

# **Riverfront Overlay Plan**

**City of Peoria, Illinois**

**December 16, 2014**

## STATEMENT OF INTENT

The establishment of this Riverfront Overlay District (the “District”) is intended to provide the flexibility for future development to facilitate a positive transition from the existing Central Business District Zoning (B-1) toward a lively, active Riverfront adjacent to and supportive of the burgeoning 24/7 environment of the Warehouse Form District. This District will supplement the underlying B-1 zoning to provide a framework that includes the tenets of a sustainable urban business environment (corporate office space, ancillary retail development, public and private parking, safe streets), while encouraging and promoting a connection to the elements of an accessible, pedestrian-friendly, multi-use Riverfront that serves the larger community as a whole. Particular attention is paid to emphasizing layout and design criteria as well as goals and objectives that harmonize the elements of a business-oriented structures with uses, architectural elements and landscape features that relate the buildings to the street front, adjacent green spaces and, ultimately, the unique character of the Riverfront.

## RIVERFRONT OVERLAY DISTRICT BOUNDARY

The boundary of the proposed Riverfront Overlay District is described in Appendix 1 and illustrated as a map in Appendix 2. The District consists of approximately 31.2 acres, all currently zoned B-1 - Central Business District. The proposed District includes both the interior parcels and the entirety of the adjacent rights of way so that the proposed framework may apply to the street and streetscape improvements on both sides of the streets adjacent to the proposed District.

## PROVISIONS FOR RIVERFRONT OVERLAY DISTRICT

### *Description of Character*

This Riverfront Overlay District will support and attract a diverse and economically sustainable downtown business community that, in coordination with the adjacent Warehouse District and Riverfront, creates, encourages and promotes a safe and vibrant environment that is accessible to the public. The character of this District will include high caliber, long-lasting buildings while maintaining a strong connection to revitalized streets and green spaces where multimodal connection to the Riverfront is encouraged and celebrated.

### *Goals and Objectives*

The goal of the District is to provide a framework for future redevelopment that supplements the existing B-1 Central Business District Zoning Code while promoting and emphasizing design elements that transition from the downtown, urban core of the City to the vibrant, multi-use Riverfront. Its objectives include:

- Lot Dimensional allowances that support the connection of the buildings to the adjacent streetscape while providing open spaces on properties that face the Illinois River along Water Street.

- Building Envelope Standards that provide maximum flexibility to support high density urban development while including public amenity spaces, line of site views and pedestrian connections to the adjacent Riverfront.
- Public and private Signage and Lighting Standards that encourage way finding, pedestrian safety and safe multi-modal use of public space and facilitate harmonious and consistent connection between private and public spaces.
- Landscaping Standards that contribute to the establishment of safe, accessible streets with clear paths of travel, walkable connection to the Riverfront, street amenities, on-street parking and continuous green canopies that reinforce appropriate transitional zones and contribute to minimizing stormwater runoff.

### *Implementation Strategy and Schedule*

The Plan is submitted for review and adoption by the Peoria City Council for the implementation of a Riverfront Overlay District to establish the framework for a future development connecting to the Downtown and Peoria Riverfront. It is anticipated that the proposed Plan would be accepted and the Riverfront Overlay District adopted into the Zoning Code in late January, 2015.

### *Layout and Design Criteria*

#### 1. The location and design of buildings, parking facilities, and loading docks

Access points for building pedestrians and vehicles shall promote safe and enjoyable connections to the street grid within the District and adjacent riverfront amenity area. Development to the property lines is allowed and encouraged to reinforce the appearance and flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic flows within the public realm. Open spaces provided on private property shall connect and provide access to the adjacent streets, coordinating with the tree canopies and streetscape amenities provided in the ROW.

Development in the District shall promote a “park once” environment where the needs of all are considered in a sustainable, pedestrian friendly environment that encourages pedestrian access to businesses, amenities and the Riverfront in a safe, effective manner at all times of the day. Single purpose, reserved surface parking should be minimized and on street parking shall be provided to the maximum extent as ROW improvements are made. Both public and private off-street parking shall be well marked and consideration should be given to opportunities for shared use parking where private parking for business might be available to the public during off-peak hours. Convenient bicycle parking is encouraged to be provided within both private and public parking facilities, open space, and in buildings. Signage promoting the use of bicycles and providing way finding shall be utilized throughout the District.

Loading docks shall be provided as required to minimize loading from trucks obstructing travel lanes in the streets. Permanent docks shall be designed so that temporary encroachment of vehicles into the ROW does not exceed 20 feet or into the travel lanes (whichever is smaller) when in use.

## 2. On-site circulation

Circulation within each developed parcel shall be commensurate with its use and emphasize pedestrians and multi-modal connections to the adjacent Complete Streets. Adequate provision shall be given to the efficient entrance and exit of on-site parking facilities and proposed facilities shall identify potential impacts to the efficiency and safety of the adjacent street network. The comfort and safety of pedestrians and bicyclists in the ROW shall be emphasized.

## 3. Landscaping and Screening

Setbacks are not specifically required in the District, as connectivity between the buildings and adjacent streets is emphasized. Landscape plans are encouraged to follow the Alternative Compliance option provided in Section 8.2.16 of the Land Development Code to maximize the context sensitive approach. Specific attention shall be given to providing a continuous tree canopy to provide pedestrians a clear path of travel from the Central Business District to the Riverfront. Landscaping in surface parking lots, open spaces and adjacent streets shall be diverse and emphasize native plants and materials. Low maintenance street trees 4" in diameter or larger are encouraged. Trees shall be spaced in a context-sensitive manner to the adjacent buildings, roadways and parking facilities.

Walls and screens shall be utilized, where appropriate, to define outdoor spaces, retain earth, enhance the pedestrian experience, separate the street-space from the private realm (parking lots, refuse areas, gardens) and screen ground level equipment. They shall be high quality stone, brick, metal (wrought iron, welded steel and/or aluminum [electro-statically plated black]) or as allowed in Section 6.6.1G. Walls shall not exceed 6 feet in height.

## 4. Lighting

Outdoor lighting design for the District is intended to provide safety while accenting key architectural elements and landscape features and creating a unique identity for the businesses and public spaces within the District. Light fixture style, material and color shall be chosen to complement the design of any proposed development project and other new lighting fixtures already approved within the District.

Street lighting in the ROW shall be designed to meet Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) standards for adequate light coverage and shall be directed downward and mounted horizontal to the ground surface to minimize driver distraction and light pollution. Proposed lighting fixtures shall be a maximum of 45 feet in height (including base) within vehicular areas and 25 feet in height within non-vehicular, open space and pedestrian areas. Lighting fixtures intended to illuminate roof-top gardens shall be designed to minimize light pollution while still providing adequate light levels to create a safe environment. All lighting sources shall be LED with a compatible color temperature throughout the District. All lighting fixtures, with the exception of fixtures used to accent architectural building features, landscaping or art as described in 8.5.4.B shall be cutoff fixtures in accordance with the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) standards.

## 5. Signage

The District is intended to be a pedestrian friendly urban business environment with mixed-use elements that connect and enhance the downtown and Riverfront and serve the larger community as a whole. Signage and street graphics in this District will contribute to increased traffic and pedestrian safety, reduced visual blight, and clearer connections. Signage in this District will promote appropriate signs and street graphics, harmonious with the city's visual context, and connected to other specialty districts such as the Riverfront, Central Business District, and Warehouse District. These goals will be achieved with utilization of appropriately scaled signage, materials, and lighting levels; the use of comprehensive lighting and graphic design, durable materials, and creative installations coupled with ongoing maintenance to create an inviting atmosphere for residents, visitors, workers, and tourists.

The unique relationship of buildings to a Complete Street grid in this District may present unique opportunities and challenges for utilizing signs and street graphics to optimize the user experience. Signage will address these challenges and opportunities and maintain a consistent urban neighborhood with a cohesive, harmonious, and distinct signage standard.

Signage in the District shall be permitted as allowed in B1 Central Business District with the addition of the following overlay criteria:

- a. Flashing signs are prohibited.
- b. Street light pole banners for corporate or civic events (no advertising) are permitted in the right-of-way.
- c. Light standard signs are limited to surface parking lots, and can only be used for way finding signage.
- d. Inflatable signs are prohibited.
- e. Billboards are prohibited.
- f. Freestanding signage in the right-of-way is permitted but limited to directional way finding. Advertising is prohibited within the right-of-way. Freestanding signage size shall be a maximum of 25 square feet and can include City way finding.
- g. Dynamic media directory signs are permitted within the right-of-way and on private property. Screens for dynamic media directory signs shall be a maximum of 55" diagonally, with pedestrian level lighting, not to interfere with traffic.
- h. Rooftop signs are prohibited.
- i. Back lit window signs are permitted, behind perimeter fenestrations/window glass.
- j. District Gateway signage at District boundaries is permitted.

## 6. Building orientation, height, and setbacks

Buildings proposed in the District shall be of an orientation and height to support an urban business development while providing and celebrating a connection to the adjacent streets and Riverfront.

Setbacks are not specifically required and building construction to the property line, if providing connection to and interaction with the adjacent street and streetscape, is encouraged. Footings, permanent earth retention, or other permanent underground construction shall be allowed to encroach a maximum of 15 feet into the right of way, provided it is underground, does not impede pedestrian or vehicle use of the ROW, does not conflict with existing or proposed utilities, and a separate, revocable permit is received from the City of Peoria.

Building Height shall not be limited in number of stories, or floors, but shall be appropriately scaled to be consistent with and facilitate development of facilities for global business enterprises, while maintaining strong connections to revitalized streets and green spaces where multimodal connection(s) to the Riverfront is encouraged and celebrated – all within a sustainable urban business environment. Buildings within the District shall not exceed 250 feet. For reference, the height of the tallest buildings currently constructed within the Central Business District (B-1 District) is approximately 282 feet.

Permanent overhangs from the building over the public ROW shall maintain a clear height of at least 10 feet from the sidewalk, except as otherwise provided for signs, street lighting and similar appurtenances. Temporary or intermittent overhangs or doors shall be permitted to encroach into the public right-of-way as long as ADA Compliance is maintained.

Uses that promote a lively street presence shall be encouraged (through a separate, revocable permit from The City of Peoria) by the construction of patios, terraces, or outdoor spaces in the public ROW for on-street dining, provided that a minimum of 8 feet of continuous public access running parallel to the curb remains between the surrounding fence or rail and curb. Patio surfaces shall be concrete, colored concrete, concrete or stone pavers or other high quality material. Railing or fencing shall be wrought iron or welded steel/aluminum – chain link or plastic fencing is not permitted.

## 7. Open space and pedestrian amenities

Where open space is provided in the District, specific consideration shall be given to providing pedestrian connections to the adjacent streets encouraging connection to the Riverfront. Green space, where provided, shall give consideration to enhancing the diversity of public recreational opportunities in the urban framework. Pedestrian amenities, including seating, landscaping, a tree canopy, trash receptacles, safe and efficient lighting and way finding within and through the District shall be provided.

## 8. Cross access easements for a riverfront promenade

All proposed development in the District shall coordinate with and connect to cross access easements providing public access to the Riverfront to encourage those working, living, or visiting within the District to have access to and visibility of both Riverfront and surrounding public amenities.

9. Review Board

Applications for development within the Riverfront Overlay District shall be reviewed for compliance with the existing Code of the City of Peoria; Appendix C Land Development Plan and Riverfront Overlay District by the City of Peoria Site Plan Review Board (SPRB).

Appendix No. 1 – Riverfront Overlay District Legal Description

Appendix No. 2 – Riverfront Overlay District Map