



CASTING LIGHT

2016 Budget-in-Brief

The City of Aurora casts a forward-facing light with its Budget-in-Brief. Please join us as we examine how a responsible budget guides the city's decisions.

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a letter from the mayor

City of Aurora Residents and Businesses:

The public has many needs. However, the resources of any government are always limited. Public budgeting is the process of allocating public resources for services, projects, and other items deemed to be important to the community.

The City of Aurora is responsible for providing core public services at the local level. These services include, but are not limited to, police and fire protection, community planning, street maintenance, water and sewer service, and economic development. The city also operates and maintains several public parks, a golf course, downtown and commuter parking facilities, and an airport.

To optimize service delivery in these areas, the city undertakes a rigorous budgeting process each year. The process extends over a span of approximately nine months. Through this process, public needs are identified, evaluated, and prioritized. In the end, the city's elected officials approve a plan—the annual budget—to satisfy the most important needs within resource constraints.

The official version of the budget is voluminous. It is comprised of several hundred pages. While the official version of the budget is comprehensive and fully compliant with all legal requirements, the layman may find it difficult to navigate. To give the public a user-friendly means of grasping the city's budget, we are pleased to offer this budget-in-brief.

We hope that you find this document to be a useful guide to understanding the city's annual financial plan. The budget-in-brief is yet more evidence that we are always working to maintain Aurora's position as a transparent city that is second to none!



Most respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. Weisner".

Thomas J. Weisner
Mayor Of Aurora

"This budget-in-brief is the first document of its type ever to be published by the city. The document presents information about the 2016 City Budget in a highly summarized, simple format. In producing such a document, we are seeking to be more transparent and informative." – Mayor Thomas Weisner

CITY AT A GLANCE

The City of Aurora is located 36 miles west of Chicago, Illinois, on the Fox River. It is the second largest city in the State of Illinois, the 20th largest in the Midwest, and the 115th largest in the United States.

The city has a population of 200,456. The city owns and operates a zoo, a golf course, and an airport. Aurora is home to the oldest limestone roundhouse in the United States, which currently houses the Two Brothers Roundhouse, an expansive restaurant, brewery and banquet facility. In 2013, RiverEdge Park opened on the east bank of the Fox River in downtown Aurora. The park is a major recreational and entertainment venue.



The Phillips Park Zoo, located near the center of the city, exhibits a wide variety of animal species and is a major attraction for families.

OUR VISION

The City of Aurora exists to provide municipal services through efficient, effective, and progressive governance allowing individuals, families, and businesses the opportunity to thrive in a friendly, safe, and dynamic environment. By maintaining trust, respect, and accountability in its day-to-day operations, the city will build on its strengths and creativity.

OUR MISSION

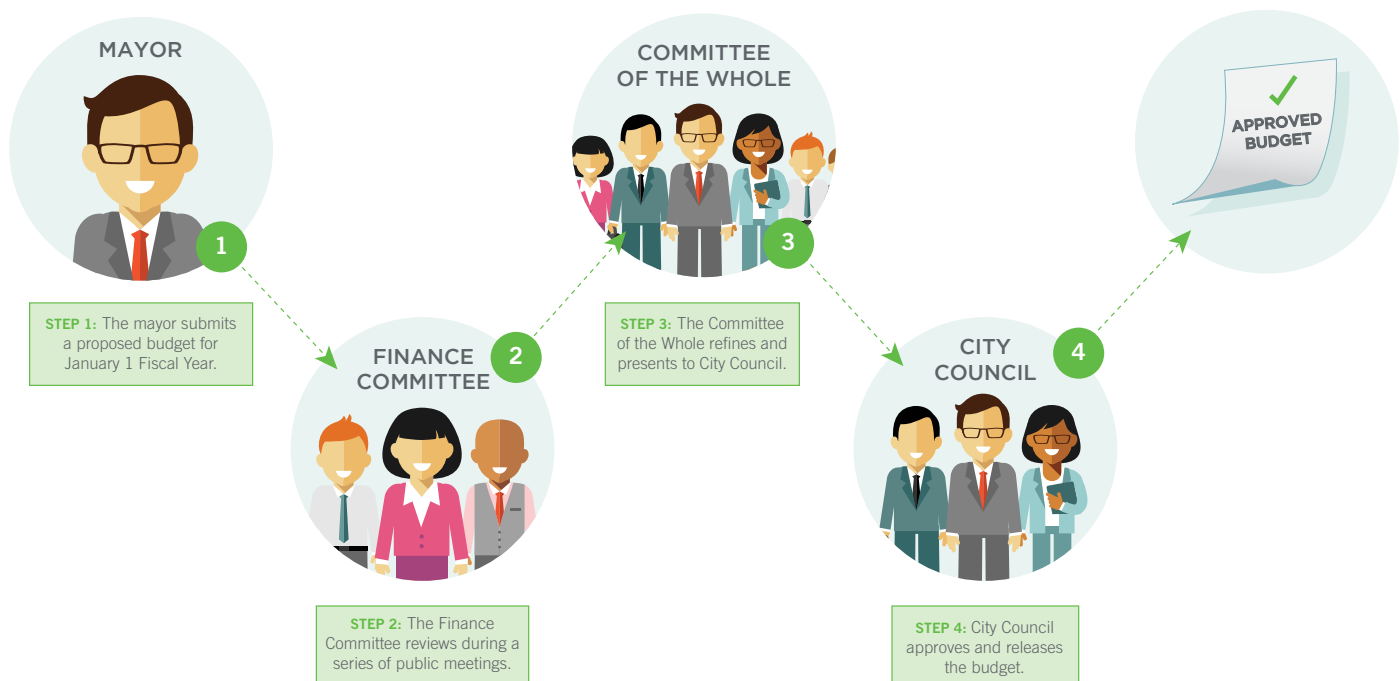
Over the next one to three years, the City of Aurora will:

- Advance the safety and security of all segments of our community.
- Improve the delivery of public services and increase levels of customer service.
- Retain and attract quality businesses to support our local economy.
- Upgrade our public facilities to better serve the needs of the community.
- Focus on revitalizing our established neighborhoods while continuing downtown development.
- Build our community image and engender a fuller public appreciation of the city's value.
- Increase the overall satisfaction of our residents, consistent with our vision of the future.

BUDGET PROCESS

HOW IS THE BUDGET DEVELOPED AND APPROVED?

Producing the city budget is a process that involves teams of people working together through many tasks. Below is an illustration of how the budget is developed and approved.



city council



Front row from left to right: Alderman-at-Large Robert J. O'Connor, Mayor Thomas J. Weisner, Alderman-at-Large Richard C. Irvin. **Second row from left to right:** First Ward Alderman Kristina A. Bohman, Second Ward Alderman Juany Garza, Third Ward Alderman Theodoros C. Mesiacos, Fourth Ward Alderman William M. Donnell, Fifth Ward Alderman Carl Franco, Sixth Ward Alderman Michael B. Saville, Seventh Ward Alderman Scheketa Hart-Burns, Eighth Ward Alderman Richard B. Mervine, Ninth Ward Alderman Edward J. Bugg, and Tenth Ward Alderman Lynne M. Johnson.

“The City of Aurora is a government that is intensely focused on continuously improving the quality of municipal services provided to the public.”

– Mayor Thomas Weisner

HOW IS THE BUDGET ORGANIZED?

The city's budget is based on funds, which can be thought of as groups of accounts used for a common purpose. Each fund has to bring in at least as much money as it spends. For example, the city's primary operating fund, the General Fund, receives money primarily from public taxes. In return, the General Fund provides police protection, fire and ambulance services, street maintenance, snow removal, community planning, supporting administration, and other services.

2016

MARCH

Distribution of budgeting materials to departments.

APRIL

Departmental budgets due to the Finance Department.

MAY

Finance Department completes preliminary revenue projections.

JUNE/JULY

Mayor reviews departmental budgets in separate meetings with department directors. Finance Department develops the proposed Capital Improvement Plan from capital-related decision packages requested by department directors and endorsed by the Mayor.

OCTOBER

Mayor's proposed City Budget presented to the City Council.

OCT/NOV

Finance Committee reviews proposed City Budget with department directors.

DECEMBER

City Council holds a public hearing on proposed City Budget. City Council adopts City Budget. City Council also holds a public hearing on and adopts the property tax levy ordinance.

FEB

City Budget published.

MARCH

Capital Improvement Plan published.

budget calendar

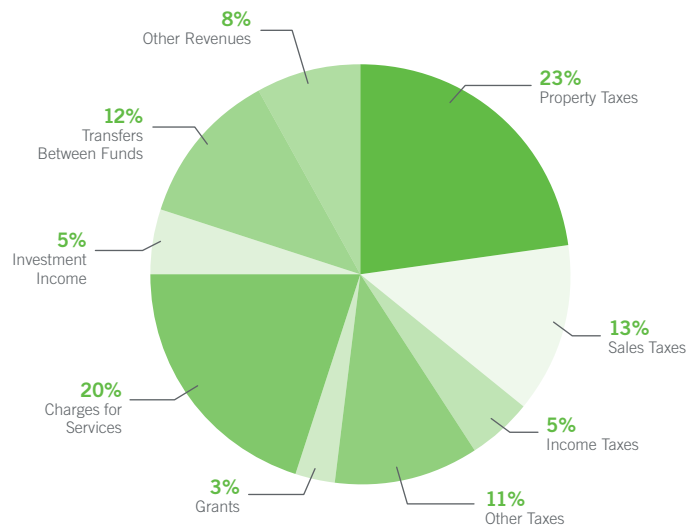
FUNDING

HOW ARE CITY SERVICES FUNDED?

The city funds public services and programs through a variety of different sources of revenue.

- The portion of the property tax bill for basic city services will have declined for the typical Aurora taxpayer by 12.9% between 2009 and 2016. These savings have been made possible by concerted efforts to contain costs.
- Since 2006, the city has received funding of nearly \$100 million through a variety of federal and state programs to support road, bridge, traffic signal, and utility improvement projects with a total cost of approximately \$145 million.
- The city adheres to a policy of adjusting water and sewer rates moderately each year to avoid large increases at irregular intervals. Since 2005, annual increases for residential customers have been limited to an average of less than 4%. The additional revenue provides resources for the continued operations and maintenance of the city's water and sewer system as well as a wide variety of infrastructure improvements.
- The "other revenues" classification reflected at the right includes pension contributions, loan proceeds, and miscellaneous revenues.

2016 REVENUES



Property Taxes	\$84,894,400
Sales Taxes	\$50,490,000
Income Taxes	\$19,850,000
Other Taxes	\$39,804,275
Grants	\$9,794,300
Charges for Services and Other Fees	\$76,096,770
Investment Income	\$17,452,200
Transfers Between City Funds	\$44,397,579
Other Revenues	\$29,820,126
TOTAL	\$372,599,650

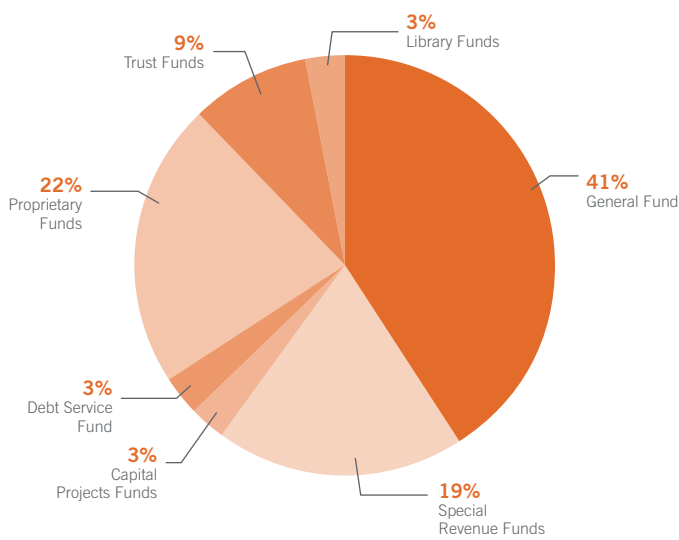
CITY SPOTLIGHT

The city issued a record number of building permits in 2015, which added more than a half billion dollars to property value in the community. The increased value lightens the overall property tax burden.



Photo by Ron Langstaff

2016 EXPENDITURES



General Fund	\$168,370,554
Special Revenue Funds	\$76,652,800
Capital Projects Funds	\$14,638,250
Debt Service Fund	\$11,569,500
Proprietary Funds	\$89,537,921
Trust Funds	\$36,249,931
Library Funds	\$13,013,975
TOTAL	\$410,032,931

In addition to current-year revenues, on-hand cash (fund balance) is available to pay current-year expenditures, especially in capital projects funds.

EXPENDITURES EXPLAINED

GENERAL FUND

The city's primary operating fund provides for basic services such as police and fire protection, community planning, and roadway maintenance.

SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS

These funds are used to manage resources that are legally restricted for specific purposes.

CAPITAL PROJECTS FUNDS

Funds used to account for resources dedicated primarily for capital outlays, such as the acquisition or construction of infrastructure.

DEBT SERVICE FUND

A fund used to accumulate resources to pay for the city's general obligation debt.

PROPRIETARY FUNDS

These funds are used to account for activities that are generally supported by user fees. The Water and Sewer Fund is the city's largest proprietary fund.

TRUST FUNDS

Resources held for the benefit of others that cannot be used for the city's programs. For example: the city's Police and Firefighters' Pension Funds are trust funds.

LIBRARY FUNDS

Resources earmarked to support the Aurora Public Library, a semi-autonomous governmental unit associated with the city.



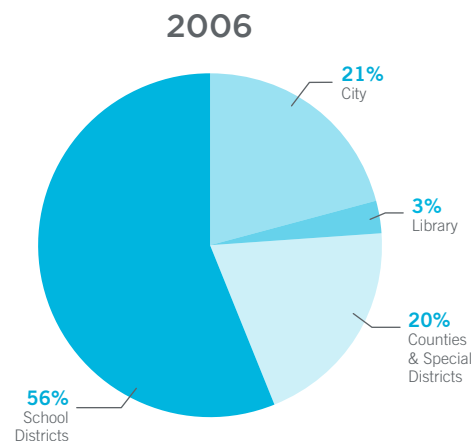
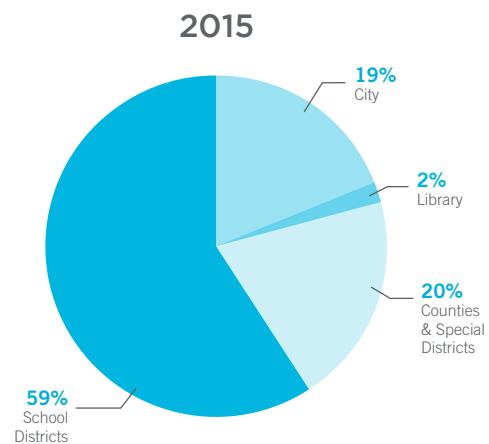
In 2016, the Aurora Fire Department will replace two fire engines, each costing \$460,000 for a total of \$920,000. One ambulance will also be replaced at a cost of \$250,000.

PROPERTY TAXES

Property taxes are the largest single source of revenue for the City of Aurora at \$80 million.

A resident's property tax bill is split among several different taxing districts. The city and the Aurora Public Library comprise about 19% and 2% of the homeowner's taxes, respectively. The city's share provides resources for public safety services and municipal debt payments. In addition, a rapidly increasing amount must be applied to state-mandated pension payments.

TYPICAL PROPERTY TAX BILL



TOP TEN PROPERTY TAXPAYERS

	EQUALIZED ASSESSED VALUE
Simon/Chelsea Chicago Development , LLC	\$47,144,869
Liberty Illinois LP	\$34,906,876
Westfield Shoppingtown	\$31,709,100
Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.	\$27,476,461
Aurora Industrial Holding Company LLC	\$17,941,482
TGM Chesapeake Inc.	\$15,243,041
AMFP II Oakhurst North	\$13,410,768
TA Associates Realty	\$9,989,548
Fox Valley Villages, LLC	\$8,971,800
MFREVF-Kirkland Crossing, LLC	\$8,499,675

The city's top 10 taxpayers paid about 7% of the city's property taxes in 2015.

CITY SPOTLIGHT

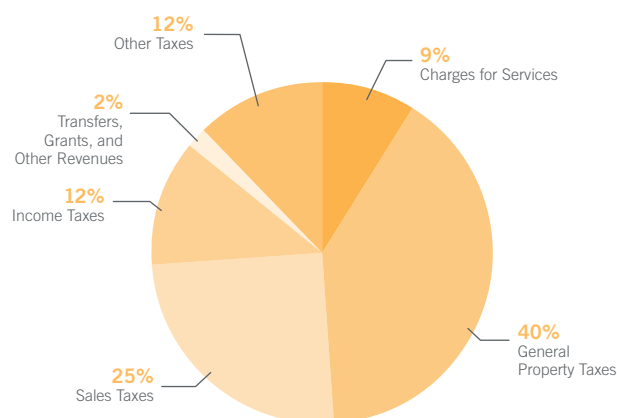
Since 2008, the city's property tax levy for operational (non-pension) purposes has declined by 11.9%.



GENERAL FUND

The General Fund is the primary operating fund that supports many of the city's core services. It accounts for the resources used to pay for the services traditionally associated with local government. Through the General Fund, financial resources are provided for police and fire protection, street maintenance, property standards enforcement, general administration, and other various services. The operations of water and sewer utility, municipal airport, Phillips Park Golf Course, and libraries are primarily supported through user fees and accounted for separately.

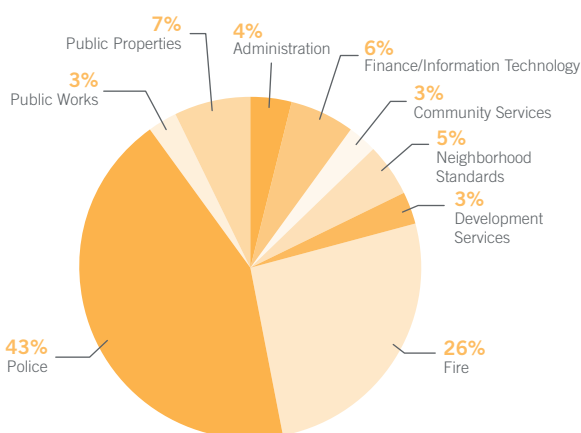
REVENUES



GENERAL FUND REVENUE BY SOURCE

Property Taxes	\$67,012,900
Sales Taxes	\$42,440,000
Income Tax	\$19,850,000
Other Taxes	\$19,661,000
Charges for Services and Other Fees	\$14,537,784
Transfers Between City Funds	\$3,500,000
Grants and Other Revenues	\$533,501
TOTAL	\$167,535,185

EXPENDITURES



GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES BY DEPARTMENT

Community Services	\$4,717,309
Neighborhood Standards	\$8,584,711
Development Services	\$4,504,868
Fire	\$44,286,921
Police	\$71,875,931
Public Works	\$4,470,488
Public Properties	\$12,111,356
Administration	\$6,822,048
Finance/Information Technology	\$10,996,922
TOTAL	\$168,370,554

In addition to current-year revenues, on-hand cash (fund balance) is available to pay current-year expenditures.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS



CITY SPOTLIGHT

For the 16th consecutive year, the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada presented the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award to the City of Aurora. This prestigious award recognizes budgets that demonstrate effectiveness as a policy document, operations guide, financial plan, and communications device.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The city's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) reflects a ten-year projection of expenditures for a wide variety of capital projects. The CIP is a stand-alone document but it impacts upon the city's annual budget. The CIP serves as a tool for planning the city's infrastructure needs. For a project to be included in the CIP, it must involve the creation or purchase of a tangible asset with an original cost of at least \$100,000 and a useful life of more than one year.

The city groups the CIP projects into several functional categories: downtown, economic development, facilities, municipal airport, neighborhood redevelopment, recreation, stormwater, transportation, and water and sewer projects. The total capital improvement budget for 2016 is \$74.9 million. The complete CIP document is available on the city's official website: www.aurora-il.org/finance/budget.php

2016 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Downtown	\$4,717,900
Facilities	\$8,601,100
Neighborhood Redevelopment	\$500,000
Recreation	\$1,260,000
Stormwater	\$14,481,100
Transportation	\$27,956,900
Water & Sewer	\$17,382,270
TOTAL	\$74,899,270

MAJOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURES FOR 2016:

- **Neighborhood Street Improvements.** In 2016, \$5.7 million has been budgeted for the ongoing neighborhood street improvement program. With this budgetary provision, 47 lane-miles will be resurfaced.
- **Arterial and Collector Resurfacing.** The city's arterial and collector road resurfacing program is budgeted at \$2.8 million in 2016. Through this program, approximately 18 lane-miles of arterial and collector roads will be restored.
- **Ohio Street Bridge.** The bridge over the Burlington Northern Railroad line and Indian Creek at Ohio Street has deteriorated. The city will rehabilitate the bridge at a total cost of \$7.8 million. The Illinois Department of Transportation will reimburse 80% of the cost.
- **Watermain Evaluation, Repair and Replacement.** In 2016, \$2.2 million is budgeted for this project. It includes the evaluation and repair of problematic sections of the city's water distribution system as well as advanced leak detection and metering.
- **Long-Term Control Plan Improvements.** The city has budgeted \$8.0 million in 2016 to separate combined sewers in various areas of the community. This work is part of a federally mandated, \$120 million program that must be accomplished by 2030.
- **Enterprise Resource Platform.** This project involves the replacement of an outdated public safety system for improved computer-aided dispatch and records management. The total estimated cost of the new system is \$7.7 million, of which \$4.9 million is budgeted for expenditure in 2016.

THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM IS FUNDED FROM A VARIETY OF FUNDING SOURCES INCLUDING:

- Motor Fuel Tax Fund
- Gaming Tax Fund
- Block Grant Fund
- Tax Increment Financing Funds
- Safety, Health, and Public Enhancement Fund
- Stormwater Management Fee Fund
- Long-Term Control Plan Fee Fund
- Capital Improvements Fund
- Bond Project Funds
- Airport Fund
- Water & Sewer Fund
- Motor Vehicle Parking System Fund
- Transit Centers Fund





The purpose of this Budget-in-Brief is to give citizens an overview of the City of Aurora's 2016 Budget. Only highlights of the budget are presented. The complete 2016 budget document can be found on the city's website:

www.aurora-il.org/finance/budget.php

THOMAS J. WEISNER

Mayor

MAYOR'S OFFICE STAFF

Carie Anne Ergo

Chief Management Officer

CITY BUDGETING STAFF

Brian W. Caputo, Ph.D., C.P.A.

Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer

Stacey L. Hamling, M.B.A., C.P.A.

Assistant Director of Finance

Silvia Cisneros

Budget Analyst



CITY OF LIGHTS

www.aurora-il.org