

AURORA LINE

urban unexpected.

2015



City Center

Station Area Plan

City of Aurora

10/28/2015

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Preface

This document is one in a series of station area plans prepared by the city to promote transit-oriented development (TOD) around the transit stations. Its policy directions are derived from the **2009 Aurora Comprehensive Plan**. The intent of this plan is to identify opportunities for compact, mixed-use development that is transit-supportive, and to develop strategies to implement a common vision. Bringing property owners and the design team together to discuss challenges and opportunities and to create the vision for this area has been the over-riding goal of this plan.

This plan provides a vision for this station area. The fundamental concepts and land use framework are intended to be flexible. Property owners and developers can provide site plans that vary from the fundamental concepts and framework visions without necessitating amendments to this plan. Such alternatives must conform to the key principles for transit-oriented development as outlined in the **Aurora Comprehensive Plan** and must provide alternatives to the fundamental concepts and framework described in this plan in a manner that conforms to those key principles. Such alternatives should conform to the general design guidance and guidelines described in this plan.



Figure 1. Aerial view looking northwest over the City Center station area

I. Background Information

The planning, construction and opening of the I-225 light rail transit corridor is eagerly anticipated by businesses and residents in Aurora. The introduction of light rail stations provides opportunities for changes in land use, creation of employment districts and new residential neighborhoods. With the extension of the Aurora Line light rail line north from the Nine Mile station, there is the possibility to create a distinctive transit supportive area at the proposed Metro Center station. Eighty (80) acres of undeveloped land adjacent to the proposed station provide the opportunity to create a compact, mixed-use neighborhood within easy walking distance of the station.

Through the station area planning process, the city of Aurora worked closely with the Regional Transportation District (RTD), and adjacent property owners, to identify the planning principles that guided this plan, and the framework plan that is the result. This plan presents the vision developed with the stakeholders and RTD.

Since the late 1970s, Aurora City Center has been planned as a major government center. The new light rail platform construction is serving as a catalyst for this regional center which is undergoing major changes. At 772 acres, City Center has its own zoning district that promotes master planned development. Newer development includes the Aurora Municipal Center, the Arapahoe County Administrative Offices, the Aurora City Place retail center, the refurbishment of the Town Center at Aurora (formerly the Aurora Mall), and the construction of 450 higher density residential units. Alameda Avenue streetscape improvements were installed following the development of consultant prepared guidelines to create an overall City Center urban design theme. The master plan for the “Centerpointe” parcel (now branded as Metro Center) was approved in 2008 and development plans for the site are proceeding. The new RTD bus transfer station is operating and the site will also accommodate a new light rail station scheduled to open in 2016.

The plan is based on numerous historical planning efforts and stakeholder input and the outlined objectives are to:

- Develop a framework for compact concentration of transit supportive development in the station area;
- Project traffic circulation patterns, devise an appropriate street system and develop strategies to mitigate any negative transportation impacts to the surrounding uses and residential neighborhoods;
- Recommend a park-n-ride and bus transfer facility design that meets RTD objectives and also supports transit-oriented development;
- Identify direct, convenient and attractive pedestrian and bicycle connections to the station and surrounding development;
- Refine bus circulation patterns;
- Develop a drainage strategy with trail connections which is highlighted as an amenity and defines a unique sense of place; and
- Highlight the area’s unique identity as Aurora’s municipal center.

The project study area comprises the one mile surrounding the station platform and includes the municipal city and county center, regional shopping, retail and residential uses. The area is bounded by E. Exposition Avenue, E. Bayaud Avenue, S. Chambers Road and Interstate I-225. South and east from the station is vacant land under the ownership of Woodbury Group with a major Kaiser Permanente facility at the northeast corner of Exposition and Sable Boulevard and residential further south. To the north across Alameda Avenue is the City of Aurora’s Municipal Center which comprises the Aurora’s city hall, the main city library; the judicial center; and police headquarters along with City Center Park which contains the area’s primary regional pond and a segment of the High Line Canal trail. To the northwest is Aurora City Place, a lifestyle center with the Cedar Avenue Mainstreet, mid box retail and single building restaurant pads. Directly west towards I-225 is the Aurora Town Center, the City’s major regional mall operated as a Simon Mall under primarily single ownership with an assortment of out parcels of varying ownerships. The outparcel directly southwest of the platform is Aurora’s redeveloped movie theater. To the east is primarily vacant land owned by the Woodbury Group (coined “Metro Center) and the Arapahoe County facility at the southeast intersection of E. Alameda Avenue and E. Alameda Drive. See Figure 2. Primary Development Parcels below.

Greenfield/Infill Opportunity

There are over 80 acres of undeveloped land and redevelopment sites close to the station. It is centrally located near major employers in Aurora including healthcare and bioscience at the Anschutz Medical Campus, Health One medical center, and Fitzsimons Science District, with more than 40,000 professional employees. The station area is enhanced by its proximity to the High Line Canal Trail, Toll Gate Creek, City Center Park and civic center open spaces. An urban renewal area is established and incentives may be available for those developments to implement the Station Area vision.

Station Area Demographic Facts (2013):

Population within three miles: 162,047

Median age within three miles: 32.3

Number of Households within three miles: 61,229

Average household income within three miles: \$51,540

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

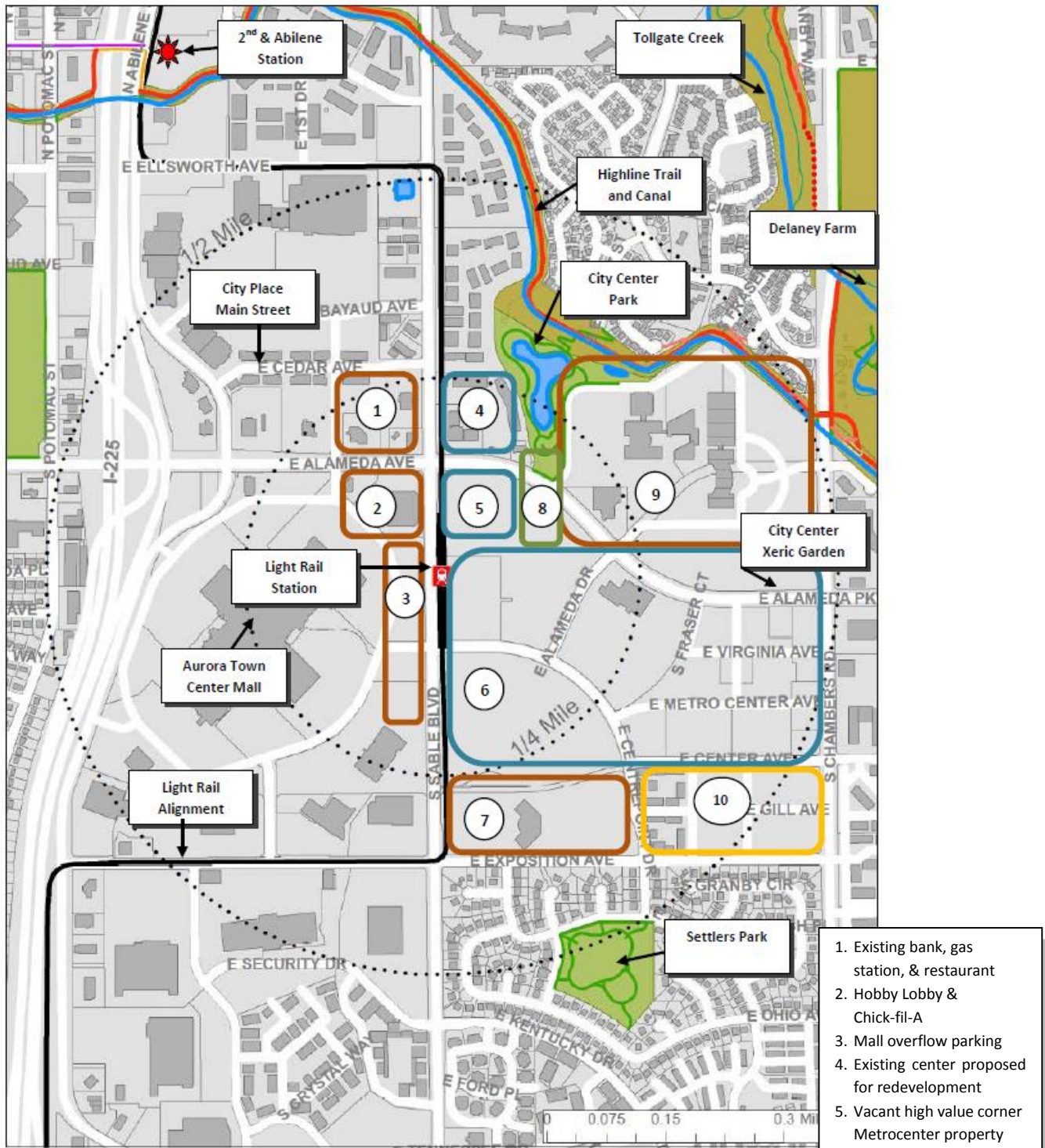


Figure 2. Primary Development Parcels

1. Existing bank, gas station, & restaurant
2. Hobby Lobby & Chick-fil-A
3. Mall overflow parking
4. Existing center proposed for redevelopment
5. Vacant high value corner Metrocenter property
6. Vacant Metrocenter property & County bldg.
7. Kaiser Permanente
8. Drainageway
9. Aurora Municipal Center
10. High density residential

Over the last 30 years, the city of Aurora, through its Council and citizens, has established a framework to create an intense and vibrant municipal core in City Center. City Center has consistently been planned by the City Council as a “*unique opportunity...to provide intense mixed-use development with excellent transportation service to and within a creatively planned center*”. City-wide economic and planning efforts since then have focused on the goal of developing Aurora’s dense core. Significant City tax dollars have been spent on various planning efforts, including:

- 1981 City Center *Zone District*
- 1981 City Center *Financial Feasibility Analysis* (BBC Consulting)
- 1982 City Center *Urban Renewal Plan*
- 1991 City Center *Future Direction*
- 1992 City Center *Existing Conditions Background Report*
- 1992 City Center *Market Feasibility Analysis* (THK Consulting)
- 1993 City Center *Special Study Session by Aurora City Council* (Design Workshop)
- 1994 City Center *Urban Design Plan*
- 1997 *Transit Oriented Communities Initiative* (case study on City Center); consultants)
- 1998 *Emerging Concepts for City Center* (new I-225/Alameda interchange)
- 2000 Aurora City Center Sketchpak (Communication Arts)
- 2001 City Center *Vision Statement* (new City Hall and plans for light rail)
- 2002 City Center *Light Rail Transit Study* (Civitas Consulting)
- 2005 *Aurora Centrepoin Master Plan* (dense, mixed use walkable downtown on 70 acres)
- 2009 City Center Urban Renewal Plan
- 2014 Metro Center Drainage Improvements
- 2014 Metro Center/RTD Parking Study
- 2015 DRCOG Transportation Improvement Program Award

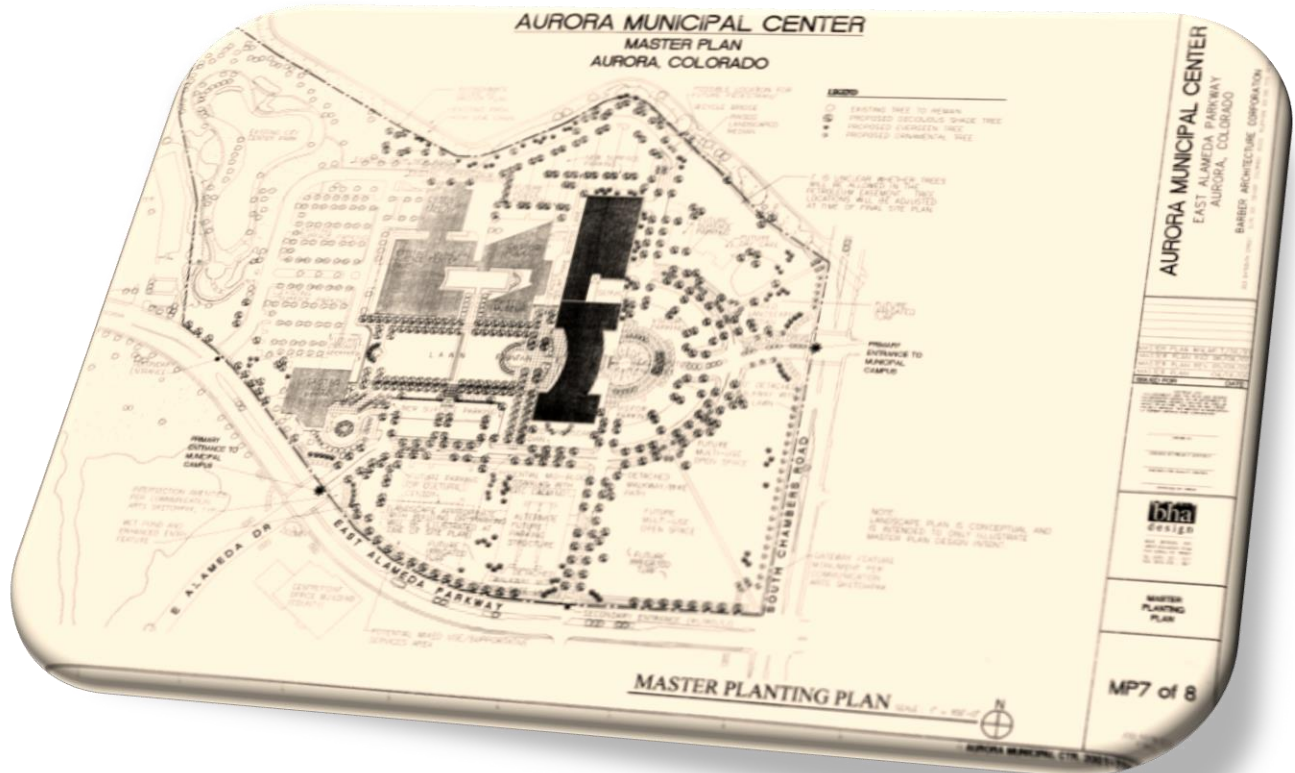


Figure 3. Aurora Municipal Center's Original Master Plan

In the past 10 years alone, over \$400 million has been invested in infrastructure improvements in City Center, including the I-225 and Alameda interchange, the new Municipal Campus, the Arapahoe County Service Center, several residential communities, Aurora City Place, the redevelopment of the Aurora Town Center, and the RTD bus transfer station constructed in June 2008. These investments have created the framework to develop City Center as a high-density, pedestrian-oriented center for Aurora, with mixed uses including residential, government, retail, office and multimodal transit. Long before an RTD light rail station was announced for this site, City Center was planned to be Aurora's intensive, mixed-use urban core, and a special zoning classification was established to ensure its implementation. With light rail, this vision is more viable than ever in the real estate market as a dense urban center. All of the peripheral components of a City Center are in place in this location, except the essential core.

RTD Aurora Line Update

The Aurora Line is a 10.5 mile light rail line with ten (10) stations which functions totally within the boundaries of the city of Aurora and will provide key regional connections. The transit services will connect Aurora residents and workers to three of the region's major employment centers, Anschutz Medical Campus, the Tech Center, and Buckley Air Force Base with ultimate connections to the Denver International Airport and downtown Denver. Initially, the funding for this portion of the light rail system had lagged for many years and the city did not foresee its completion until 2025.

This system is part of FasTracks, RTD's voter-approved plan passed on November of 2004 to expand transit service across the metro region. In 2009 RTD committed \$90 million to building the first segment from Nine Mile to the Iliiff Station. In the spring of 2013, the RTD Board of Directors approved a proposal from Kiewit Infrastructure Company to complete the full line and open it in 2016 with the ultimate investment within the city of Aurora being approximately \$685 million.



Figure 4. Light Rail Alignment

For the majority of the Aurora Line, the system aligns with the east side of I-225. During the planning stages from 2009-2012, RTD and the city of Aurora agreed to pull the light rail out of the I-225 right-of-way and into the City's heart, City Center, with its primary stop being the Aurora Metro Center Station. The line will divert to the east along Exposition Boulevard, then travel north along Sable Boulevard with its stop at Metro Center, and continue traveling along Sable Boulevard until Ellsworth Avenue where it will turn back west then north paralleling I-225 up to Abilene Station. This "horseshoe" segment is located within Aurora's designated City Center. The Aurora Metro Center station area is ripe with development possibilities, allowing for the creation of a unique and special urban place associated with the Metro Center infill development and adjacent redevelopment opportunities. See Figure 4. Light Rail Alignment above.

Existing Conditions

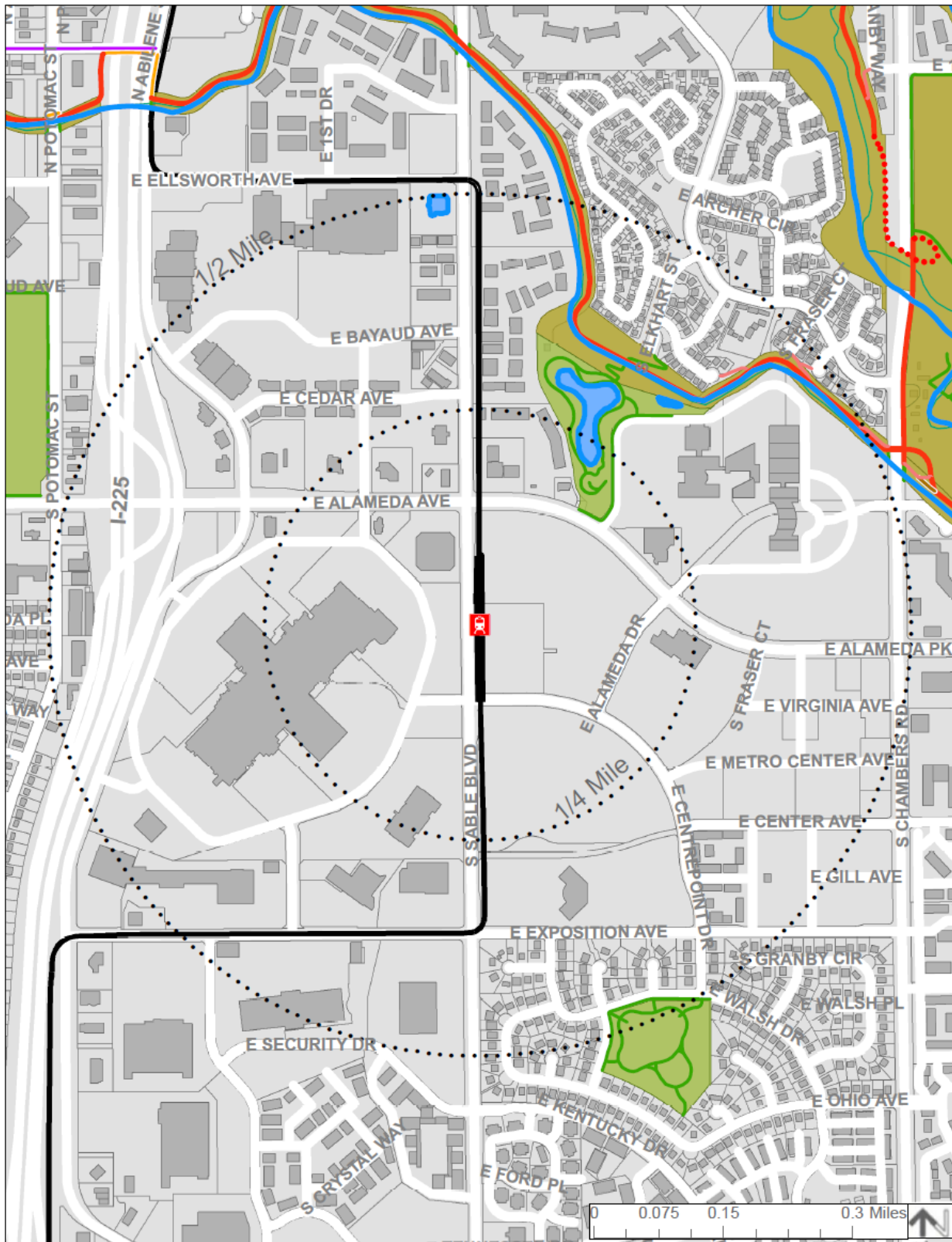


Figure 6. Existing Conditions

Area Attributes

This station area has several unique attributes. First, there are approximately 80 acres of undeveloped land that are under single ownership adjacent to the future station. This simplifies the development process, creating greater opportunity for new higher density development to be built to take advantage of the station's proximity. The Metro Center Station is located midway in the Aurora Line corridor with an estimated weekday boarding of 1,920 by 2020 and 2,850 by 2035, the second highest rate next to Peoria/Smith station. It is an area containing major public and private services and activities. The Aurora Municipal Center Complex is located across Alameda Parkway to the north of the study area. Major retail destinations, Aurora Town Center, Aurora Place and City Place are located across Sable Boulevard to the east. A significant Arapahoe County service center is located within the study area.



Figure 7. Sight line looking southwest to Metro Center from Aurora Municipal Center

There are numerous multimodal transportation and recreation systems that that serve City Center. These include:

- The Highline Canal and Tollgate Trail systems
- City Center Park
- Settlers Park
- Delaney Farm
- RTD's Bus Transfer Center
- Designated on street and off street bike routes

Proposed connections and improvements associated with the Aurora Line include:

- 2 Light Rail Stations (Metro Center and Abilene);
- New multi-use bike route along Sable Boulevard. extending north from Ellsworth near the Highline Canal to the south towards Florida Avenue;
- Florida Avenue bike lanes with connections over I-225 extending to Potomac where it will then traverses south to Jewell Wetlands ultimately connecting Toll Gate and Westerly Creeks using the new bicycle/pedestrian bridge being constructed with the Florida Station onto Cherry Creek; and
- A new streetscape urban design treatment adjacent to the new Metro Center Station rail alignment.

The study area and more specifically, Metro Center's single undeveloped property could be considered City Center's missing link and is positioned to become City Center's "green infrastructure and transportation hub".

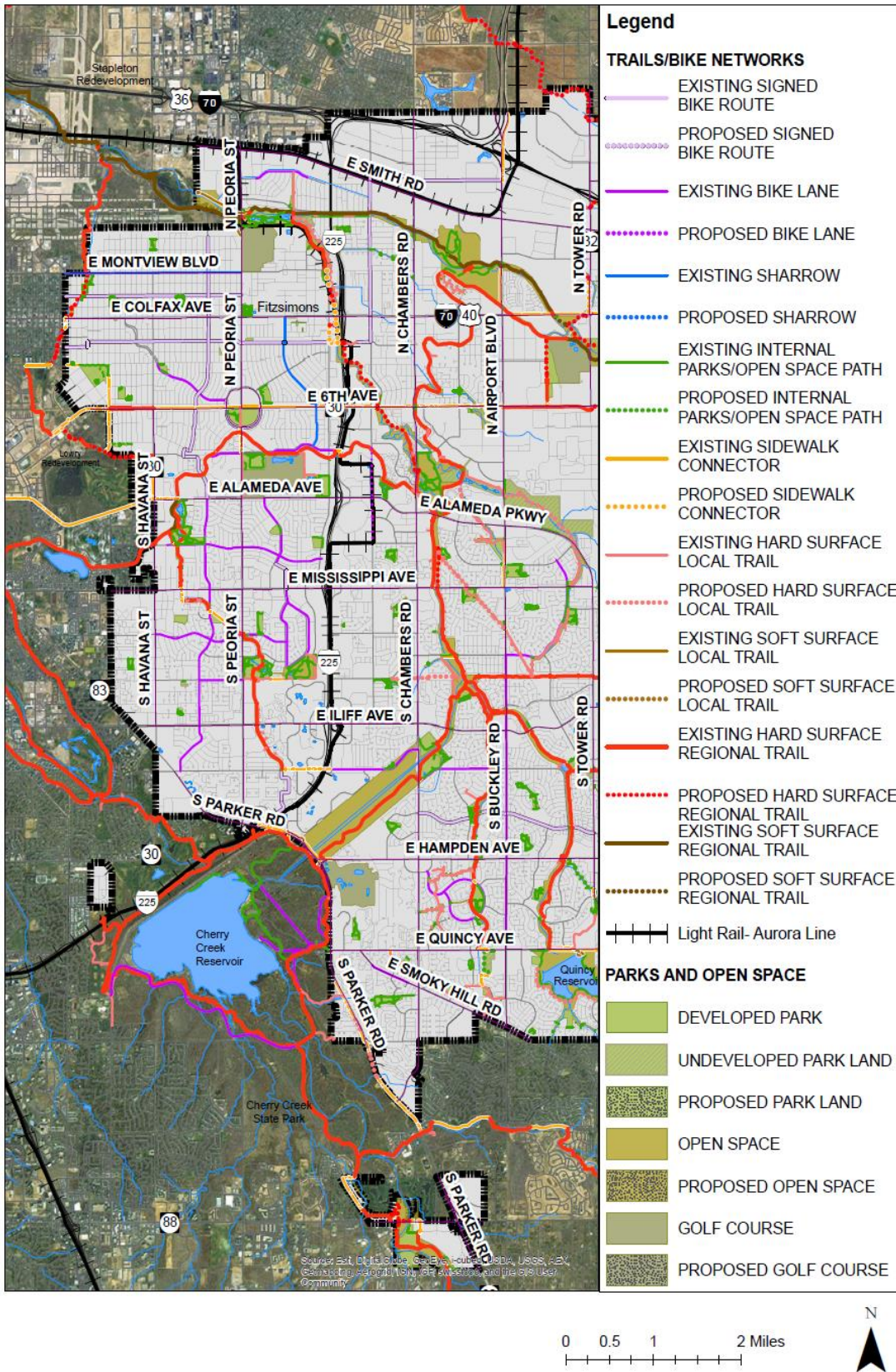


Figure 8. Surrounding Transportation and Recreational Systems

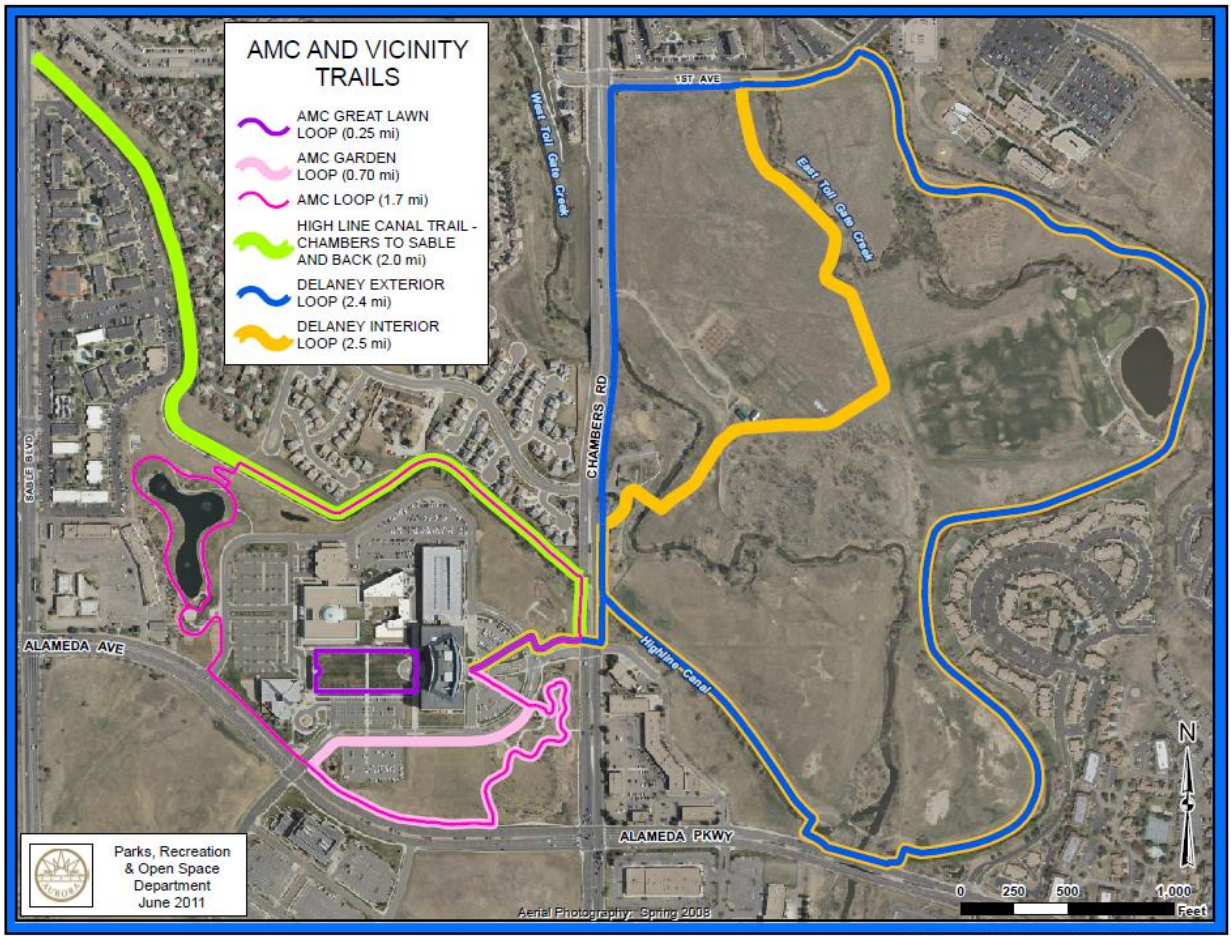


Figure 9. Existing City Center Parks and Trails (primarily north of Alameda)

Development Challenges

Among the challenges facing the study area are the following:

- A regional drainage way running through the northwestern portions of the Metro Center property area requires significant improvements, which are partially under construction.
- The existing City Center Park is isolated with difficult pedestrian/bike access to the south and west and is not integrated into the adjacent development parcels.
- The light rail line runs along the eastern boundary of the study area along Sable Boulevard, limiting pedestrian and vehicular access.
- The ultimate location and financial mechanism for a joint use Metro Center and RTD parking garage needs to be defined. This also anticipates the use of currently RTD owned parcels.
- There is a need to create a parking district within City Center that would incorporate on and off-street parking system to support commercial activities.
- There is a need for improved pedestrian, bike and vehicular connections across the arterial streets, Alameda Parkway and Sable Boulevard, which border or run through the study area.
- The existing City Center Zoning classification does not align with the established street grid; has an arbitrary, irregular shaped core boundary; and does not align with the evolving TOD goals for the immediate station area.

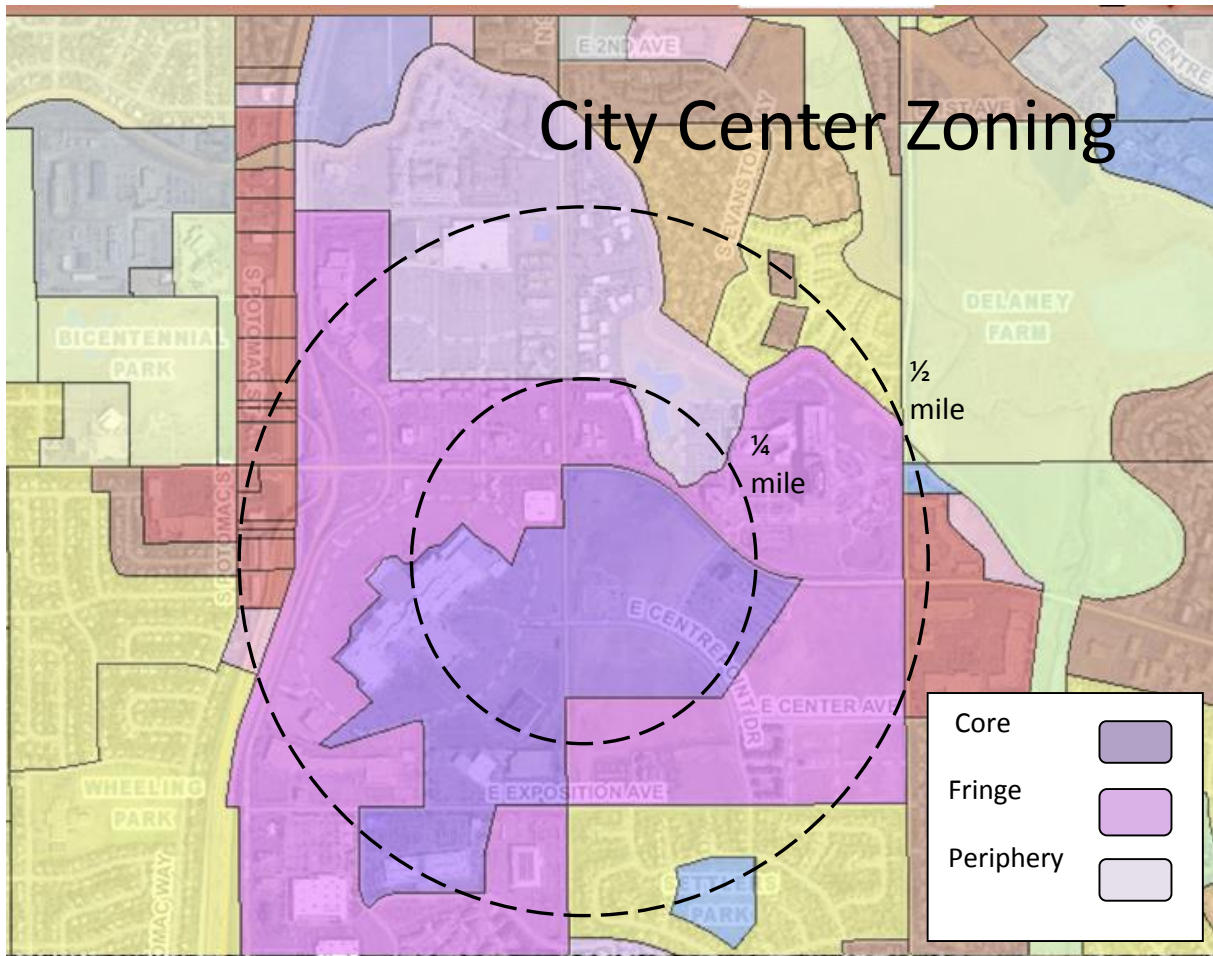


Figure 10. Existing City Center Zoning

Existing zoning around the station currently are three City Center Zone District classifications, Core, Fringe and Periphery. These zoning districts are defined in Section 146-700 of the Zoning Code as follows:

Core. The core is the central area of City Center where the greatest intensity of development shall occur. Major centers of employment and public facilities shall be functionally integrated with high density and commercial areas.

Fringe. Surrounding the core area is the fringe, containing uses in different proportions, and at a lesser density. Higher density residential uses are intended to comprise a greater proportion of the total development in the fringe than in the core, with lower densities in the fringe.

Periphery. The periphery is the outer area of the City Center surrounding the fringe and the core, and will be primarily residential. Commercial and office activity will be compatible with adjoining residential areas, and should be primarily intended to serve the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Unique development standards for each sub-district are detailed in the Zoning Code and while many of the same principles apply, the station area plan and associated TOD zoning will further identify the area surrounding Metro Center Station and help to achieve the long-term vision set forth in this plan.

II. The Plan

The City Center Station Area Plan builds on the long term vision for the station area by establishing a framework plan for development of a vital mixed-use core. The planning process has recognized key challenges and aims to minimize their negative or detrimental impacts. The development opportunities are centered on the lands identified in Figure 2. Primary Development Parcels. This is a practical, proactive plan that creates a unique identity for the station and a balanced approach to the competing demands for land by the station. Place making, parking, station access, drainage and high density development are the plan components that are balanced. The plan provides for a unique design to access the station with the establishment of a gridded street system, creation of a sense of place by means of public spaces, concepts for medium to high density development, and design elements that take advantage of the location in the City Center area. This station area planning process evaluated solutions to the challenges identified to lay the framework for taking the Aurora's City Center from vision to implementation, including an assessment of infrastructure needs.

The following documents and studies have informed and guided the development of this station area plan:

- 2005 Aurora Centrepoint Master Plan;
- 2009 City Center Urban Renewal Plan; (Does this need revision?)
- 2009 Aurora Comprehensive Plan;
- 2009 I-225 Corridor Environmental Evaluation (RTD);
- 2010 City of Aurora Strategic Parking Plan and Program Study;
- 2014 City Center Regional Drainage Study;
- 2014 Metrocenter Parking Garage Study; and
- 2015 DRCOG's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Award.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Key Principles

Through the planning process, the following key principles from the Aurora Comprehensive Plan shaped the development of the concepts.

1. TOD works as a "district". The one-half mile area around the transit station is the minimum area of influence from the transit station, which could extend as far as one mile. These areas can become new neighborhoods where development draws value from the transit stations, parks and plazas are gathering places, and the mix of uses allows pedestrians to easily reach their destinations.
2. TODs must be walkable. TODs are to create an urban scale where the pedestrian is important. Attractive and safe pedestrian connections are a priority in TODs.
3. Central spaces give identity to TODs. Public spaces are very important in TODs; parks, plazas and main streets that are beautiful and useful can become important identifying elements with the city of Aurora's Small Urban Parks (SUP) standards serving as an implementation tool.
4. TODs connect to the surrounding neighborhoods. The pedestrian network of the TOD should allow easy pedestrian connections to surrounding neighborhoods. The relatively small size of the blocks should allow for an attractive and convenient pedestrian experience.

5. Density is important. TOD should have density sufficient to create an active center for an existing or new neighborhood. Higher densities take advantage of the massive public investment in transit. Density also creates the potential for diversity of housing types, a range of land uses, and the possibility of neighborhood-serving retail. Density should transition from the highest densities in the core of the TOD around the transit station to lower densities next to existing residential neighborhoods.
6. Design matters. The quality of building architecture and the design of streets, parks and plazas are important elements that create the identity of a station area.
7. Promoting sustainability. Compact development promotes efficiency in infrastructure, and may require innovative urban approaches to detention and water quality.

Fundamental Concept

It is expected that development will initially occur on the undeveloped parcels, with the highest intensity uses closest to the station. Planned drainage improvements and trail connections will improve the capability of the station area to support higher densities. The fundamental concept (Figure 12. Concept Plan) provides a quick visual summary of the essential concept of the station area plan.

Over time the development of the pivotal vacant parcels within the plan area will serve as the heart of Aurora's City Center. Phasing and infrastructure planning are vital to the success of City Center and its primary development parcels (shown in Figure 2. Primary Development Parcels). The fundamental concept provides a visual summary of the essential components which include:

1. Urban Street Network

- A legible system of blocks and streets is essential to ensure that City Center is a walkable, convenient downtown.
- The provision of a uniform streetscape with a design palette that will aid in establishing the center as a distinct place (see Section V of this plan).

2. Regional Green Network/Public Spaces

- The focal point of City Center will be its regional open space that serves as:
 - The primary bike and pedestrian connection from the Metro Center Station to the Aurora Municipal Center and the city wide trail systems
 - The primary gathering area for residents of City Center
 - The primary open drainage system for City Center, resolving long term flooding conditions
 - The integration of Metro Center with City Center Park and its associated water feature
- Aurora Municipal Center (AMC) Memorial Park
 - As an extension of the AMC's on-site Xeric Demonstration Garden, a memorial park is planned to commemorate Aurora's 7-20 event. (Illustrated in Figure 11. AMC Xeric Garden & Memorial Park below)

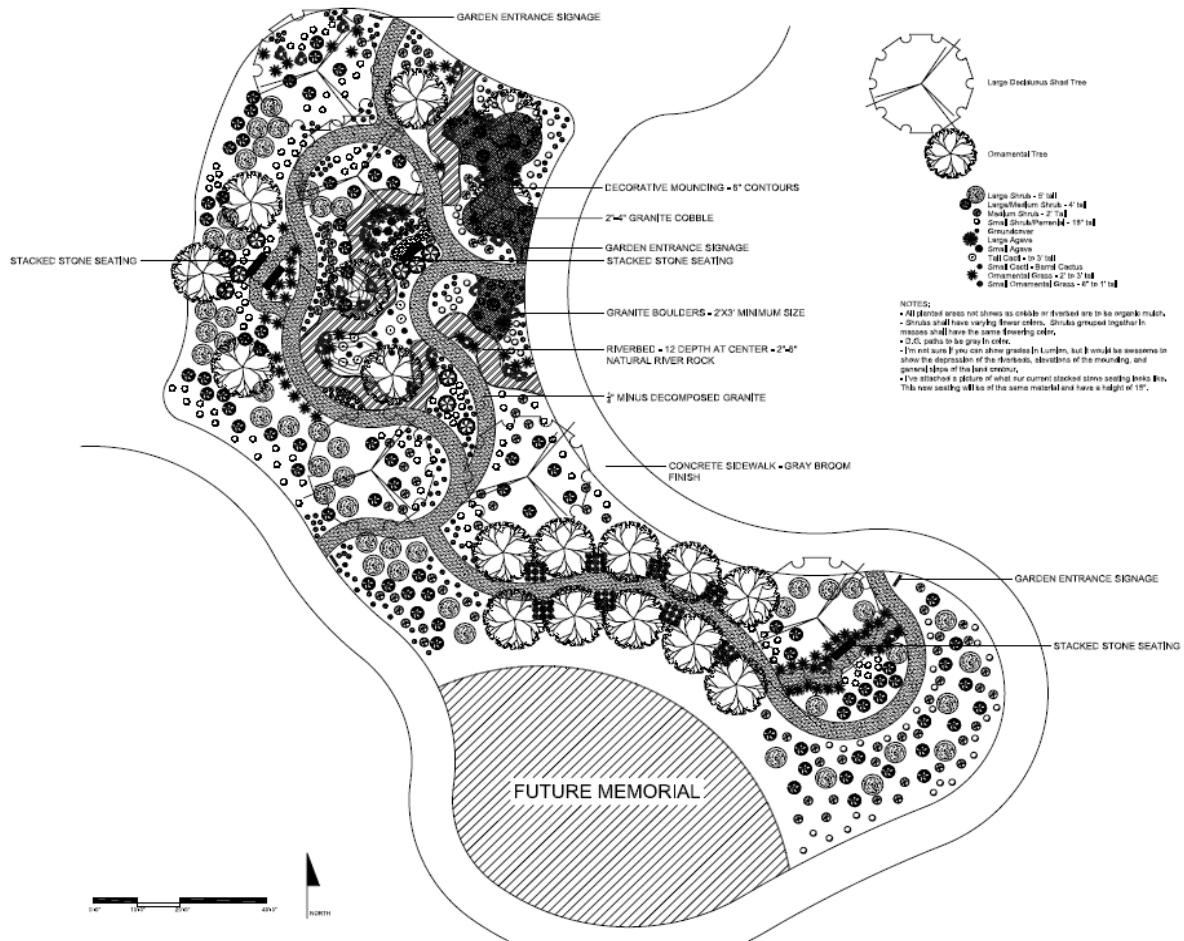


Figure 11. AMC Xeric Garden & Memorial Park

3. City Center Area Bike/Pedestrian Connector Facility

- A Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project was awarded in 2015 by the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) for this station area to improve access for bicyclists and pedestrians between the Aurora Municipal Center (AMC) Complex, the High Line Canal Trail, and the Aurora Metro Center Bus/Light Rail Station at Sable Avenue and Centrepont Drive. A completely interconnected bike and pedestrian system is vital for the integration of Metro Center and Aurora Municipal Center. Coordination with developers and Aurora Water is essential to link the bike and pedestrian systems with the Alameda underpass and associated drainage improvements, with direct connections to the AMC and Metro Center Station.
- New improvements around the existing lake/ water feature near the northwest corner of the Aurora’s Municipal Center property will be enhanced in association with City Center Park. This includes the removal an existing 6-foot wide concrete sidewalk that currently extends along the east side of the lake from the base of the High Line Canal embankment near the north end of the lake to a point near the south end of the lake which will be replaced with a 10-foot wide multi-use path. Improvements include:
 - Construction of a 10-foot wide sidewalk with lighting and vegetation from Alameda Avenue southwestwardly to the Metro Center Bus/Light Rail Station located at Sable Boulevard and Centrepont Drive.

- Construction of a new 10-foot wide sidewalk from the south end of the above-mentioned lake to Alameda Avenue.
- Construction of a 10-foot wide sidewalk along two sections of an existing parking lot that is located at the west side of the Aurora Municipal Center Complex in order to provide improved bicycle and pedestrian access from this parking lot to the previously mentioned High Line Canal Trail and the Metro Center Bus/Light Rail Station at Sable Boulevard and Centrepoint Drive.

4. Integration of the Light Rail Track System and Station into City Center

- Active ground floor land uses such as restaurants, coffee shops, and/or retail will be located directly adjacent to the station platform.
- The platform shall have direct access to Metro Center’s focal point, its primary greenway and public space, providing multiple functions such as the platform plaza, public art displays, drainage functions, trail connections and residential recreation.
- Interim parking associated with the station shall not inhibit future development of a permanent parking solution, envisioned as a multistory garage on top of the existing RTD bus transfer facility. RTD has agreed to defer the construction of surface parking, but an alternative option may need to be determined for opening day. Ultimately, the parking design should reflect accurate parking counts based on use, utilize shared and on-street parking within the station area and implement a creative, condensed parking solution with the intent of limiting large surface lots.
- Linkage of new and existing development with the construction of vital connections is essential—transit, light rail, bicycle, pedestrian, park, and drainage.

5. Sable and Alameda Intersection

- This high visibility intersection is considered to be the gateway to the station area and should serve as the primary architectural highlight of the district.
- Land uses at the Sable Boulevard and Alameda Avenue Intersection will have a defined layout that will facilitate high density, multi-story redevelopment over time. The vacant southeast corner may initially be developed as a one and two-story restaurant commons with a plan for increased density over time. It is envisioned that all four corners will ultimately house a minimum of three story development and form a gateway to the core of City Center.
- A new Alameda pedestrian underpass will extend from the intersection of Alameda Avenue and Alameda Parkway forming a new direct connection to City Center Park. It is envisioned that this connection will be part of a pedestrian and bicycle route which will eventually extend from the Park to Aurora City Place, onto the Aurora Town Center Mall and back to the Metro Center Station platform, tying into the existing trail system. This will create a new pedestrian circulation system giving the pedestrian the option to circulate on a route separated from automobile traffic, avoiding the very busy intersection of Sable Boulevard and Alameda Avenue.

6. Metro Center Main Street

- It is important that a defined main street be developed with buildings and public open spaces fronting the street with minimal building setbacks. The desired building forms along this street shall have active ground floor uses with on-street parking.
- The minimum building height along this main street shall be two stories or twenty-feet.

7. Mixed-Use Buildings with Active Edges

- Mixed-use is appropriate and desirable for the entire area indicated on Figure 12. Concept Plan below. However, frontages on the major arterials of Alameda Avenue and Chambers Road are generally more suitable for commercial uses.
- The buildings, particularly on Centrepont Avenue and other internal private and public roads, have active ground floor uses

8. Transit-Supportive Housing

- Residential uses are desirable within all the mixed-use areas and are particularly encouraged along the transit and park corridors, as well as along Sable Boulevard and Centrepont Drive. Residential buildings should range from four stories in height or taller closest to the station with a transition to lower urban townhomes as development extends to the periphery.

9. High Density/Redevelopment Conditions

- The overall goal of the station area plan is to enable the highest quality development and best use of the properties. Redevelopment and intensification of uses can occur over time throughout the study area. This goal translates to a gridded street system with the allowance of some initial low density conditions at the southeast corner of Alameda Avenue and Sable Boulevard. With the framework in place, it is intended that this corner serve as the premier City Center intersection with higher density reflective of the station area plan's objectives.

10. Strategic Light Rail Parking Placement and Management

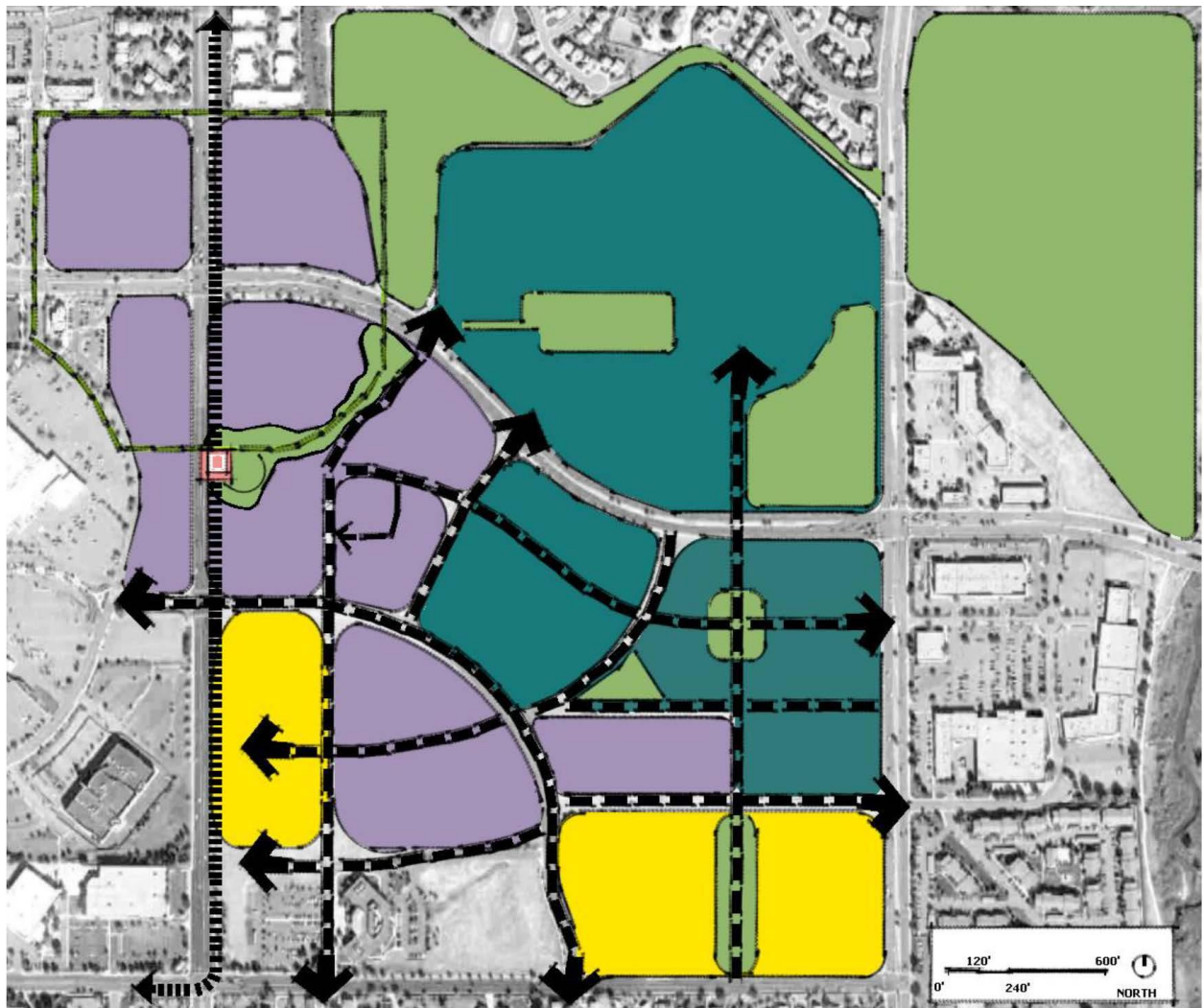
- A conceptual parking plan for the Metro Center Station was performed by SEM, Norris Design, and SA Miro in April of 2014. The City of Aurora had identified this essential plan component as an item for immediate resolution prior to the final design of the station platform by RTD. It summarizes that the optimal location for the Aurora Line parking at Metro Center would be in structured parking with a minimum of three levels and a ground floor dedicated to the existing, reconfigured bus transfer facility (see the Primary Components of a Metro Center Infrastructure Plan below).
- Shared parking is essential to maximize parking supply. The City of Aurora's Park & Mobility Manager will assist in efforts to manage and construct shared parking systems throughout the district with public parking being actively managed both on and off street.

11. City Center Public Realm and Metro Center Urban Form Design Standards

- Since City Center is envisioned as the City's downtown municipal core, it is essential that the public realm design elements be unified. This also applies to each master planned development. For private development, a set of uniform design standards complementing the City's standards for the public realm, must be submitted either prior to or with the required site plan. These private standards will be part of each required master plan (see Section V. Uniform City Center Public Realm Design Standards for specific requirements)

12. Infrastructure Phasing Plan

- As each subarea of a master plan is site planned, an associated public improvement plan should be submitted, identifying all required infrastructure, open space and park requirements. Clearly delineated phasing with triggers and accountability for each phase is required.









LEGEND			
	Mixed-Use		Commercial
	Residential		Park/Open
	Street Grid		Desired Future Walkway

Figure 12. Concept Plan

Primary Components of a Metro Center Infrastructure Plan

The City of Aurora as well as private and public stakeholders identified plan components that require immediate resolution based on the ambitious schedule defined by RTD for the construction of the Aurora Line. These components were identified as projects that require funding and implementation for opening day of the Metro Center light rail station. The following two studies were initiated in April of 2014 by the City of Aurora:

1. Conceptual Parking Plan for the Metro Center Station performed by SEM with Norris Design and SA Miro
2. Drainage and Park Plan for City Center performed by Calibre Engineering and Stream Landscape Architects

1. Excerpts from the May 2014 Conceptual Plan of Parking Improvements Report - Metro Center Station

The following pages illustrate a three-level, 600+ car parking garage located above the existing bus transfer facility, consolidating transit functions, while preserving developable land. A public plaza would be located immediately West of the future mixed-use development site, along the LRT platform, and at the Sable Blvd. end of the diagonal park/greenway system of pathways leading to the proposed pedestrian underpass at Alameda Blvd. The Transit Power Sub-Station (TPSS) is located at the North end of the Public Plaza. The TPSS location should be sited in a manner which would allow for screening, and minimize its visibility and impact on the public open space. Lowering the grade is suggested.

Also illustrated are two alternative approaches to providing pedestrian bridge access from the transit facility to the Town Center across South Sable Blvd. One approach would be to locate the bridge so as to take advantage of the garage stairs and elevators, obviating the need for a separate vertical circulation system at the East end of the bridge. This bridge would span over the tracks and catenary power lines, at a height necessitating stairs and elevators on the Town Center site. The alternative bridge would be lower, at the level of the existing Town Center parking lot. It would land at the Southbound platform, requiring stairs and elevator(s) only on the East end of the bridge. A pedestrian bridge is thought to be an important and valuable element of public infrastructure within the pedestrian circulation network, and should be considered with any future development.

Cars would access the parking decks from a speed ramp up from the new commercial "Main Street" to the lowest parking level. Upper level(s) would then be accessed via a 6% sloped parking plate. Due to the width of the 4-bay garage, it is suggested that light-wells be incorporated into the plans. Bus access into the transfer facility is relocated West, so as to achieve at least 150 ft. curb-to-curb dimension between the bus drive and "Main Street".

Pedestrian access from "Main Street" would be predominantly via the greenway system of paths to a public plaza N/W of the garage. Alternatively, a second access way would be through the bus transfer facility along the side of the car speed ramp.

Approximate Parking Capacity

Ground Level	11 Bus berths
Level P1	215 Cars
Level P2	219 Cars
Level P3	179 cars
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 613 cars

Phasing

It is desirable for funding purposes to phase the garage structure. While horizontal phasing is generally preferable to vertical phasing, the configuration of this garage over the bus transfer facility adds some special considerations. For example, in either scenario, it is quite likely that the bus transfer functions would have to temporarily be relocated during the later phase as well as the initial construction.

Horizontal Phasing

The initial phase would be a 3-story garage and full-height elevator core built over the North half of the bus transfer facility. The capacity of the first phase would be approximately 260-300 cars. The second phase would be a 3-story garage built over the South half of the bus transfer facility.

Vertical Phasing

The initial phase would be a 1-story garage built over the entire bus transfer facility. The capacity of the first phase would be approximately 210-240 cars. The second phase would be a 2-story addition built over the initial phase, extending the initial stair and elevator core two additional floors.

Either scenario would provide the park-n-ride capacity for RTD commuters of at least 200 cars in the initial phase.

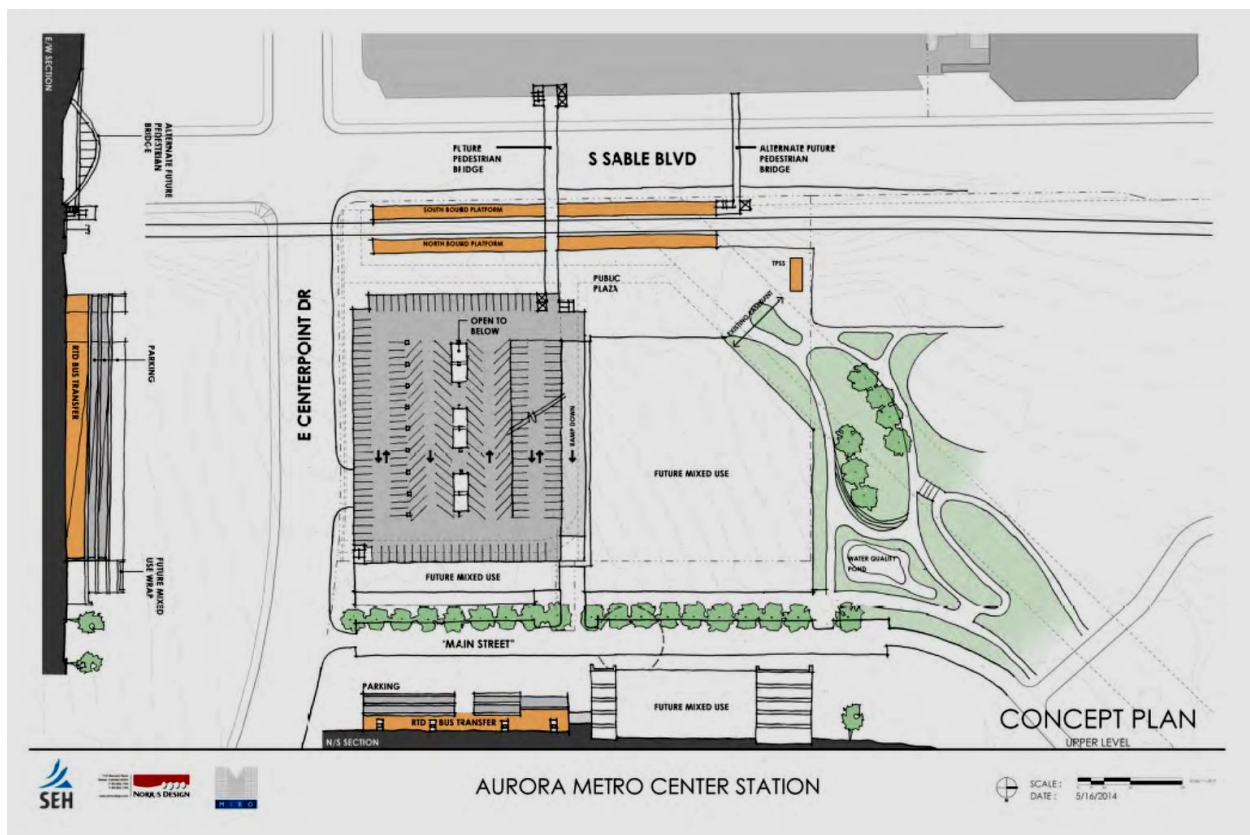


Figure 13. Parking Garage Options

Zoning Guidance

1. Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Zoning District

A Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Zoning District is available for use in Aurora in the surrounding areas of both the Aurora Line and commuter transit stations. The TOD zoning district references the station area plan to provide guidance concerning boundaries, building form and intensity. This station area plan is to be used by applicants in conjunction with the City's TOD zoning district. Specific sections of the TOD zoning district are modified by this station area plan.

Existing zoning around the station currently are three City Center Zone District classifications, Core, Fringe and Periphery. These land use district boundaries do not reflect the area impacted by the light rail nor follow the established street grid systems envisioned by this plan. The new TOD zoning will be essential to take full advantage of the development potential of this area. The city anticipates that TOD zoning will be applied at the request of property owners. The TOD zoning additionally offers an administrative approval process.

2. Sub-Districts and Land Use

Two sub-districts can be defined for the City Center Station area, each with its own land use characteristics:

1. Core Sub-District.

a. *Location.* This sub-district includes the major portions of the vacant Metro Center development parcel directly adjacent to the Metro Center Station platform and the existing strip shopping center at the northeast corner of Alameda and Sable Boulevard. The district is bounded by Sable Boulevard to the west, E. Center Avenue to the south, E. Center Drive and Fraser Court to the east and the northern property boundary of the shopping center. The south east corner of Alameda Avenue and Sable Boulevard is designated as a low density restaurant village. The restaurant village concept is to be considered an initial phase with an ultimate goal of locating high density, multistory development at all four corners of Sable and Alameda. Furthermore, the area between Centrepoint Drive and Exposition Avenue is contemplated for medium to high density residential and office.

b. *Uses.* This zone includes medium to high intensity commercial, residential, hotel, civic, restaurant and entertainment uses. Public and private parking structures are also permitted. Park uses are permitted and the drainageway will serve as the focal point of the station area with pedestrian and bike connections to and from the platform. Fueling stations and drive-through uses are not permitted.

2. General Sub-District.

a. *Location.* This sub-district includes the remaining portions of the Metro Center site and the Aurora Municipal Center. This district will be bounded by E. Center Avenue to the south, Chambers Road to the east, the Highline Trail to the north and the Core sub-district of the station area to the west.

b. *Uses.* With a density less than the Core, the uses in this area will range from commercial and mixed-use to multifamily residential. Fueling stations are not permitted.

3. Transition Sub-District Option.

a. *Location.* This sub-district option includes all properties within one mile of the station, outside of the Core and General Sub-Districts defined within Figure 15. TOD Sub-districts below.

b. *Uses.* With a density less than both the Core and General, the uses in this area will be primarily commercial, however mixed-use and residential are encouraged.

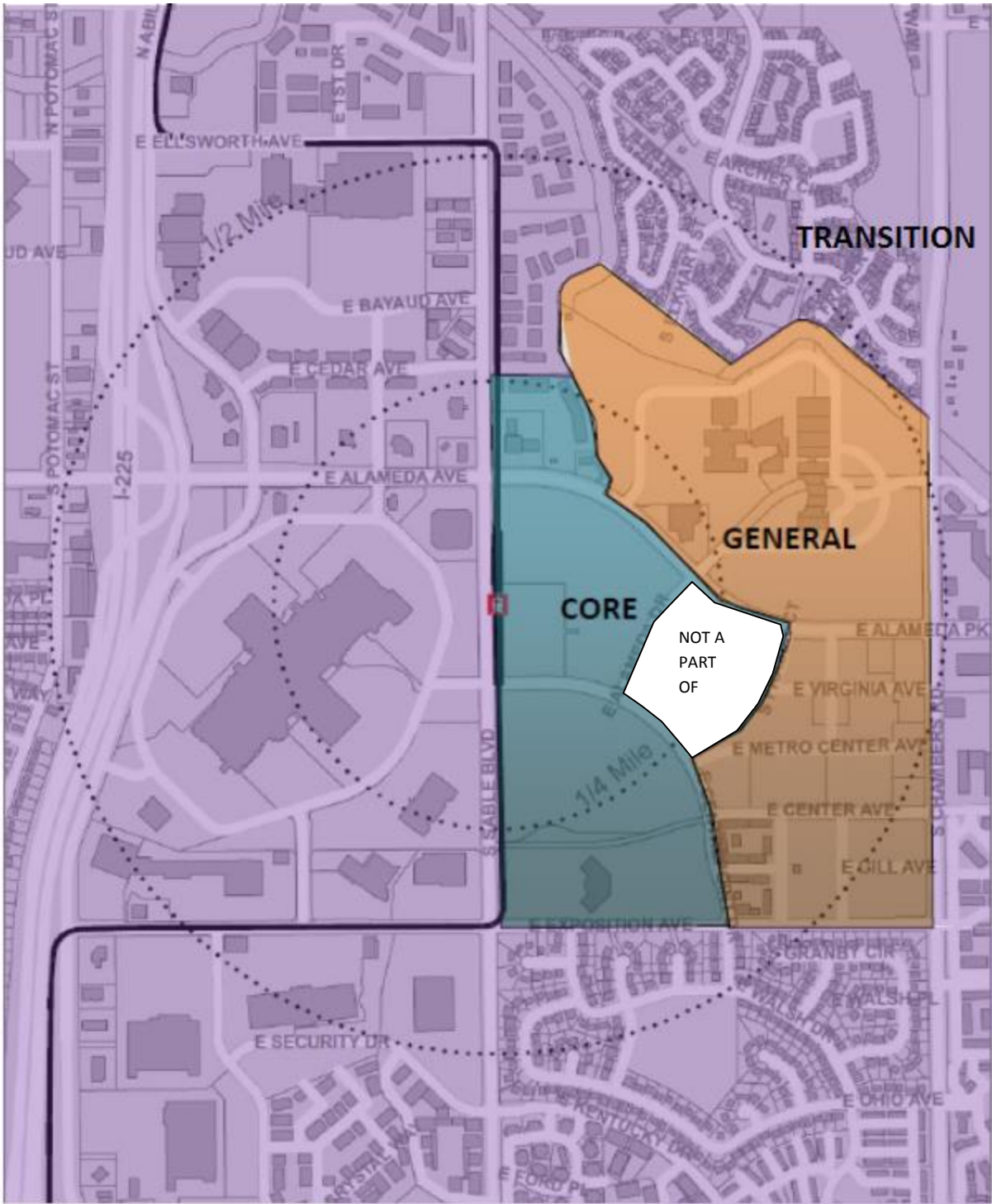


Figure 15. TOD Sub-districts

III. Development Standards

This section provides modifications to Sec. 146-728. Development Standards of the city of Aurora Zoning Code:

Block Size and Street Grid. A system of streets with on-street parking shall reflect an urban form street grid similar to that depicted in Figure 12. Concept Plan within this document.

Building Heights. There is no height limit in the Core Area. Buildings or canopies should shade the sidewalks on the south and west sides of streets in hot weather, but allow for a stepped approach for sun exposure on the north side of streets during cold weather. Building heights for the sub-districts are:

1. Core Sub-District:

A minimum height of four stories is required for any residential development. Such buildings shall be elevator served. There is no maximum height. Buildings at the southeast corner of Alameda Avenue and Sable Boulevard shall have a minimum height of 20 feet.

2. General Sub-District:

There is a minimum height of two stories with an allowance for single story uses along the Chambers Street frontage. The minimum height for all buildings is 20 feet.

1. Transition Sub District Options:

The minimum height for all buildings is 20 feet.

Urban Form. Building forms should be related to the width and activity on the street that fronts them, so that a sense of enclosure is created. Ground floor uses shall consist of active uses such as retail, restaurants, entertainment venues, public open spaces and multifamily supportive uses in areas that will be frequented by pedestrians. The active public realm spaces shall be organized in relation to a logical pedestrian flow, integrating ground floor uses with no “back of house” presence (i.e. extending architectural elements on all sides visible to the public view). Landscape and streetscapes shall comply with urban street standards, allowing for pedestrian traffic and outdoor seating. In the Core Sub-District, buildings shall be oriented to the street (right-of-way or property line), defined by the back of sidewalk, with allowances made for shallow setbacks or building foundations encroachments, consistent with a uniform street frontage.

Desired Building Setbacks. The setbacks for the sub-districts in the TOD Zoning District shall apply. In addition, the following development standards shall apply.

- a. Front. There shall be a building setback not more than ten (10) feet in the Core and General sub-district. The ten (10) foot setback is permitted to increase in the Core and General sub-districts for outdoor cafes and overhanging balconies. Steps, stoops, balconies, porches, roof overhangs, awnings, chimneys, projecting windows, etc. as well as public plaza areas may encroach into the setback.

Desired Building Forms. The following additional development standards shall apply.

- a. Continuous building frontage is required along streets. If any portion of a surface parking or drive aisle fronts a street it must be screened with a low masonry wall. A continuous (average) building height façade along all streets is desired to be a minimum of two to three stories to provide a defined urban edge to the street.
- b. Commercial uses at-grade on main streets and surrounding any public spaces are required to support pedestrian activity.
- c. Clear windows at grade along the street frontage are required for a majority of the façade length, except for residential uses.
- d. Quality materials on the ground floor façade are required on all buildings along the streets (no simulated faux materials).
- e. Building façades materials adjacent to a public park or plaza must be of a high quality, such as brick, stone, architectural metals or wood composites, stucco or glazing.
- f. Entries shall front on the major streets (except along Sable Boulevard) and shall be generously proportioned and defined with architectural features. Awning and structural canopies for weather protection at building entrances are desirable.
- g. Drive-through windows of any kind shall not be permitted in the Core sub-district.
- h. Building design should incorporate projections, color, overhangs, changes in parapet height and other features to create architectural interest on all four sides. Parapets should be integrated into the building design to screen roof top mechanicals. All façades shall have architectural details that add visual interest.
- i. Loading docks and service entrances shall have an interior orientation, screened from the public right-of-way, residential and adjacent uses, and shall not face any parks, opens spaces, arterial or collector streets with minimal presence on interior streets.

Residential Densities. Single family residential is not permitted. There are no defined minimum residential densities defined within this plan, but the minimum height standards must be met. All multifamily residential, two stories or above, must be elevator served with tuck under and/or structured parking. Ground level units shall have direct street access.

IV. Design Guidelines

The following design guidelines have been developed to establish high quality standards for design of all projects subject to TOD zoning.

Each master-planned area should further define unique guidelines related to each topic listed below. The minimum requirements set forth within this plan must be met (see Section VI. Implementation).

A. Sustainability

Sustainability of the City Center Station Core Sub-District should be encouraged by promoting the use of well-established U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) or other similar sustainability guidelines. Buildings in the City Center Station Area are encouraged to incorporate sustainability in their design, and construction as follows:

- Improve site and building efficiency with effective solar orientation
- Upgrade heating, air-conditioning and ventilation systems
- Incorporate renewable energy, where possible
- Improve water conservation and stormwater quality
- Provide access to multi-modal transportation
- Evaluate local sourcing of materials (e.g., contribute to the local economy)
- Alternative uses for building roofs such as terraces, roof gardens and green roofs are encouraged.
- Apply non-toxic interior finishes

B. Pedestrian Connections

- Walkways, bridges and pedestrian crossings shall constitute a network that interconnects all transit, commercial and residential buildings.
- Hidden areas and blind corners shall be avoided in favor of open, visible gathering places and unobstructed paths with clear visual connections to destinations beyond.
- Pedestrian walkways should avoid doubling back or acute changes in the travel path, and should have good visual connection with the surroundings at all times. Active uses should be located along the pedestrian paths.
- In addition to a minimum 5-foot clearance for pedestrian throughway, public sidewalks should meet Urban Street Standards, and allow for roadside cross-section elements such as signs, parking meters, street trees in tree openings, landscaping, site furniture, and building landscaping to increase the overall pedestrian experience. Reference Section E. Landscape and Streetscape and Figure 16. Urban Streetscape below.

C. Public Spaces

There should be a central open space in the Core Sub-District to serve as a focal point and public gathering space, containing pedestrian amenities that make it comfortable and aesthetically pleasing. Street trees should provide shade in summer, and elements such as public art should provide interest year long. The space should be located so that it is not overshadowed by adjacent buildings.

D. Parks and Open Space Residential Requirements

To meet the city of Aurora requirements for dedication of community and neighborhood park lands in association with new residential development, options such as Small Urban Parks should be explored and a system of open spaces should be linked.

Small Urban Parks are specifically designated for areas defined as urban centers, transit-oriented developments and urban infill development parcels. Such parks can be no less than 10,000 square feet in size should complement and integrate with surrounding uses and serve two functions; 1) provide facilities to meet the park needs of residents by serving as place for social interaction and leisure opportunities; 2) create focal points and activity nodes with the urban fabric; and 3) provide “meaningful recreation, education and conservation benefit”. Please refer to the City of Aurora’s Parks and Open Space Manual for complete requirements.

E. Landscape and Streetscape

Streetscape and open space areas should add a distinctive identity to the area, using planting, paving, lighting, signage and street furnishings as cohesive elements (see Figure 16. Urban Streetscape below). Features should be coordinated throughout the development. The landscape treatment on each development parcel shall be coordinated with the public space streetscape design.

The station area should contain a variety of street types which reflect different streetscape treatments, according to the Aurora Urban Street Standards.

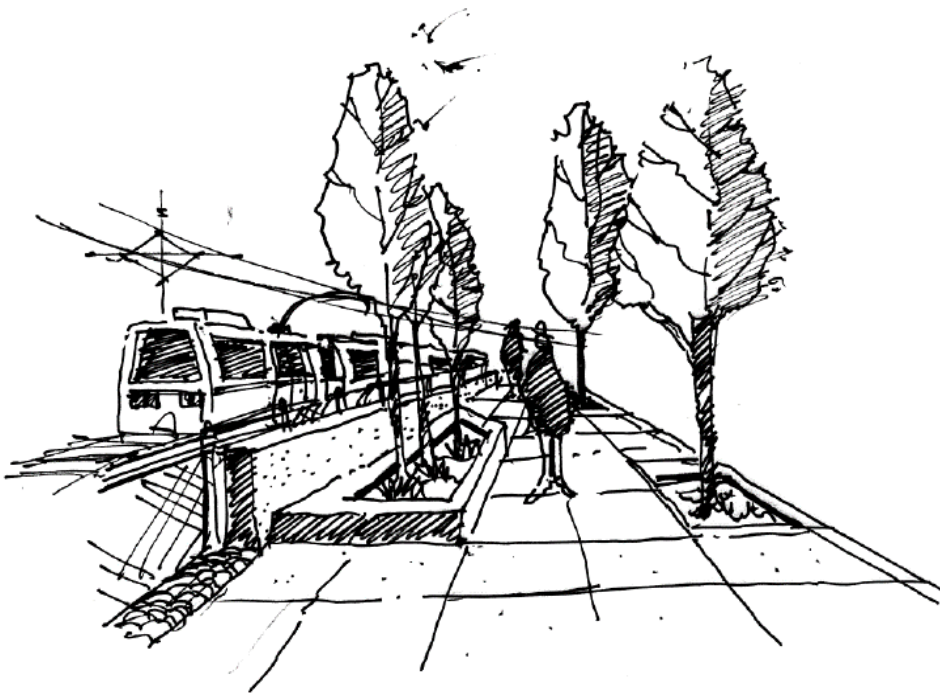


Figure 16. Urban Streetscape

F. Site Furnishings and Lighting Fixtures

Site furnishings and public lighting should:

- be incorporated as part of the building design and architectural style;
- express a transition from the station area core to outlying areas;
- be durable and appropriate for the climate;
- illuminate all sidewalks and pedestrian pathways; and
- not cast light directly into residential windows.

G. Roof Landscaping

Building roofs should be developed as open space resources, amenity decks and green roofs, where possible.

H. Landscape Materials

Materials should be provided based on the following considerations:

- Safety – avoid visual obstructions especially at circulation intersections;
- Local microclimate – provide summer shade and open canopies for warmth in winter;
- Low watering requirements –the majority of plant material shall be xeric and selected from the city of Aurora’s Recommended Xeriscape Plant List found with the Landscape Manual;
- Ease of maintenance – minimize the need for mowing and excessive water use;
- Attractiveness – intensify in key locations with seasonal color, texture, scale; and
- Screening – screen service areas, parking lots, meters and garbage dumpsters.

I. Parking

- Surface parking lots are discouraged in the Core Sub-District.
- The entire Core Sub-District should be self-sufficient in terms of parking. Shared parking is highly encouraged and may be shared from parcel to parcel.
- Parking structures should be wrapped with residential or commercial buildings, and should be integrated architecturally into the master planned area to minimize the visual impact on public streets and spaces.
- Parking access shall be well-identified by a wayfinding signage system.

J. Architecture

Architectural design should distinguish the City Center station area Core Sub-District from other development areas in Aurora, with timeless architecture, attention to detailing, human scale and relationship to the primary public space. Uniform franchise architecture is not permitted. The buildings shall have a defined top, middle, and base and prominent entry features with lobbies oriented towards streets or public spaces. Long building profiles shall be broken by relief in the façades and rooflines to minimize apparent bulk and mass.

K. Fenestration

Clear-glass, high-ceiling storefronts should be provided on ground floor facades to ensure visibility of active uses. On upper levels, façades should respond to their orientation by individualized treatment of façades to accommodate sun shading and solar gain as appropriate.

L. Articulated Architecture

To create an urban environment that is visually pleasing from all points of view, all sides of a building shall exhibit design continuity, with articulation on all sides. Early phase buildings, which have other buildings abutting them to provide screening, may have building faces that are without fenestration or other façade design features.

M. Solar Orientation, Shading and Solar Access

Building façades shall be environmentally responsible by adapting fenestration, shading and materials individually to respond to the environmental conditions. Buildings shall minimize the negative impact of winter shade on public open spaces and sidewalks. Buildings shall not contain surface coatings that are highly reflective or mirrored.

N. Awnings, Canopies and Arcades

Awnings, canopies and arcades shall be an integral part of the architectural design to provide weather protection and shading. Canopies may cantilever beyond the faces of buildings. Awnings shall be solid colors. Designated outdoor eating and coverage associated with such establishments are encouraged. All eating establishments should have an associated outdoor eating area.

O. Materials and Finishes

Materials, finishes and detailing shall enrich the station area's visual and tactile qualities. Regionally-appropriate and compatible materials associated with the Aurora Municipal Center shall be used, carefully detailed and combined. The building materials shall establish a consistent and high level of quality that is durable and appropriate to pedestrian contact at the street level. Materials used shall convey a high level of visual amenity that is commensurate with the urban character of the station area. Materials tactilely accessible at the pedestrian level cannot be synthetic stucco.

P. Storefront Design

Storefront entry thresholds shall be at the adjacent sidewalk level. Storefronts shall be scaled and detailed to break down large façades of buildings into small units. A variety of small scale storefront designs shall predominate over a uniform series of longer storefronts. A high proportion of clear glass shall be used in storefronts, consistent with energy conservation requirements and to increase visibility. Encourage storefronts to wrap or extend along facades which front a street.

Q. Equipment and Service

All rooftop equipment and ground level equipment, trash storage, loading and utilities shall be screened from view from public rights-of-way. Trash enclosures must be constructed of the material utilized on the main building structure with opaque gate systems (veneer treatments are not permitted).

R. Building Signage

Signage shall comply with Aurora Codes and Ordinances relative to mixed use districts and main streets. Unique sign programs exclusive to a master planned development can be developed to provide a distinguished identity in keeping with the Station Area's primarily pedestrian orientation. Signs directly related to a business shall be allowed to extend over the sidewalk, at a height of no less than 9'-0" above the sidewalk.

S. External Building and Site Lighting

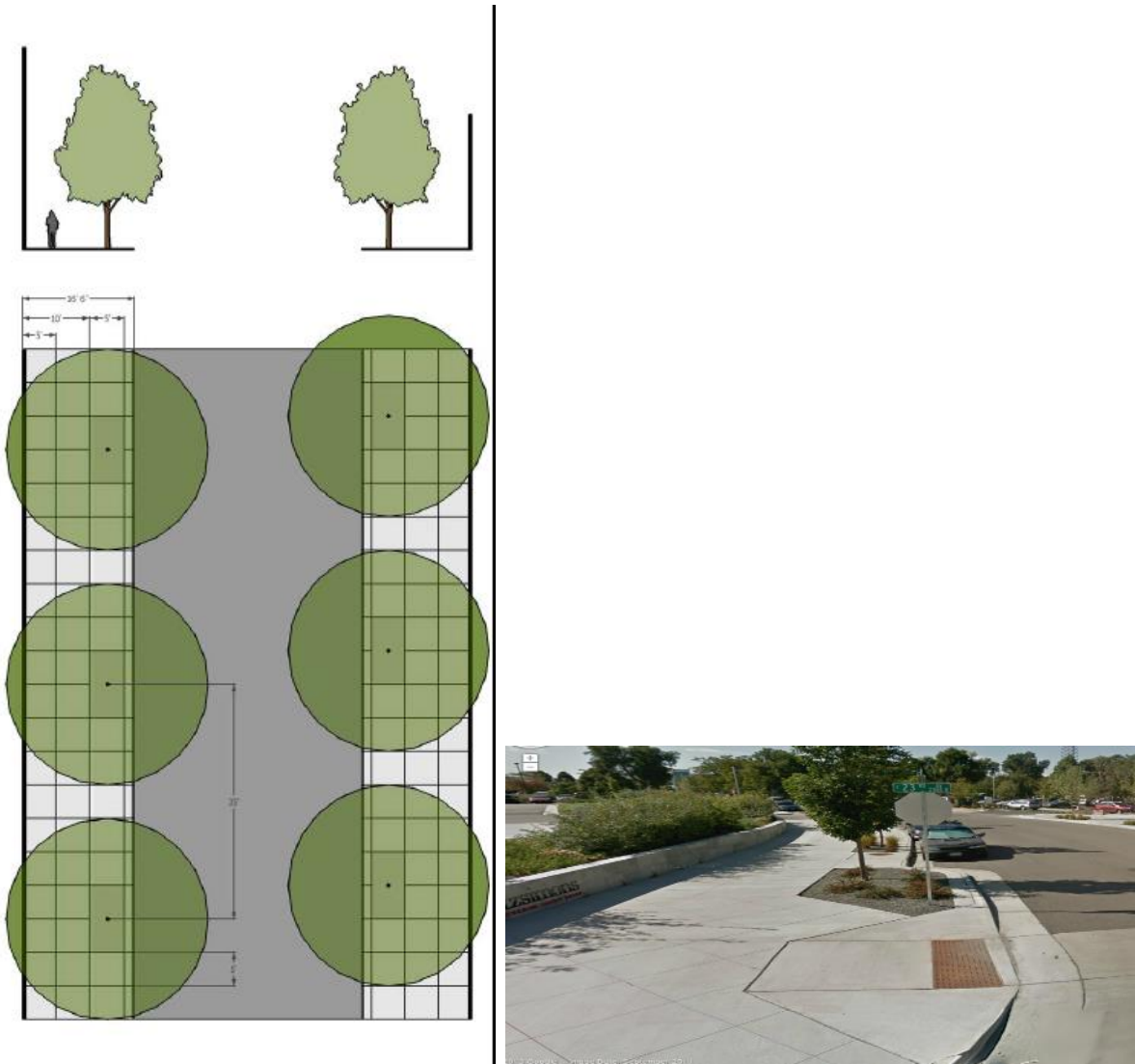
- External lighting of buildings shall be minimized, except for accent lighting of building entries or features.
- The impact of lighting on the night sky shall be minimized by full cutoff fixtures, downward projecting fixtures and minimizing light energy.
- Exterior light fixtures shall confine direct light rays to the premises, and the light source shall not be directly visible from any adjacent property or beyond two mounting heights distance from the fixture.
- Power consumption for external building lighting shall be minimized.
- Minimum light levels at building entries shall be 5.0 foot-candles. Levels elsewhere shall comply with Aurora code and ordinances, and shall be as uniform as practical on pedestrian sidewalks.
- Landscape lighting levels within the public spaces and small urban parks shall provide security with fixture types approved by the Parks and Open Space Department.
- Some types of lighting shall be prohibited, including moving, blinking or flashing lights, and any light that is distracting to the operator of a motor vehicle (see City Center Design Standards below for adopted pedestrian and street light fixture type).
- Street, pedestrian and parking lot lighting shall be provided per Aurora's Urban Street Standards. Lighting types must be cohesive with those listed in Section V. Uniform City Center Public Realm Design Standards below.

V. Uniform City Center Public Realm Design Standards

To further establish City Center and its associated Aurora Line station, a uniform set of design elements has been defined to further distinguish the City Center. These standards apply to all public realm street systems; associated platform amenities; and public parks and spaces.

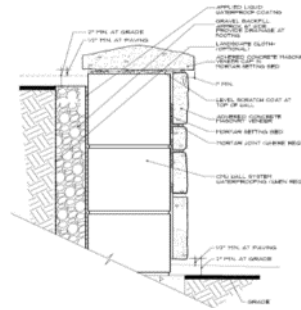
- Attached Urban Street sidewalks with tree openings (ranging from 8' to 16' in depth)
- 5'x 5' sidewalk scoring concrete patterns (*can be altered to similar grid pattern such as 4'x4', where needed*)
- 5'x 10' – 5' x 20' tree well openings with understory ornamental grass plantings
- Where trees are not planned as part of the public sidewalk, trees should be planted on property behind such walkways
- Unified retaining wall and free standing walls treatments
- Pedestrian lighting
- Unified site furnishings, such as trash receptacles, benches and bus stops and newsrack consolidation
- Tree planting species as per Forestry standards (See appendix for City Center Tree List)

City Center Urban Street Cross Section



- 5' x 10' – 5' x 20' tree openings;
- 5' x 5' score lines;
- Trees planted 30 feet on center
- Directional curb ramps

Wall Treatments within the Public Realm



- Sample of wall, color and treatment for all City Center public realm masonry treatments
- For walls higher than 18" the treatment should be a veneer with cap, Eldorado Stone Veneer Limestone "San Marino" as illustrated
- Walls along sidewalk edges 15"-18" in height should have a cap that can doubly serve a seating wall
- Simple rail versus fencing on top of walls; only utilizing a railing when there is a drop in grade of 30" or more.
- Retaining walls can utilize a stacked wall option, (KS Century Wall) multi-colored and random patterned with varying size block types to match the Eldorado Stone Veneer Limestone "San Marino"

Stacked Wall Examples

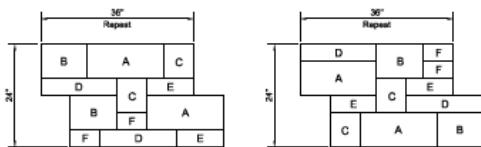


"The New Image of Stone"

Colored "LEDGESTONE" Face



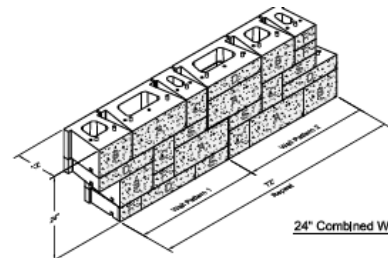
Sample of a Stacked Wall



Wall Pattern 1

Wall Pattern 2

24" Wall Patterns



24" Combined Wall Pattern

Lighting within the Public Realm

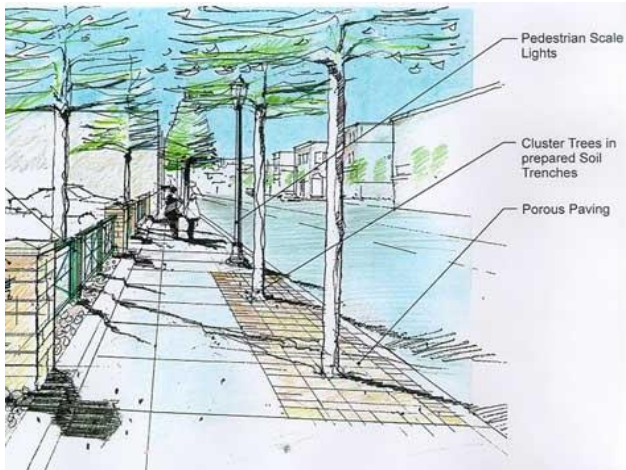
Pedestrian Lighting- Louis Poulsen (Black)
(or similar, to be approved by Planning Director)



Street Light -Gullwing (Mocha Brown)



Urban Streetscape Examples



VI. Implementation

The City Center Station Area Plan presents the vision developed through a collaborative process between government agencies, property owners and residents.

Policy Changes

The specific implementation steps are:

- Adoption of the City Center Station Area Plan as an amendment to the 2009 Aurora Comprehensive Plan;
- Adoption of the Transit-Oriented Development Zoning District for the currently zoned and/or designated commercial properties in the City Center area. This may be implemented in phases, depending on each property owner's development plans and schedule.
- Stakeholder implementation of the drainage solution, station parking and park system

Submittal Requirements

For new development rezoned to TOD on sites under 5 acres, the use shall conform with the development standards as outlined in the Transit Oriented District, Article 7, Division 6, 146-725 through 146-731. For those properties less than 5 acres not rezoned, the use shall comply with goals of the adopted City Center Station Area Plan and the City Center Zone District standards as per Zoning Code 146-700 through 146-707. Approved Master Plans and unique standards defined therein shall supersede the adopted City Center Station Area Plan.

Large Scale Site Planned Areas

For sites of large contiguous land areas (5 acres and above) and those sites under common ownership, design standards, an infrastructure phasing plan with shared regional drainage and open space, and a master infrastructure site plan must be provided. The phased site plan shall define uniform architectural and urban design standards and shall include the following:

- Building Orientation, Style & Scale
- Building Types: Residential, Retail, Restaurants, Mixed Use, Parking Structures, Franchises
- Loading and Service Area Screening & Placement
- Rooftop Unit & Ground Level Mechanical Screening
- Exterior Building Materials & Glazing
- Roof Types
- Building Entries
- Canopies
- System of Public Parks and Open Spaces
- Landscaping and Wall Treatments
- Ground Plane Materials and Patterns
- Lighting
- Signage
- Uniform Site Amenities (benches, trash receptacles, etc.)