



City of Aurora Year in Review: 2020

THE STATE OF OUR CITY IS STRONG!



Despite illness, quarantine, slowed supply chains, reduced tax receipts and disrupted workforces in 2020, Aurora finished up this difficult year with many projects completed and a positive financial outlook entering into 2021. The new E. Pioneer water line, the 306 widening at 82, and more than \$1 million in road paving were accomplished. We also kept our parks open and available, with protocols, for everyone hungering to get outside, and we have broken ground for the splash pad in Kiwanis-Moore Park, expected to be finished

for enjoyment this summer.

We are in a good financial position, able to fund almost \$18M in new capital projects in 2021, while maintaining about \$9M in the General Fund as our healthy unofficial rainy day fund. Being prudent and fiscally conservative, we delayed some projects in 2020 because of the pandemic but should be able to complete them in 2021. We also continue to monitor the impact of the pandemic on our finances.

Through 2020 the city has successfully avoided borrowing for our 1920s waterline replacements, the fourth of which – E. Pioneer Trail – was completed, along with a new sidewalk to New Hudson. With that sidewalk, we have installed more than 2 miles of sidewalks since I became Mayor! We also purchased 21 acres on E. Garfield as part of our continuing plan to preserve greenspace, create connectivity, and control development.

As a leader of a community, how do you prepare for unexpected and sometimes catastrophic events like a pandemic? You make sure that your employees are protected, in this case equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment as well as the necessary technology to work from home if possible, because without our staff the city could not operate. You also pay attention to your financial base, the businesses and industry that contribute 82% of our income tax revenue, and our new Economic Development Director has done just that, providing information and assistance on state and federal Covid funding and other relief available.

Further, you pay attention to infrastructure, which I have been doing since becoming Mayor. We have replaced aging waterlines and planned for major sanitary system upgrades and traffic signal improvements which will begin this year. You want a team that can give you the best advice even in dire circumstances, people who can evaluate changing legal, medical, financial, public policy and safety landscapes quickly and help protect the community through it all. We have such a team in Aurora, the Directors and Chiefs who head our city departments. With this team, and the financial and project planning we have been doing for seven years, Aurora can face 2021 with confidence!

Mayor Ann Womer Benjamin

COVID VACCINE RESOURCES

Website: gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov

Phone numbers: **1.833.4.ASK.ODH** or call University Hospitals at **216-844-3339** and leave a voicemail. UH Volunteers will call back within 24-48 hours and help you get registered for the vaccine.



TOGETHER WE ARE AURORA STRONG

JEDD Agreement Brings Promising Opportunities to the Area

After years of discussion, the city negotiated a **Joint Economic Development District (JEDD)** agreement with Bainbridge, laying the foundation for economic growth on the Bainbridge portion of the former Geauga Lake and Sea World property. It provides for the division of income tax revenue between Bainbridge and Aurora and outlines the provision of utilities by Aurora to support development on the Bainbridge side. Shortly after the JEDD was finalized, Industrial Commercial Properties (ICP) purchased the remaining 377 acres of former park land in both Bainbridge and Aurora, setting the stage for its exciting redevelopment.

Aurora's Economic Activity Persists!

New Economic Development Director **Holly Harris Bane** started in her position with Aurora just as the pandemic hit, and her public policy and strategic planning experience has served the city well. Based on the information from applications filed, **284 companies** in Aurora received Covid funding assistance last year and more than 4,000 jobs were retained through that assistance. Senior executives of Simon Properties, owner of **Aurora Premium Outlets**, have told the city that new tenants are being sought and the company is committed to the mall and to Aurora. In addition, Aurora welcomed new businesses to the community in the last year, including **Aurora Nutrition, ReMax in the PNC building, and Schell Bell Boutique.**



Economic Development Director Holly Harris Bane

Police Served and Protected

The uncertainty of 2020 brought forth a number of challenges surrounding the most vulnerable population within our community. Thanks to Officer Vickie Yendriga these concerns were quickly identified and brought to the attention of key leaders and other key community organizations. A collaborative approach among the many different agencies addressed the concerns of the elderly community during a time when necessary resources were suddenly interrupted. The newly developed P.A.S.T. (Police and Seniors Together) program is led by Officer Yendriga and is providing many of the needed resources for comfort and relief. Many community events such as Safety Town, National Night Out, Community Wide Clean-Up, None for Under 21 and the annual Bike Rodeo should return in 2021.



Evan Webster and Mayor Womer Benjamin are pictured with the 2020 Aurora Chamber Person of the Year, U.S. Marshal Pete Elliott.



Mayor Womer Benjamin presented a key to the city to Abigail's owner Julie Lazor. Abigail's was named 2020 Business of the Year by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

2020 Year in Review

- **Purchased 21 acres** on E. Garfield for a future connector path from Hartman to the city's parks to the south, part of the Mayor's greenspace preservation program.
- **Enacted a moratorium** on new residential development until next November and undertaking a density study.
- **Completed all fields and a restroom facility** at Hartman Park on Town Line Road.
- **Moved summer outdoor concert series** to Hartman to provide a safer drive-up setting.
- **Partnered with Community Focus** to pre-tape Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies which then aired on the city website and cable channel 1021.
- **Finalized a settlement agreement** with FirstEnergy on its transmission project, securing a landscape fund, restriction on future poles, and recreation easement for city.
- **Held sports programs with safety protocols**, including summer and fall baseball and softball, and fall soccer program with more than 300 athletes participating.
- **Developed new programming** for seniors to interact virtually and outdoors.
- **Installed surveillance cameras** at Hartman Park and Sunny Lake.
- **Sponsored a Fill-the-Bus** food and cleaning supply drive and collected over 1,700 pounds of items for Aurora residents in need.
- **Celebrated the first ever** virtual holiday tree lighting ceremony with Santa and friends.
- **Added more holiday lights** and decorations around the city for residents to enjoy.
- **Paved** East Pioneer Trail, S. Park Drive, N. Park Drive, W. Mennonite Road, Lantern Way, Hidden Creek Drive, Creek View Drive, Chatham Drive, Trails End, Pennsylvania Avenue, Aurora Cemetery, S.R. 43 valve boxes and Hartman parking lot.

What to Look for in 2021

- Beginning the **wastewater treatment** upgrades and the **citywide signalization project**, for which the city has a \$3.5M grant.
- **Road paving** is budgeted at \$1.625M, including road preservation to improve pavement longevity.
- **Connectivity** will continue with a sidewalk on the west side of 306 in the Historic District, including period appropriate lighting.
- \$70,000 is budgeted for **W. Pioneer school zone flashing lights** and a crosswalk, to improve student safety in that area.
- The **splash pad** at Kiwanis-Moore Park, with almost 4,700 square feet and an environmentally friendly recirculating water system, is scheduled to open this summer.
- **Holiday events** are budgeted higher to accommodate drive-up concerts and expanded tree lighting festivities, with \$20,000 carried over from last year for fireworks – We are hoping!
- Designing a new **rec building** and constructing a **police carport**, delayed from 2020, and getting a new Fire Department **aerial ladder truck**.
- New **park entrance signs** throughout the community will be installed, along with a picnic shelter and playground equipment at Hartman Park and new fishing boats, kayaks, and life vests at Sunny Lake Park boathouse.
- The parking lot at **Tails 'n Trails Dog Park** will be paved.
- Pursuant to a new "**Energy Efficiency Initiative**," the city expects to install two electric car charging stations at the Library.

Keep In Touch

Police/Fire Emergency - 911 • City Hall - 330-562-6131
 City Council - 330-995-9125 • Mayor's Office - 330-995-9126
 Parks & Recreation - 330-562-4333
 Planning, Zoning & Building - 330-562-9564
 Service - 330-995-9116
 Economic Development - 330-995-8867 • Finance - 330-995-9100
 Law 330-995-9160 • Personnel 330-562-6390



Presorted Standard
 US Postage
PAID
 Permit No. 4
 Aurora, Ohio
 44202

**ECRWSS
 POSTAL CUSTOMER
 AURORA, OH 44202**

City Finances: General Fund Review

	Expenses	Revenue
2019 Actual	\$15,853,943	\$19,408,406
2020 Actual	\$15,208,800	\$19,238,468

City Finances: Total Fund Review

	Expenses	Revenue
2019 Actual	\$29,882,748	\$31,870,298
2020 Actual	\$31,368,380	\$32,883,410

2020 Building Stats

Residential Construction	\$26,289,314
Commercial Construction	\$3,661,609
Industrial Construction	\$1,817,041
Total Construction	\$31,767,964

FIRE and EMS Stats

- Answered **2,155 total calls**: 1584 EMS and 571 fire. Average response time to fire calls was 6.19 minutes and 4.29 minutes to EMS calls.
- **Major purchases**: New exhaust removal systems for both stations, a new inflatable rescue boat, and a new aerial ladder truck.
- **Hosted the annual blood drive** on Christmas Eve, in the Walker Building to provide isolation for city personnel on duty, yielding 83 units of blood.
- **45 members of the department** have received their Covid vaccinations.

Department of Public Services

- Collected **9,395 cubic yards** of brush.
- Collected **3,660 cubic yards** of leaves.
- Supplied **514,550,770 gallons** of drinking water.
- Used **5,867 tons** of salt on roads.
- Installed **1,297 linear feet** of sidewalk on East Pioneer Trail.
- Installed **storm catch basins** around the city including 14 on West Mennonite and 28 on East Pioneer Trail.
- **Landscaping at Aurora Cemetery** was renovated with stamped concrete, benches, planter boxes and plaques to honor each branch of the military.
- Crack sealed **29 lane miles** in-house and contracted 3 lane miles on S.R. 43.
- Road striped **76 lane miles**.

SHRED DAY

Saturday, April 17th from 9 a.m. to noon in City Hall parking lot.