



Aurora Matters: City of Aurora Historical Resources Survey Plan, 2015

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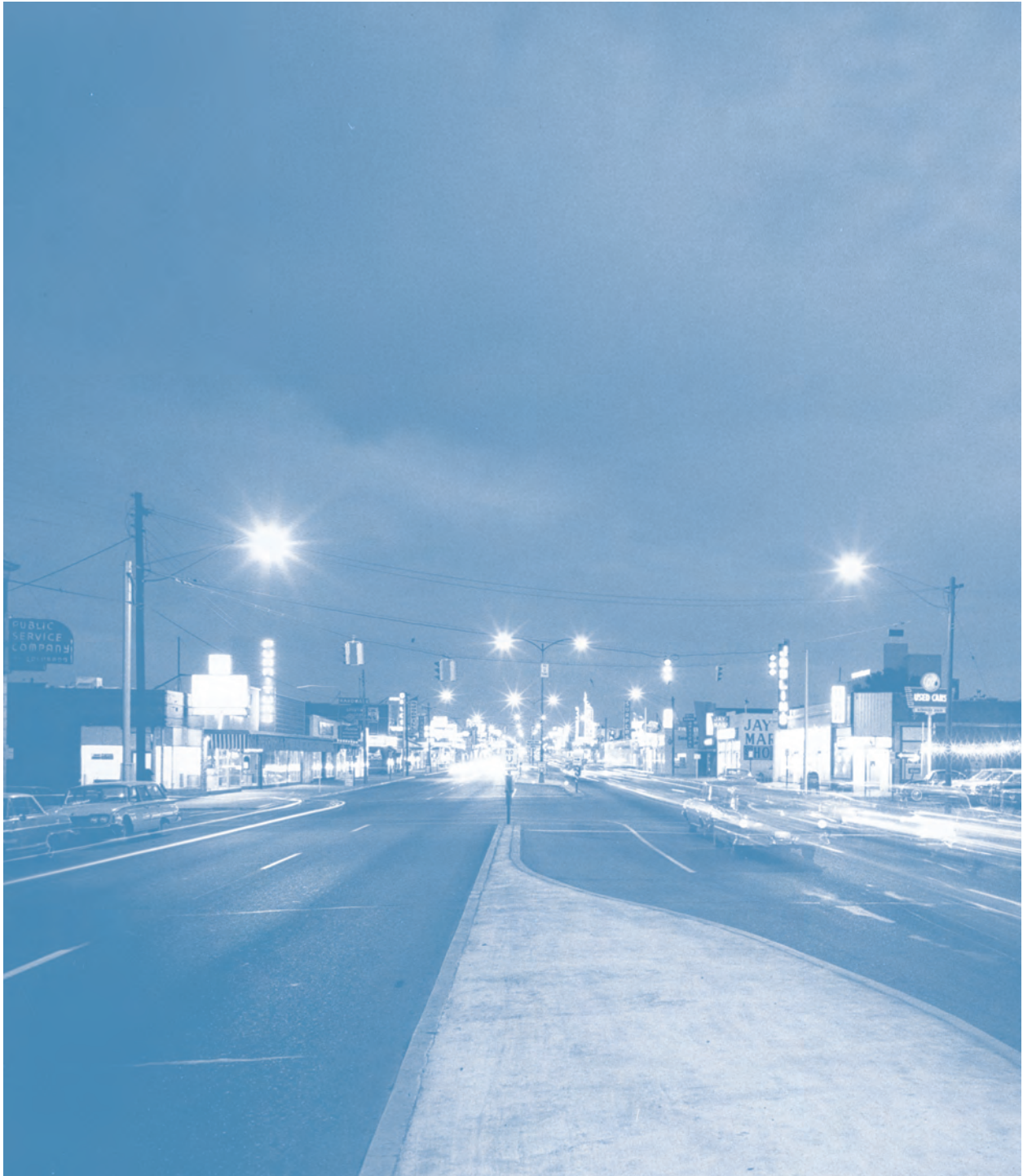
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Certified Local Government Grant
CO-14-011



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architectural history | preservation planning | digital preservation media



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On the cover. Colfax Avenue is just one of Aurora's distinct and culturally diverse places that matter. (*Aurora History Museum*)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City of Aurora Historical Resources Survey Plan, 2015

In 2014 the Aurora Historic Sites and Preservation Office (AHSPO) was awarded a Certified Local Government grant to complete an Historic Resources Survey Plan. The Plan is a feasible, practical, financially responsible framework that AHSPO staff and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) can follow to systematically record and evaluate Aurora's historic built environment.

The Plan is based upon the following research:

- ▶ Architectural reconnaissance survey—photographic record of historic sites thirty years or older within the city's 154 square mile boundary resulting in a guidebook summarizing Aurora's prevalent architectural styles and building types
- ▶ Public outreach and opinion gathering—city staff workshop, community organization leader workshop, public open house, and visual preference exercise at local public libraries
- ▶ Assessment of city's previous research and documentation efforts—analysis of the four historic contexts and seven historical and architectural survey projects completed over nearly four decades

The research findings informed the identification of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing historic resources in Aurora.

Strengths

- ▶ Well-established working relationship between the Aurora History Museum and AHSPO allows for preservation collaboration
- ▶ Commitment to Plan development demonstrates AHSPO desire to be proactive
- ▶ Staff responsibility for and interest in historic preservation across multiple city departments creates a more integrated preservation system in Aurora

Weaknesses

- ▶ Lack of shared preservation awareness and knowledge, based in part upon Aurora's geographic size, hinders development of a city-wide preservation constituency
- ▶ Inconsistent funding for the Preservation Specialist position has impaired momentum and accomplishments
- ▶ Recent demolitions of key historic sites have undermined the image of AHSPO and HPC

Opportunities

- ▶ New FastTracks Light Rail line can unify the geographically vast city and encourage exploration of Aurora's historic places
- ▶ Adaptive reuse of Stanley Aviation can inspire similar revitalization of historic buildings and their surrounding neighborhoods

- ▶ The HPC is poised for transformation and will be critical to the plan's implementation
- ▶ Aurora has a chance to be a statewide leader in studying history and architecture from the late 1940s through the 1990s
- ▶ Greater use of the Cultural Heritage Sites program can honor the place-related stories that matter most to Aurora's citizens

Threats

- ▶ Treatment of historic buildings within Aurora's Urban Renewal Areas has resulted in demolitions rather than adaptive reuse
- ▶ Ripple effects from redevelopment warrant prompt attention to avoid demolitions and insensitive alterations to historic housing stock
- ▶ Few citizens are directly involved in or actively advocate for historic preservation
- ▶ Many of Aurora's historic buildings are neglected or poorly maintained

Goals

The resulting goals and priorities are...

Goal 1—RESEARCH themes most important to Aurora's development to tell the stories of this diverse city and its built environment. These include historic contexts devoted to resi-

dential development, 1940s–1960s; residential development, 1970s–1990s; Original Aurora, 1880s–2000s; and Military in Aurora, 1918–1990.

Goal 2—DOCUMENT Aurora's most historically and architecturally significant and intact sites that give the city its own unique sense of place. Historical and architectural survey efforts will include a staff-led "Quick-Strike" team to photograph historic buildings prior to demolition; an initiative to resurvey previously recorded sites; large-scale, consultant-led projects focusing on historic buildings in the Park East and Mission Viejo subdivisions; and survey of pre-1940s buildings and city-owned resources.

Goal 3—ENGAGE the public to increase local history knowledge and boost community pride. Outreach activities will enhance the profile of the AHSPO, encourage public participation in historic preservation, and support a shared city-wide identity based upon stories of the past and significant architecture.

Goal 4 —UTILIZE the data to guide a relevant historic preservation program in Aurora. Pursue historic designation and specialized communication based upon completed research and survey.

Implementation of the Plan assigns specific roles to AHSPO staff, the HPC, other city staff, city council, volunteers, interns, Aurora's citizens, and professional consultants.

INTRODUCTION

Aurora Matters

In 2010 the Portland-based marketing firm Metropolitan Group developed a rebranding campaign for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Its “This Place Matters” slogan was incredibly successful in not only updating the image of this advocacy organization but also inspiring greater interest in historic preservation, especially among an untapped younger and more diverse audience. The campaign sought to simplify the focus of historic preservation to its most basic shared value, a love of places, and thus make it more relevant to everyday life. The Trust capitalized upon this goal with a viral campaign that allowed individuals to snap photographs of their favorite historic places and affix the new slogan as a hashtag. In response to the popularity of this initiative, countless state historic preservation offices and preservation advocacy organizations encouraged their constituencies to participate, showing their support for the places that resonate most or they hold most dear. Through the action of sharing these images, viewers became not only aware of new places but also developed greater appreciation for the special qualities of the sites where we all live, work, shop, learn, and play each day.

While the City of Aurora may not have overtly encouraged its citizens to take part in the “This Place Matters” campaign, it is clear that many of its residents possess similar positive feelings about historic places within their community. Nearly everyone who participated in the outreach activities for this project shared memories of places relevant to their per-

sonal history; there were accounts of shopping for new shoes on East Colfax Avenue, attending overcrowded postwar elementary schools, seeing the Buckley “golf ball” radomes after a long road trip and knowing home was not far away, watching areas around a first home in southeast Aurora grow and change nearly as fast as the kids in the family, and many others. These comments illustrate which history matters most to individuals from Aurora and, considered collectively, provide a sense of what is important to the community as a whole.

A number of themes began to emerge. In general, Aurorans:

- ▶ Celebrate the community’s ethnic, cultural, and geographic diversity and wish to honor the past and places associated with all parts and peoples in the city;
- ▶ Recognize they have both visible and hidden historical assets and are keen to discover them, advertise them, and protect them as part of the community’s unique sense of place; and
- ▶ Appreciate that the city’s potential, especially in terms of its history and architectural heritage, is not widely known but still view capitalizing upon these qualities as a way to boost community pride.

Recognition of the power of place, along with an acknowledgement that Aurora indeed matters, is the major motivating force behind the city’s decision to develop a Historic Resources Survey Plan. The plan is designed to chart a course

Recognition of the power of place along with an acknowledgement that Aurora indeed matters is the major motivating force behind the city’s decision to develop a Historic Resources Survey Plan.

for making decisions about what history and which places are most important to telling the story of Aurora's past and its physical development. Section I of this document details the work executed prior to developing the plan, including project outreach; a reconnaissance survey of Aurora's historic architecture; an assessment of the city's past efforts in developing historic contexts and completing historical and architectural surveys; and an honest evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for historic preservation in Aurora as it relates to research and documentation of its historic sites. Section II contains the Aurora Historic Resources Survey Plan. The four goals were developed to highlight the importance of four key activities: research, survey, outreach, and using the results of both contexts and surveys. The plan

recommends specific projects and initiatives to follow over the next twenty years. The plan concludes with an implementation section, a restatement of the goals and recommendations with details about how quickly those items should be accomplished and which individuals are anticipated to be involved with successful completion.

Because the development of Aurora so closely follows the development of Colorado and the entire West, especially after World War II, the recordation, preservation, and celebration of its historic built environment is crucial to maintaining the city's and the state's unique sense of place and protecting the cultural and architectural legacy of the intermountain West. Not only does Aurora matter, the preservation of its history will ensure the protection of the heritage of an entire region.

SECTION I

Survey Plan Methodology

Aurora is a geographically vast city, with a total of 154 square miles of land spread across three counties. Nearly 350,000 people live in Aurora, making it the fifty-fifth largest city in the United States in terms of population. The city is also ethnically diverse; it has the largest percentage of foreign-born residents, 20.6 percent in the 2010 United States Census, in the Denver metropolitan region and over thirty percent of Aurora's speak a language other than English at home. These demographic factors, plus the fact the city does not have a traditional downtown or recognized central gathering place, makes it difficult to consider the City of Aurora as a unified whole. Instead citizens seem to identify most closely with their neighborhood, subdivision, or quadrant of the city.¹ High levels of growth create development pressures, putting historic resources at potential risk. All of these factors affect Aurora's historic context and historical and architectural survey needs and are considered throughout this section of the document.

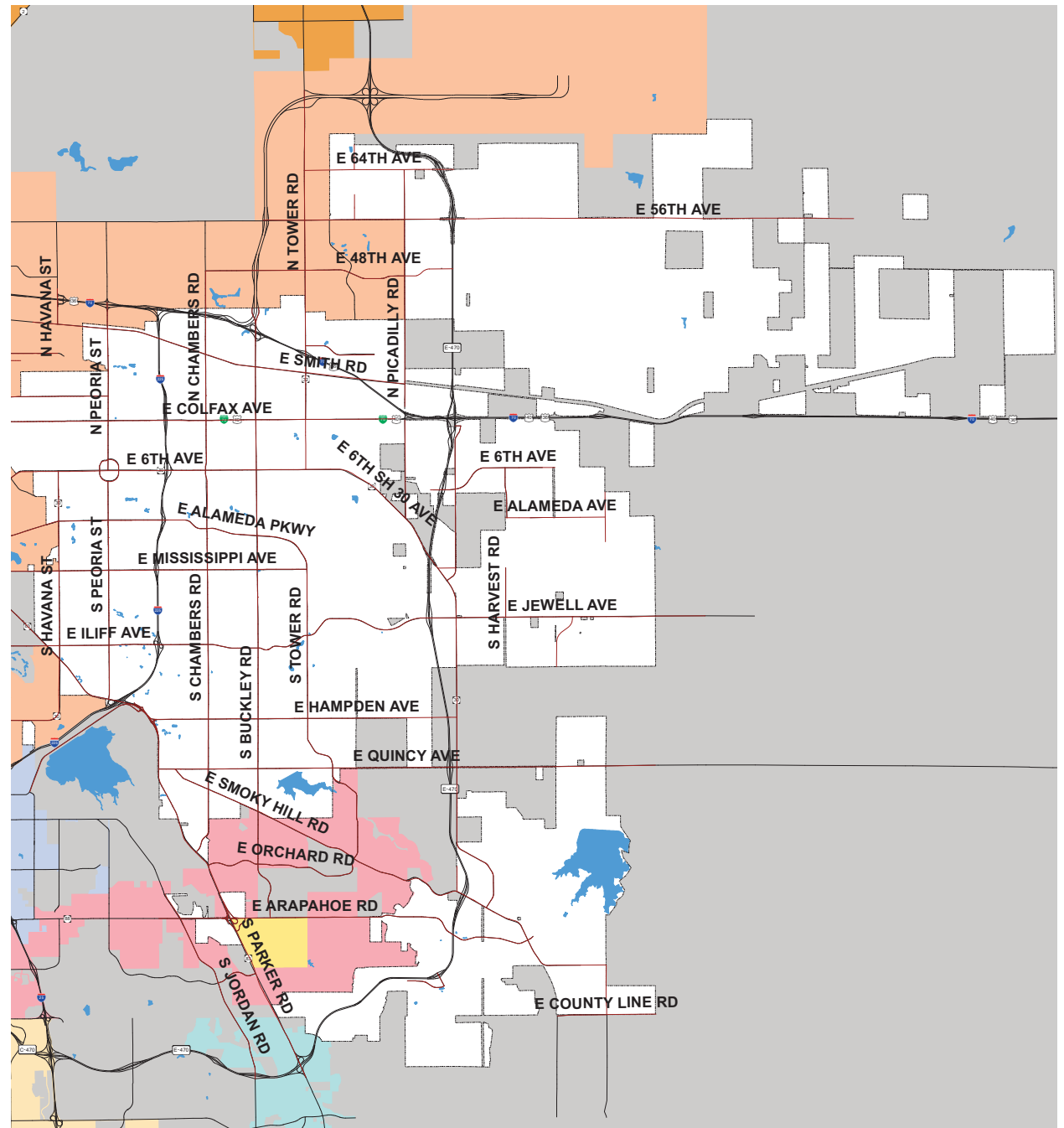
PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The project to create the Aurora Historic Resources Survey Plan was based upon methodology aimed at gathering a diversity of opinions and insights for not only the assessment of previous work and current conditions but also the plan itself. Table 1.1 summarizes the various outreach efforts for this project. A total of nine city employees attended the initial workshop; the low number of participants was intentional, with

TABLE 1.1: OUTREACH EFFORTS FOR AURORA HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY PLAN

Format	Date(s)	Target Audience	Content Summary
Workshops	11 September 2014	City staff	PowerPoint summarizing Aurora Historic Resources Survey Plan schedule, funding; what is a survey and why is it important to preservation?
			"Why are you here?" sharing activity.
			"Which Places in Aurora Matter?" photo activity.
			Brainstorming questions focusing on how various participants use survey data; existing data needs; opinions about development trends for the next five to twenty years; incorporating historic resources into city redevelopment efforts; other questions and concerns.
	1 October 2014	Business and community leaders	PowerPoint similar to the 11 September workshop, but with added discussion of how survey results can be used for marketing.
			"Why are you here?" sharing activity.
			"Which Places in Aurora Matter?" photo activity.
			Brainstorming questions similar to 11 September Workshop.
Open House	25 October 2014	Aurora citizens	PowerPoint similar to 11 September Workshop on continuous loop.
			"Which Places in Aurora Matter?" voting.
			Word Association: "Aurora History Means..."
			Maps: identify historic places, both extant and lost.
			Drawing: "What's your favorite place in Aurora?"
Online Questionnaire via Survey Monkey	December 2014–January 2015	Aurora citizens	Name your favorite place or building in Aurora.
			Modification of "Which Places Matter" photo activity.
			I am interested in knowing about the history of...
			Additional comments or questions.
On-the-Road at Libraries	Various dates during December 2015 and January 2015	Aurora citizens	"Which Places in Aurora Matter?" voting.

Map 1.1. With 154 square miles of land (shown in white on this map) spread across three counties and nearly 350,000 residents, Aurora has distinctive neighborhoods, parks, industrial areas, military installations, and waterways. (*City of Aurora, Information Technology*)



invitations sent to staff in various divisions within the Planning & Development Services, Neighborhood Services, and Library & Cultural Services departments. This group was very congenial and seemed to share an overwhelming sense of pride in their roles within city government and a genuine interest in the topics discussed at the session. They participated enthusiastically in all discussions.

A dozen people attended the second workshop, consisting of a mix of business owners and representatives from non-profit and membership organizations. Again, this group was attentive and participated actively in the “Which Places in Aurora Matter?” activity. This audience was prompted to engage in conversation about the usefulness of historic contexts and the results of historical and architectural surveys beyond tra-

ditional preservation applications. A portion of the presentation considered how to make Aurora’s historic resources more visible and relevant to all the city’s residents and stakeholders. It focused on the link between research/documentation and marketing, emphasizing the potential for Aurora’s historic buildings and sites to increase competitive advantage, either for individual buildings or the community as a whole. The group also discussed the importance of heritage tourism and stressed how crucial it is for businesses likely to serve tourists—restaurants, stores, hotels, and others—to support any effort, like surveys or historic contexts, which helps to make the history and architecture of the city more accessible to visitors. The presentation highlighted how promotion of historic resources can make Aurora the type of place where both



Figure 1.1. Places do indeed matter to Aurora citizens of all ages. (Drawing by Luci)





Figures 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4. Posters of Aurora Buildings Used for the Visual Preference Activity During Project Outreach

1. Apartment building on Alton Street
2. Bungalow on Chester Street
3. Oblong Box Gas Station near Del Mar Parkway and Havana Street
4. Strip mall near Mission Viejo
5. International style industrial building on Yosemite Avenue
6. Both signs and hotel/motel resources (mostly along East Colfax Avenue)
7. Googie style diner on East Colfax Avenue
8. Heather Gardens
9. One of the city's first high rise buildings at Havana and Florida streets
10. Late Victorian home on Galena Street
11. St. Matthew Lutheran Church near Havana and 16th streets
12. Modest cottage with modified porch on Galena Street
13. "Palm Springs" type Ranch at 201 Zion; Parade of Homes 1963
14. Ranch on Nile Street in Park East Subdivision; Parade of Homes 1958
15. Townhome style house in Mission Viejo subdivision
16. Shotgun type home on Galena Street
17. Drive-in bank near Ironton and 14th streets; main building fronts East Colfax Avenue
18. Contemporary-style Ranch duplex near 11th and Dallas streets
19. Masonic Hall near 16th and Fulton streets
20. Altered Pueblo Revival style commercial building near East Colfax Avenue and Clinton Street
21. Brick bungalow on Fulton Street
22. Mission Viejo Library

(Mary Therese Anstey and Aurora History Museum)

Aurora Matters Open Houses

During the outreach phase, the City of Aurora asked residents to cast votes for the buildings they thought were most and least important among these illustrated resources. This visual preference exercise was designed to initiate a conversation about Aurora's historic built environment. The open-ended nature allowed participants to define what "important" means to them, an opinion that could be based upon architecture, history, personal memories, aesthetic preferences, and other factors. At the workshops, structured discussions followed the voting. These conversations introduced the concept of architectural versus historical significance and allowed participants to explain why they chose particular buildings as either most or least important. Workshop participants also shared their knowledge and memories of some of the pictured sites.

Results for this activity from the workshops, open house, and libraries showed the greatest support for #10, #22, #12, #18, #2, and #7. These choices indicate a higher than expected level of appreciation for postwar resources. One property (#10) already has been designated as an Aurora local landmark. Five of the six most important choices are located within Original Aurora, likely indicating a general perception that the four original plats that comprised the Town of Fletcher form the core of historic Aurora. Outside Original Aurora, the Mission Viejo Library likely ranked as important for two reasons: this library was one of the voting sites and neighbors have campaigned to have this local facility remain open in the face of budget cuts to Aurora libraries.

The photos of resources determined to be least important included #4, #17, #15, #1, #5, and #21. Five of the six lowest ranking images were constructed in the late-1930s through the 1970s. These buildings included two examples of auto-related resources that, although revolutionary at the time of construction, are now considered commonplace. International style resources are sometimes perceived to be plain or bland and have also become ubiquitous. In the case of choice #21, participants perceptively recognized this bungalow was less important because it was altered and had a lower degree of physical integrity.

Overall, the results of this exercise indicate a need for greater understanding for both post-1940s history and architecture in Aurora. These efforts need to move beyond the previous survey focus, almost exclusively within Original Aurora, and consider the historic themes and architectural expressions that most affected other parts of the city as it has developed.

business owners and new families want to relocate; many businesses are drawn to communities where they can reuse historic buildings (for example LoDo or RiNo in Denver) or that offer unique community assets to their employees. Finally, the group explored how sharing the stories of Aurora's past and publicizing its historic architecture also can help to change popular perceptions about the city, transforming the opinions of outsiders who incorrectly believe the community is just a sprawling, cookie-cutter suburb instead of realizing it is a vibrant community with its own unique history that residents, public officials, community organizations, and business leaders are proud to share. Combined, all described endeavors based upon historic contexts and historical and architectural surveys could potentially boost Aurora's sense of community identity and pride.

The third session, an open house for the general public, held on a Saturday morning at Beck Recreation Center, was poorly attended despite advertising through the city's registered neighborhood organizations, the Aurora Historic Sites and Preservation Office (AHSPO) website, the Aurora History Museum's e-newsletter, and social media messages. Given the disappointing attendance, two supplemental types of outreach were added to the project. A simple five-question online questionnaire solicited a far greater response than the Open House. Historic Preservation Specialist Liz Boyer also "took the show on the road," asking patrons at four city libraries to participate in the "Which Places in Aurora Matter?" activity from the workshops and to cast their votes for the most and least important buildings in Aurora based upon twenty-two photographs on three large posters.

ANALYSIS: AURORA'S HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE, PREVIOUS WORK, AND CURRENT CONDITIONS

Aurora's Historic Architecture

The scope of work for the Aurora Historic Resources Survey Plan project included completion of a reconnaissance survey to assess the city's historic architecture. Fieldwork was completed in a total of seven sessions between July 2014 and January 2015. Lacking dates of construction for all buildings within the City of Aurora, subdivision platting dates from the City of Aurora's GIS department were a fairly accurate way to narrow the portion of the 154 square miles of Aurora in need of consideration. Reconnaissance survey fieldwork roughly followed the historic development patterns for the community, beginning in the northwest quadrant of the city and proceeding in a basic south and east direction. Date of construction details for both Aurora Public Schools and Cherry Creek Schools also helped to guide the fieldwork; given the prevalence of postwar and later residential subdivisions within Aurora, the presence of a school building often indicated the general period of construction for the surrounding homes, churches, commercial strips, and community facilities.

The results of the reconnaissance survey are summarized in *A Guide to Aurora's Historic Architecture*. This document—detailing the most prevalent historic building forms, resource types, and architectural styles—is as a companion publication to this report. The intended audience for the Guide is broad. Hopefully it will assist the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) in fulfilling its responsibility to "preserve, protect, enhance, regulate, and use buildings... which provide *significant examples of architectural styles*" (emphasis added).² It also can inform Aurora's citizens about the architectural expressions

most common to the city; the photos accompanying the narrative descriptions show a variety of examples, including a number of Aurora local landmarks. The results of the reconnaissance survey also influenced the project recommendations in Part II of this plan, with abundant or threatened resources receiving special attention.

Existing Research and Documentation Projects

The AHSPO possesses two general types of sources documenting the community's history and architecture. The first, a historic context, is a document that lays the foundation for preservation planning. It explains the community's or specific area's broad historical patterns that link directly to the historic architecture found in the built environment. The second resource, historical and architectural survey products, is created after the identification and evaluation of historic sites. Most historical and architectural survey projects prepare both individual inventory forms for each site and a report summarizing the project process and results.

For a community of its size and with such an immense diversity of historic resources, the City of Aurora has few historic context documents. The four available historic contexts cover a very minute proportion of the community's overall history. Historian Rebecca Hunt wrote the first context and, although undated, it seems likely to have been completed in the early to mid 1990s. This document is very different in length, tone, and approach to the historical background that appeared in Aurora's earliest survey reports (see below). This product presents Aurora's history through the prism of greater historical themes, attempting to understand not only the city itself but also how it fits into the larger whole of both Colorado, Western, and American history. Hunt's longer, more scholarly publication,

including full citations to assist academics and researchers, leads off with an exploration of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, following up with sections of the document devoted to "Land," "Water," "Transportation," and several "Biographies" of key men involved in developing the Town of Fletcher. The context concludes with a brief discussion of the fledgling town's decision to rebrand itself as Aurora, citing this event as part of the larger narrative, a story "of real estate developers trying to make a profit, of families looking for safe, affordable living, and of a town trying to mold its identity."³ According to Hunt, "Aurora is still trying to find its historical and actual 'center.'"⁴

The second historic context is actually a term paper architectural historian Chris Geddes prepared while earning her Masters of Arts in Public History and Historic Preservation from Colorado State University in Fort Collins. Completed in 1998, it explores the Town of Fletcher's street railway system within the context of the larger story of not only the City of Denver's transportation system but also the common trends associated with trolley lines and development patterns. Like Hunt's piece, this historic context is scholarly in tone and approach, citing numerous academic sources to support the importance of the streetcar to not only Aurora but also all growing suburban areas; it allowed workers the freedom to live outside the dirty and crowded city, yet delineated classes according to house locations either further from or on the wrong "side of the tracks." Geddes concluded with the assertion that the trolley "is more than just an obsolete mode of transportation, it is an artifact of the past... (that) links us to the people of an earlier time..."⁵

These two historic contexts illustrate a growing professionalism within Colorado's historic preservation field. Three

key factors—lessons learned from early preservation practice, higher numbers of individuals who were university-trained in historic preservation, and greater availability of grant funding through the Certified Local Government (CLG) program and the State Historical Fund (SHF)—facilitated this shift. The long, well-researched, and clearly written historic context sections within the two Hoffman Heights historical and architectural survey reports projects (see below) fit into this same pattern of higher quality standards for historic context documents.

Former City of Aurora Preservation Specialist Jim Bertolini wrote the final two historic contexts for the City of Aurora; both of these are still in draft status. Written in 2013, the first document covers the Aurora Cultural Arts District (ACAD) in support of official arts district designation; it presents the history and architecture along East Colfax Avenue as part of the proposed zone. This document takes a long view of the area, beginning its narrative with a discussion of archaeology and the first human inhabitants of the region's grassy plains. Other sections in this context are devoted to "Fletcher and Early Aurora on Colfax" and "Postwar Boom and Bust," with the document's conclusion remaining unwritten. Bertolini's second in-house historic context, written in 2014, covers the origins and evolution of the AHSPO. The key subheadings in the document distinguish blocks of text devoted to an overview of Aurora's history, early preservation in Aurora, the key foundational activities for passing an ordinance and building a database of historical and architectural survey records, early restoration or rehabilitation projects of historic buildings in Aurora, the efforts to establish the city's formal preservation program, and a brief section recapping the program's accomplishments and its current status. Both of these documents are basic, succinct summaries of rather narrow topics.⁶ Though

neither context is complete, once finished both seem like documents suitable for posting on organizational/departments websites or perhaps for inclusion in grant applications.

The City of Aurora has completed a total of five historical and architectural survey projects not related to federal cultural or natural resource compliance projects. Table 1.2 summarizes these projects plus the recordation required for both Lowry Air Force Base and the Fitzsimons U.S. Army Garrison site when they ceased military operation and the land was transferred for redevelopment. This list of surveys does not include the hundreds of individual survey forms—now the Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) Architectural Inventory Form (#1403) and previously the infamous "pink and green forms" used in the late 1970s and through the 1980s—completed to fulfill the city's obligations to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. AHSPO staff complete intensive-level survey forms for projects on historic buildings fifty years or older where Federal funds are expended; many of the projects are initiatives from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), with the city's Community Development staff taking responsibility for project execution. Key HUD programs over the years have included targeted programs to make historic homes more energy efficient or to rehabilitate and resell updated houses as a solution to foreclosure-based vacancies. The purpose of the Section 106 survey process is to determine whether the proposed physical work will have an "adverse effect" upon the historic building; the details about the history and architecture of the property on the completed survey form not only record the building prior to any physical changes but also highlight character-defining features that should be treated sensitively during the HUD-financed project.

Table 1.2: Historical and Architectural Survey Projects Completed in City of Aurora

Date	Survey Area	Surveyor	Project Description	Results
1978	citywide	Vicki Sandstead, Preservation Planning Intern	Selective Intensive	Total of twenty-seven sites recorded; identified eligible historic district of twelve homes between 1500-2300 blocks of Galena Street Recommendations for preservation program: continue surveying buildings 40 years or older; create preservation plan; establish Heritage Village Park (later known as DeLaney Farm-Gully Homestead site); write design review standards for Colfax Avenue in Original Aurora; appoint “historic preservation advocate”
1985	East Colfax Avenue between Yosemite Street and Picadilly Road	Sarah Pearce	Preliminary Reconnaissance (no forms) and then Selective Intensive survey	Total of 150 sites recorded—four potentially eligible to National Register: KOA Building (current local landmark); China Place Restaurant (demolished); Dutch Mill Court (demolished); and the War Mothers Home (current local landmark)
	Peoria Street between Interstate 70 and Parker Road			
	All other property within area bounded by Interstate 70 (north), 1984 city limits (south, east), and Peoria Street (west)			Also two National Register nominations (for the William Smith House and relocated Gully Homestead) prepared
1995	Lowry Air Force Base	Front Range Research Associates, Inc.	Selective Intensive (with HABS-standard photo documentation, measured drawings)	Total of fifty historic resources surveyed (only five within City of Aurora); two potential National Register historic districts identified Other products for recordation: historic context for Lowry Air Force Base, interpretive plan, interpretive brochure
1998	U.S. Army Garrison Fitzsimons	Front Range Research Associates, Inc.	Comprehensive Intensive (with HABS-standard photo documentation, narrative history, architectural descriptions, reproductions of original blueprints, historic photographs)	Documentation completed in partial fulfillment of Section 106 compliance; recordation served as only existing record of significant resources likely to be demolished during redevelopment of the site
2004	1500–2300 blocks of Galena Street	Preservation Publishing	Comprehensive Intensive	Total of 122 sites recorded; three sites identified as potentially eligible to National Register; two sites identified as potentially eligible to State Register
2010	Hoffman Heights	Hoehn Architects P.C.	Comprehensive Reconnaissance	Total of 1,696 single-family homes recorded on customized form; four different house models present; identified potential National Register historic district Recommendations for future work: survey of non-single-family homes within Hoffman Heights; research source of community plan for subdivision; continue outreach about significance of homes; complete nomination for National Register historic district
2012	Hoffman Heights	Hoehn Architects P.C.	Selective Intensive	Total of twenty-two commercial, institutional, public, and multi-family residential sites recorded; nine sites identified as eligible to National Register; reaffirmed eligibility of National Register historic district Recommendations for future work: nominations for individually eligible sites (National Register, State Register, local landmarks); nomination for National Register historic district; interpretive signage; continued outreach/education

A study of the city's non-compliance historical and architectural survey projects indicates the evolving practice of resource documentation over time. Reviewing the two earliest projects, the initial survey in 1978 and the 1985 project completed in conjunction with creation of Aurora's historic preservation ordinance, the survey reports seem, to contemporary eyes, quaintly antiquated. A focus exclusively on appearance—true black-and-white photographic contact sheets for choosing images to include with the survey forms or survey reports with graphics that are photocopied from library books and created on manual typewriters—belies the usefulness of these survey products. Looking beyond the limitations of an age without the benefit of point-and-shoot digital cameras or laptop computers, this early survey work contains great information. The early surveys record places that no longer exist, especially along East Colfax Avenue; the historic building names and original addresses help us reconstruct a past when this vital thoroughfare was still Aurora's "main street." The historic background information in these projects correctly identified many of the themes that define Aurora's story: the origins of the Town of Fletcher, the community's agricultural past, military influence on the local economy, the rise and fall of auto tourism, and the tremendous impact of postwar subdivision development. The 2004 Galena Street survey relied on the information in the two earlier surveys, noting how neighborhood conditions and individual buildings had changed over time. Finally, the early surveys are important for giving us a glimpse into current conditions at the time the projects were completed. For example, in the 1985 report consultant Sarah Pearce mentioned she attempted to survey first those buildings in areas of Aurora facing extreme development pressure, but admitted that in multiple cases, the resources were de-

molished before her recordation could take place

Like the later historic contexts, Aurora historical and architectural surveys prepared through the 1990s onward tend to demonstrate higher production quality and increasing levels of academic rigor. While most of the survey products documenting Aurora's resources were prepared with competitive grant funds, the two recordation projects at Lowry Air Force Base and U.S. Army Garrison Fitzsimons were developed with different goals in mind. Both military complexes were documented at the much higher level of specificity as required in the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) program; architectural historians from Front Range Resource Associates assembled large-format true black-and-white photographs, measured drawings, and narrative histories and architectural descriptions for all historic resources as required in specialized programmatic agreements between the federal government and redevelopment authorities in the land transfer of the former military bases. Such exacting documentation must be completed because it is assumed the physical buildings will be significantly altered or, more likely, demolished, leaving the paper record as the only remaining evidence of the significant resource.

The City of Aurora hired paid consultants to complete three grant-funded historical and architectural survey projects during the 2000s. In 2004 the community's focus returned to Galena Street with a project that resurveyed some of the "Fletcher Houses" originally documented in the 1978 and 1985 projects and also recorded additional houses within the eight-block survey area. This project expanded perceptions, emphasizing residential development patterns beyond the town origins and highlighting the wide variety of architectural styles that now appear on this single street in Original Aurora.

The city's most recent historical and architectural survey projects both took place in Aurora's first postwar residential subdivision. The first project, a comprehensive reconnaissance survey of all of the homes in the multiple filings of this development completed in 2010, made excellent use of student interns to assist with the fieldwork. The second Hoffman Heights survey project, completed two years later, recorded selected non-residential resources at the intensive level. The survey reports for both projects contain excellent historic contexts that emphasize the historical and architectural significance of this key postwar resource.

THINKING STRATEGICALLY ABOUT CURRENT CONDITIONS

In order to plan for Aurora's historic context and historical and architectural survey needs over the next twenty years, it is important to objectively and honestly assess the current preservation program in light of both what has been accomplished already and the challenges it is likely to face in the future. A "SWOT analysis" is a structured planning technique that has been employed since the 1960s to assess existing programs. The letters in the acronym stand for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This analysis is based not on personal opinion or whim, but instead takes into account all available evidence, including the input from the project's var-



Figure 1.5. Del Mar Circle epitomizes the mid to late 20th century residential developments in Aurora. Historical and architectural survey projects have been completed in the Hoffman Heights subdivision, a neighborhood that includes the northwest quadrant of this thoroughfare. This survey plan recommends a documentation project in the Park East subdivision near this roadway's southeast arc. (Aurora History Museum)

Aurora History Museum Exhibits

- 2008 – Googie on Colfax – a photographic exhibit of examples of Googie architecture on Colfax
- 2009 – Aurora’s Hoffman Heights – a panel exhibit with historic photos and stories of the 1950s Hoffman Heights neighborhood
- 2009 – Ike Slept Here: The Fitzsimons Story – an exhibit including artifacts and panels about the history, development, and lasting story of Fitzsimons Army Medical Center
- 2010 – Trolley Trailer No. 610 – a panel exhibit about the history of Trolley Trailer No 610 and the discovery and restoration of this unique artifact and landmark.
- 2011 – Aurora’s Landmarks – a panel exhibit on the 25 (at the time) local historic landmarks and one historic district
- 2011 – A City Emerges: Aurora’s First 50 Years – a panel exhibit on the highlights and stories of Aurora’s origins up to the beginning of World War II.
- 2012 – Protecting Our Skies: Lowry & Buckley – a panel exhibit about the history of Lowry Air Force Base and Buckley Air Force Base
- 2012 – Homesteading - a small panel exhibit on the specifics of homesteading life in eastern Colorado – how people arrived in Colorado, farming, pioneer societies, and the history of DeLaney Farm.
- 2013-2014 – The Golden Highway: Views of Colfax – a photographic exhibit of historic and modern views of east Colfax from the Aurora History Museum and private collectors.

Source: Aurora History Museum

ious outreach efforts. While it is impossible to accurately predict the future, this analysis is based on likely outcomes founded upon historical patterns such as outward expansion, population gains, and general development trends within the City of Aurora. At first glance some of the topics under the headings strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats may appear to be more related to the AHSPo rather than the more narrow confines of the survey plan. However, the narrative text makes the connections back to the defined purpose of charting a course for researching and documenting Aurora’s historic and architectural resources.

Strengths

- ▶ **Well-established working relationship between the Aurora History Museum and the AHSPo allows for preservation collaboration.** The City of Aurora’s preservation function is housed within the Aurora History Museum, but its collaborative efforts are based on more than mere geography or expediency. These two entities share a common purpose of making the community’s history more tangible and originated from similar missions to preserve; the Museum is charged with protecting artifacts while the AHSPo is responsible for preserving significant and intact historic and architectural sites. The preservation and museum staff work closely on a variety of initiatives. In the past, the Museum has hosted a number of exhibits about survey-related topics (see sidebar), providing a much larger audience for survey project results. This arrangement has been beneficial for Aurora’s historic resources, museum attendance, and the general public. Maintaining and strengthening this relationship will be valuable for both the city’s survey efforts and the preser-

vation program as a whole.

- ▶ **Commitment to Plan development demonstrates AHSPo desire to be proactive.** Few communities have invested the necessary time and grant funds to assess their historic context and historical and architectural survey needs. Facing the daunting task of documenting the historic resources in a geographically large and architecturally diverse built environment, the staff wisely chose to forego immediate work on research and documentation in favor of developing a plan that makes sense in terms of not only their historical and architectural resources but also available funding and overall capacity. The completed survey plan is intended to be a feasible, practical, financially responsible plan Historic Sites staff and the HPC can follow to systematically record and evaluate Aurora’s important heritage.
- ▶ **Staff responsibility for and interest in historic preservation across multiple city departments creates a more integrated preservation system in Aurora.** The city’s preservation ordinance requires the Planning and Community Development departments to monitor permits for new construction, alterations, removal or demolitions to landmark sites or within landmark historic districts, both listed and pending. Historic Sites staff and the HPC have up to two months to comment prior to granting the permit. Staff in the Historic Sites and Neighborhood Services departments also are required to cooperate on reviews of effects on buildings fifty years or older prior to expenditure of federal funds. Yet, attendees at the Staff Workshop indicated a willingness to become involved beyond these required interactions; at the session staff discussed an ideal situation where the AHSPo and the HPC work

with property owners, Community Development, the Planning department, and others to find ways to use historic buildings to their greatest extent without actually destroying the character-defining features of the resources. Historic Sites staff should commit to continued collaboration to meet this and other shared goals.

Weaknesses

- ▶ ***Lack of shared preservation awareness and knowledge, based in part upon Aurora's geographic size, hinders development of a city-wide preservation constituency.*** Aurora is a geographically large city with no one central hub, instead encompassing multiple scattered shopping, working, and living districts. The ethnically diverse community also faces the challenge of language and cultural barriers when developing a unified vision for the city. For these and other reasons, most Aurorans actually identify more closely with their neighborhood, subdivision, or quadrant of the city. There is an opportunity, with the preparation of accessible historic contexts and informative historical and architectural surveys and then dissemination of project results, to unify the city in support of a shared history.
- ▶ ***Inconsistent funding for the Preservation Specialist position has impaired momentum and accomplishments.*** In late 1990 the city hired its first Preservation Specialist, Nan Rickey, to a part-time position at the Aurora History Museum. During Rickey's nearly decade-long leadership Historic Sites became its own division within the city's Library & Recreation Services Department, with funding of a Preservation Assistant position as well. A request from Rickey's successor, in 2000, to expand the Historic Sites

staff to five full-time and two other support employees was denied; instead, in 2006, budget cuts eliminated the Historic Sites Division and its independent funding and reduced the staff to a single, part-time, Museum-based Preservation Assistant. Four years later the Preservation Assistant position became full-time, yet remained a contingent position without benefits for an additional four years. Currently, the AHSPPO has a single, full-time employee, the Historic Preservation Specialist. Operating with a part-time Preservation Assistant for an extended period made it nearly impossible for the city to submit competitive grant applications, let alone demonstrate the necessary capacity to support projects and be awarded funding. As a consequence, relatively few formal historic context and historical and architectural survey projects have taken place in Aurora; this survey plan is the first step in making up for lost time and opportunities.

- ▶ ***Recent demolitions of key historic sites have undermined the image of the AHSPPO and HPC.*** Decisions to demolish both the architecturally distinctive Fan Fare Building and the beloved Red Cross Building, a local landmark located on the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center (UCHSC) campus, elicited strong feelings within the larger metro-Denver and Colorado preservation community regarding the city's support for historic buildings and the effectiveness of the local system to protect its resources. At the same time, some Aurora citizens and elected officials perceive preservation as "coming too late to the party" and standing in the way of progress. This situation indicates the need for both a more thorough public understanding of Aurora's history and a more complete survey record so the AHSPPO and HPC have sufficient

Overall, the City of Aurora's historic preservation program must be more proactive rather than reactive. A more complete survey record can greatly assist in meeting this goal.



Figure 1.6. When beginning surveys, the city can capitalize on its residents' strong associations with their distinctive neighborhoods. (*Aurora History Museum*)



and appropriate information regarding significance and integrity and can proceed in a timely, persuasive manner to protect the historic built environment and encourage productive historic property rehabilitation.

Opportunities

- ▶ ***The new FastTracks Light Rail line can unify the geographically vast city and encourage exploration of Aurora's historic places.*** The Aurora Line will traverse a 10.5-mile route through the city, with eight stops located along its path. The accompanying Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)—focused on mixed-use venues for living, working, shopping, and playing located near most of the stations—seeks to be pedestrian-oriented and reduce sprawl while protecting existing neighborhoods. For this reason, it will be important for historic contexts to explore the most important themes for these areas and historical and architectural surveys to identify the character-defining features of the historic architecture. According to Regional Transportation District (RTD) predictions, by 2020 approximately 17,700 riders daily will travel along this new transit corridor. With engaging historic contexts and in-depth historical and architectural survey records suitable for use for interpretive and outreach efforts, the city can capitalize upon this new audience.
- ▶ ***Adaptive reuse of Stanley Aviation can inspire similar revitalization of historic buildings and their surrounding neighborhoods.*** This project introduces a new type of retail experience to Aurora. Adaptive reuse of the twenty-two-acre site and its massive 140,000 square feet manufacturing building, constructed in 1954 to design and produce military ejection seats but vacant since 2009,

is an exciting development for northwest Aurora. Envisioned as similar to the Source urban market in Denver's River North (RiNo), this project will create space for a beer hall, managed by Denver chef and restaurateur Kevin Taylor, and numerous other retail outlets under one massive roof. The AHSPO reviewed the developer's use plan for this historic building. A joint effort is underway to designate the building as a local landmark. The HPC should seek ways to remain involved with the high-profile project and encourage similar economic development in other historic buildings. AHSPO staff and the HPC must share future surveys and the outreach initiatives based upon project results with the city's retail recruiter so he is fully aware of potential sites suitable for adaptive reuse. They must maintain an open dialogue about how such projects can meet both preservation and economic development goals.

- ▶ ***The HPC is poised for transformation.*** This eleven-member advisory board was established in 1985. The HPC is charged with a total of thirteen powers and duties (see sidebar) and, over its thirty year existence, has designated not only twenty-six individual sites but also two local historic districts. The recent introduction of term limits for all city boards and commissions has the potential to change the composition and character of Aurora's HPC, as many long-serving members transition out of service. Numerous recommendations in this survey plan suggest an enhanced role for HPC members, especially in terms of outreach and community engagement; many of these items are in keeping with the Commission's own ideas as expressed in their Summer 2014 brainstorming session about strategic planning.

Powers and Duties of the City of Aurora Historic Preservation Commission

1. Preserve, protect, enhance, regulate and promote the use of buildings, structures, sites and districts that are important in local, state or national history.
2. Enhance property values through preservation and stabilization of neighborhoods, buildings, structures, sites and districts of the city.
3. Promote development and maintenance of appropriate environments for such buildings, structures, sites and districts.
4. Encourage education in cultural understanding and knowledge of the city's heritage.
5. Cultivate civic pride in the accomplishments of the past.
6. Cooperate with state and federal historic preservation efforts.
7. Make recommendations to the city planning and zoning commission and city council regarding development issues, including but not limited to comprehensive plans, rezoning, variances, site plans, use hearings and demolitions which may affect archaeological or historic resources.
8. Recommend names to the city council for public places which are pertinent to the city's history.
9. Serve as a resource regarding the prehistory and history of the city; advise the city council regarding matters of archaeological and historical significance.
10. Review applications for the Colorado Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit created pursuant to procedures and fees established by C.R.S. § 39-22-514.
11. Advise and counsel landmark property owners upon request to assist in maintenance, restoration, rehabilitation, investigation, stabilization of properties and utilization of grant and assistance programs that may be available.
12. Review landmark nominations for buildings, structures, sites and districts and make recommendations to the city council for designation or non-designation.
13. Exercise such powers and duties as may be assigned from time to time by the city council.

Source: Code, City of Aurora, Colorado ARTICLE II. HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION - Sec. 78-31. Powers and Duties

► ***Aurora can be a statewide leader in studying history and architecture from the late 1940s through the 1990s.***

Like many communities in the western United States, Aurora experienced a tremendous population boom in the post-World War II period and, thanks to seemingly limitless undeveloped land surrounding its corporate boundaries, continued to grow even after the number of citizens in other nearby communities stabilized. This continued growth means the city has a wealth of resources dating from the 1940s through the 1990s. While relatively few preservation programs in Colorado have explored their post-1945 development, Aurora already has completed two grant-funded historical and architectural survey projects in Hoffman Heights. There is much more to learn about not only the city's numerous other postwar subdivisions of this same period but also the larger city, state, and national trends that influenced and impacted Aurora's housing explosion after 1945. Completely new ground can be forged with studies of Aurora's residential growth from the 1970s through the 1990s.

- ***Greater use of the Cultural Heritage Sites program can honor the place-related stories that matter most to Aurora's citizens.*** In 2009, the HPC established the Cultural Heritage Site program to recognize historically significant buildings and locations within the city that do not meet the integrity requirements for eligibility as either local landmarks or designation to the National or State registers. Currently there are only two resources, the Victory Grange on North Tower Road and Friend Furniture on East Colfax Avenue, listed as Cultural Heritage Sites. There are numerous worthy candidates, but this strictly honorary program needs better promotion and outreach to en-

courage property owners to submit applications to the HPC. In addition, future historical and architectural survey projects should help to identify resources eligible for listing as Cultural Heritage Sites.

Threats

- ***Treatment of historic buildings within Aurora's Urban Renewal Areas has resulted in demolitions rather than adaptive reuse.*** The City of Aurora currently has a total of eleven urban renewal areas within its boundaries. The areas listed in Table 1.3 are located within Aurora's historic core, a zone where the majority of the original buildings were constructed prior to the 1980s. Within the existing urban renewal areas it likely is too late to consider much integration of historic preservation into redevelopment since too many projects are already completed, underway, or embodied in existing plans. More complete historic context and survey records are crucial to developing a full knowledge of Aurora's historical trends, a better understanding of the character-defining features of key buildings, and a more nuanced appreciation for the tangible remnants of a shared past in the current built environment. These same materials can be used for marketing historic resources to owners seeking both redevelopment opportunities and the character, patina, and sense of place that comes with reusing an historic building.
- ***Ripple effects from redevelopment warrant prompt attention to avoid demolitions and insensitive alterations to historic housing stock.*** The redevelopment of the former Fitzsimons site is anticipated to create more than 35,000 jobs when build-out is completed in about 2020. Realtors already are promoting historic 1940s and 1950s

subdivisions near the medical campus as perfect areas for students, doctors, professors, scientists, and other support staff to purchase homes. While new homeowners are welcome in Aurora, there is a need for outreach about appropriate treatment of historic building materials and sensitive approaches to altering or enlarging homes with historical or architectural significance. Humble houses, like those found in Original Aurora, are particularly susceptible to demolition with new housing that is out of scale and character with the existing architecture. Aurora can learn lessons about inappropriately proportioned changes from its neighbors in both Denver's Upper and Lower Highlands, where entire streets have transformed from strips of small Classic Cottages, Bungalows, and other modest historic house forms into multi-story, boxy units built from lot line to lot line. Historical and architectural survey forms are an excellent educational tool, helping realtors and new owners to better understand what makes an historic property special.

- **Few citizens are directly involved in or actively advocate for historic preservation.** Aurora has a relatively small preservation constituency. When buildings over fifty years old are threatened with demolition, AHSPO staff and members of the HPC pursue established processes to preserve resources, but these efforts alone have not been enough to protect key buildings from the wrecking ball. Aurora preservation requires a louder, more persuasive voice, the kind that comes from a larger group of individuals who both understand the community's unique history and are willing to stand up for those historic buildings that tangibly tell Aurora's story. Ironically, dur-

TABLE 1.3 – SELECTED CITY OF AURORA URBAN RENEWAL AREAS

Area Name	Year Est.	Location	Size	Planned or Executed Changes to Built Environment
Fitzsimons	2001	Site of former Fitzsimons Army Hospital and surrounding area	688 acres	Majority of buildings along East Colfax Avenue demolished to clear way for mixed-use, high-density development—historic resources that remain are highly threatened or scheduled for demolition; on UCHSC campus, most historic resources dwarfed by size, scale, number of new buildings
Colorado Science and Technology Park	2008	North of Montview Boulevard on UCHSC medical campus	160 acres	New bio-science research park—largest medical-related redevelopment project in U.S. west of Mississippi River with 227-acre UCHSC campus
Buckingham	2008	Former Buckingham Square Mall site	61 acres	New and expanded commercial Big Box facilities and redevelopment of former Municipal Building (one of Aurora's first high rises) as senior living facility
Havana North	2010	Havana Street corridor and surrounding blocks from 6th to Dartmouth avenues	88 acres	FanFare Building demolished—goal to encourage targeted investment for new mixed-use development
Fletcher Plaza	2001	Along East Colfax Avenue between Dallas and Galena streets	51 acres	Improvements to Aurora Fox Arts Center, new Martin Luther King, Jr. Library/Municipal Services Center, various streetscape improvements, public art, new live-work facilities for arts/theater district
Westerly Creek Village	2013	Northwest Aurora (Yosemite Street, Montview Boulevard, 26th Avenue between Dayton and Emporia streets, Peoria Street between East 26th and 25th avenues)	200 acres	New grocery store (Dayton and Montview), new Lola-Fulton-Kingston street connections to Stapleton, flood control, improvements at Westerly Creek and Montview Boulevard, new mixed use district approved

ing the outreach process for the survey plan, many citizens acknowledged the negative impact of demolitions upon their personal memories. They spoke enthusiastically and nostalgically about buildings from their past that no longer exist. The city can capitalize on these feelings. Outreach is critical to inform citizens about threats to historic buildings and, more importantly, what makes Aurora special both historically and architecturally and, therefore, worthy of preservation. Community support for preservation must be built well in advance of demolition threats, encouraging everyone to play an active role in creating vital and well-maintained places that are too beloved and successful to even consider losing them.

► **Many of Aurora's historic buildings are neglected or poorly maintained.** The reconnaissance survey completed as part of the survey plan identified a wealth of historic architectural styles, building forms, and use types. Most of these buildings appeared well cared for, yet there were places that demonstrated signs of neglect (either benign or active) and poor maintenance. Such treatment has a detrimental effect on physical integrity and prevents buildings from conveying their historical and archi-

tectural significance. Neglect can be complicated and based upon a number of factors, including lack of resources to repair sensitively or with the appropriate materials. Many property owners, and their historic buildings, would benefit from greater understanding of what makes these resources special, including background on why they were constructed a certain way originally and the types of techniques and replacement materials best suited to architecture of different periods.

Notes

1. Museum Director Jennifer Kuehner and Preservation Specialist Jim Bertolini identified this trend in preliminary discussions about the Aurora Historic Resources Survey Plan. This same opinion emerged during discussions at the city staff workshop, the community organization leader workshop, and public open house.
2. *City of Aurora, Building and Zoning Code of the City of Aurora, Colorado* (Aurora: City of Aurora, 2001), Article 19. Historic Preservation, Sec. 146-1900. Purpose.
3. Rebecca Hunt, *Aurora, Colorado, Historical Context Study* (Denver: n.p., ca 1995), 35.
4. Ibid.
5. Chris Geddes, "Fletcher and Her Trolley: A Suburb's Link to the city, Our Link to the Past" (Fort Collins: Colorado State University, 1998), 9.
6. Neither the ACAD nor the AHSPD context is complete, and both documents would need substantial work-- more research and narrative text exploring the importance of noted topics in relation to local, state, and national developments plus suitable historic photographs-- to meet contemporary standards for historic contexts. However, the two draft documents, once edited and approved, still are useful since the written histories do not appear in print elsewhere and explore themes important to the City of Aurora's development. For example, these accounts seem suitable for posting on organizational/department websites or perhaps for inclusion in grant applications.

SECTION II

City of Aurora Historic Resources Survey Plan

The Aurora Historic Resources Survey Plan links the past with the future. Historic contexts tell the stories of specific people and places at a certain time, linking those themes back to actual historic buildings and sites. Historical and architectural survey projects record examples of historic building forms, use types, and architectural styles, helping contemporary audiences appreciate more fully the historic design, materials, and workmanship of these resources. Yet, a plan, by definition, also is about charting a way forward. This survey plan sets goals and makes appropriate recommendations to achieve those goals over the next twenty years. AHSPO staff requested a plan that was practical and achievable. The recommendations in this plan are intended to be suitable for phasing into competitive grant applications that follow the best practices of historic preservation and are likely to provide an excellent return on the investment of public funds.

ENVISIONING GOALS

The goals in the Aurora Historic Resources Survey Plan set a vision for what needs to be accomplished in terms of research and documentation. In addition, they seek to address many of the issues identified in the SWOT analysis. This survey plan has been designed to capitalize upon strengths, correct weaknesses, mitigate threats, and take advantage of opportunities.

The first goal of the plan relates to the need to research

and write historic context documents. Historic contexts are vital to boost the understanding of Aurora's history. Well-written historic contexts have the power to appeal to a diverse audience. At their best, historic contexts attract readers with the story, keep them reading with a narrative that highlights common human experience, engage them with poignant photographs, and prepare them to recognize in the built environment the patterns and themes discussed in the context document. Given the benefits of historic contexts, the City of Aurora should consider context-driven preservation. This approach is different than a traditional emphasis on field survey first. One advantage of the context-driven model is the ease of tapping into the love of story all humans share instead of making the more difficult "sell" of trying to explain the sometimes esoteric nuances of architectural style and expression. The themes and stories presented in historic contexts give readers a framework to better understand and appreciate the buildings, sites, and structures that are the tangible evidence of the stories from our past.

The second goal of the Aurora Historic Resources Survey Plan is one of the most central, since it deals with the topic of historical and architectural survey projects. While identifying and evaluating all of the historic sites within the City of Aurora that are fifty years or older is an admirable aspiration, it simply is not practical in terms of time, money, or the resources themselves. This survey plan is about prioritizing the most impor-

Goals for Aurora Historic Resources Survey Plan, 2015–2035

- Goal 1.** RESEARCH themes most important to Aurora's development to tell the stories of this diverse city and its built environment.
- Goal 2.** DOCUMENT Aurora's most historically and architecturally significant and intact sites that give the city its own unique sense of place.
- Goal 3.** ENGAGE the public to increase local history knowledge and boost community pride.
- Goal 4.** UTILIZE the data to guide a relevant historic preservation program in Aurora.

One advantage of the context-driven model is the ease of tapping into the love of story all humans share instead of making the more difficult “sell” of trying to explain the sometimes esoteric nuances of architectural style and expression.

tant historical and architectural survey projects, suggesting efforts that are both *feasible* and *reasonable* within either current and future AHSP and HPC work plans or the timelines and funding levels for CLG and SHF competitive grant programs or other alternative money sources. This goal recommends documenting only those Aurora sites that are both historically and architecturally significant and the most intact. This qualifier requires decision-making about which resources are most important and possess the greatest physical integrity. Significance and integrity are the two concepts that support designation and one of the major reasons to complete historical and architectural surveys is to protect eligible historic sites via local landmarking; surveying resources with high levels of significance and integrity facilitates the designation process. Another reason for recording historic sites is, however, to create a pictorial and written documentation package for resources that will be dramatically altered or demolished. The recommendations under Goal 2 also address a potential method for surveying in such inevitable situations.

Inspired by the success of initiatives like the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s “This Place Matters” campaign, there is now a better appreciation for the need to engage with the public. The third goal of the survey plan deals with outreach. Education and outreach are particularly important in a geographically vast city like Aurora. There are real advantages to meeting the people where they live, work, and shop, but the location and other conditions need to be carefully considered. The citywide Open House to solicit public input on the survey plan, held on a busy Saturday in an out-of-the-way community room at the Beck Recreation Center, had disappointing attendance. However, Historic Preservation Specialist Boyer’s one-on-one interactions with patrons at four public libraries

yielded excellent results. If appropriately planned, successfully promoted, and well-attended, outreach based upon historic contexts and historical and architectural surveys can begin to address an identified weakness, Aurora’s lack of a citywide identity. One great way to assure adult participation in planned outreach activities is to plan special events for kids; parents not only have to accompany, and usually drive, their children to such events but once there, they are more likely to get involved if their children are interested and engaged.

The final goal in the plan encourages the AHSP to utilize historic contexts and historical and architectural survey products to improve the profile of historic preservation citywide. These materials are designed to be used rather than sit on a shelf. Recommendations relate to programs for encouraging more designations of eligible resources, both privately and city-owned. Interpretation, especially through the use of technology that provides a self-guided experience, seems to be particularly well-suited to the busy schedules so many individuals have; the Survey Monkey questionnaire received a much greater response than the Open House for this project.

GOAL 1: RESEARCH themes most important to Aurora’s development to tell the stories of this diverse city and its built environment

Aurora has a wealth of topics suitable for historic context development; the recommendations below highlight the highest priority historic contexts and address issues identified in Part I of this plan. For example, accessible historic contexts can: unify the city in support of a shared history (Weakness 1), explore the most important themes for areas along the new light rail line (Opportunity 1), and both contribute to increased knowledge of Aurora’s historical trends and encourage a more



Figure 2.1. After World War II, a robust demand for housing saw many farms converted to neighborhoods. (Aurora History Museum)

nuanced appreciation for this historic built environment. (Threat 1). These research themes can facilitate historical and architectural survey projects and highlight individual resources or geographic areas with the highest levels of significance and integrity.

1.1—Aurora's Residential Development, 1940s–1960s

This historic context is the first of several recommended projects that offer Aurora an opportunity to become a leader in postwar studies. The 1940s–1960s time period was transformative for Aurora, marking the community's transition from a small town to a growing city. Great scholarship already ex-

ists about Hoffman Heights, and the proposed project should build upon the completed research but broaden the scope to look at residential development throughout the area that ultimately became part of the City of Aurora. Key themes for exploration include the history of subdivisions platted during this period, the prevalence of infill construction in previously platted subdivisions, similarities and differences from Colorado and nationwide subdivision trends, the key builders and developers involved plus the construction techniques and materials employed in subdivision development, and homeowner demographics. Beyond the stories of home development and home ownership, this context is crucial for staff

Facilitating Successful Completion of the Aurora Historic Resources Survey Plan

While not technically part of the Aurora Historic Resources Survey Plan, working on the following list of broad programmatic improvements may increase the likelihood of successfully accomplishing the research and documentation goals and recommendations.

- **Gather materials** likely to be useful to paid consultants working on historic context and historical and architectural survey projects. Examples include comprehensive date of construction data from Adams and Arapahoe counties; oral history interviews with older Aurorans, especially long-time residents and military veterans; and newspaper clippings and promotional information for current commercial and residential developments so these research materials will be readily available once the resources meet the time threshold for eligibility (usually fifty years or older).
- **Schedule regular meetings** with staff who participated in Workshop #1. Strengthen these existing relationships to encourage open dialogue, collaboration, and greater and more timely AHSP and HPC involvement in redevelopment plans that may affect Aurora's historic buildings.
- **Develop internship program**, recruiting students from historic preservation, history, and architecture programs at local academic institutions. (NOTE: Historic Preservation Specialist should consider time required for training, supervision, and assessment before making any commitments.)
- **Request budget increase** with additional money earmarked specifically for AHSP, including annual allocation towards cash match for grant-funded projects and sufficient funding to reestablish the Preservation Assistant position.
- **Encourage the HPC** to take a more proactive and strategic role, becoming a dynamic body that advocates for Aurora's historic resources in a knowledgeable, timely fashion—provide training as necessary for individual members to improve their networking, public speaking, and negotiating skills.



Figure 2.2. Mission Viejo set the standard for master-planned communities in the Denver metropolitan area. (*Aurora History Museum*)

to conduct Section 106 reviews for postwar homes being altered with Federal funds.

1.2—Aurora’s Residential Development, 1970s–1990

This context allows Aurora to lead within the preservation field, since few Colorado communities have considered homes constructed during these two decades. This proposed document should continue the story initiated in Context #1, explaining the influences and events that made this later period of suburban development different from the initial postwar boom. The most well-known Aurora subdivision for this later period is Mission Viejo. While the history of this planned community should appear prominently in the second context, the overall emphasis of the document should be citywide. Key themes for exploration include the history of subdivisions platted during this period, similarities and differences from Colorado and nationwide subdivision trends, emerging house types and architectural styles along with the construction techniques and materials employed, the key builders and developers involved in subdivision development, and homeowner demographics. According to realtors, 1970s homes are quickly becoming the “next big thing,” and it would benefit the City of Aurora to be ahead of this trend in order to build appreciation for these homes.

1.3—Original Aurora, 1880s–2000s

During its long history Original Aurora has experienced profound changes and the story of this popular (as expressed in the visual preference exercise) historic area reflects a great deal about the community’s history and development. This context should expand upon the scholarship from previous surveys along Galena Street, incorporating key themes such

as the founding of the Town of Fletcher, the importance of the streetcar line to early residential development, the evolution of commercial enterprises along both East Colfax Avenue and Montivew Boulevard, the changing demographics of this region over time, and more recent efforts to revitalize and re-brand the area as a Cultural Arts District.

1.4—Military in Aurora, 1918–1990

Opinions expressed during the outreach phase of the survey plan process confirmed how much the City of Aurora identifies with the military. It is home to two historic bases—the former Fitzsimons Army Hospital and the former Lowry Air Force Base—and the active Buckley Air Force Base facility. In addition, numerous veterans choose to live in this community. While research exists about these three military bases, it has been neither gathered in one document nor approached from a citywide perspective. There is a need for an accessible, comprehensive context that tells the story of these three institutions and the people who served and worked there. Key themes for exploration include the relationship of the three bases with one another and their impact on Aurora’s infrastructure, culture, residential and commercial development, school construction, and city identity.

GOAL 2: DOCUMENT Aurora’s most historically and architecturally significant and intact sites that give the city its own unique sense of place.

The recommendations below highlight the highest priority historical and architectural survey projects and address issues identified in Part I of this plan. More complete, accurate, and up-to-date survey records can: provide the AHSP and HPC with information regarding significance and integrity in

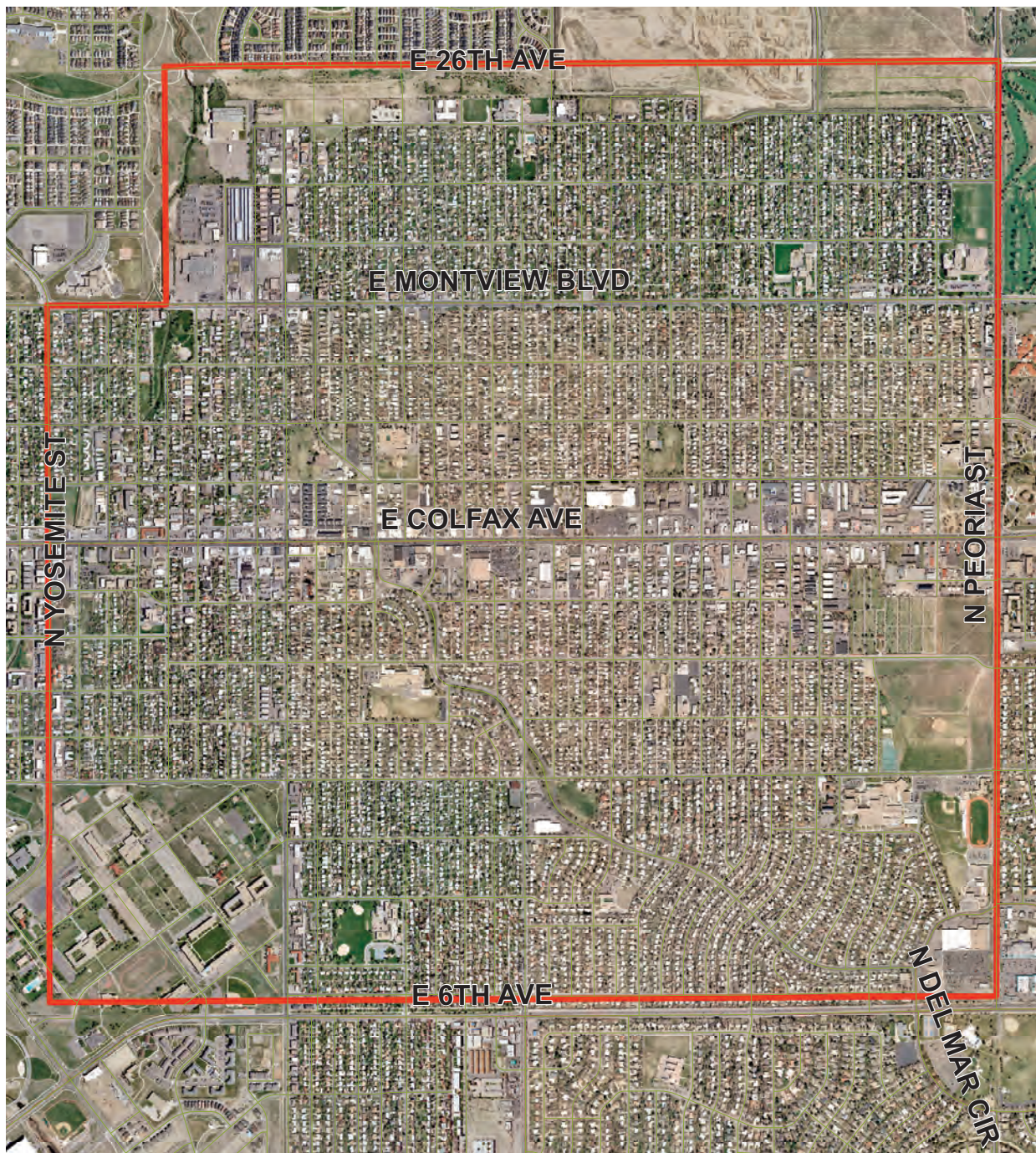


Figure 2.3. City residents expressed a fondness for Original Aurora (outlined in red), which contains the original Town of Fletcher. (*City of Aurora, Information Technology*)



Figure 2.4. The three military bases in Aurora have always held an important place in the story of the city and the hearts of its residents. (*Aurora History Museum*)



Figure 2.5. The five points of the star in the City of Aurora's seal represent home, school, places of worship, business, and industry. All of these resource types will be part of future surveys. (*City of Aurora*)



Figure 2.6. The city's places of worship are important geographic, cultural, and ethnic landmarks. (*Aurora History Museum*)

order to respond more effectively to demolition threats (Weakness 3); identify character-defining features of historic architecture to feature in light rail-related interpretation (Opportunity 1); highlight sites suitable for adaptive reuse (Opportunity 2); and increase the community's level of knowledge about community history and architecture as a way to discourage demolitions (Threats 1 and 2), build a larger preservation constituency (Threat 3), and encourage better treatment for historic buildings (Threat 4).

The suggested historical and architectural survey efforts described below are divided into two basic categories. The first two proposals represent items that easily can be initiated immediately with few additional resources. They both are intended to become part of the AHSPO work plan; the first should be executed on an as-needed basis and in response to increased demolitions due to development pressure, while the second may best be as an annual effort to assure Aurora has the most current survey data. The rest of the survey project suggestions are envisioned as grant-funded efforts.

2.1—"Quick-Strike" Team

Aurora is a growing city and there is little reason to assume this multi-decade trend will cease any time soon. Development pressure, and the resulting possibility of the demolition of historic resources, comes with population growth and its accompanying demands for new land uses. The concept of this proposed effort is to create the community's own Historic American Building Survey (HABS)-like team, which can quickly survey, prior to demolition, private properties not using federal funding (and thus triggering the required formal survey). At a minimum, thorough photo documentation that captures all building elevations and key architectural

details needs to occur as soon as intentions to raze are announced. If AHSPO staff snap the photographs, then volunteers or an intern can finish the remainder of the research and form completion on the Architectural Inventory Form as time allows.

2.2—Resurvey Initiative

The process of survey is never done; even when a building or site has been recorded, updating that form to reflect any changes to the property represents preservation best practice. OAHPS recommends resurvey every five to ten years. As with the "Quick Strike" program above, photo documentation, if nothing else, should be completed for resources that have changed since the original survey. Gathering to take photographs for historic sites in need of resurvey might be suitable as an annual HPC team-building project. Additions and enhancements to the construction history and historical background on the forms should be completed as practical, perhaps making use of interns for this task. Resurvey concludes with a reassessment of site eligibility based upon new information about the individual resource, better understanding of how the surveyed property fits into the larger historical context, and changes in overall conditions that may have changed the status of the building in terms of scarcity of the particular architectural expression.

2.3—Aurora Seal Surveys

The City of Aurora seal features the rising sun with five stars that represent the five most important spheres of influence for the community, namely home, school, places of worship, business, and industry. The three recommended survey projects are intended to record these five categories of re-

sources within the identified survey areas as a way to honor this municipal symbol that expresses the core concepts most important to the community.

► Park East

This subdivision—significant as the site of the Parade of Homes in 1958, the first year this metropolitan Denver event featured new houses all on a single street—exhibits a high level of integrity. Focusing on this area not only is a logical follow-up to Recommendation 1.1, the historic theme about Aurora's residential development from the 1940s to the 1960s, but also represents another way the city can establish its leadership in the study of postwar resources. The Park East subdivision includes a total of three filings dating from 1957 to 1959. A selective intensive historical and architectural survey project should include an individual survey form (#1403) for not only each

of the seventeen Parade of Homes houses but also the most intact examples of both key house models within Park East and other community buildings such as churches and schools; it is anticipated this project would record approximately fifty buildings. Project research should capitalize upon completed work, including the Aurora Historical Society's tour of select Parade of Homes properties, and oral histories with long-time homeowners in the subdivision.

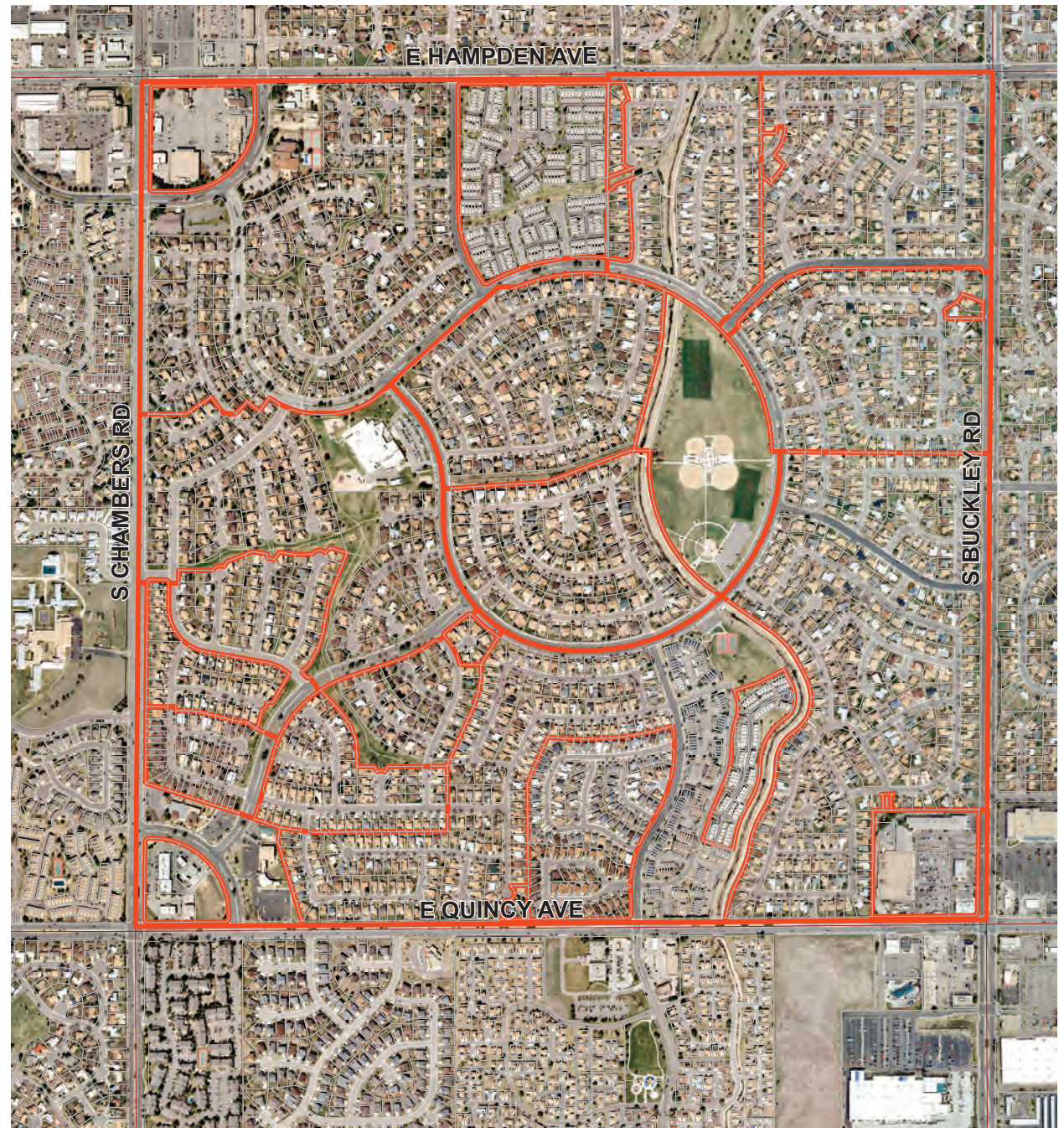
► Mission Viejo

This highly significant planned community has an intriguing history and distinctive architecture that influenced further development not only in Aurora but also along Colorado's Front Range in the 1970s and onward. Focusing on this important neighborhood represents a logical follow-up to Recommendation 1.2, the historic



Figure 2.7. Mission Viejo represents the later residential development period from 1970s to 1990s. (Aurora History Museum)

Figure 2.8. The master-planned community of Mission Viejo, with its numerous subdivision filings, grew over time. The red boundary on the aerial photograph marks the massive area that comprises all of this groundbreaking development. (City of Aurora, Information Technology)



context about Aurora's residential development from the 1970s to the 1990s. Mission Viejo includes a total of eighteen filings between 1972 and 1981. The intensive historical and architectural survey project should utilize a slightly modified Post-World War II Residential Suburban Subdivision Form (#1403b) for each filing. This form, as is, allows for documentation of large numbers of architecturally similar housing models, resources deemed individually eligible to the National Register of Historic Places, and any identified National Register Historic Districts. To record non-residential resources within the Mission Viejo subdivision filings and to meet the intentions of the Aurora Seal Survey concept, Form #1403b should be modified as needed to document schools, places of worship, community facilities such as the architecturally distinctive Mission Viejo Library, and commercial resources like the nearby strip mall shopping plaza designed to serve Mission Viejo residents. This modified form also should identify individual resources eligible to the State Register of Historic Properties, as an Aurora landmark, and suitable for listing as Cultural Heritage Sites and, if applicable, identified Aurora historic districts. Given the sheer size of the Mission Viejo subdivision, this survey project must be a multi-phase effort.

► Pre-1940s Buildings

This historical and architectural survey project is a logical follow-up to Recommendation 1.3, the historic context of Original Aurora. The majority of the most significant and intact resources constructed prior to 1940 already have been designated as Aurora local landmarks. Given this

fact, the best approach is a selective intensive survey of the thirty to fifty most intact and architecturally distinctive homes, schools, places of worship, businesses, and industrial sites within Aurora's twenty pre-1940 subdivisions, all located in Original Aurora. There is an opportunity with this project to identify resources particularly suited to adaptive reuse (like Stanley Aviation) or other functions within the Cultural Arts District.

2.4—Documenting City-Owned Resources

The City of Aurora owns about 30 buildings built prior to 1965, but only ten have been landmarked. The number of city-owned buildings constructed after 1965 skyrockets, and these will soon reach the 50-year mark. Intensively surveying these resources represents good practice, providing the municipality with the opportunity to be a good steward of their historic buildings and participate in the same type of documentation effort they endorse in the recommended Aurora Star Survey initiative.

GOAL 3: ENGAGE the public to increase local history knowledge and boost community pride

The recommendations below highlight a variety of specific outreach endeavors designed not only to support the completion of the suggested contexts and survey projects, but also to address issues identified in Part I of this plan. These outreach activities are intended to support a shared citywide identity for Aurora based upon the stories of its past and its significant architecture (Weakness 1), enhance the image of the AHSP and HPC (Weakness 3), and encourage more public participation in historic preservation (Threat 3).

3.1—Gone But Not Forgotten

During the process of developing this survey plan, many individuals shared stories about cherished places in Aurora that have been demolished. There is a power to place. We never forget the way it felt to wake up on a lazy Saturday in the guest bedroom at a favorite aunt's house, the diner where our parents treated the team to ice cream after a Little League victory, or the gym where we danced at our Senior Prom. Even when these places no longer physically exist, they still continue to resonate as we carry them in our memory. This initiative seeks to validate and gather, either as oral history interviews or written accounts, the places that matter most to each Auroran. Once gathered, such remembrances easily can be incorporated into historic contexts or included on historical and architectural survey forms. These kinds of personal stories make historic sites come alive with details that are far more relatable than a rote recitation of a chain of title or a list of the architectural features the building exhibits.

3.2—My House, My Neighborhood, My Aurora

This initiative is a way for Aurora's citizens to photo document the places that shape their daily lives. Each participant is asked to take three digital photographs: one of their house, one of their neighborhood, and one that captures what Aurora means to them. Submitted images easily could be curated into a static museum exhibit, a traveling display, or posted to the web. From an historical and architectural survey perspective, the images the participants capture become placeholders, the most simple photographic reconnaissance survey that illustrates resources until they are scheduled to be documented as part of one of the recommended projects noted under Goal 2 or as part of the Section-106 compliance process.

If the same people participate year after year, then the collection of photos will illustrate changes over time. However, the most important aspect of this project is its capacity to unify, encouraging participants to think of themselves as part of a citywide community defined by the places they cherish most.

3.3 — This Place, Then and Now

This activity is designed to help citizens better understand the ways Aurora's built environment has changed over time. The basic idea is to create a new image showing the original historic image in one-half of the frame with the current view comprising the other half; for example, matching up the historic and current halves of a particular house in Original Aurora. While the then and now photographs could be executed quite simply using photocopies of historic images from the AHSPO Archives, the potential of developing a mobile phone application should be explored. This higher tech approach has the advantage of instant access with the pre-scanned historic images automatically popping up (use of GPS or other geo-locating software) when app users are near the location to take the half-and-half photograph. This application could have an option for users to post their image directly to a variety of social media platforms. The then and now project can be launched either as a stand-alone initiative or in conjunction with professional survey work; for example, if there are historic images available for the sites being surveyed, then the public could be out in the field over the course of the project. This timing is perfectly suited to boosting interest and direct participation in historical and architectural survey projects; public half-and-half photos could appear in the survey report or the end-of-project presentation.

GOAL 4: UTILIZE the data to guide a relevant historic preservation program in Aurora

The true value of historic contexts and historical and architectural survey products is determined by how useful these materials can be, especially for designation of eligible historic resources and communication with the public about these special places. Equipped with a well-researched, accurate survey form, most property owners can easily prepare their own nomination for listing. Strong historic preservation programs rely upon the stories and architectural details gathered in the research and documentation process to help the public better understand the built environment.

4.1—Post-Survey Designation Initiative

Very few property owners with buildings identified during a historical and architectural survey as eligible for listing choose to follow-through with the next step in the preservation process. To encourage more listing, the AHSPO and HPC should collaborate on a post-survey process designed to inform owners of properties of their options: recognition of historical significance (Cultural Heritage Sites), honorary distinction (National or State registers), or protection (local landmark). Careful consideration should be given to the types of materials (perhaps informational packets) required, appropriate ways to make initial contact with the owner (written correspondence, open house, personal visit), and a schedule for ongoing contact. This project could begin immediately with an effort to encourage designation of eligible resources from the Hoffman Heights survey projects.

4.2 —Operation City Landmark

The HPC's brainstorming session revealed the board's de-

sire to identify and designate eligible city-owned historic properties. This initiative represents a great follow-up activity to Recommendation 2.4, survey of city-owned facilities constructed prior to 1986. Municipal designation is an excellent way for the city to set an example and encourage Aurorans to landmark their own properties. Cities that list their own historic sites demonstrate, by active participation, a belief in preservation and the importance of the Certificate of Appropriateness process in protecting historic buildings. As an added bonus, designated resources are eligible for SHF grant funding for a variety of projects such as construction drawings, restoration and rehabilitation work, and education or interpretation.

4.3—Interpretation With Results...It Yields Results

Well-researched and expertly written historic contexts and survey projects result in an amazing wealth of personal stories, current and historic images, and details about the built environment and how it has changed over time. These products are not merely compliance; they are tailor-made for use in a wide variety of communication materials. Examples include, but are not limited to, museum (or traveling) exhibits, tours, websites, documentary films, podcasts, educational presentations, neighborhood meetings, coffee meetups, and one-page summaries for city council members. Communicating project results reaches new audiences and has the potential to increase interest in historic preservation in Aurora. Using project results for interpretation represents a way to "get more bang for the buck" from the initial investment in research and documentation.

IMPLEMENTATION

Based upon preservation best practice, Aurora should pursue a more context-driven approach, allowing the historical research to inform the surveys. This practice creates a strong interdependent link between contexts and surveys.

Implementation of the plan is summarized in Table 2.1. The first two columns feature the goals and recommendations detailed in Part II of this plan. The prioritization, in the third column of the chart, is based upon a realistic assessment of current conditions, including the results of the reconnaissance survey and input from AHSPO staff. The projects suggested for earliest implementation represent both the easiest items to

accomplish with existing resources and items that are independent of other tasks. The last column in this table identifies the key individuals likely to be involved in each recommendation. Items assigned to AHSPO staff and the HPC respectively should be included in the appropriate annual work plan.

Many of the long-term (ten and twenty year) recommendations are dependent upon completion of projects proposed during the first five years of the plan. Recognizing that some of the suggested initiatives may take longer than expected and may require additional resources, the plan will need periodic reassessment and, if necessary, adjustments to the time frame.

TABLE 2.1: PRIORITIZATION CHART FOR IMPLEMENTING AURORA HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY PLAN

Goals	Recommendations	Priority	Time Frame	Responsible Party
RESEARCH	1.1—Historic Context: Aurora's Residential Development, 1940s–1960s	4	0–5 years	Professional consultant
	1.2—Historic Context: Aurora's Residential Development, 1970s–1990	7	5–10 years	Professional consultant
	1.3—Historic Context: Original Aurora, 1880s–2000s	3	0–5 years	Professional consultant
	1.4—Historic Context: Military in Aurora, 1918–1990	11	10–20 years	Professional consultant
DOCUMENT	2.1—"Quick Strike" Team	2	0–2 years and then ongoing	AHSPO staff, HPC, City staff, Volunteers, Interns
	2.2—Resurvey Initiative	12	10–20 years	AHSPO staff, HPC, Volunteers, Interns
	2.3—Aurora Seal Star Surveys: Pre-1940	8	5–10 years	Professional consultant, Intern
	2.3—Aurora Seal Star Surveys: Park East	9	5–10 years	Professional consultant, Intern
	2.3—Aurora Seal Star Surveys: Mission Viejo	10	5–10 years	Professional consultant, Intern
	2.4—Documenting City-Owned Resources	12	10–20 years	Professional consultant, Intern
ENGAGE	3.1—Gone But Not Forgotten	1	0–2 years and then ongoing	AHSPO staff, HPC, Aurora citizens
	3.2—My House, My Neighborhood, My Aurora	5	0–5 years and then routinely	AHSPO staff, HPC, Aurora citizens
	3.3—This Place, Then and Now	16	10–20 years and then ongoing	AHSPO staff, HPC, Professional app designer, Aurora citizens, Tourists
UTILIZE	4.1—Post-Survey Designation Initiative	6	0–5 years and then ongoing	AHSPO staff, HPC, Intern, Property owners
	4.2—Operation City Landmark	15	10–20 years	HPC, City staff, City Council
	4.3—Interpretation With Results... It Yields Results	14	0–5 years and ongoing	AHSPO staff, HPC, Museum staff

CONCLUSION: FOSTERING A PRESERVATION CONSTITUENCY

Historic preservation is, at its foundation, the sensible management of change and the celebration of places. The sense of place in Aurora matters to residents, visitors, business owners, city officials, indeed to anyone who lives, works, and recreates here. Making Aurora matter more requires cultivating a robust sense of place that connects people to the built environment. Thus, historic preservation is also a celebration of stories.

This plan envisions both survey practice and the larger preservation program in Aurora as proactive and highly participatory. Each recommendation not only emphasizes resource protection but also engages the citizens who ultimately benefit from that protection. Successfully meeting each of the four goals requires not just extensive public input but a commitment to serving Aurorans through the city's historic resources. Survey should never be just about designation; it is about buildings *and* people—the union of substance and memory that gives meaning to and provides direction for a community.

Every action Aurora's historic preservation program undertakes should help foster the growth of a pro-preservation constituency. Historic preservation should become a natural and inevitable part of civic life in Aurora, and the recommendations in this plan will help the city achieve this goal.

A energetic preservation program necessarily requires a broad outlook. Pro-preservation constituencies built on a smattering of individual resources or a few districts are very difficult to sustain. Aurora must expand the preservation spec-

trum to embrace a diversity of interests and provide people with a real stake in preserving their pasts and directing their futures.

A vibrant historic preservation program and pro-preservation constituency need not depend on resources of venerable age. Aurora's multitude of postwar resources is one of its greatest strengths. Engaging the recent past is powerful because it forces preservationists to deal with human beings that are, in fact, still breathing. Engaging the recent past is an effective way to put people back into preservation.

Not every historic place worthy of protection is big, beautiful, or unique. Indeed, the value of a historic place is not the sum of its aesthetics or its contribution to the grand narrative of American history, but its ability to shelter effectively people and their enterprises in a way that contributes to a distinctive, but not necessarily beautiful, sense of place.

Perhaps Aurora's greatest asset for building a vibrant preservation program and pro-preservation constituency is its unusually high level of cultural diversity. When preservationists bring as many people from as many different perspectives as possible into the pro-preservation tent, as the National Trust for Historic Preservation did with its "This Place Matters" campaign, they bring with them ideas. And as urban historian Carl S. Smith notes, "cities are built out of ideas as much as they are of timber, bricks, and stone...."¹ The future of preservation in Aurora, both as a movement and as a practice, will remain bright as long as it includes as many different resources and people as possible.

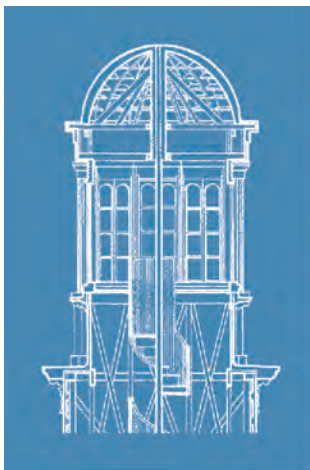
Notes

1. Carl S. Smith, *City Water, City Life: Water and the Infrastructure of Ideas in Urbanizing Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), p. 2.

Survey should never be just about buildings; it is about buildings and people—the union of substance and memory that gives meaning to and provides direction for a community.

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