Build Up Aurora update: Overall city street network now rated in good condition

The city was able to deliver on its promises this year to improve the condition of its residential streets through the Build Up Aurora program. All of the planned residential street maintenance work was completed as of October and is visible on the project tracker at EngageAurora.org/BuildUpAurora. The effort, which addressed streets in 35 Aurora neighborhoods with the greatest need for repairs, has elevated the city’s overall street network back to good condition, according to national standards.

Prior to the launch of Build Up Aurora, the city’s overall street network, including neighborhood streets, was rated as fair or below. The Aurora City Council approved a plan in 2022 to address the issue, using an innovative solution without raising taxes to fund the residential street maintenance work in 2023.

Additional residential street maintenance citywide is planned annually as part of the city's five-year street maintenance plan.

The 2024 street maintenance plan is being developed now and will be available at EngageAurora.org/BuildUpAurora in January 2024.
Aurora honors great businesses in the community

The city of Aurora and its Business Advisory Board hosted its Aurora Business Recognition Awards Ceremony in October at The People's Building to honor several Aurora businesses that have demonstrated innovation and creativity, great community impact and ongoing resiliency. The ceremony recording may be viewed at YouTube.com/TheAuroraChannel.

This year's winners are:

**Innovation and Creativity Award:** CME Catering uses creativity and innovation to serve the community through food, providing catering services to nonprofits, families, and people in need.

**Small, Small Business Award:** Five Star Multiple Services is available around the clock to provide five-star service to the community when it comes to tax preparation, immigration bonds, paralegal support and more. And they do it all with just five employees, providing the best in personalized attention.

**Resiliency and Community Impact Award:** Lady Justice Brewing demonstrated creativity and a willingness to adapt through the worst of recent times, which has enabled them to survive, build a solid customer base and give back to the community in droves.

**Service Industry and Hospitality Award:** Pearl of Siam in southeast Aurora has provided the community with a cozy gathering spot for authentic Thai food for more than 20 years. The restaurant is one of the city's dining mainstays, exemplifying the best of Aurora's international cuisine.

**Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Award:** You be You Early Learning offers a new model for early childhood education—a classroom on wheels dedicated to engaging culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

**Essential Heroes Honorable Mention Award:** Roshni, a nonprofit organization that brings people from different backgrounds together to learn and share their stories with each other, stayed active throughout the pandemic, shifting programs to outdoor spaces and hosting a virtual summer dance project dedicated to frontline workers that reached people online worldwide.

**Essential Heroes Honorable Mention Award:** Aurora Mental Health and Recovery continued supporting the community’s mental health throughout the pandemic, shifting to a telehealth model of care delivery that continues today in lockstep with face-to-face care. The nonprofit organization meets the needs of Aurora’s diverse community through rigorous staff training and assessments and customized culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

**Energy Leader Award:** This annual award—developed as an outcome of the city’s Energy Action Plan created and implemented as part of Aurora’s participation as an Xcel Energy Partners in Energy community—is designed to recognize businesses that demonstrate leadership and dedication to energy conservation and innovation. The inaugural recipient is the Havana Business Improvement District Board and the district’s executive director, Chance Horiuchi, for actively participating in the implementation of the city’s Energy Action Plan, highlighting the unique energy needs and interests of the district’s member businesses and supporting energy action through customized delivery of energy information.

The city of Aurora is accepting nominations for the 2024 awards through Dec. 15 at AuroraGov.org/BusinessAwards.

**Community input needed**

Some exciting new development opportunities await at the Colfax and 13th Avenue light rail stations near the intersection of Colfax Avenue and Interstate 225. But to unlock these opportunities, the city must update its 2009 station area plan for this area.

To renew the vision for this important place in the heart of Aurora, the city needs community input. It’s important for anyone who lives, works, shops or simply travels through this area to provide feedback starting in January. Visit EngageAurora.org to learn more on how to make your voice heard.

**Celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

Remember the legacy and continue the mission of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with the city of Aurora’s 38th annual commemoration of events themed “Capturing the Dream,” starting Friday, Jan. 5, with a youth event. Details and full schedule are available at AuroraGov.org/MLK.
Volunteer for annual Point-in-Time homeless count in Aurora

Aurora’s Housing and Community Services Department is seeking volunteers for the 2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) count, an annual count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a given day. The Aurora PIT count event is scheduled from 6 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Jan. 23, and is part of national efforts to identify the extent of homelessness in the country.

Volunteers will assist by covering a designated area of the community with a team and speaking directly with people experiencing homelessness to administer a survey to help identify needs. Resources will also be provided.

“The Point-in-Time count helps inform city decisions for the year that can help provide appropriate services to some of our most vulnerable neighbors,” said Emma Knight, Aurora’s manager of homelessness. “The event also helps raise awareness within our community of the importance of the services we provide.”

The city’s Homelessness Division will conduct a virtual information session for interested volunteers at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 5, and noon Wednesday, Dec. 6. The links and recordings will be posted at AuroraGov.org/Homelessness for those who receive this newsletter after the session dates have passed.

To register as a volunteer, visit the city’s volunteer portal at AuroraGov.org/Volunteer. The registration deadline is Monday, Jan. 15. New volunteers must attend a one-hour virtual training hosted by Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI). The training will be scheduled at various dates and times before Tuesday, Jan. 23. Information about this training will be provided after registration.

Questions? Please contact Emily Fuller, community engagement coordinator for homelessness programs, at emfuller@auroragov.org or 303.739.7906.

Northwest Aurora intersection improvements coming in mid-2024

The NW Aurora Intersections Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Program will construct bulb-outs (also known as curb extensions) at eight intersections, along streets that are on the Regional High Injury Network (those roadways with the highest number of fatal and severe injury crashes).

Project locations were prioritized based on prior crash history and community input, including through the 2020-21 Havana Street Corridor Study. These installations will reduce the crossing distance and narrow the roadway to encourage slower vehicle speeds, which will improve safety and enhance visibility for pedestrians accessing area trails, parks, schools, bus stops and other destinations.

Concrete bulb-outs will be installed at two intersections and rapid implementation bulb-outs at six intersections. Final designs for the eight project locations will be posted to the project webpage spring 2024. Project construction is estimated to start in summer 2024.

Visit the project webpage to learn more and subscribe for project updates by clicking the “Follow Project” button at EngageAurora.org/NWPedSafety.

City’s TV station now available on phone and streaming apps

AuroraTV is excited to announce the availability of AuroraTV programming on new smartphone and TV streaming apps. The apps feature a livestream of the same great programs that run on Comcast Channels 8/880 in Aurora, as well as on-demand viewing of shows and events such as the Aurora Now weekly news program and City Council meetings.

The new apps allow for greater access in the community to important and award-winning city programming, especially among those not subscribed to cable services. To find the app, search for “AuroraTV” or “AuroraTV.org” on the following platforms:

- iOS App Store (for Apple devices)
- Google Play Store (for Android devices)
- Roku
- Amazon Fire App Store
- Apple TV
Looking to spruce up your neighborhood? Aurora is once again offering Neighborhood Improvement Grants for neighborhood groups and residents (where a neighborhood organization may not exist) to help enhance neighborhoods while strengthening neighborhood relationships among residents.

In 2023, the city awarded nearly $60,000 to 14 neighborhood organizations, and for 2024, applicants can seek up to $5,000 per project. The competitive grants promote projects that improve a neighborhood’s physical condition, enhance pride and identity, increase neighborhood communication, and bring new assets to the neighborhood that foster gathering and positive experiences.

Examples of eligible projects include clean-up events, community message boards, community benches, community gardens, etc.

Residents interested in applying must attend one of three virtual pre-application meetings to learn more about the funding opportunity and application process:

- Wednesday, Jan. 24, 6 p.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 1, noon
- Tuesday, Feb. 6, 6 p.m.

For meeting links, please visit AuroraGov.org/NeighborhoodGrants. Applications will be available starting Wednesday, Jan. 24.

Before applying, residents are required to schedule a meeting with a city community engagement coordinator by emailing engagecec@auroragov.org to discuss the project and, if needed, necessary city permits.

The deadline to apply is 5 p.m. Friday, April 19. All projects selected to receive grant funding must be completed by Oct. 31.

Eligible projects must be within Aurora city limits, provide an identifiable benefit to the neighborhood, have a specific timeline, and involve at least three households in the neighborhood.

For questions, email engagecec@auroragov.org.

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**2024 water rates approved**

Aurora Water continues to experience increasing costs for materials and utilities to treat water to the high standard our customers expect. We’re also seeing greater expenses to maintain and improve our system to ensure reliability as it continues to age. For 2024, residential customers will see a moderate adjustment of $3.73 per month on average for water use, and $1.83 for sewer. Stormwater rates will remain unchanged. These new rates take effect on January 1, 2024, and will be prorated on your bill. You will see two sets of charges in January, one dividing your bill proportionately for 2023 and the other for 2024, dependent on when your water meter is read. 2024 water, sewer and stormwater rates can be seen at AuroraGov.org/Rates.

**Calculating your sewer fees**

Each month, your water bill includes sewer use fees based solely on indoor water use, such as showering, flushing the toilet or doing laundry. The sewer use fees are listed separately from the water use portion of the bill, which is the amount of water used each month. Most customers use only around 5,000 gallons of water for indoor use, which is charged at the lowest volumetric rate.

As changes occur to your water-use patterns, appliance efficiency and the number of people in your home, this indoor usage naturally fluctuates yearly and is recalculated annually. To calculate the indoor use, Aurora Water averages the December through February water usage, also known as your average winter consumption. This allows us to estimate the amount of wastewater discharged from your home into the sewer line. The sewer charge predominately covers the processing by Metro Water Recovery and the sewer line maintenance in the street.

Questions? Call Aurora Water’s billing staff at 303.739.7388.

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**Show your landscape some care**

Trees, shrubs and newly planted perennials may need care over the winter to keep them healthy and happy. Plan to hand water about once a month if temperatures are over 40 degrees and there’s no snow. Don’t turn your sprinkler system back on. A soaker hose is a great way to water, but be sure to disconnect it to prevent damage. For more information on caring for your trees, visit AuroraGov.org/Trees.