

# Welcome to Aurora

City Hall, 44 E. Downer Place

## Important City Phone Numbers

|                                 |                     |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Customer Service                | 630-256-INFO (4636) |
| Aldermen's Office               | 630-256-3020        |
| Aurora Public Library           |                     |
| Main Branch                     | 630-264-4100        |
| Eola Branch                     | 630-264-3400        |
| West Branch                     | 630-264-3600        |
| Animal Control                  | 630-256-3630        |
| Building & Permits              | 630-256-3130        |
| Community Services              | 630-256-3400        |
| Economic Development Commission | 630-256-3160        |
| Fire Department-Central Station | 630-256-3400        |
| Human Resources                 | 630-256-3430        |
| Mayor's Office                  | 630-256-3010        |
| Neighborhood Redevelopment      | 630-256-3060        |
| Parking Violations              | 630-256-3580        |
| Parks and Recreation            | 630-256-3730        |
| Planning                        | 630-256-3080        |
| Police Department-non emergency | 630-256-5000        |
| Property Standards              | 630-256-3770        |
| Real Estate Transfer Tax        | 630-256-3600        |
| Recycling & Sanitation          | 630-256-3810        |

Revenue & Collections 630-256-3560

Water Billing 630-256-3600

**Local Public School Districts**

East Aurora School District 131 630-299-5550

West Aurora School District 129 630-301-5000

Indian Prairie School District 204 630-375-3000

Oswego Community Unit School District 308 630-636-3080

Batavia Public School District 101 630-937-8800

**Institutions of Higher Learning**

Aurora University 630-892-6431

Waubonsee Community College

Aurora Downtown Campus 630-892-6431

Sugar Grove Campus 630-466-7900

Copley Campus 630-585-7900

**Local Government**

Fox Valley Park District 630-897-0516

Oswegoland Park District 630-554-1010

Naperville Park District 630-848-5000

Sugar Grove Park District 630-466-7436

Aurora Township 630-897-8777

Naperville Township 630-355-2786

Oswego Township 630-554-3211

Sugar Grove Township 630-466-5255

Wheatland Township 630-851-3952

Winfield Township 630-231-3591

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Kane County Forest Preserve District   | 630-232-5980 |
| DuPage County Forest Preserve District | 630-933-7200 |

**Transportation**

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Aurora Municipal Airport                | 630-466-7000 |
| Route 25/59 Parking Permits             | 805-963-9400 |
| Metra Train Information                 |              |
| Aurora Transportation Center (Route 25) | 630-692-6313 |
| Aurora Transportation Center (Route 59) | 630-820-7408 |
| Pace Bus Information                    | 630-892-8444 |

**U.S. Post Offices**

|                                 |              |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Main, 525 N. Broadway           | 630-844-8810 |
| Fox Valley, 3900 Gabrielle Lane | 630-585-2430 |
| Eola, 6S404 Eola Road           | 630-851-2288 |

**Hospitals**

|                            |              |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Provena Mercy Center       | 630-859-2222 |
| Rush-Copley Medical Center | 630-978-6700 |

**Chamber of Commerce**

|                                      |              |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Greater Aurora Chamber               | 630-256-3180 |
| Aurora Hispanic Chamber              | 630-264-2422 |
| Quad County African-American Chamber | 630-859-9776 |

**Election Information**

|                                   |              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Aurora Election Commission        | 630-256-4030 |
| DuPage County Board of Elections  | 630-407-5600 |
| Kendall County Voter Registration | 630-553-4105 |

Will County Voter Registration

815-740-4620

**Form of Government**

Aurora operates under the Mayor/Aldermanic Council form of government with 12 aldermen sitting on the City Council. Each of the City's 10 wards elects an alderman with another two At-Large aldermen elected city-wide to serve on the Council. The City has a full-time Mayor. Aldermanic positions are considered part-time and most hold outside employment. The Mayor's Office is located at City Hall, 44 E. Downer Place, and the Aldermen's Office is located at 60 E. Downer Place.

**Aurora City Council**

Mayor's Office, City Hall

Mayor Thomas Weisner

630-256-3010

Aldermen's Office

630-256-3020

1<sup>st</sup> Ward

Abby Schuler

630-710-0331

2<sup>nd</sup> Ward

Juany Garza

630-499-5560

3<sup>rd</sup> Ward

Stephanie Kifowit

630-306-2888

4<sup>th</sup> Ward

Rick Lawrence

630-995-1390

5<sup>th</sup> Ward

John "Whitey" Peters

630-710-0355

6<sup>th</sup> Ward

Mike Saville

630-896-9895

7<sup>th</sup> Ward

Scheketa Hart-Burns

630-898-2943

8<sup>th</sup> Ward

Rick Mervine

331-452-5136

9<sup>th</sup> Ward

VACANT

## 10<sup>th</sup> Ward

Lynda Elmore 630-898-0403

## Aldermen-at-Large

Robert O'Connor 630-897-6919

## Aldermen-at-Large

Richard Irvin 630-906-5571

### **Government Meetings**

The Committee of the Whole meets at 5 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of the month in Conference Room 5-B on the fifth floor of City Hall. The purpose of the meetings is to send items reviews by the standing committees to the City Council to be voted on the following week.

City Council meetings are held at 6 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month in the second floor Council Chambers of City Hall. The purpose is to discuss and take final votes on agenda items. To speak at a Council meeting, call the City Clerk's Office at 630-256-3070.

There are four standing committees of the City Council, including Buildings, Grounds & Infrastructure (BGI); Government Operations (GO); Finance; and Planning & Development (P&D).

- BGI – The Committee meets at 4 p.m. on the second and fourth Mondays of each month in the Aldermen's Office, 60 E. Downer Place. The panel reviews flooding and drainage problems, violations of flood plain zoning, all matters pertaining to the environment, sanitation, solid waste disposal, water treatment and distribution, storm and sanitary sewers. BGO also has jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to City-owned buildings and grounds
- GO – The Committee meets at 4:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at the Aldermen's Office. The group reviews parades, rally requests from charity groups to solicit donations, intergovernmental relations, street lighting, sign requests, traffic concerns, legislative matters, the motor vehicle parking system and City-owned golf courses.
- Finance – The Committee meets at 3 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month in Conference Room 5-B on the fifth floor of City Hall. The panel reviews proposed expenditures, the annual City budget, contracts for goods and services involving the City, taxation and debt payment, bond issues, fees and service charges, management of the City money, pensions, insurance and the City audit.

- P&D – The Committee meets at 4 p.m. every second and fourth Thursday of the month in Conference Room 5-B on the fifth floor of City Hall. The group reviews proposed residential subdivisions and commercial developments, requests for annexation, planning, zoning, housing, urban renewal, code enforcement and community block grant administration.

### **City Public Safety Services**

#### **Aurora Police Department**

1200 E. Indian Trail Road

Emergency Number 911

Non-Emergency Number 630-256-5000

The Aurora Police Department protects the second largest city in the state. The department's jurisdiction covers about 45 square miles in four different counties.

Known nationally for its Community Oriented Policing initiatives, the Aurora Police Department is dedicated to solving and preventing crime at the neighborhood level. Officers partner with the community in a variety of ways including Citizen and Neighborhood Watch Groups.

The City of Aurora is broken down into three policing areas. Area 1 is comprised of the West side of Aurora and its downtown. Area 2 represents the near East side starting at Root Street and going east to the DuPage County line. Area 3 is bounded by City property lying in DuPage, Kendall and Will counties.

For more information on crime prevention and community involvement, call the department's non-emergency telephone number.

#### **Aurora Fire Department**

Central Station, 75 N. Broadway

Emergency Number 911

Non-Emergency Number is 630-256-4000

The Aurora Fire Department operates nine fire stations throughout the City. In the event of a fire or medical emergency, call 911. Call the Central Fire Station non-emergency number for general questions, information regarding tours, block parties and etc.

Open burning is prohibited within the City limits of Aurora. However, some types of outdoor fireplaces are allowed. Contact the Fire Prevention Bureau at 630-256-4130 for further information and to obtain a permit at no charge.

The Fire Prevention Bureau is responsible for reviewing plans and issuing permits for fire-related activities. The Bureau also inspects sites for fire lane contracts, responds to fire complaints, inspects target occupancies for compliance with adopted fire codes, inspects commercial buildings during construction and enforces the False Fire Alarm Ordinance.

### **Outdoor Warning System**

The system is tested at 10 a.m. the first Tuesday of every month.

### **Aurora Services**

#### **Water & Sewer Maintenance Division**

This division is responsible for the maintenance of the sanitary sewers, storm sewers, water lines and fire hydrants. It also repairs water service leaks from the water main in the street to the meter inside each home or business.

The Water & Sewer Maintenance Division is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to make sure residents can receive water and sewer service at all times. If you see water bubbling up or running down the street for no apparent reason, call 630-256-3710 from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For after hours and weekend emergencies, call Protocol Answering Services at 630-585-2845.

If residents are experiencing sewer problems inside a building, they can call the division to have the sewer lines checked before you call a plumber. Residents can call the division if they have flooded streets or water backing up into their basement during heavy rains or if they have low or no water pressure.

All calls related to water taste or discoloration can be directed toward the City of Aurora Water Production at 630-256-3250.

#### **Yard Waste & Brush**

The City of Aurora utilizes a volume-based refuse program that includes the use of stickers. For more information on refuse stickers, call Customer Service at (630) 256-INFO or visit the City's website at [www.aurora-il.org](http://www.aurora-il.org).

#### **Customer Service Call Center**

Residents only need to know two phone numbers when dealing with the City of Aurora, 911 for emergencies and 630-256-INFO for all other requests. The Customer Service Center is located at 3770 McCoy Drive, where residents can go to pay their water bill, purchase garbage stickers, register their pets and conduct other City business.

## **Local Ordinance Provisions**

### **Motor Vehicle Parking Regulations**

- Cars cannot be parked on the street for more than 48 consecutive hours
- Vehicles cannot block sidewalks or be parked on the grass
- No parking in the front yard unless paved or zoned
- After a snowfall of 2 or more inches, cars must be moved off the street for plowing
- Five or more tickets will result in your vehicle being booted
- One recreation vehicle maximum is permitted for each zoning lot in rear or side yard only
- No commercial vehicles above a "B" plate classification nor equipment is permitted to be parked/stored in a residential area.
- For tickets or monthly parking passes for City lots, call 630-256-3580

### **Fence Provisions**

- Permits are required
- Fence can be put up to your property line, not over it
- Finished side of the fence must face outward
- Interior yards are allowed to have up to 7 feet to enclose rear yard area; maximum 4 feet allowed in side and front yards
- Corner lots must verify with Planning & Zoning Division at 630-256-3130 for specific height requirements
- If you reside in a subdivision that has an association, please contact the association directly for additional requirements

### **Building Permits**

Building permits are required for additions, remodeling, pools, roofs, decks, sheds, garages and gazebos. Call the Planning & Zoning Division at 630-256-3130 before starting your project.

### **Garage Sales**

Residents are allowed to have two garage sales per year from January to December. Violations can be reported to Property Standards at 630-256-3770.

### **Loud Noises**

Noise is classified as any sound associated with the repairs of vehicles or engines, music or operation of mechanical equipment other than vehicles, which may be heard 75 feet beyond

the property line from which said sound originates. If the noise is in progress, please call the Aurora Police Department non-emergency number at 630-256-5000.

### **Animal Control**

Aurora residents must register their dogs and cats with the City of Aurora and have a county rabies tag. Pet owners must clean up after their animals or be fined. All pets must be leashed on a 6-foot leash when off property or face a fine if animals are allowed to run loose. Residents are permitted to have a limited number of domestic animals. Please check with the Animal Control Office at 630-256-3630 for details.

### **Crime Free Housing Ordinance**

The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program is intended to enhance the quality of life for residents living on rental properties in the City of Aurora. The City has dealt with cases related to rental properties where severe nuisance problems adversely impacted residents within the neighborhoods, and the property owner was unaware or unable to quickly or effectively resolve the matter. The Crime Free Multi-Housing program was developed help landlords, tenants and the City reduce crime and increase safety. For more information, visit the City's website at [www.aurora-il.org](http://www.aurora-il.org).

### **History of Aurora**

The beautiful Fox Rivers and fertile Fox Valley attracted the Native American tribes to what is now called Aurora. One such tribe was the Pottawatomie, headed by Chief Waubonsie, which often encamped about a mile north of today's downtown.

Aurora's first permanent settler was Joseph McCarty, a 24-year-old millwright from New York. Joseph arrived in 1834, staked out a claim on the east bank of the river, and soon after, bought an adjoining 400 acre tract for his younger brother Samuel. The McCarty brothers built a sawmill in 1834-35 and gristmill next to it in 1836-37, so settlers could grind their grain into flour.

The settlement, which had been called McCarty's Mills, needed an official name in 1837, when an application was made for a U.S. Post Office. The name Aurora was chosen, after a town in New York, a state many of the early residents had called home.

In addition to the river, another major factor in the development of Aurora was its role as the birthplace of the Burlington Railroad. The railroad began as a 12-mile branch line from Aurora. Through mergers, it became the Chicago Burlington & Quincy rail line. Aurora was chosen as the site for the railroad's major car shops, and soon employed more than 350. In the 1860s, the shops built the first American diner car. At its height, the shop complex covered more than

70 acres and employed 2,500. The former machine shop is now the downtown commuter station, and the roundhouse was renovated in 1996 and opened as America's Roundhouse, a restaurant and entertainment complex.

Aurora earned the title of "The City of Lights" in 1881, when it became one of the first cities to have electric street lights. Five years later, the City built and operated its own electric plant, making it the first municipality in the world to do so. Aurora has other firsts: first free school in the state, first YMCA building to be constructed in Illinois, and in 1995, the first large city in the country to connect all of its schools to the Internet.

Through the first two-thirds of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Aurora continued to develop as a major city and industrial center in its own right, not as a mere Chicago suburb. Several heavy industrial companies succumbed to consolidation and recession in the 1970s and 1980s, but Aurora has successfully transitioned to a vibrant and diverse economy. Much of the DuPage County portion of Aurora was annexed in 1973 and about one-third of Aurora's population and 41 percent of its land mass is now located outside of Kane, in DuPage, Will or Kendall counties. Aurora has led Illinois in housing starts in recent years and now is the state's second largest city with nearly 180,000 residents.

Some of the finest shopping in the Fox Valley can be found in Aurora. The 1.5 million-square-foot Westfield Shoppingtown Fox Valley center along Route 59 attracts shoppers from miles around. Aurora is home to a 125-store upscale outlet center, Chicago Premium Outlets that opened in 2004 along the Reagan Memorial Tollway (Interstate 88) and Farnsworth Road. For recreation, the City also operates two 18-hole golf courses, one of which is Phillips Park, where a unique zoo and restored Sunken Gardens are located. A visitor's center, which opened in 2003, houses mastodon bones unearthed in the 1930s when WPA workers dug the Phillips Park's Mastodon Lake. Downtown Aurora is home of the Paramount Theatre, a 1930s Art Deco theater restored to its original opulence, where many of the country's top entertainers appear year-round. The City's own David L. Pierce Art and History Center, a Regional Fire Museum, SciTech Hands On and other themed museums excite and educate residents and visitors alike.