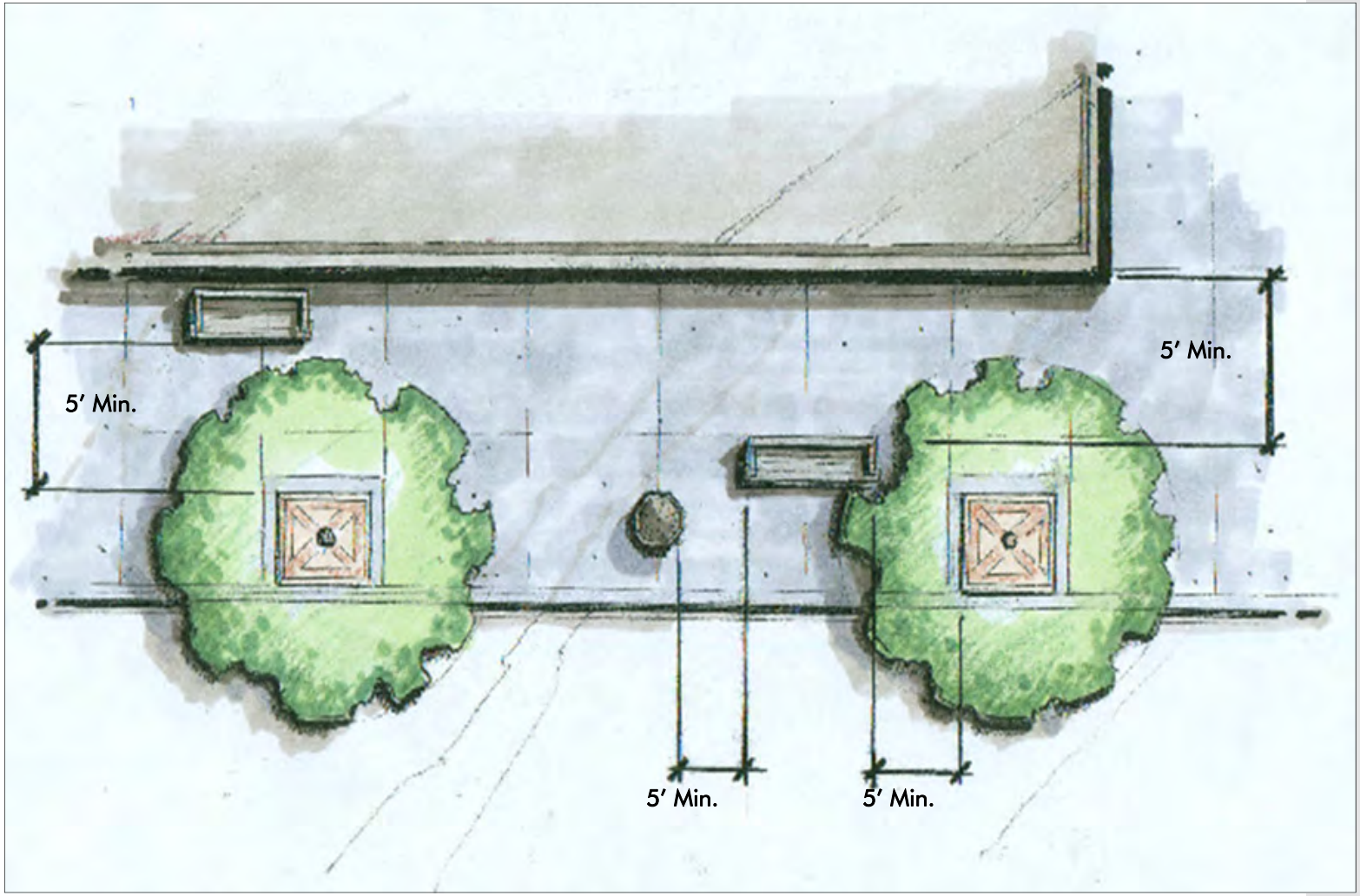






PGAV PLANNERS

- The minimum distances shown represent suggestions for site furnishing placement. Actual distances may vary due to site conditions.

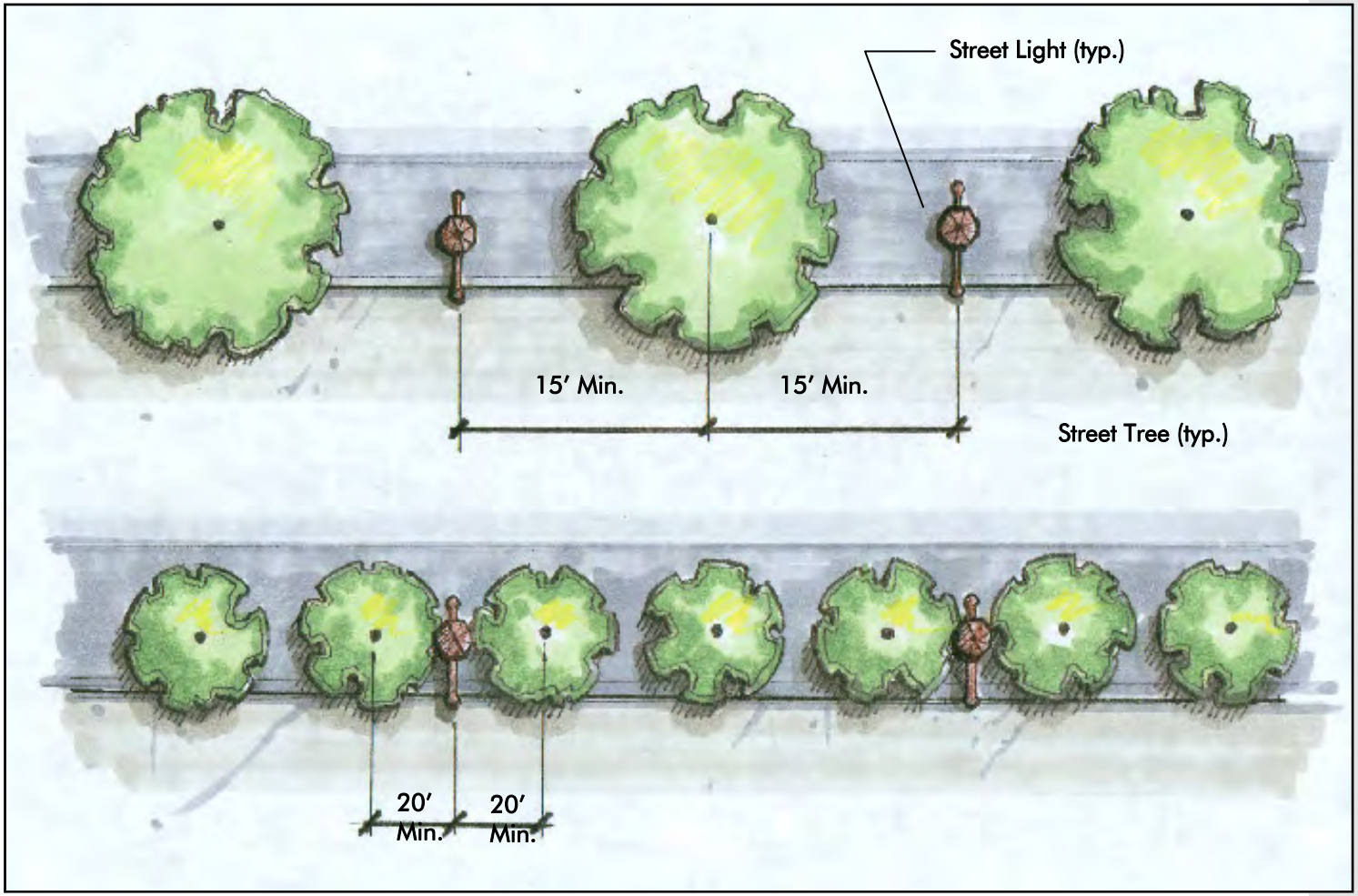


5.11 Landscaping

- Landscaping zones can be identified along side streets to complement the building façades along the main streets.
- When landscaping in front of a business, movable planters should be considered where no available landscape strip is present. Planters and other fixtures should never be placed in the pedestrian pathway but rather immediately adjacent to buildings or curbs.
- Trees work best when planted in groups or islands where they can thrive on larger volumes of soil and should be of a hardy variety, common to the region. Trees should also be specified at a size which will allow a minimum of seven feet of clearance before any lateral branching begins. The canopy of the tree should be considered to avoid excessive roosting of birds and trees that produce fruiting berries should be avoided to reduce maintenance of sidewalks. Trees should also be chosen with downward growing roots, not lateral roots that will damage surrounding pavement.
- Shrubs should also be of a hardy variety common to the region, but specified at a size which will allow a minimum of seven feet of clearance before any lateral branching begins. Shrubs should also be grouped in plantings of five to seven plants with no more than two different species within the same planting bed.
- Landscaping should be located in traditional areas of the Downtown business site. Areas along the front entrance help to draw customers to the front door of the business, while landscaping in the parking lots help define the businesses parking area. For residential buildings, plantings along fences, walks, foundations, and at porch edges are good locations.

Examples of landscaping in an urban environment.

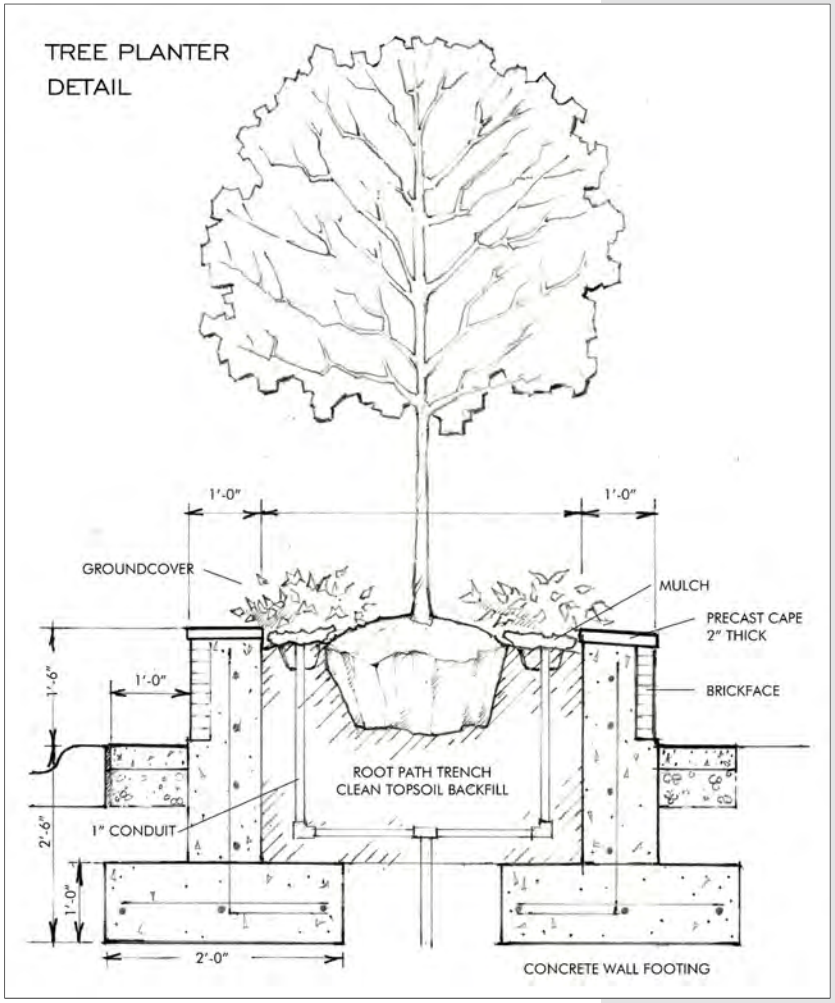
- The minimum distances shown represent suggestions for installation placement only. Actual distances may vary due to site conditions.
- Street Trees tend to be one of the most controversial streetscape elements, but they are well worth the trouble. The natural feeling provided by correctly placed, selected, and cared for trees is critical to connecting with pedestrians.



5.12 Tree Planter

Quality design and installation of tree planters will help ensure the healthy growth of street trees and visually enhance Downtown. Listed here are some specifications which help to achieve this goal:

- Hot dip galvanized dovetail anchor slots.
- 1"-4" O.C. Max horizontal spacing around perimeter of concrete planter wall for 3/16".
- Galvanized, triangular—shaped wire ties sized to extend within 1" of exterior masonry.
- Root path trench, backfilled with 70% sand/30% soil mix.
- Jet water in layers to settle and mycorrhizal fungi to soil next to root ball (1 packet per 1" caliper tree).
- Guy wire to be 12 gauge, double strand and twisted. Hose to be 5/8 reinforced rubber garden hose of one color.
- Extend hose a minimum of 2" beyond any trunks and branches for protection from wire.
- Use metal stakes, 2 per tree, at 180 degrees.



5.13 Rain Gardens

Rain Gardens are low-lying landscape beds designed to collect rainwater from adjacent impervious areas. A properly designed and installed Rain Garden will ease the load of the existing storm sewer system and reduce erosion and pollution. Rain Gardens also help to facilitate filtration and absorption of rainwater back into the ground. Rain Gardens require proper design and plant selection for maximum efficiency and reduced maintenance costs. Careful consideration to these factors will reward Downtown Aurora with significant environmental impacts for a low cost. Even small Rain Gardens can have a large impact on storm water run-off. General recommendations for Rain Gardens include:

Examples of Downtown Rain Gardens from Portland, Oregon.

- Low maintenance native plants are recommended due to their greater tolerance for climatic and soil conditions, as well as extreme moisture.
- Design Rain Gardens to also provide aesthetic benefits to the streetscape.
- Rain Gardens should be located so that they do not create an obstacle for street cleaning and maintenance vehicles.
- As with any landscape bed, regular weeding and clearing of litter is required.
- Rain Gardens can typically replace existing landscape beds so as to not require a reduction of parking spaces.
- Species that have trouble thriving should be immediately removed and replaced.
- The City should consider the use of porous pavement in nearby parking areas to help reduce the amount of overall standing water impacting Downtown.
- Rain Gardens should be viewed as a treatment for storm water before it enters the water system.
- Access to conventional drainage systems should be maintained to prevent flooding during heavy storm periods.
- Curb inlets should be provided to allow water to enter and exit the Rain Garden if necessary. The curb inlets should be tapered to minimize damage from maintenance vehicles.

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6.0 WAYFINDING

6.1 Wayfinding Principles

Wayfinding is an indispensable tool for directing travelers to destinations and creating a positive first impression. The term wayfinding was originally coined by Kevin Lynch in his 1960 book *The Image of the City*. Lynch presented the concept that people use a cognitive map to move through their environment to their destination. Wayfinding is a system to assist travelers in interpreting their cognitive maps. The goal of a wayfinding system is to make the journey to a destination as transparent and seamless as possible. By taking a comprehensive approach in developing the wayfinding system, a community can reinforce its unique identity and sense of place. This approach should include design and building codes centered on four primary aspects:

Architecture:

- Visual clues of buildings and other features of a street aid people in knowing their location and the direction of their destination without the use of signage.
- Strong architecture serve as landmarks and orientation points. These points are often destinations as well as starting points and other wayfinding techniques should exploit this aspect.
- Buildings themselves have visual aids that draw our eyes to where we expect an entrance or a shop window to be located.

Sight Lines:

- The motorist will feel most comfortable in maintaining visual contact with his or her destination and will want to make as few direction changes as possible.
- Clean, clear lines down streets at key intersections should be maintained.
- Avoid allowing buildings to encroach or block these lines.
- Repetitive landscaping and furnishings can enhance and draw the eye down these streets, but care must be taken that these items do not obstruct important navigational landmarks.

Wayfinding kiosks can be an easy to spot element of the Downtown pedestrian system.

<u>Lighting:</u>

- Lighting can be used to encourage routes and pathways.
- Warmly lit sidewalks and streets draw the customer onward. Warmly lit storefronts and entrances draw the eye and provide the customer with the information needed to get to the business.
- A repetitive line of lighting can be a very effective navigation tool.
- Poor lighting causes missed information and leaves an unsafe impression.

<u>Signage:</u>

- Uniform signage at important decision points is a critical element of downtown wayfinding.
- Excessive signage will lessen the effectiveness of individual signs. Fewer, easy to read, appropriately placed signs are preferred.

6.2 Wayfinding Components

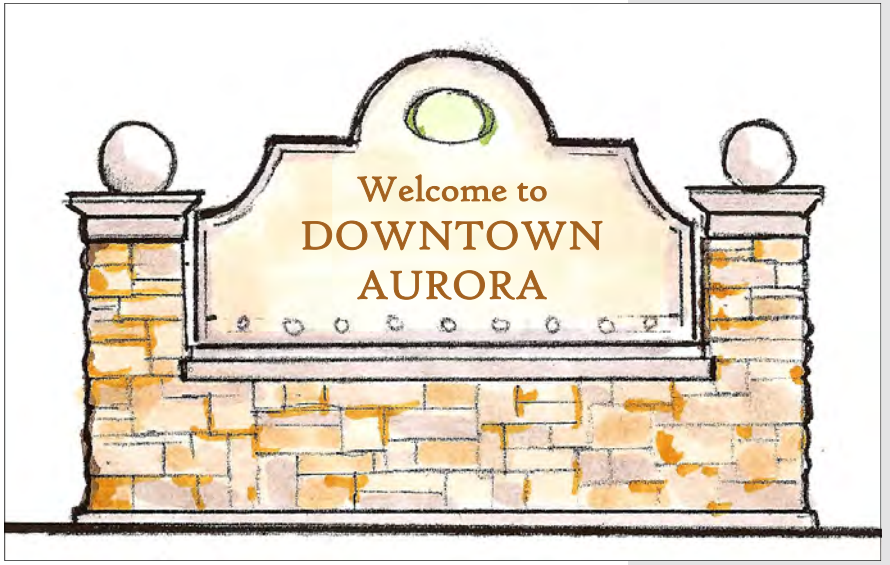
Wayfinding systems create an arrival sequence to Downtown. The system consists of common-themed signs, of various types that direct travelers to attractions. All too frequently existing wayfinding systems are inadequate. Typical problems with wayfinding systems include:

- Lack of accuracy, with arbitrary sign location.
- Visual clutter from too many signs.
- Lack of focus in directing traffic to Downtown.
- Diffuse allocation of signs, across many entrances.
- Signs that lack charm, or are standard Department of Transportation signage.
- Routes actually direct travelers around Downtown.
- Signs are too small with inconsistent sizes, colors, and types.
- Signs are too wordy and hard to read.

Wayfinding Signage
(Webster Groves, Missouri)

Components of successful systems seamlessly integrate the visitors experience with the messages needed to navigate around Downtown. These components include:

- Primary Gateway Sign—Serves as the "Welcome" to a visitor, creating the first impression of the community. The sign should be significant, serving as a landmark. Downtown Aurora does not have these signs.
- Traffic & Directional Signs—As unobtrusive and attractive as possible, while still meeting Department of Transportation guidelines for safety. Traffic signs must be developed using the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) published by the Federal Highway Administration. This type of public signage was discussed in **Section 5.7 Signs and Banners on page 37.**
- Trailblazer Sign—Utilitarian purpose combined with unique branding and design elements. Downtown Aurora attractions to consider as destinations on Trailblazer Signs include Government Offices, the City Library, parking, and the main shopping area. These signs should be located at or near key transportation nodes.
- Proximity Signs—In close proximity of attractions, these signs direct visitors through their final few steps to the destination.
- District Gateway Sign—Creates a boundary for a particular district within the Downtown, such as a Historic District. These signs can be used within the district to be defined and should reflect the size, scale and character of the existing architecture of the district.



Example of a proposed Primary Gateway Sign

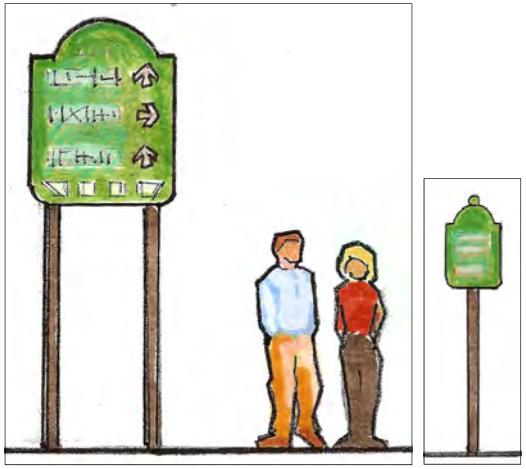


Illustration of a trailblazer sign at left and a proximity sign at right.

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7.0 IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Recommendations

The first step towards implementing the recommendations contained in this report is to build public support and understanding of Downtown Aurora. Effectively communicating the benefits of well designed and maintained Downtown buildings and streetscape improvements is critical. An understanding of these benefits will help mitigate any opposition. Explaining the positive impact to the community as a whole, beyond Downtown will help to garner broader support. Strategically maintaining visibility for Downtown will keep these recommendations and the overall Downtown revitalization program moving forward. Other recommendations regarding Downtown design, include:

- Main Street Aurora and the Aurora Historical Society need to promote the benefits of historic rehabilitation. The process to adopt these design guidelines or to designate a historic district in Downtown Aurora will require an understanding of what is expected of businesses and property owners. This effort should be approached carefully and include plenty of public input, as well as information regarding incentive programs that the City can use to help historic projects.

- The City should develop a Wayfinding system and add this component to the existing Downtown streetscape plans. Main Street Aurora could charge a subcommittee of its group with the project oversight. The committee should meet with major attraction owners/managers, tourism officials, government officials to discuss which attractions should be included in the signage system. Likely sites for the gateway monument signs should also be identified. Armed with cost estimates, the City can seek funding and Main Street Aurora can raise donations with the end goal of contracting with a sign company to develop the appearance, manufacture and installation of the signs.

- Main Street Aurora should begin the process of identifying banks interested in participating, along with the City, in a Building Façade Renovation program. Such a program can consist of low-interest loans funded by banks and also include grants for specific façade improvements. All façade renovations that receive an incentive should be consistent with the concepts expressed within this report. This program can also be coupled with the City's Business Assistance Program and other State incentives.

The City should review its codes, ordinances, enforcement practices and development policies to see if adjustments or improvements are necessary. Effective practices and regulations deal with issues including:

- Code enforcement should address more than safety concerns. City staff should work to resolve minor maintenance issues, that may be primarily aesthetic in nature, before they become major structural problems.

- Promote the conservation and efficient use of resources. "Green" and other energy efficient, innovative building methods should be considered and can be required through codes.
- Ensure that building codes are firmly, and fairly, enforced. This will demonstrate to future developers that their development risk will be minimized because the City of Aurora will insist on high-quality construction.
- The City should show that it can be flexible if reasonable variations will not compromise quality or other construction aspects. Any governmental process needs to be able to bend for unusual situations.

The entire community of Aurora, needs to understand that in order to create the resources that will ultimately achieve the goal of a successfully revitalized Downtown, additional taxes, districts, or legislation may be required. Main Street Aurora should promote the benefits of these additional mechanisms for Downtown.

Main Street Aurora should also work with the City and Chamber to develop a sponsorship program whereby individuals or businesses can "buy" specific street furnishings for public use. A catalog can be printed that will show the costs of items, which should include installation and a plaque with a message from the sponsor. The City should do all installations and will maintain ownership.

Main Street Aurora can also develop a formal "Adopt-a-spot" program whereby the burden to maintain Downtown landscaping can be shared with civic groups and clubs. The City should supervise, but allow the volunteers freedom to install flora, remove litter, and do other minor repairs and clean-up on a regular basis. The City should also post a plaque indicating the adopting group and the Chamber and Main Street Aurora should recognize the groups in newsletters and other opportunities.

APPENDIX A: SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION
(36 CFR Part 67)

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.