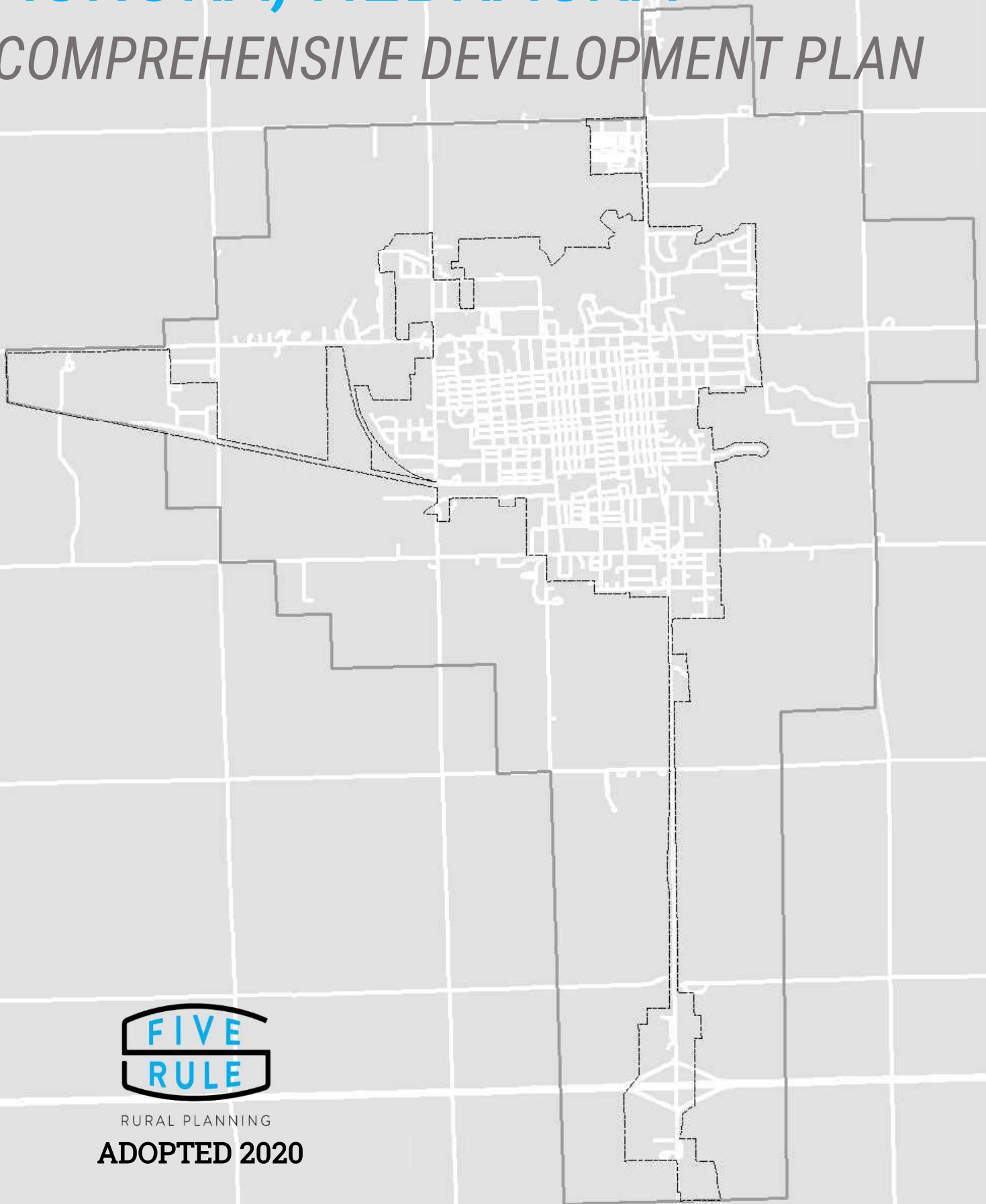


# AURORA, NEBRASKA

## COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN



RURAL PLANNING  
**ADOPTED 2020**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### WHY WE PLAN

The City of Aurora is a leader both in its region and as an example for small cities across the Midwest. In the early 2000s, this community was one of the first to establish an official economic development organization. As a result, many great amenities are enjoyed by Aurora residents that are not available to residents of comparable cities. Many of these amenities are paid for privately as this community enjoys a unique culture of strong local leadership, ownership, and investment.

The Aurora Community prides itself on offering a great quality of life today while also keeping a close eye on ensuring that they can look forward to a great future. As such, the Aurora City Council and Planning Commission have demonstrated their belief in a strong future by consistently updating its comprehensive plan at the beginning of every new decade. The comprehensive plan assesses the current state of the community and documents its vision of the city's built environment in the next decade.

This current assessment has revealed that the City, unlike its peers across the state, has seen steady and/or consistent growth in population since 1940. However, since 2000, all stable communities in the Grand Island Metropolitan Statistical Area (GI MSA) have seen growth in the number of new residents, available jobs, and increasing incomes. Therefore, while Aurora has historically outpaced its regional peers in growth, more growth was captured by nearby cities than ever before.

The City of Aurora recognizes that it is lucky enough to be in the Midwest and have access to incredible quality of life amenities such as exceptional public education, low crime rates, fresh air, and ample outdoor recreational opportunities. Due to the cyclical nature of the nation's agricultural economy, being in the Midwest, where agriculture is generally the largest economic driver, is not always considered an economic strength. However, Aurora is also lucky enough to be in a region that is seeing stable economic and population growth despite agricultural downturns.

The City's leadership understands that these regional strengths combined with the success of neighboring cities requires some policy changes if the City wants to continue to see substantial growth every ten years.

Local policies that made Aurora a great place to live over the past decade will have to change to accommodate the change in growth opportunities being generated by the economic activity in the GI MSA. This comprehensive plan update serves as the City's concrete step toward continuing its strong tradition of attracting and accommodating growth, while also maintaining a safe, quiet, and clean community.

---

Growth goals that the City intends to accomplish through this plan update are listed below:

- ~ Expanding housing choices for all income levels.
  - ~ Increasing the amount of available park space at the same rate as new residents are added to the city.
  - ~ Ensuring that neighborhoods can continue to expand in a sustainable and predictable manner.
  - ~ Attracting workforce to the city that is needed by area employers.
  - ~ Creating an attractive commercial corridor from the city to Interstate 80.
  - ~ Encouraging the start-up, expansion, and re-location of companies to Aurora that provide jobs and services to the area.
  - ~ Maintaining the City of Aurora as a regional leader in providing community that is a great place to live, work, and play.
-

## **RESPONSIBILITY TO PLAN**

Add an overview paragraph to frame the narrative – talk about the key takeaways, talk about some of the downward trends or scarcity of housing and indicate that the planning commission has taken steps already to address these issues and position the city to grow (i.e., by adding residential zoning on the future land use map).

Per Nebraska Revised Statutes (NRS) § 19-901 (1), municipal governments in Nebraska are granted the authority to regulate land use within their jurisdiction.

For the purpose of promoting health, safety, morals, or the general welfare of the community, the legislative bodies in cities of the first and second class and in villages may adopt zoning regulations which restrict the height, number of stories, and size of buildings and other structures, the percentage of lot that may be occupied, the size of yards, courts, and other open spaces, the density of population, and the location and use of buildings, structures, and land for trade, industry, residence, or other purposes.

## **AUTHORITY TO PLAN**

NRS § 19-901 (2) explains that zoning regulations may not be adopted until a comprehensive plan has been completed, recommended [by the Planning Commission] and adopted [by the City Council].

Such powers shall be exercised only after the municipal legislative body had established a planning commission, received from its planning commission a recommended comprehensive development plan as defined in section 19-903, adopted such comprehensive development plan, and received the specific recommendation of the planning commission on the adoption or amendment of zoning regulations. The planning commission shall make a preliminary report and hold public hearings on its recommendations regarding the adoption or repeal of the comprehensive development plan and zoning regulations and shall hold public hearings thereon before submitting its final report to the legislative body. Amendments to the comprehensive plan or zoning regulations shall be considered at public hearings before submitting regulations to the public body.

*A Public Hearing regarding the recommendation of this Comprehensive Plan was held by the City of Aurora Planning Commission on this date in 2020:*

---

*The City of Aurora Planning Commission recommended adoption of this Comprehensive Plan on this date in 2020:*

---

*A Public Hearing regarding the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan was held by the City of Aurora City council on this date in 2020:*

---

*By approving Ordinance No.\_\_\_\_\_, the Aurora City Council adopted this Comprehensive Plan on this date in 2020:*

---

## BUILDING THE PLAN

The City of Aurora Comprehensive Plan is organized into chapters based upon the guidance and requirements listed within NRS § 19-903:

The regulations and restrictions authorized by sections 19-901 to 19-915 shall be in accordance with a **comprehensive development plan** which shall consist of both graphic and textual material and shall be designed to accommodate anticipated long-range future growth which shall be **based upon documented population and economic projections**.

The comprehensive development plan shall, among other possible elements, include:

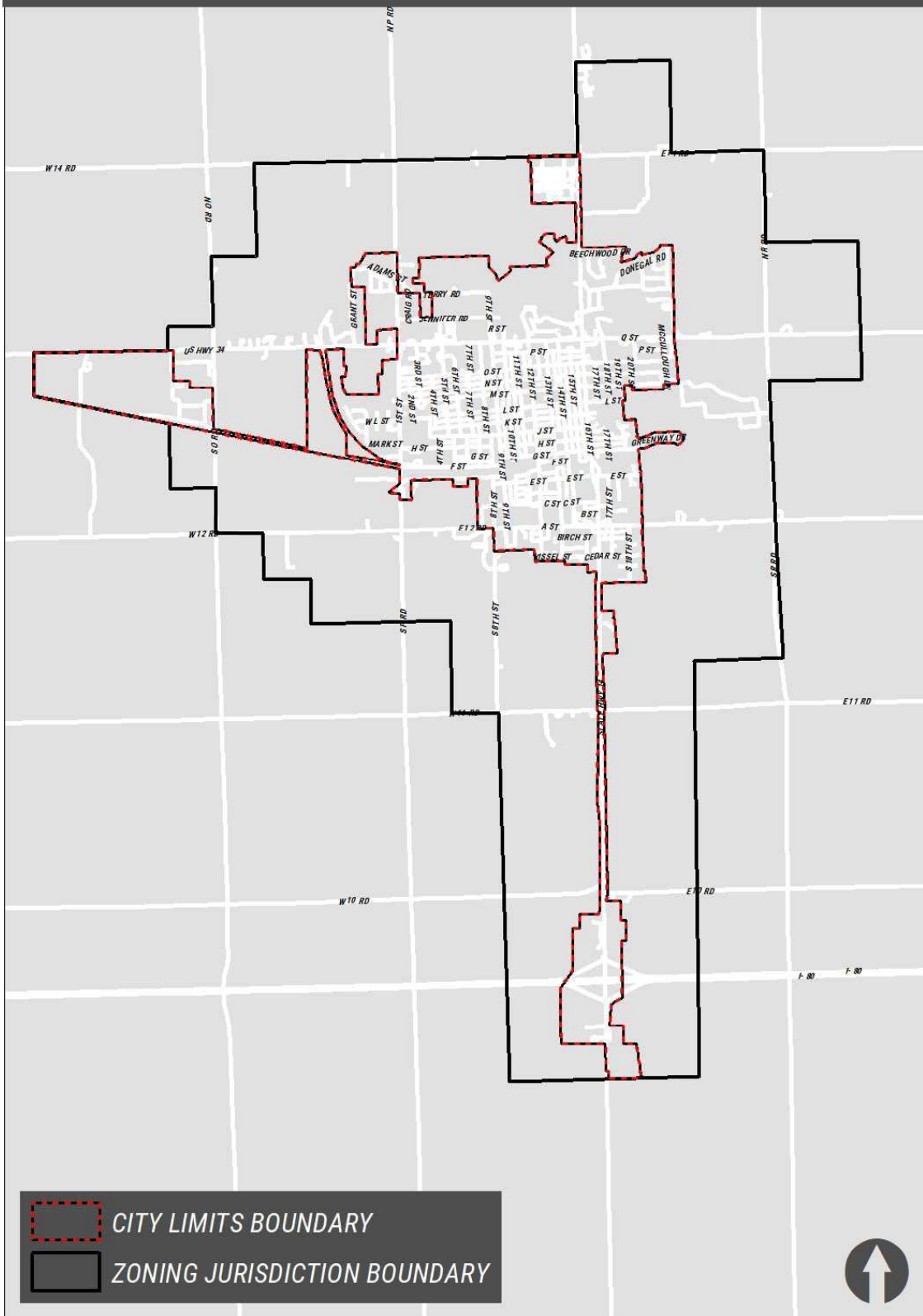
- (1) A **land-use element** which designates the proposed general distributions, general location, and extent of the uses of land for agriculture, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, education, public buildings and lands, and other categories of public and private use of land;
- (2) The general location, character, and extent of existing and proposed major roads, streets, and highways, and air and other **transportation routes and facilities**;
- (3) The general location, type, capacity, and area served of **present and projected or needed community facilities** including recreation facilities, schools, libraries, other public buildings, and public utilities and services;
- (4) When a new comprehensive plan or a full update to an existing comprehensive plan is developed on or after July 15, 2010, but not later than January 1, 2015, an **energy element** which: Assesses energy infrastructure and energy use by sector, including residential, commercial, and industrial sectors; evaluates utilization of renewable energy sources; and promotes energy conservation measures that benefit the community. This subdivision shall not apply to villages; and
- (5)(a) When next amended after January 1, 1995, an identification of sanitary and improvement districts, subdivisions, industrial tracts, commercial tracts, and other discrete developed areas which are or in the future may be appropriate subjects for annexation and (b) a general review of the standards and qualifications that should be met to enable the municipality to undertake **annexation** of such areas. Failure of the plan to identify subjects for annexation or to set out standards or qualifications for annexation shall not serve as the basis for any challenge to the validity of an annexation ordinance.



## **MAP 1.1 JURISDICTION OF THE PLAN**

In accordance with NRS §17-1001 (1), the area covered by the Comprehensive Plan includes all lands within the City's Extraterritorial Zoning Jurisdiction (ETJ) displayed in Map 1.1.

# MAP 1.1 CITY OF AURORA ZONING JURISDICTION



## COMMUNITY INPUT

**Planning Commission:** The creation of the City of Aurora Comprehensive plan was led by the City's Planning Commission. The Aurora Planning Commission consists of nine committed community members are appointed by the Mayor and responsible for advising the Council on all matters to current and future land use development decisions.

The members of the Planning Commission consistently attend monthly meetings and are diligent in their service to the Aurora Community. The members of the Planning Commission that have guided the creation of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan are listed below:

- Jeff Morris, Chairperson
- Bruce Ramsour, Vice Chairperson
- Jeff Bart, Secretary
- Mark Shaneyfelt
- Christa Hunnicutt
- Keith Wasem
- Cal Strong
- Ron Elge
- Wayne Brehm

**Future Land Use Open House:** a draft Future Land Use (FLU) Map was reviewed and revised by the Planning Commission and presented to the community. All members of the community were invited to view the FLU Map either online or in person at an Open House held at City Hall on January 22, 2020. All property owners within the ETJ received a flyer through direct mail.

AURORA NEWS-REGISTER

## Map touts city's plan

■ Open house Jan. 22 part of detailed comprehensive plan

Creating a vision for future housing and business development in and around Aurora will be the focus of an open house Jan. 22 at City Hall, where local residents are invited to share their thoughts and perspective.

Members of the Aurora Planning Commission have been working with a planning consultant since October, with a goal of updating the city's comprehensive plan by the spring of 2020. The document was last revised in approximately 2010 and is traditionally updated every 10 years.

"This is a big deal just so everybody has predictability," said Jeff Morris, chairman of the Aurora Planning Commission. "When you are dealing with housing, commerce and development it helps people to know what they can expect from the developer's side and the government's side as well."

Bobbe Pettit with Five Rule Rural Planning based in Kearney was hired in late September and has been working since that time to create inventories of all existing properties. Pettit made a preliminary report to city planners in November (see related story on Page A3) and conducted a visioning exercise in early December, providing input and information she will use to create a future land use map.

"I have found that has been the best way to get people's attention," Pettit explained.

"When they look at that map and see that their property is a certain color, then if they do have something to say they'll come forward."

"The future land use map is the most important piece because that will become the zoning map," she continued.

An open house has been scheduled for Jan. 22 at City Hall. The future land use map will be on display from 4-7 p.m., with Pettit and others available to answer questions. The Aurora Planning Commission will meet at 7:30 p.m. that night, prepared to begin reviewing input before making a final recommendation, at a later meeting, to the Aurora City Council.

A digital version of the future land use map will be posted to the News-Register's website prior to the Jan. 22 open house.

## JOIN US!

The Aurora Planning Commission has worked with FIVE RULE to prepare a proposed Future Land Use (FLU) Map.

- The proposed FLU map will be on display for public viewing and comment on **Wednesday, January 22 at City Hall.**
- Community residents are invited to view the proposed FLU map during an open house (come and go) at City Hall on Wednesday, January 22, 2-7 PM.
- A Consultant from FIVE RULE will be available to explain the proposed FLU map and answer questions.
- A formal presentation of the proposed FLU Map will also be provided from 5:30-6:00 PM that evening.

## WHAT IS THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP?

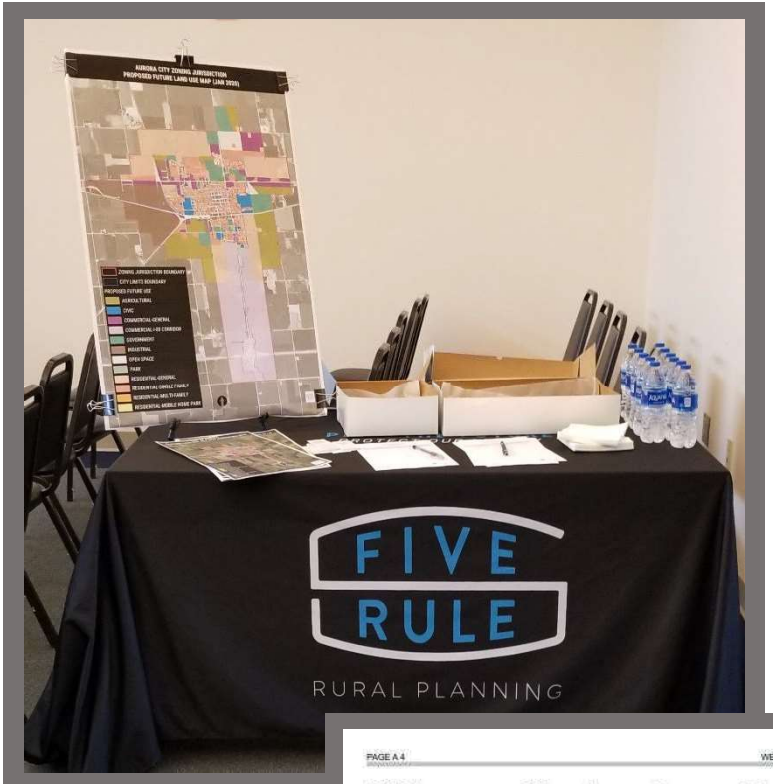
In the Fall of 2019, the City of Aurora contracted with FIVE RULE Rural Planning to update the City's Comprehensive Plan (Plan). The Plan guides the City Council's land use decisions over the next decade.

The map on the back of this flyer is the City's **Existing** Land Use (ELU) map. The comprehensive plan process consists of the Council considering what attributes of the ELU map should change and what attributes should remain the same over the next decade. The Council makes these considerations with input from the Community and guidance from the Planning Commission.

Those considerations are then represented on a second map, named the Future Land Use (FLU) Map. The FLU Map will be a crucial [decision making] page within the Plan.

The Plan serves as baseline guidance for land use decisions while the Zoning Ordinance serves as the local law regulating property development within the City of Aurora and its one-mile zoning jurisdiction. While the FLU Map is not the same as the City's Zoning Map, it will guide the City's zoning decisions. Once the Plan is complete, the City Zoning Ordinance will be updated to reflect the Plan.





**AURORA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
**Future Land Use Map Open House**  
 January 22, 2020

NAME	ADDRESS/AFFILIATION
Laurel Harcourt	1004 S16 Aurora
Trotti Kall	1403 N.R Rd Aurora
Daniel Phillips	619 - 1st "
Trit Phillips	619 1st "
Teresa Elder Smith	City of Aurora
Moore Seaman	City of Aurora
Ron Elge	2015 "4" St Planning Comm
Kurt Johnson	
Larrie Pfister	1106 1st Ave & Thomas Roadby
Tim Jones	1726 E 5th Aurora
James Kowmey	City Council
Shawn Thompson	319 Jennifer Rd
Matthew Kiner	939 Terrace Road Kiner, Inc
Kelsey Berger	Aurora Development Corp
Tom & Melissa Duckman	675 Sycamore Dr
Chris & Cathin Sogert	615 5th Street
James Hawley	2114 Tippecanoe Rd
Dick Klewer	
Gene Gouge	
Robert West	1106 South S RD
Bruce West	

Please Sign In!

A total of 22 community members attended the future land use open house.

The primary purpose for attending was to gather information regarding the future implications of having a FLU Map.

Upon completion of the Open House, the Planning Commission organized a committee that make minor revisions to the final FLU map.

## Citizens offer input on city's proposed future land use map

Planners to review comments before making final decision

by Kurt Johnson

City planners are preparing to take one final look at Aurora's future land use map after an open house last week gave local residents an opportunity to share their thoughts, concerns and perspective on the city's potential growth plans. Creating a vision for future housing and business development in and around Aurora was the focus of an open house Jan. 22 at City Hall which drew an estimated 25 people.

"We didn't get a lot of comment on the map itself as far as what was shown but people were asking what does it mean," Adam Darbro, the city's planning and zoning administrator, told members of the Aurora Planning Commission later that night.

"Bobbi (Petit) did a good job of talking people through it. Sixteen-hundred letters were sent out to property owners and one of the residents who showed up was very thankful we sent them out before we did anything with the plan."

Petit, who owns the Kearney-based Five Rule Rural Planning firm hired by the city to update Aurora's comprehensive plan, said she added the open house event as a way to gather public input at this early stage of the process.

"The folks who attended the open house did not seem surprised at what we were proposing and were mainly there to learn about the process and find out for sure what the city's authority would be over their land," Petit said. "I guess the main thing was that some folks who stopped by wanted guarantees when it came to the farm ground surrounding the city. They want reassurance that the farmland up to their house would stay that way."

Toward that end, Petit said the only way to guarantee future land use of neighboring property is to buy the ground. "I can tell folks what the city has in mind and explain the

planning process (future land use map vs the zoning map and how you eventually make zoning decisions that will match the future land use map over time), but there are no guarantees. City leadership changes, landowners change their minds and generations turn over. There are no guarantees, there is only the process which has been put in place to help communities have some degree of predictability."

The main goal of the open house, she said, was to show the community that the city is acknowledging a bright future of growth in and around Aurora and is therefore choosing to make plans in an attempt to be proactive by attracting opportunities instead of being reactive to whatever development happens to come Aurora's way.

**"We didn't get a lot of comment on the map itself but people were asking what does it mean."**

Adam Darbro, Planning and zoning admin

residents. The plan serves as baseline guidance for land use decisions while the zoning ordinance serves as the local law regulating property development within the City of Aurora and its one-mile zoning jurisdiction.

Darbro recapped some of the questions raised during the open house, which included zoning on specific parcels of land east of Jolo's Gelato, north and west of the Northridge Subdivision and on Highway 14 along the I-80 corridor.

"One of the changes I would recommend is that the Mission Critical land needs to remain I-80X (zoning) and that we change from I-80X to commercial closer to town as a transitional piece."

Darbro also suggested that commercial zoning be changed in some areas to extend to a quarter-mile east and west of Highway 14, reduced from the current half-mile I-80X zoning guidelines.

"As I recall the reason we did that was trying to line up with Mission Critical land closer to town," Darbro explained of a 250-acre parcel

owned by the Aurora Development Corporation on the east side of Highway 14 where the "Welcome to Aurora" sign now sits.

Mark Shaneyfelt, a member of the planning commission, questioned the reduction to a quarter mile, asking if that was enough room to allow for construction of an access road.

"I think that's important because it controls people turning on and off the highway," he said. "I just think it would be a good move to have an access road."

City Administrator Rick Mekcher, who listened in to the discussion and is very familiar with the details having served as planning and zoning administrator for many years, said he believes 1,300 frontage feet would be suitable for a frontage road along the I-80 corridor.

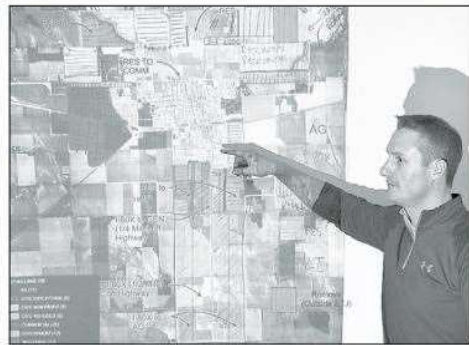
Darbro said that issue could be discussed more in detail, noting, for example, that Interstate Battery 1st Web Sales owns property adjacent to the highway that could be used for an access road.

"We could look into that more but I think there is plenty of room for a frontage road there," he said. Jeff Morris, planning commission chairman, listened to the 20-minute discussion, later appointing a four-person committee to study the input and proposed map, then report back to the full commission at its February meeting. The four members appointed included Morris, Shaneyfelt, Christa Hammitt and Jeff Bart.

**Comprehensive plan** Members of the Aurora Planning Commission have been working with a planning consultant since October, with a goal of updating the city's comprehensive plan by the spring of 2020. The document was last revised in approximately 2010 and is traditionally updated every 10 years.

Five Rule Rural Planning was hired in late September and has been working since that time to create inventories of all existing properties. Petit made a preliminary report to city planners in November and conducted a visioning exercise in early December, providing input and information used to create the future land use map.

"I have found that has been the best way to get people's attention," Petit explained in an earlier interview. "When they look at that map and see that their property is a certain color, then if they do have something to say they'll come forward. The future land use map is the most important piece because that will become the zoning map."



Aurora planning and zoning administrator Adam Darbro discusses the proposed future land use map with members of the Aurora Planning Commission.



Aurora Mayor Martin Seaman, right, discusses the city's proposed future land use map with planning commission member Ron Elge during an open house Jan. 22 at City Hall.

**FARM FOR SALE**

Level Irregular Quarter. Sale includes 2012 Zoned, 7 lower crop and 100 +/- acre plus. Well drilled in 2007 at center point. Over 90% of acres are top quality Class 1 soil. \$8,975 per acre with full possession March 1. Double acre 160.00 half 1st of Section 36, Township 19N, Range 8W, Hamilton County, Nebraska. For additional information or the most quality offering, contact Dale Tracy.

## **DECISION TO PLAN**

By creating and adopting this Comprehensive Plan, the City Council of Aurora is choosing to actively envision, work toward, and create a healthy and vibrant community that protects its legacy, creates a thriving community for current residents and preserves the natural and built environment for future residents.

Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.

~Warren Buffett

## II. DOCUMENTED DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS

### GRAND ISLAND MSA

The primary source of demographic and economic information was provided by the United States Census Bureau.

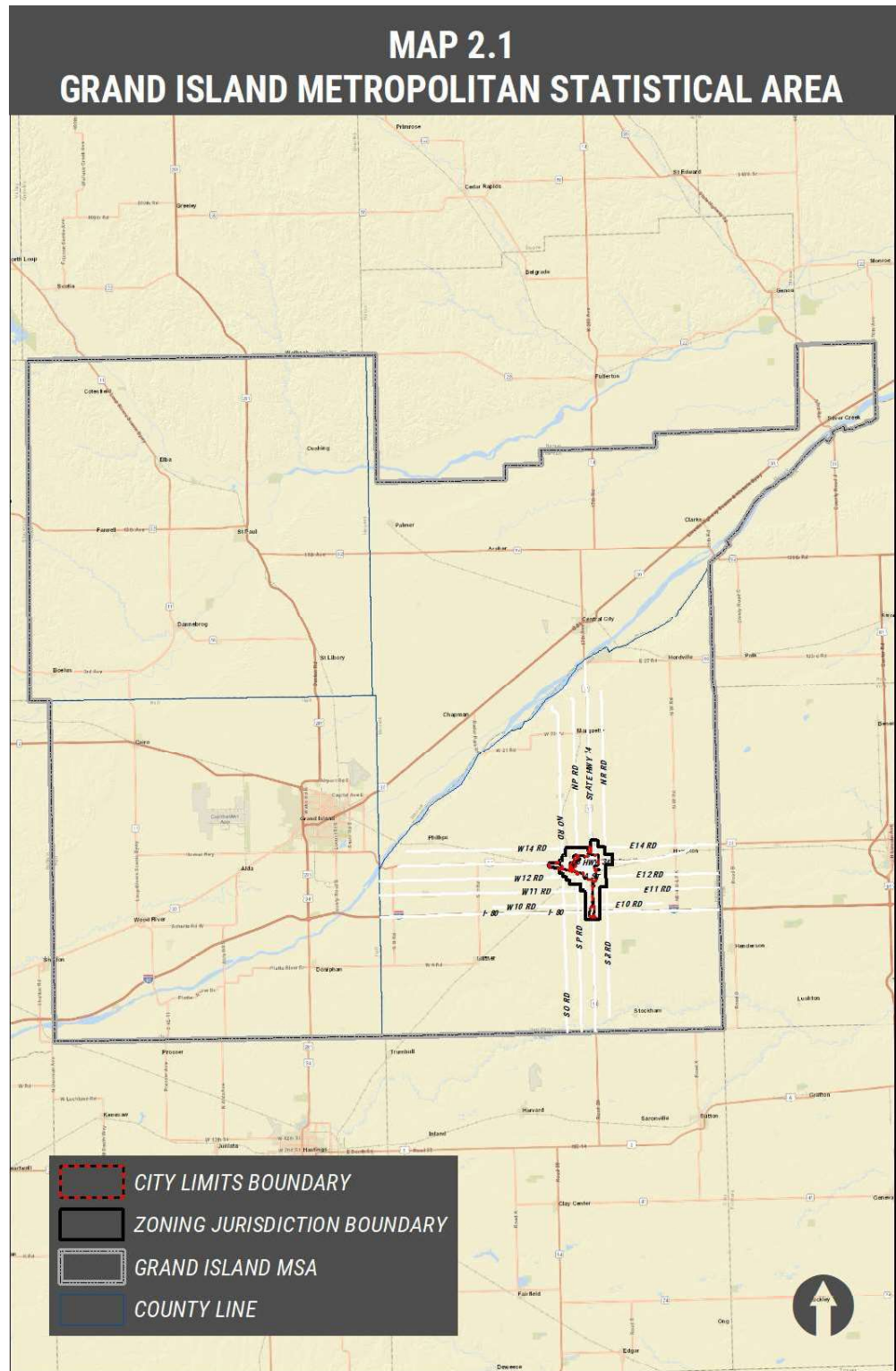
The City of Aurora is located within the Grand Island Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes is shown in Map 2.1 and includes Hall, Hamilton, Howard, and Merrick Counties.

Growth trends for similar communities provide insight as to what has taken place regionally and what the city can expect for regional and local growth.

A total of 24 communities are included within the Grand Island MSA.

For growth analysis, the following fellow GI MSA second-class cities were compared to Aurora:

- Central City;
- St. Paul; and
- Wood River.



**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

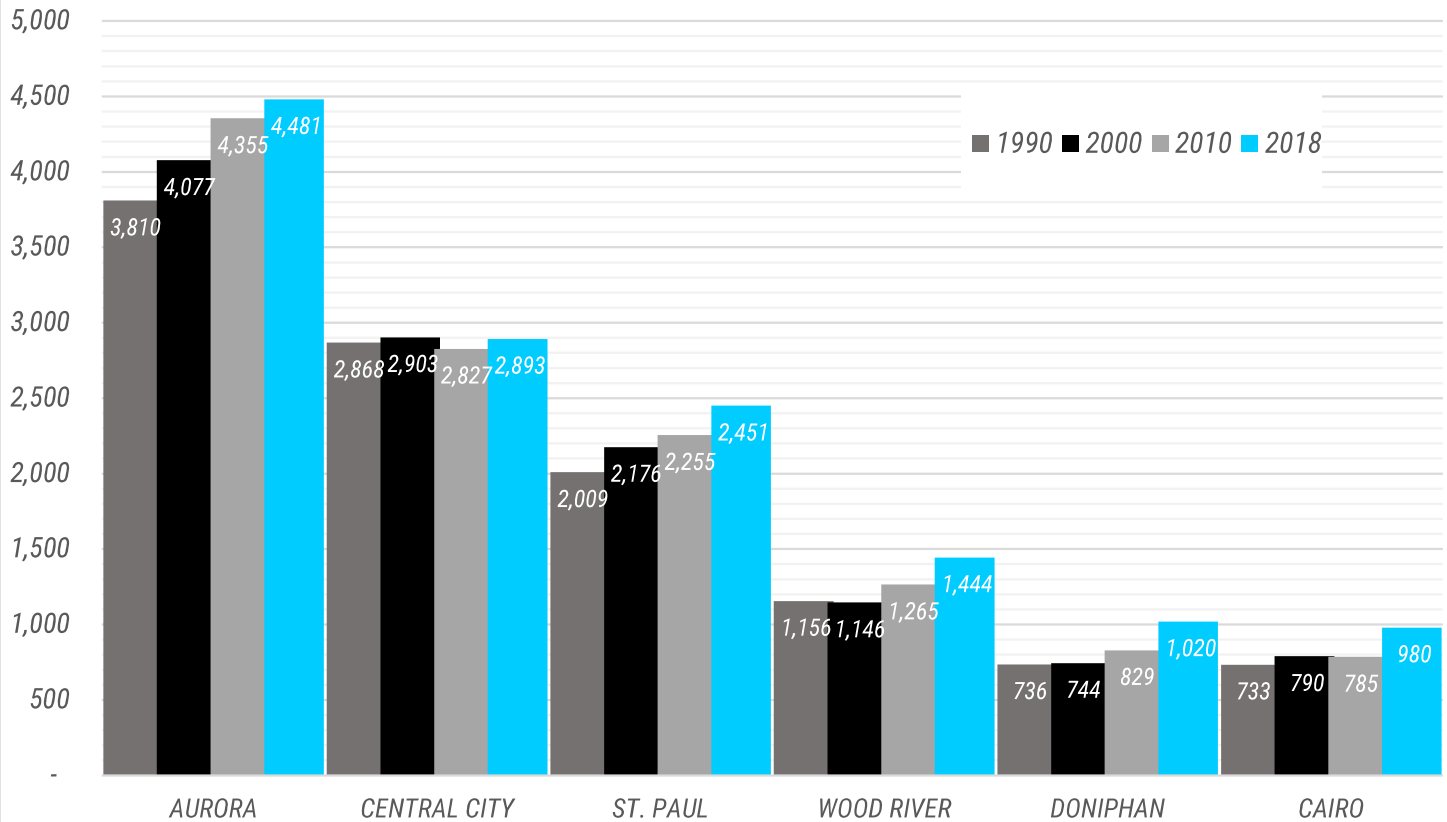
Since 1990, the City of Aurora has experienced consistent growth in each decade while other cities in the MSA saw slight decreases. Since 2010, Cairo and Alda both rebounded from a negative growth rate in the 2000s. These villages that will soon be second class cities have experienced a significantly stronger growth rate than the other second class cities in the MSA. According to the American Community Survey, Central City is the only community that has a weaker growth rate than Aurora.

**TABLE 2.1 GROWTH RATE, GRAND ISLAND MSA SECOND CLASS & ALMOST SECOND CLASS CITIES**

	1990	2000	ANNUAL GROWTH RATE, 1990s	2010	ANNUAL GROWTH RATE, 2000s	2018	ANNUAL GROWTH RATE, 2010-2018
<b>AURORA</b>	3,810	4,077	0.70%	4,355	0.68%	4,481	0.36%
CAIRO	733	790	0.78%	785	-0.06%	980	3.11%
ALDA	532	652	2.26%	642	-0.15%	758	2.26%
WOOD RIVER	1,156	1,146	-0.09%	1,265	1.04%	1,444	1.77%
ST. PAUL	2,009	2,176	0.83%	2,255	0.36%	2,451	1.09%
CENTRAL CITY	2,868	2,903	0.12%	2,827	-0.26%	2,893	0.29%
DONIPHAN	736	744	0.11%	829	1.14%	1,020	2.88%

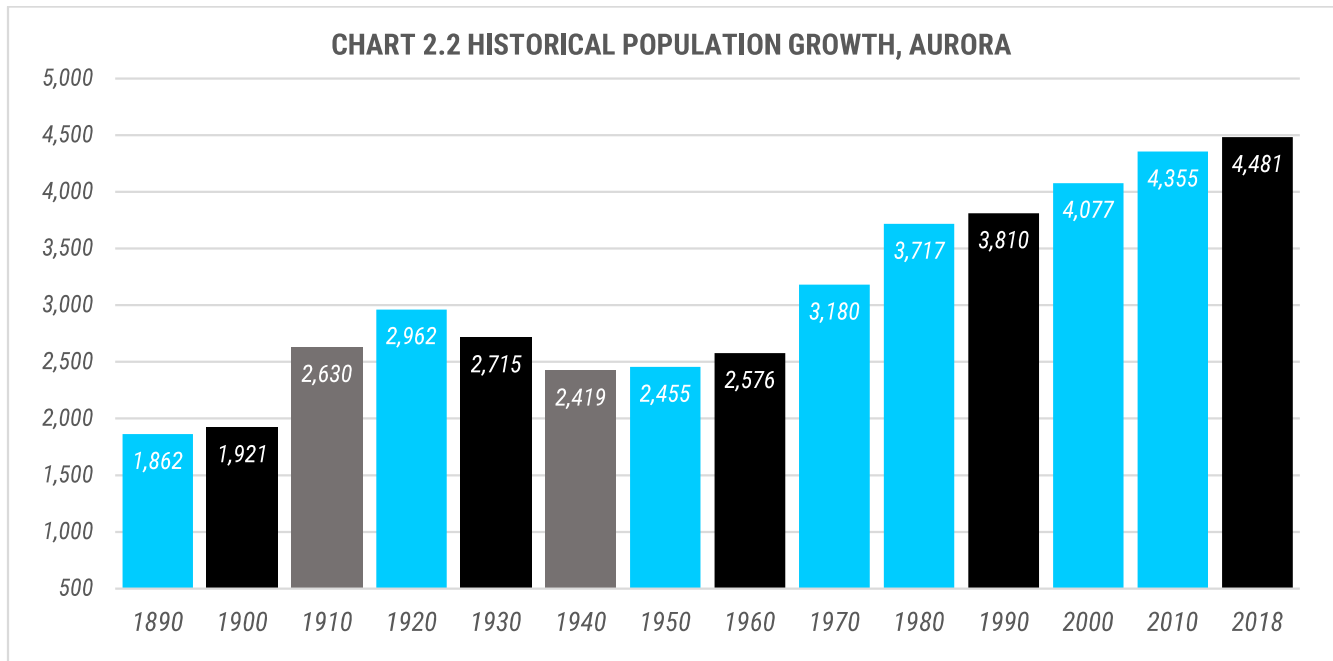
SOURCE: 1990 AND 2000 DECENNIAL CENSUS, 2018 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (ACS)

**CHART 2.1 POPULATION TRENDS GRAND ISLAND MSA 2ND CLASS CITIES**





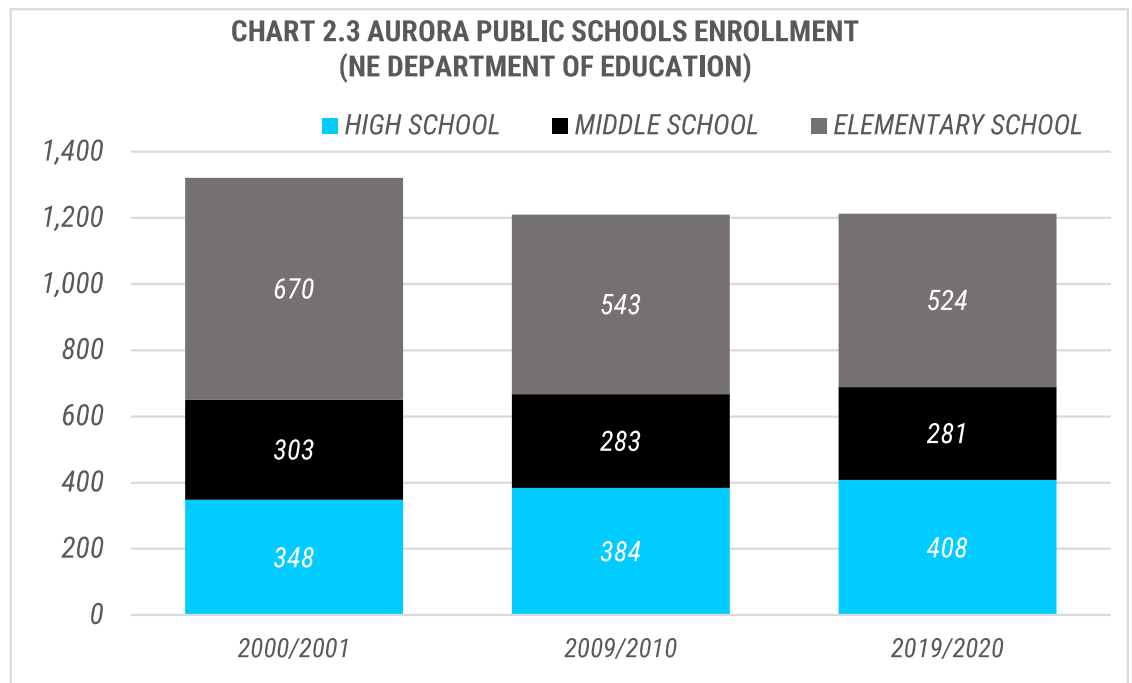
Despite experiencing weaker growth rates since 2010, Aurora and the rest of the small cities in the MSA are seeing steady growth with all communities reporting a larger population in 2018 than in 2000.



In the 2000 Decennial Census, the city reported its highest population to date. The 2018 population estimate provided by the American Community Survey suggests that the City is continuing to grow and will report its largest count yet during the 2020 Decennial Census.

School enrollment is important indicator of population growth in a community. The Aurora Public School District is shown on Map 2.2.

Unlike the total population pattern reported for the Aurora Community, enrollment numbers have decreased since 2000 and have only held steady since the 2009/2010 school year.



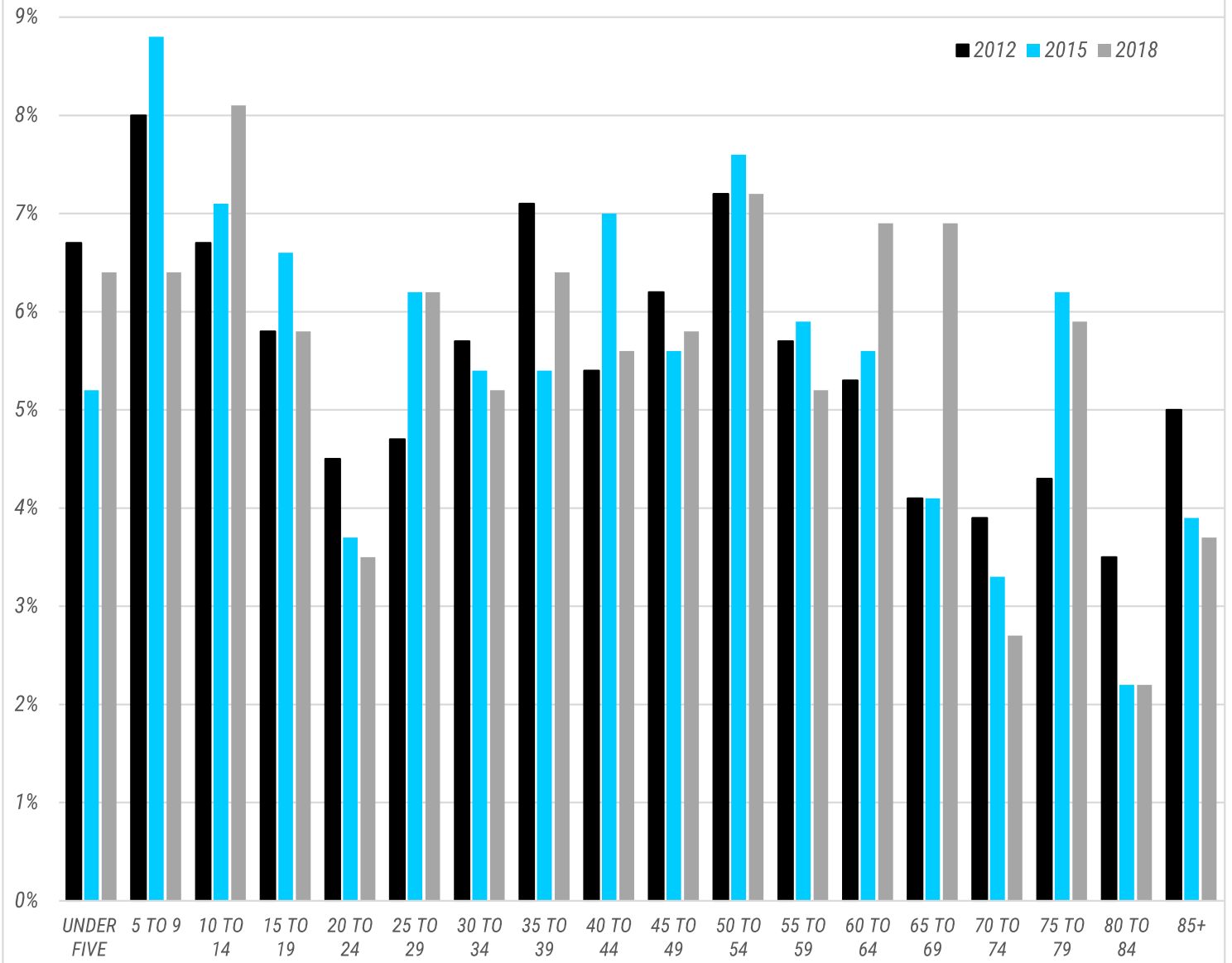


Identifying age cohort patterns within a population group is important in order to understand the community's current needs and also predict future needs and also to help predict future population.

The tables on the following page support the observations below:

- The largest cohorts in the City of Aurora are elementary and middle school aged children between the ages of 5 and 14.
- In 2012 and 2015, the largest percentage of the population (age cohort) were children aged 5 to 9 which preceded the largest age group being children aged 10 to 14 in 2018.
- Normally, the next largest cohort would be adults in their child bearing/rearing years, aged 30-45, which was the third largest cohort in 2012.
  - ~ However, the next largest age cohort in all three represented years was adults aged 50 to 54.
- In 2015 and 2018, the largest age cohorts represented are children under the aged 5 to 14 and adults aged 50 to 64.
- The size of the cohort that would include those adults in their child bearing/rearing years (30-44) actually appears to be shrinking.
  - ~ Yet, the age cohort that would include adults in their pre-retirement/early retirement years appears to be growing.

**CHART 2.4 AGE COHORT CHANGE, 2012-2018**



**TABLE 2.2 CHANGE IN AGE COHORT, 2012, 2015, 2018**

	UNDER 5	5 TO 9	10 TO 14	15 TO 19	20 TO 24	25 TO 29	30 TO 34	35 TO 39	40 TO 44	45 TO 49	50 TO 54	55 TO 59	60 TO 64	65 TO 69	70 TO 74	75 TO 79	80 TO 84	85+
2012	6.70%	8.00%	6.70%	5.80%	4.50%	4.70%	5.70%	7.10%	5.40%	6.20%	7.20%	5.70%	5.30%	4.10%	3.90%	4.30%	3.50%	5.00%
2015	5.20%	8.80%	7.10%	6.60%	3.70%	6.20%	5.40%	5.40%	7.00%	5.60%	7.60%	5.90%	5.60%	4.10%	3.30%	6.20%	2.20%	3.90%
2018	6.40%	6.40%	8.10%	5.80%	3.50%	6.20%	5.20%	6.40%	5.60%	5.80%	7.20%	5.20%	6.90%	6.90%	2.70%	5.90%	2.20%	3.70%

SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY ESTIMATES: 2012, 2015, 2018

**TABLE 2.2 CHANGE IN AGE COHORT, 2012, 2015, 2018**

	UNDER 5	5 TO 9	10 TO 14	15 TO 19	20 TO 24	25 TO 29	30 TO 34	35 TO 39	40 TO 44	45 TO 49	50 TO 54	55 TO 59	60 TO 64
2012	6.70%	8.00%	6.70%	5.80%	4.50%	4.70%	5.70%	7.10%	5.40%	6.20%	7.20%	5.70%	5.30%
2015	5.20%	8.80%	7.10%	6.60%	3.70%	6.20%	5.40%	5.40%	7.00%	5.60%	7.60%	5.90%	5.60%
2018	6.40%	6.40%	8.10%	5.80%	3.50%	6.20%	5.20%	6.40%	5.60%	5.80%	7.20%	5.20%	6.90%

SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY ESTIMATES: 2012, 2015, 2018

Data provided for the population portion of this comprehensive plan document is based upon information provided by the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is an ongoing survey that provides the basis of estimates made by the U.S. Census Bureau. The ACS is largely based upon estimates that are dependent upon the accurate completion and return of surveys sent to U.S. households on a rolling, ongoing basis. Due to its dependency upon estimates, it is possible for ACS data to present inconsistencies.

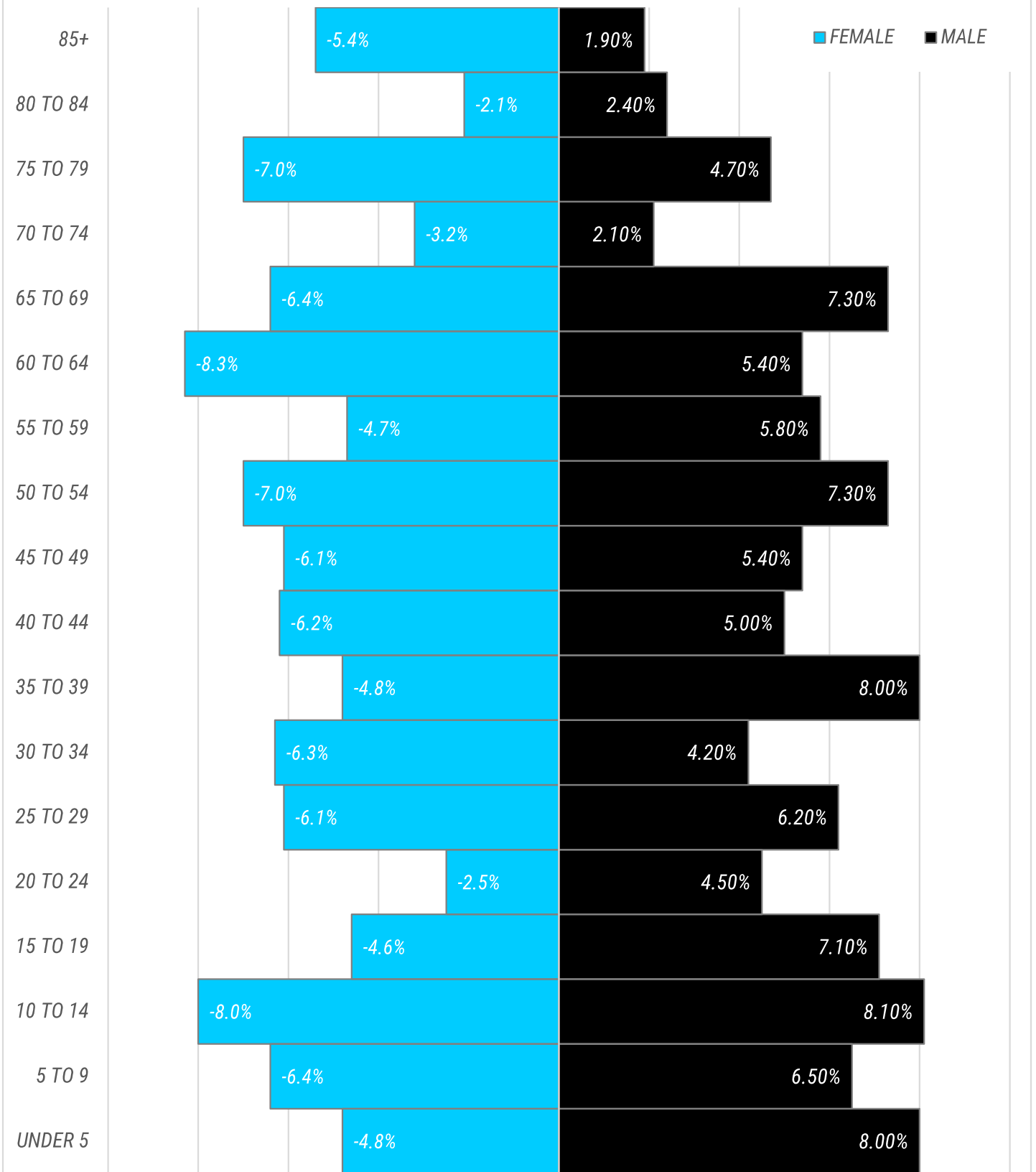
Therefore, in addition to the completion of the cohort analysis on the previous page, a population pyramid based upon the ACS’s estimation of males and females in Aurora is also provided. The City’s leadership must also consider his/her observations that have been experienced in the community in order to decide which population estimating tool best represents the population trends in Aurora.

The population pyramid on the following page displays the distribution of the age and gender of the people in Aurora. Females are represented on the left side of the chart and males are on the right. The ideal population pyramid will show the widest populations on the bottom of the chart then thinning out while moving up the chart, therefore creating a pyramid.

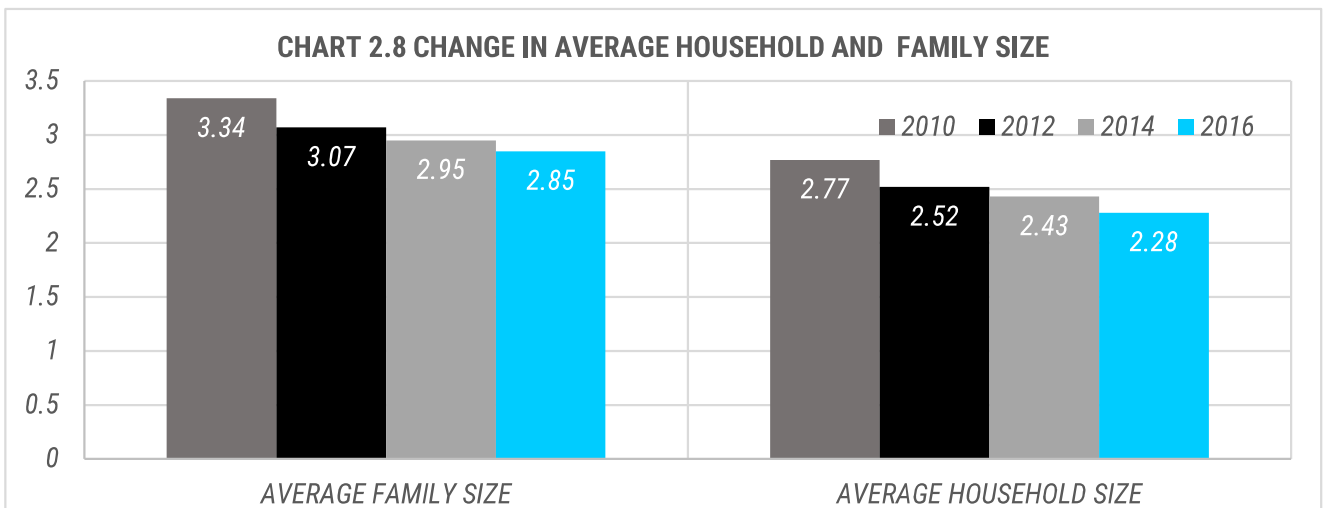
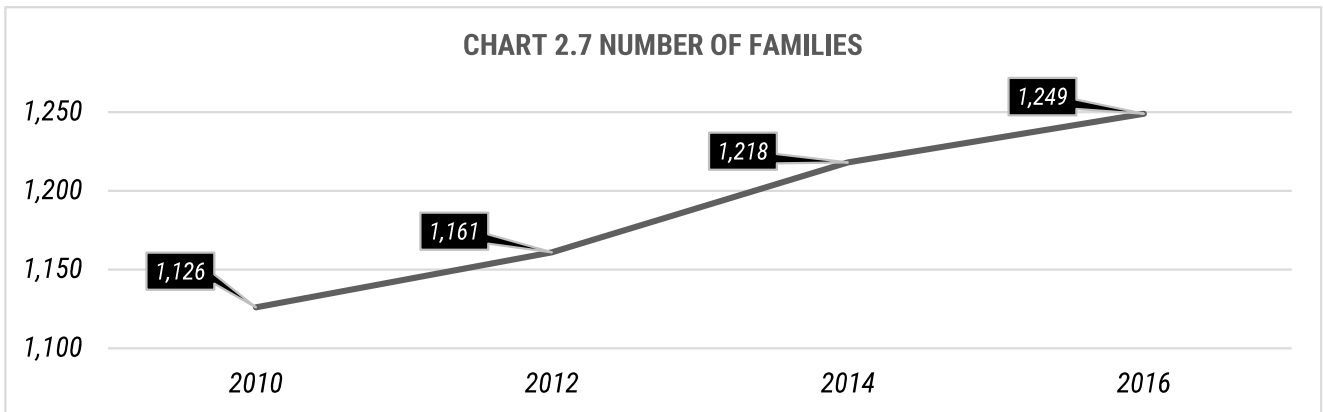
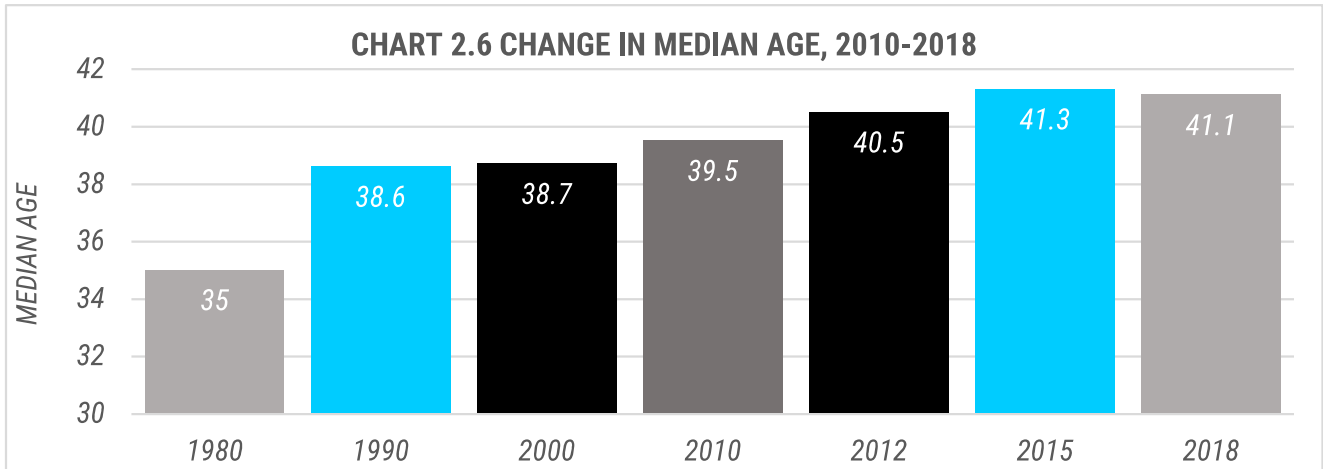
Assumptions about the age cohorts in Aurora based upon the population pyramid are stated below:

- The largest age cohort in 2018 was children aged 10-14 followed by adults aged 60-69.
- The third largest cohort was adults aged 50 to 54.
- Much like the age cohort tables, adults in their child bearing/rearing years make up a smaller proportion of adults in Aurora than those in their pre/early retirement years.
- The population pyramid in Aurora does not follow the ideal shape of pyramid as the largest cohorts are at the top and bottom of the pyramid.
  - ~ It does match the ideal in that adults aged 70 years and older are the smallest cohort.
  - ~ However, adults in the 20s are the next smallest cohort.

**CHART 2.5, 2018 POPULATION PYRAMID**



The following factors displayed on the following charts support the previous two analyses that suggest the proportion of Aurora seeing the most growth is adults nearing and/or entering retirement age: increase in median age; increase in number of families; decrease in household size; and decrease in family size.

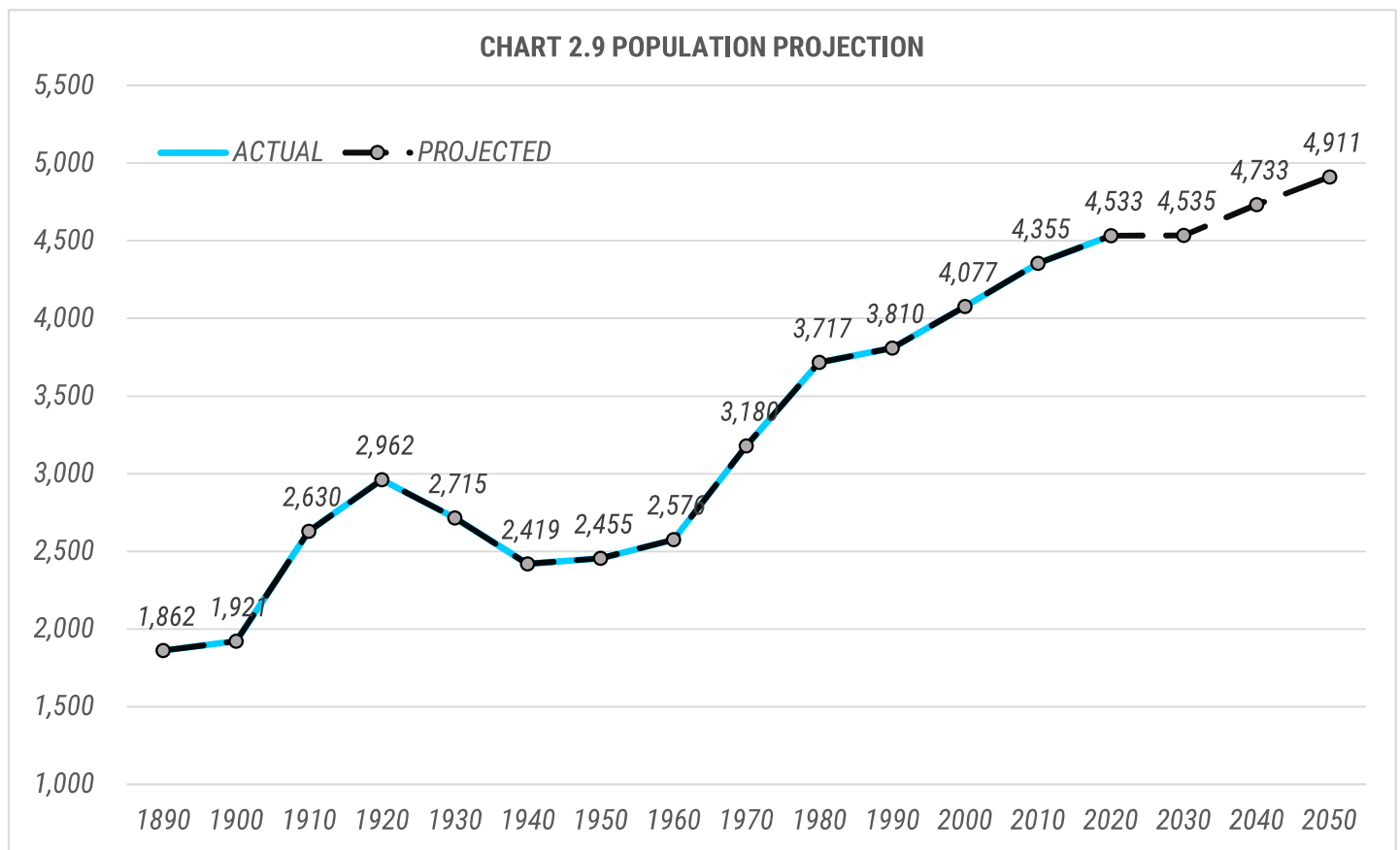


## POPULATION PROJECTION

The most recent population indicators combined with the 130-year history of Aurora suggest that the City will continue to grow. A population projection chart has been prepared under the assumption that the City of Aurora will continue to grow and shrink in the same pattern it has done so for the past 130 years.

Assuming that the city will continue to grow at the same pace, the line graph below predicts that the city's total population will continue to grow over the next 30 years. From 2020 through 2050, each decennial census count should become a new record population number for Aurora.

This projection only considers what has happened in Aurora in the past. Should the city change policies and set different growth goals, the slight growth predicted to take place after from 2020-2040 could be increased. Either way, the City should continue to make decisions based upon the desire to accommodate and sustain its anticipated growth.





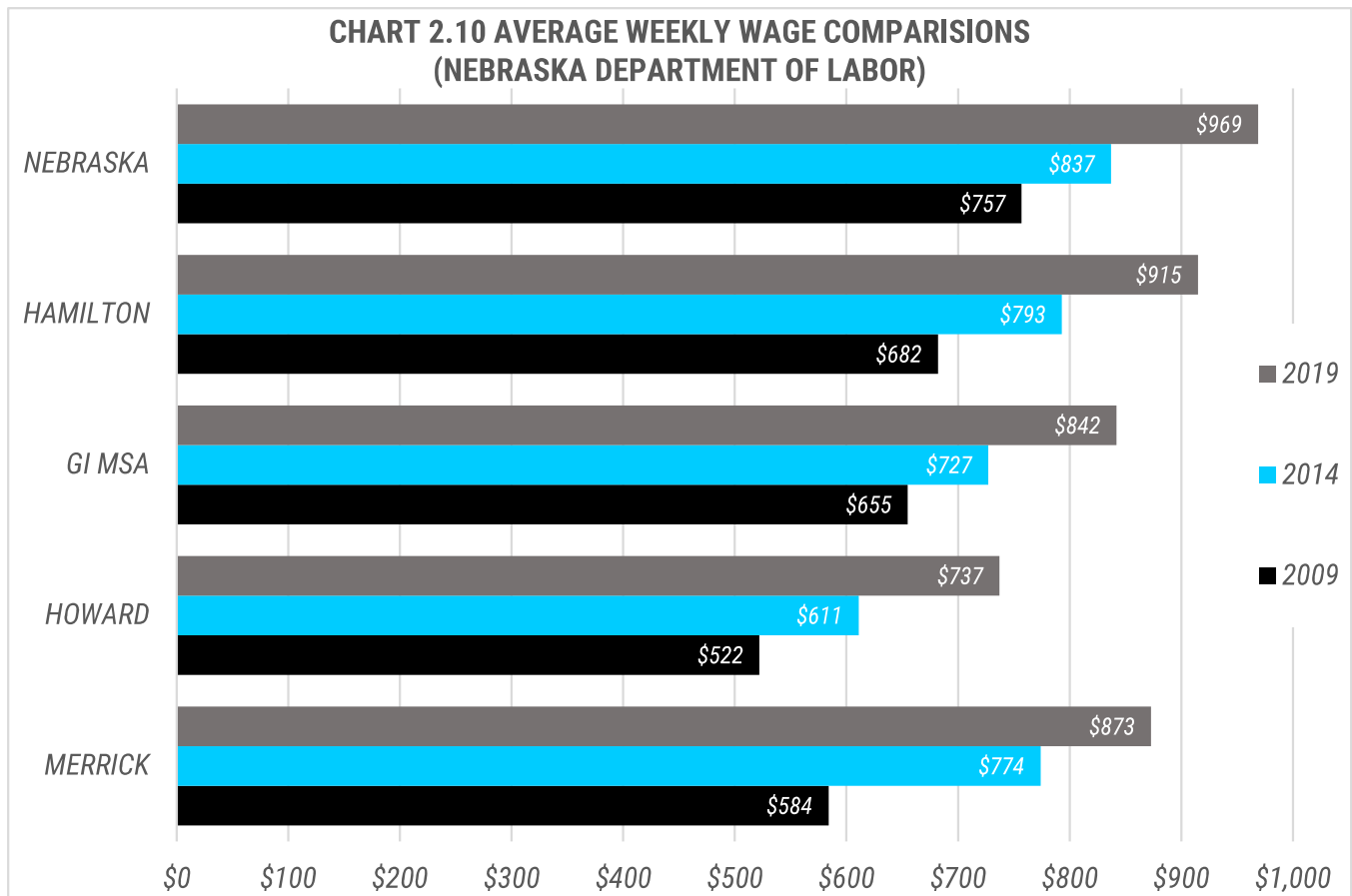
**ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Average weekly wage (AWW) measures individual paychecks and provides background on the growth of individual earning potential. The AWW figures below include jobs in all industries that are covered by state unemployment insurance.

On average Hamilton County has the highest wages in the area, only second to the statewide average. Wage rates for workers in Merrick and Howard counties are seeing higher growth rates than Hamilton County; Merrick from 2009-2014 and Howard from 2014-2019. These wages may just be “catching up” with Grand Island MSA and Hamilton County in order to compete for labor. The strong growth in wages does suggest that the demand for workers is stronger than the demand for jobs in this region.

<b>TABLE 2.3 AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE (AWW) COMPARISON</b>					
	2009	2014	% CHANGE 2009-2014	2019	% CHANGE 2014-2019
NEBRASKA	\$757	\$837	11%	\$969	16%
HAMILTON	\$682	\$793	16%	\$915	15%
GI MSA	\$655	\$727	11%	\$842	16%
HOWARD	\$522	\$611	17%	\$737	21%
MERRICK	\$584	\$774	33%	\$873	13%

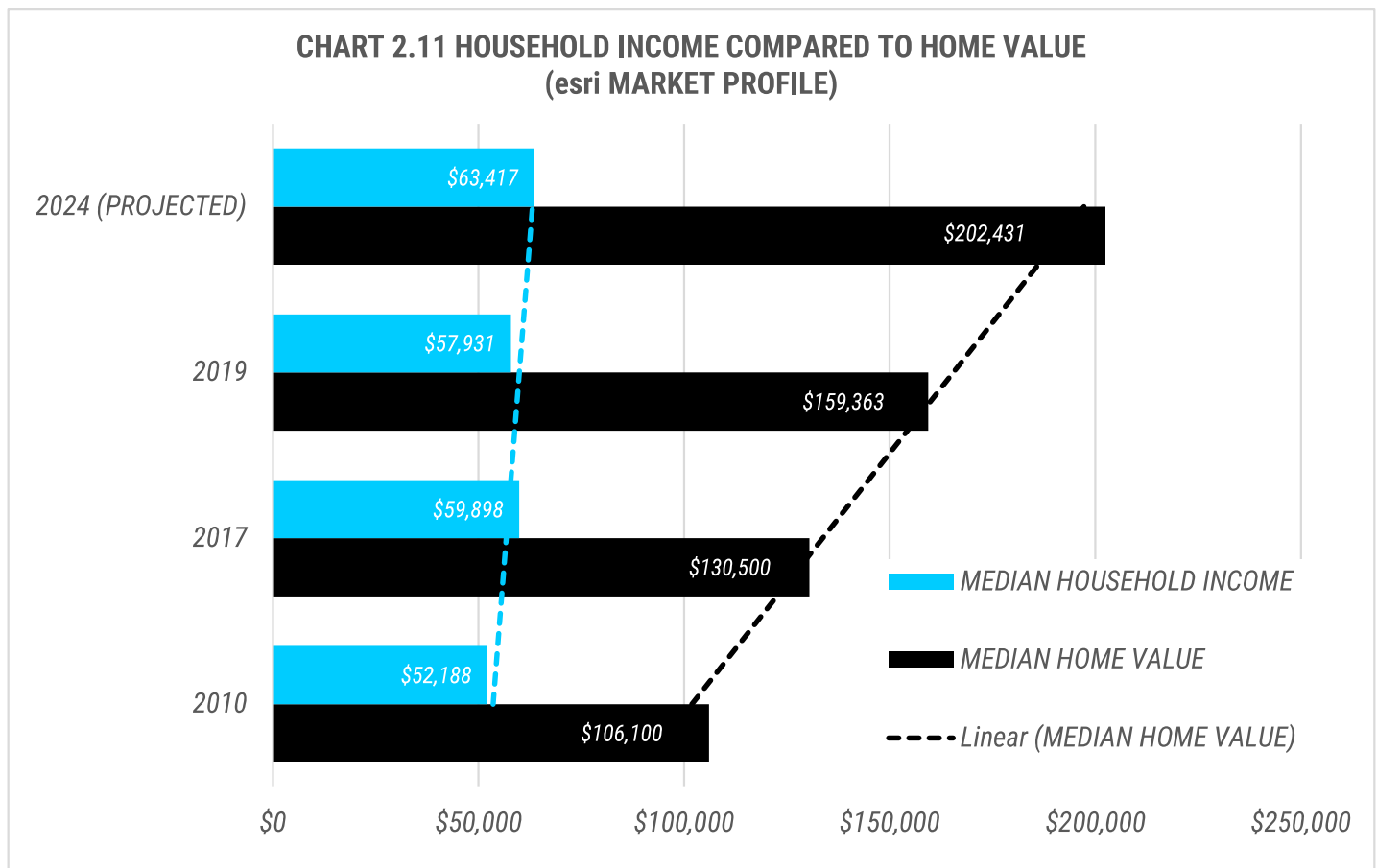
SOURCE: NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, QUARTERLY CENSUS OF WAGES



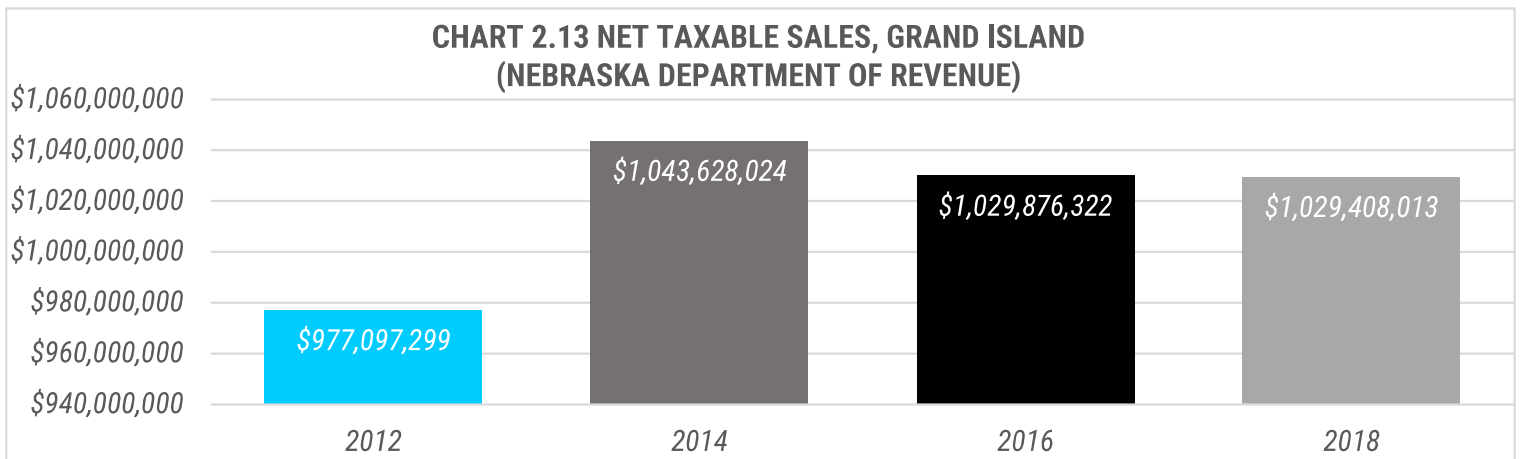
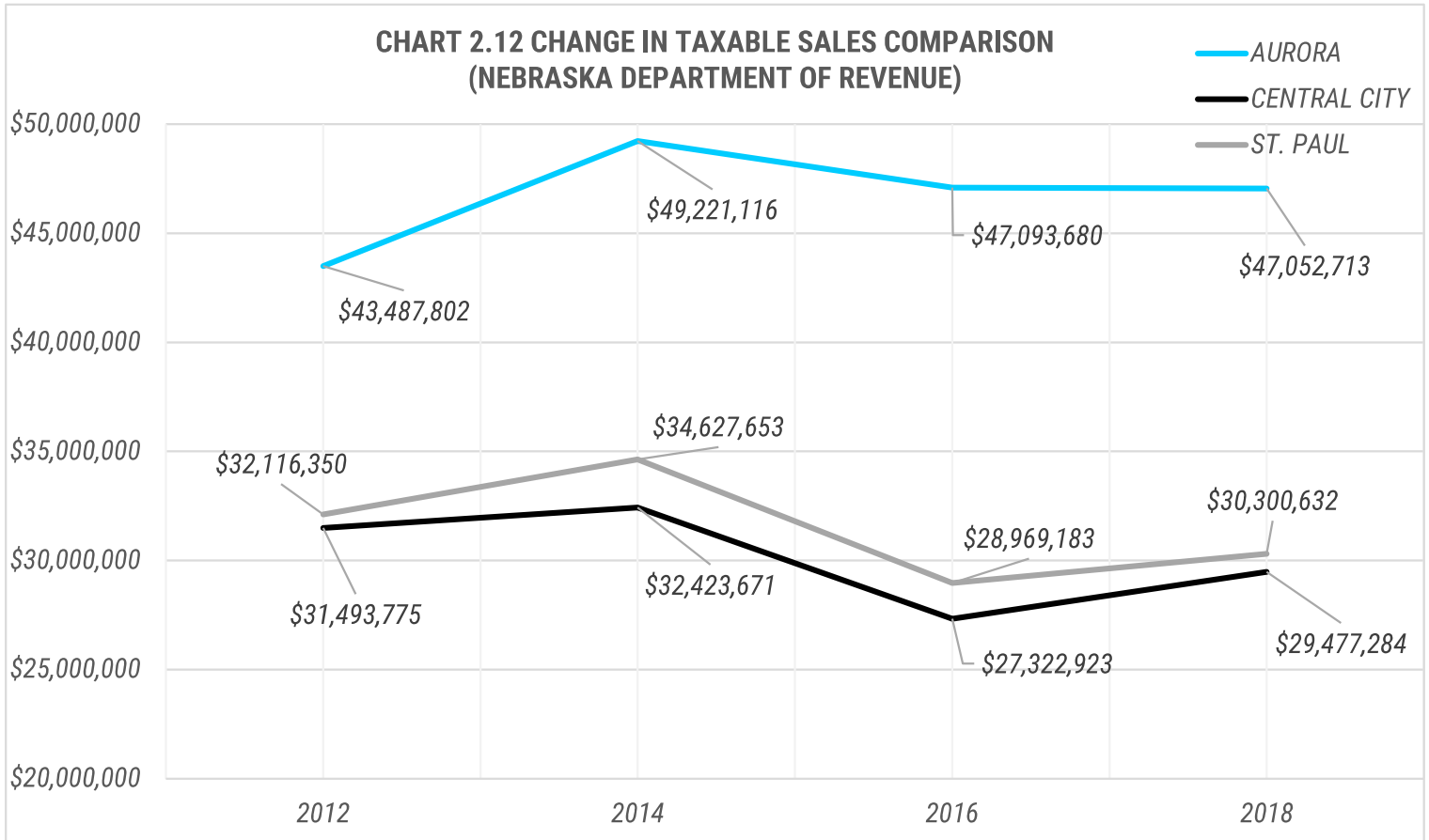
Household income data provides insight concerning the income potential of the entire family. Household income and home value data presented below is provided by the Business Analyst division of esri ArcGIS. The data is a compilation of information from the U.S. Census and geographic information owned by esri. The 2024 forecasts are provided by esri and based upon past trends and market predictions.

The information below compares the increase in household income to the increase in home value. The median home value appears to be growing far faster than median household incomes. Similar to the suggestion made on the previous page that the demand for labor is going unmet, the demand for housing also appears to be going unmet.

It is likely that a relationship exists between the growing price of labor and the growing price of homes in the Aurora area.



While income data informs the amount of earning potential that residents have, sales tax information provides insight as to the spending power and habits of residents. The net taxable sales for Aurora, Central City, and St. Paul are displayed below. Similar to wages, while Aurora does have a higher amount of taxable sales, it saw a slight decrease from 2016 to 2018 while Central City and St. Paul continued upward and actually saw a slight increase. Due to its impact on the region, Grand Island's net taxable sales are also considered below. Similar to Aurora, Grand Island also saw a slight decrease from 2016-2018 in taxable sales.



## DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS-KEY TAKEAWAYS

The following statements summarize the current population patterns in Aurora:

- Since 1940, the City of Aurora has experienced sustained growth, with the last population loss recorded in the 1930s.
  - ~ The city's growth rate from 2010 to 2018 (0.36%) was smaller than that of the 1990s (0.7%) and the early 2000s (0.68%).
- The region as whole is growing as every small city and large village in the Grand Island MSA has sustained or grown population numbers since 2000.
- Aurora appears to be growing at a slower rate, experiencing a growth rate that was behind every other city in the MSA besides Central City.
- While the population of the City of Aurora is growing, Aurora Public Schools had fewer students enrolled for the 2019/2020 school year than that of 2000/2001.
- The largest age cohorts are children aged 10-14 years followed by adults in their 50s and 60s. Adults in their 30s and 40s are the next largest cohort.
- Aurora's population is projected to continue to grow; however, cohort figures combined with the following observations suggest that Aurora is gaining more residents in pre-retirement/early retirement years:
  - ~ increasing median age;
  - ~ increasing number of families;
  - ~ decreasing average family size; and
  - ~ decreasing average household size.

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The following statements summarize the current economic state of Aurora:

- On average, workers in Hamilton County are paid higher wages than the rest of the Grand Island MSA counties.
- The growing price of labor in the entire region suggests that a shortage of labor exists; employers in the region are most likely being forced to compete for workers.
- Though household incomes are projected to increase, the median value of homes in Aurora is growing exponentially faster than household incomes.
- It is likely that a relationship exists between the growing price of labor and the growing price of homes; workers able to move into the region are most likely struggling to find a home in Aurora that matches their income.
- Aurora, Central City, and St. Paul all three saw decreases in spending as net taxable sales fell from 2014 to 2016; Central City and St. Paul saw an increase from 2016 to 2018 while Aurora experienced another slight decrease. Net taxable sales in Grand Island have also continued to decrease since 2014.

The City of Aurora has experienced both population and economic growth for the last two decades. Data does indicate that the City may be losing families with children and that an ongoing, unmet demand for labor and housing will impede future growth.

While incomes and spending in Aurora continue to be greater than its most comparable regional cities (Central City and St. Paul), economic data suggests that other cities have begun to capture a greater share of growth in the region than Aurora.

If the City of Aurora does nothing, it should continue to see steady and gradual growth, yet it will most likely see the increase of residents that are past their child bearing/rearing and working years. This assumption is based upon based growth trends and does not consider the impact of neighboring cities' growth trends, which may impact the future growth potential of Aurora as well.

If the City chooses to be more proactive in affecting the type and amount of growth it wishes to experience in the next decade, it will need to consider policies, projects, and programs that increase the availability of housing and labor.

### III. LAND USE AND ANNEXATION

#### NRS § 19-903

A **land-use element** which designates the proposed general distributions, general location, and extent of the uses of land for agriculture, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, education, public buildings and lands, and other categories of public and private use of land;

When next amended after January 1, 1995, an identification of sanitary and improvement districts, subdivisions, industrial tracts, commercial tracts, and other discrete developed areas which are or in the future may be appropriate subjects for annexation and (b) a general review of the standards and qualifications that should be met to enable the municipality to undertake **annexation** of such areas. Failure of the plan to identify subjects for annexation or to set out standards or qualifications for annexation shall not serve as the basis for any challenge to the validity of an annexation ordinance.

#### EXISTING LAND USE, CITY OF AURORA - BREAKDOWN

Single family residential homes are by far the largest user of land in Aurora. When breaking down land uses by parcels, this use accounts for almost ¾ of the entire city. Commercial uses and vacant lots are the next two highest users of land by parcels. Though, most vacant lots appear to be platted and ready to become a residential use in the near future as well.

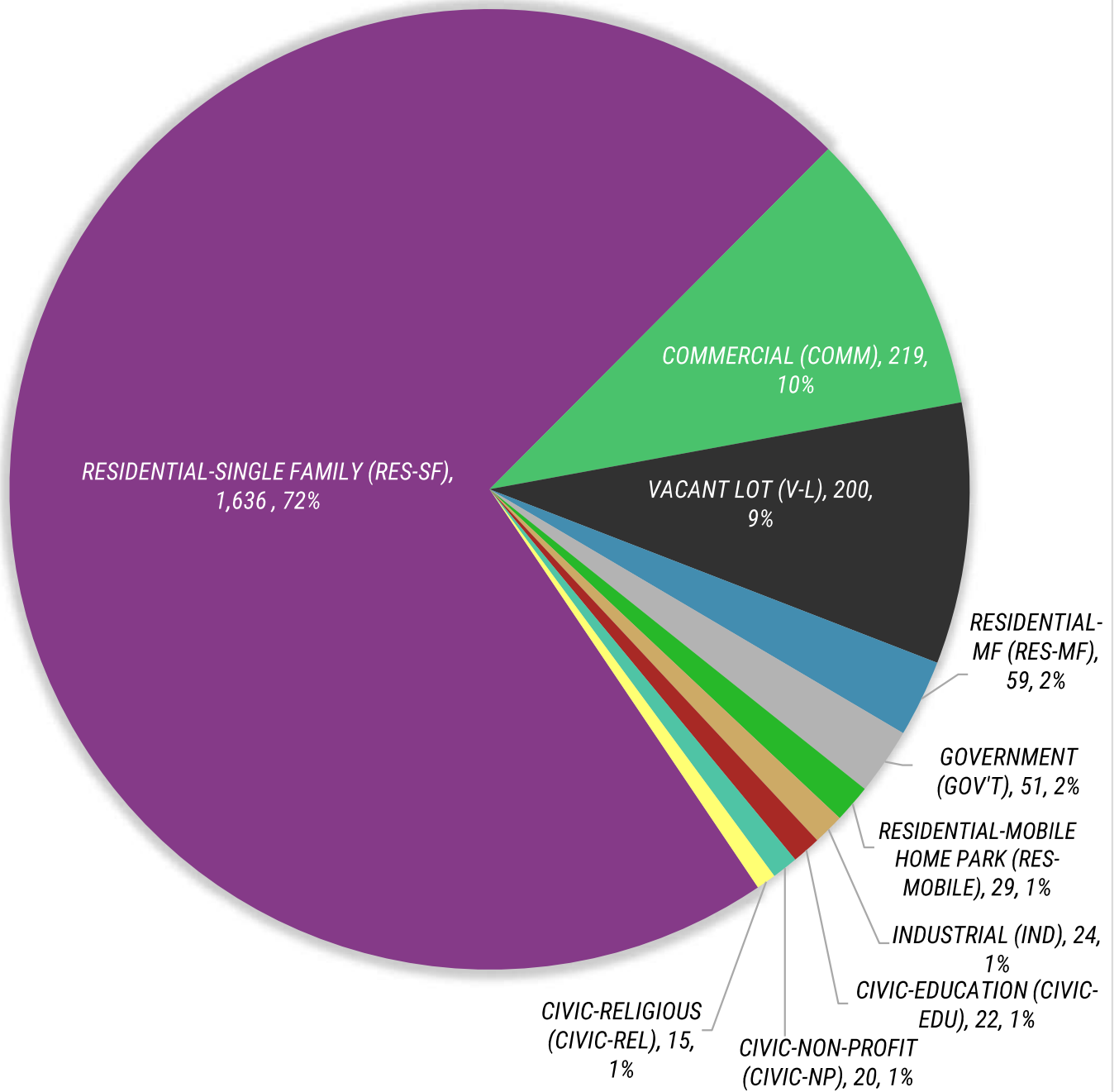
When breaking down land uses by number of acres, the proportions of uses are more spread out. Next to residential single family, government is the next highest user of land followed by vacant lots and commercial.

**TABLE 3.1 AURORA CITY EXISTING LAND USE BREAKDOWN**

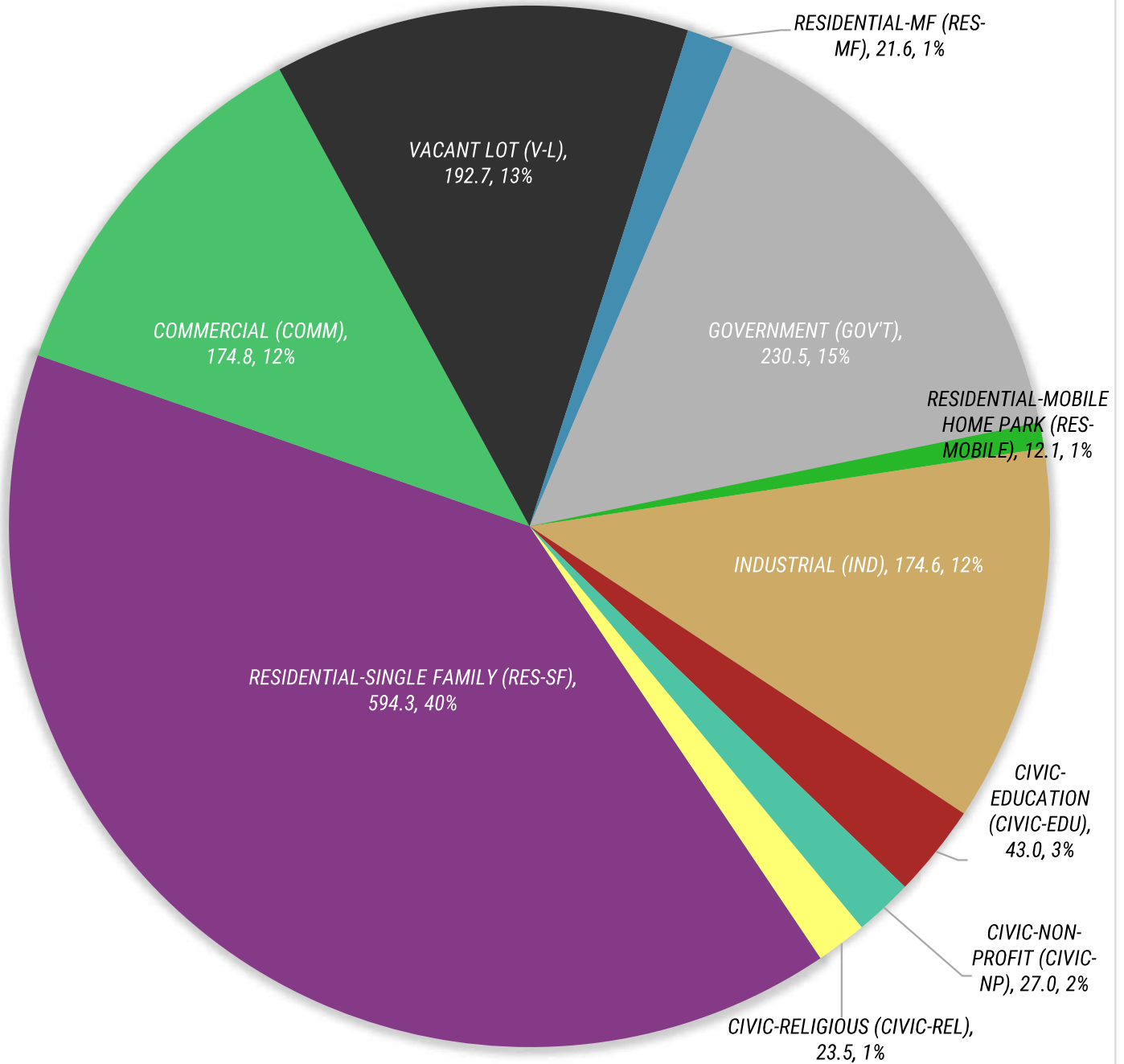
USE	# OF PARCELS	% OF TOTAL	ACRES	% OF TOTAL
RESIDENTIAL-SINGLE FAMILY (RES-SF)	1,636	72%	594.3	40%
COMMERCIAL (COMM)	219	10%	174.8	12%
VACANT LOT (V-L)	200	9%	192.7	13%
RESIDENTIAL-MF (RES-MF)	59	3%	21.6	1%
GOVERNMENT (GOV'T)	51	2%	230.5	15%
RESIDENTIAL-MOBILE HOME PARK (RES-MOBILE)	29	1%	12.1	1%
INDUSTRIAL (IND)	24	1%	174.6	12%
CIVIC-EDUCATION (CIVIC-EDU)	22	1%	43.0	3%
CIVIC-NON-PROFIT (CIVIC-NP)	20	1%	27.0	2%
CIVIC-RELIGIOUS (CIVIC-REL)	15	1%	23.5	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,275</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,494.2</b>	<b>100%</b>

SOURCE: FIVE RULE LAND USE INVENTORY, OCTOBER 2019

**CHART 3.1 AURORA CITY EXISTING LAND USE BREAKDOWN BY PARCELS  
(FIVE RULE LAND USE INVENTORY, OCTOBER 2019)**



**CHART 3.2 AURORA CITY EXISTING LAND USE BREAKDOWN BY ACRES  
(FIVE RULE LAND USE INVENTORY, OCTOBER 2019)**





**EXISTING LAND USE, AURORA ZONING JURISDICTION-BREAKDOWN**

A breakdown of the land uses outside of the City of Aurora, but within the Extraterritorial Zoning Jurisdiction (ETJ) is provided below. The uses are more varied as agriculture is the largest user of land within the ETJ. It is also interesting to note that vacant lots are the second largest user, yet appear to be planned and platted for more residential uses.

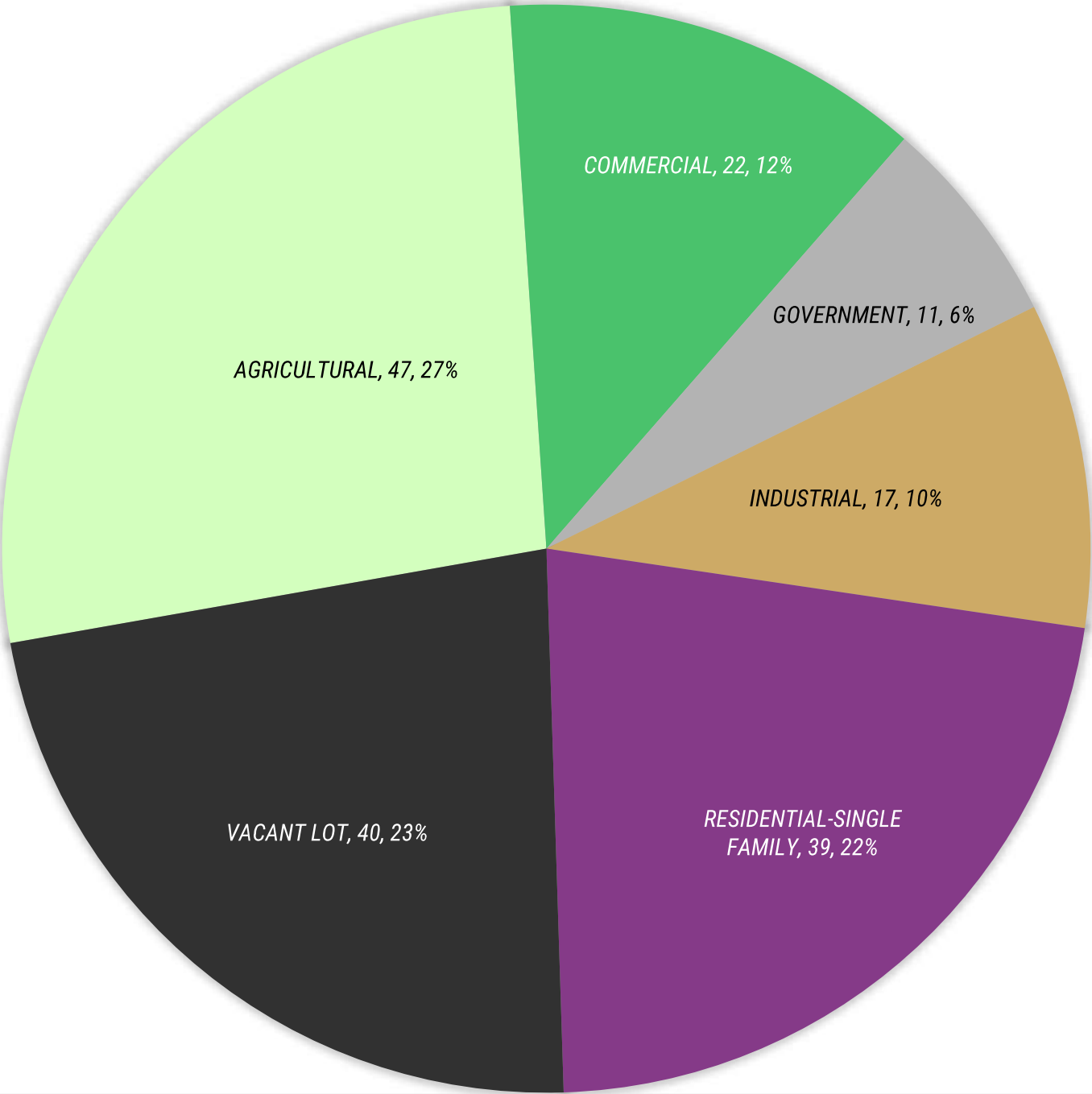
Single family residential is the third largest user as another 39 families appear to be living within the city's ETJ zoning jurisdiction. With the exception of the majority of undeveloped land being farmed, single family residential is the dominating user of land within the city and the ETJ.

**TABLE 3.2 AURORA ZONING JURISDICTION EXISTING LAND USE BREAKDOWN**

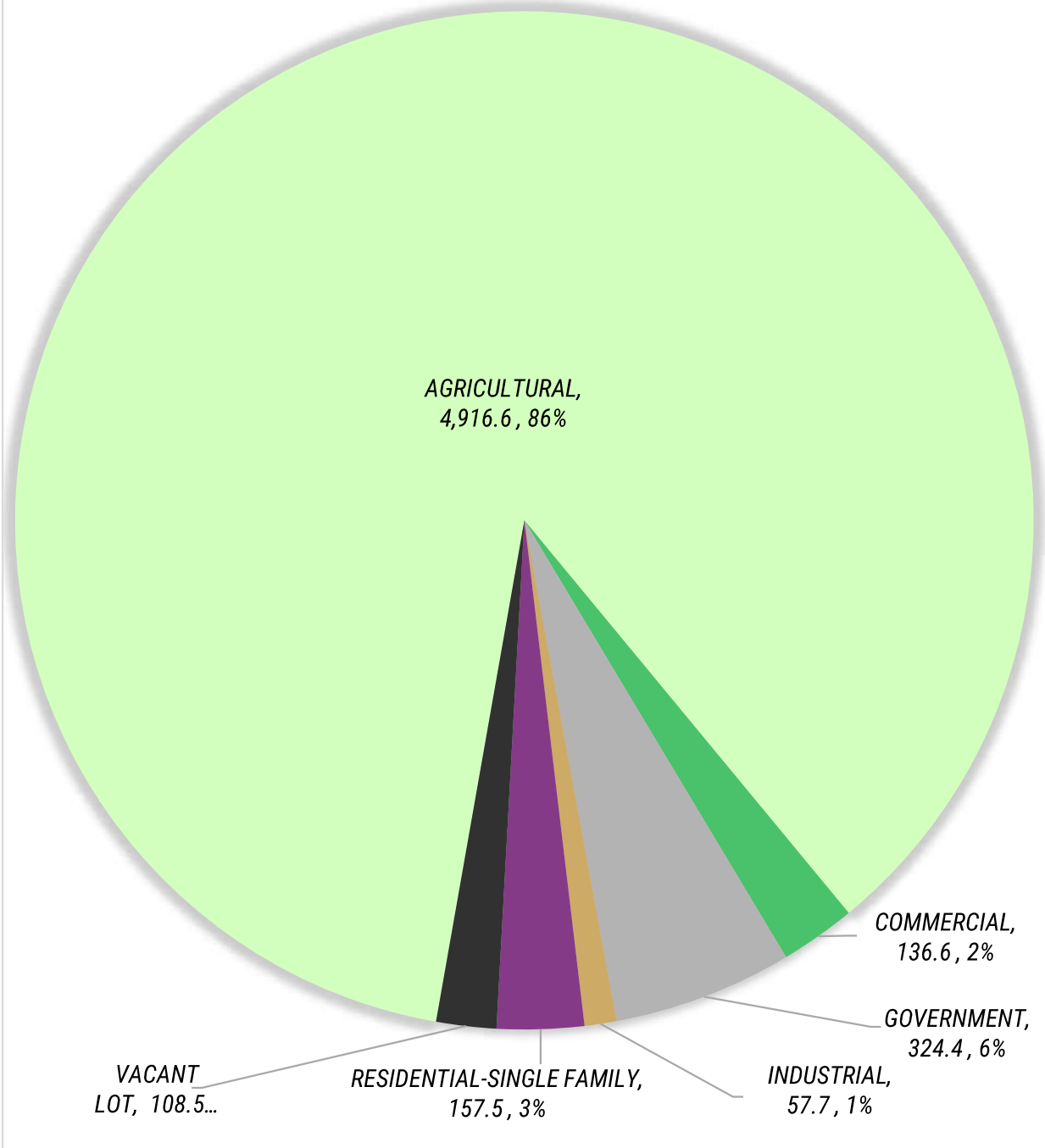
	# OF PARCELS	% OF TOTAL	# OF ACRES	% OF TOTAL
AGRICULTURAL	47	27%	4,916.6	86%
VACANT LOT	40	23%	108.5	2%
RESIDENTIAL-SINGLE FAMILY	39	22%	157.5	3%
COMMERCIAL	22	13%	136.6	2%
INDUSTRIAL	17	10%	57.7	1%
GOVERNMENT	11	6%	324.4	6%
TOTAL	176	100%	5,701.3	100%

SOURCE: FIVE RULE LAND USE INVENTORY, OCTOBER 2019

**CHART 3.3 AURORA CITY EXISTING LAND USE BREAKDOWN BY PARCELS  
(FIVE RULE LAND USE INVENTORY, OCTOBER 2019)**



**CHART 3.4 AURORA CITY EXISTING LAND USE BREAKDOWN BY ACRES  
(FIVE RULE LAND USE INVENTORY, OCTOBER 2019)**

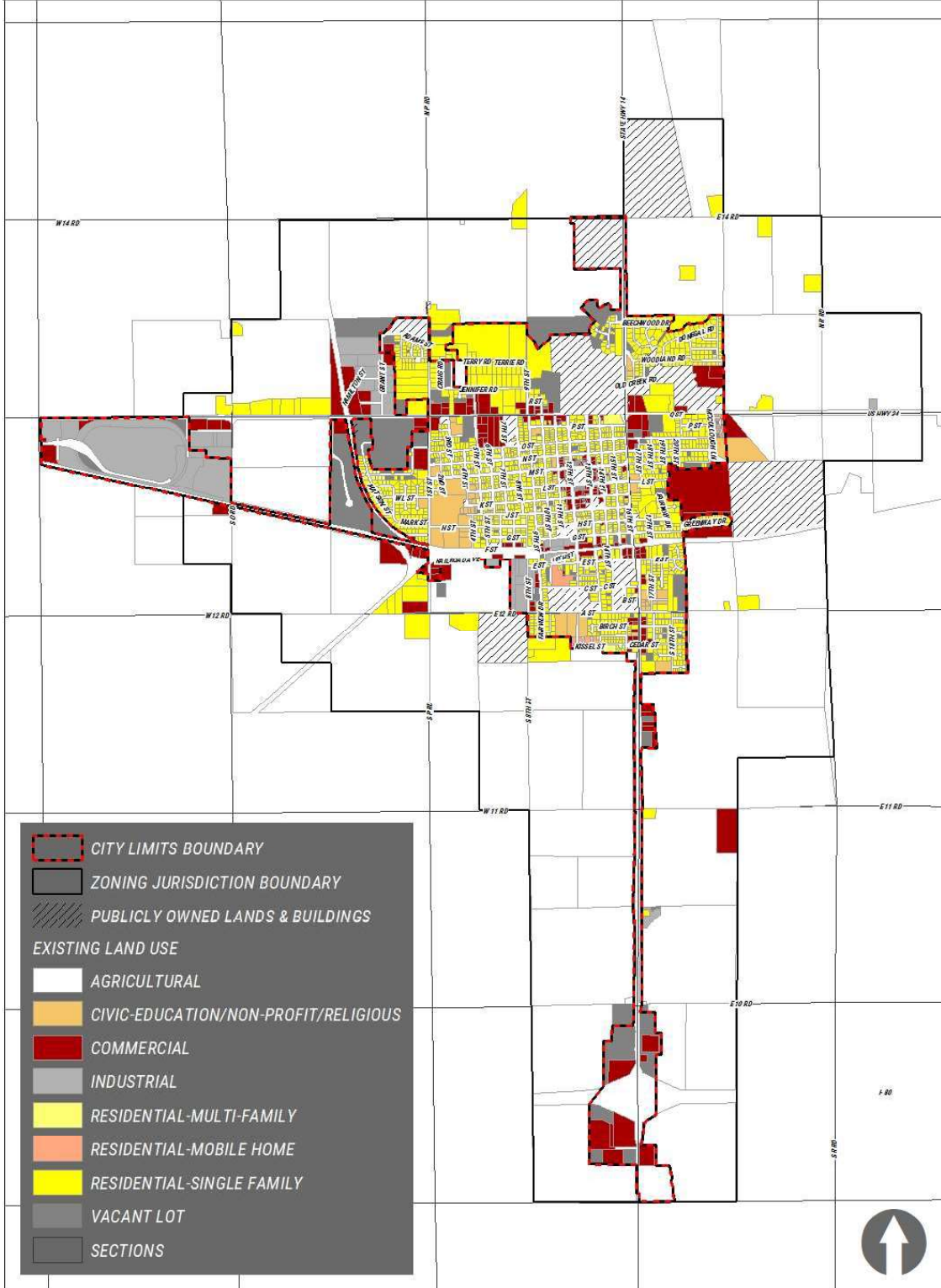


### **EXISTING LAND USE-MAP**

Map 3.1 on the following page displays the pattern of uses within the City of Aurora and the one-mile zoning jurisdiction. Map 3.2 displays the condition and status of structures within the City of Aurora; this map is a snapshot in time, documenting the current condition and status of structures and properties on the day that the inventory was completed in October, 2019.

A city is comparable to a living creature, always changing; the status and condition of some structures may have changed since the day of the inventory. However, the inventory still serves as a guide as to the general condition and occupancy status of the structures within the city.

# MAP 3.1 AURORA ZONING JURISDICTION EXISTING LAND USE MAP





**CONDITION AND STATUS OF ALL STRUCTURES**

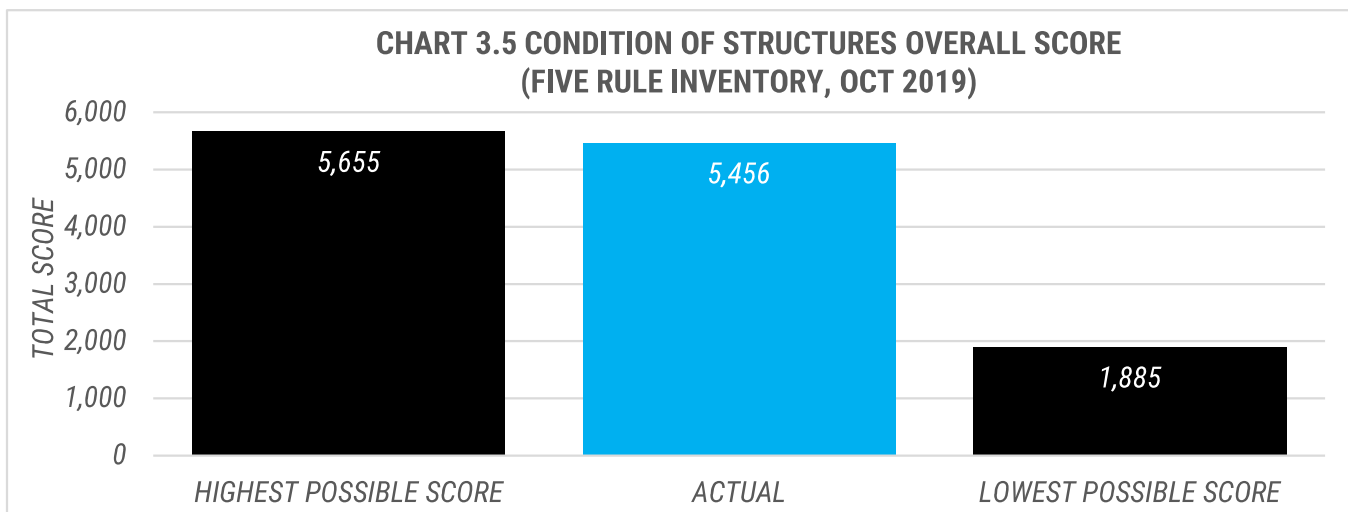
In addition to collecting existing land uses, the condition and occupancy status of structures was also collected when the existing land use inventory was completed in October, 2019.

Concerning the condition of structures, a total of 1,885 structures was counted. Of those structures, only 10% were rated below fair or excellent.

<b>TABLE 3.3 AURORA CITY, CONDITION OF STRUCTURES</b>		
<i>CONDITION</i>	<i># OF STRUCTURES</i>	<i>% OF TOTAL</i>
<i>FAIR TO EXCELLENT</i>	<i>1,700</i>	<i>90%</i>
<i>MAJOR WEAR</i>	<i>171</i>	<i>9%</i>
<i>DILAPIDATED</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>1%</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>1,885</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>SOURCE: FIVE RULE LAND USE INVENTORY, OCTOBER 2019</i>		

When the condition was rated, each structure was given a score based upon its rating; fair to excellent-3, major wear-2; and dilapidated-1. The numbers assigned to each condition assist with determining an overall score for the building stock condition in Aurora. If each structure had received a rating of 3, the highest overall score Aurora's overall building stock could have received was 5,655; if each structure had received a rating of 1, the lowest possible score Aurora's overall building stock could have received was 1,885.

Aurora's building stock received a rather high score, only 200 points away from the highest possible score.



Concerning vacancy, the land use inventory completed in October 2019 counted a total of 81 vacant structures throughout Aurora. Of those 81 structures, 9 appeared to be abandoned (not maintained nor used regularly) and 14 were listed for sale. The remaining 58 structures labeled as vacant appeared to be maintained (no broken windows, mowed grass), yet they did not appear to be regularly used, suggesting these structures may be under-utilized.

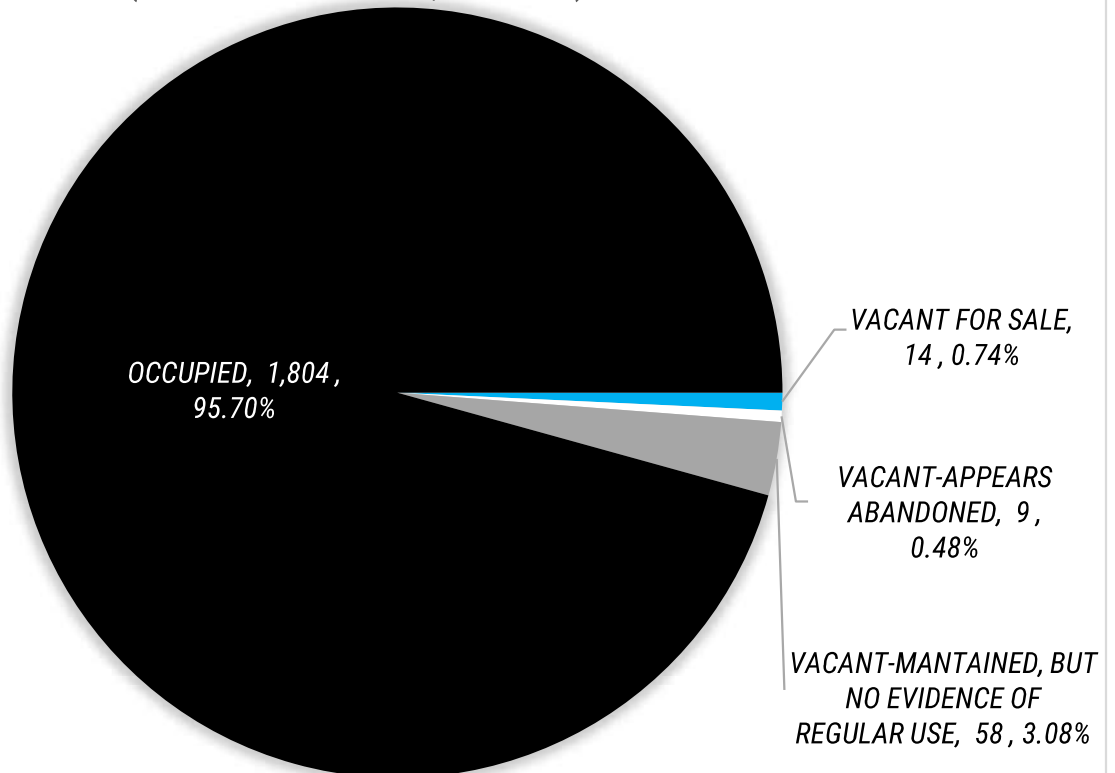
**TABLE 3.4 AURORA CITY, OCCUPANCY STATUS OF ALL STRUCTURES**

STATUS	# OF STRUCTURES	% OF TOTAL
VACANT FOR SALE	14	0.78%
VACANT-APPEARS ABANDONED	9	0.50%
VACANT-MANTAINED, BUT NO EVIDENCE OF REGULAR USE	58	3.22%
OCCUPIED	1,804	100%

SOURCE: FIVE RULE LAND USE INVENTORY, OCTOBER 2019

A general rule of community planning is that a vacancy rate of 7% is an acceptable vacancy rate. At the time of the inventory, the City had a vacancy rate of 4.3%, which is extremely low. Less than 1% of the structures counted were listed as for sale; this low percentage of homes for sale suggest that building stock for sale is in high demand. Assuming the majority of structures for sale are residential, this would relate to the price of homes far exceeding household incomes in Aurora. This lack of homes for sale thereby supports the previous chapter’s key takeaways that stated that the demand for housing is not currently being met.

**CHART 3.6 CITY OF AURORA, VACANCY STATUS OF ALL STRUCTURES (FIVE RULE INVENTORY, OCT 2019)**



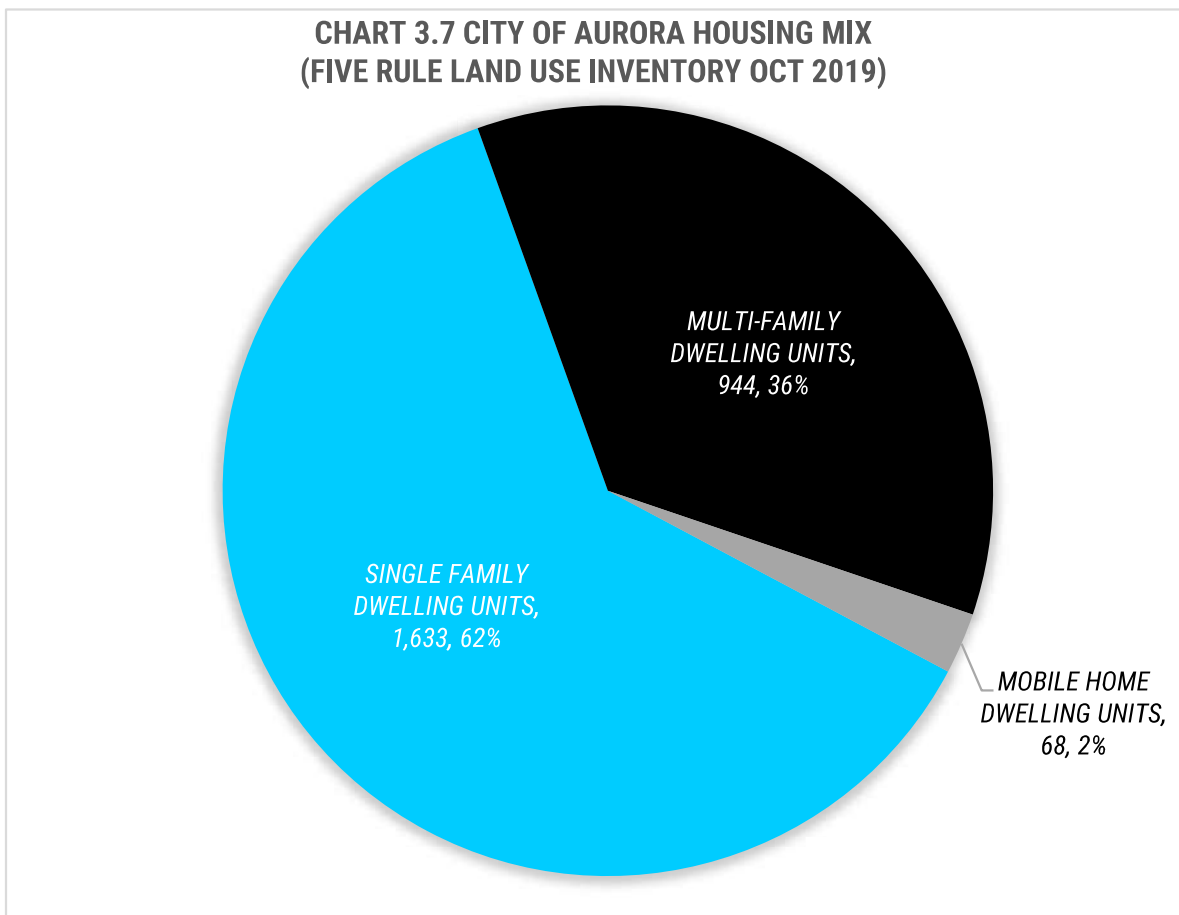


### CONDITION AND STATUS OF RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES

Residential is the largest user of land in Aurora and also appears to be the land use that is in highest demand. Therefore, the status and condition of existing residential-only structures is provided below.

The housing stock in Aurora is primarily made up of single-family residential homes. Typically, the housing tenure mix in a community consists of 75% single family and 25% multi-family units. The percentage of multi-family units in Aurora is slightly higher as 36% of the housing units counted in Aurora were classified as multi-family units.

The condition of each type of housing is summarized on the following pages.



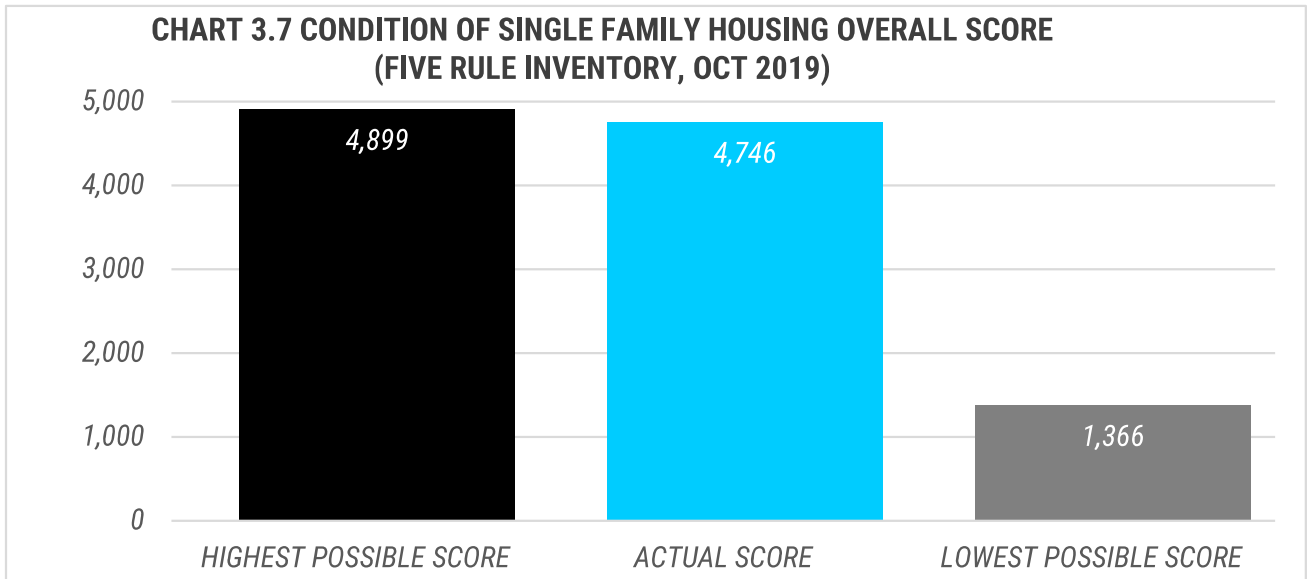
**Single Family (SF) Residential-Condition**

A total of 1,633 SF residential structures were counted when completing the inventory. Out of that total count of structures, only 3 were rated as dilapidated.

The scoring system for rating the condition of structures in Aurora would have produced a total score of 4,899 if every house in Aurora had been rated as Fair to Excellent.

The actual score earned by single family homes in Aurora was 4,746; the overall condition of single-family homes in Aurora is very good.

<b>TABLE 3.5 OVERALL CONDITION: SINGLE FAMILY HOMES</b>	
<b>SCORING SYSTEM</b>	
FAIR TO EXCELLENT	3
MAJOR WEAR	2
DILAPIDATED	1
<b>TOTAL SF DWELLINGS</b>	
	1,633
<b>HIGHEST POSSIBLE SCORE</b>	
	4,899
<b>ACTUAL SCORE</b>	
FAIR TO EXCELLENT (1,483 x 3)	4,449
MAJOR WEAR (147 x 2)	294
DILAPIDATED (3 x 1)	3
<b>TOTAL ACTUAL SCORE</b>	<b>4,746</b>
<b>SF HOUSING CONDITION GRADE</b>	<b>97%</b>
SOURCE: FIVE RULE LAND USE INVENTORY, OCTOBER 2019	



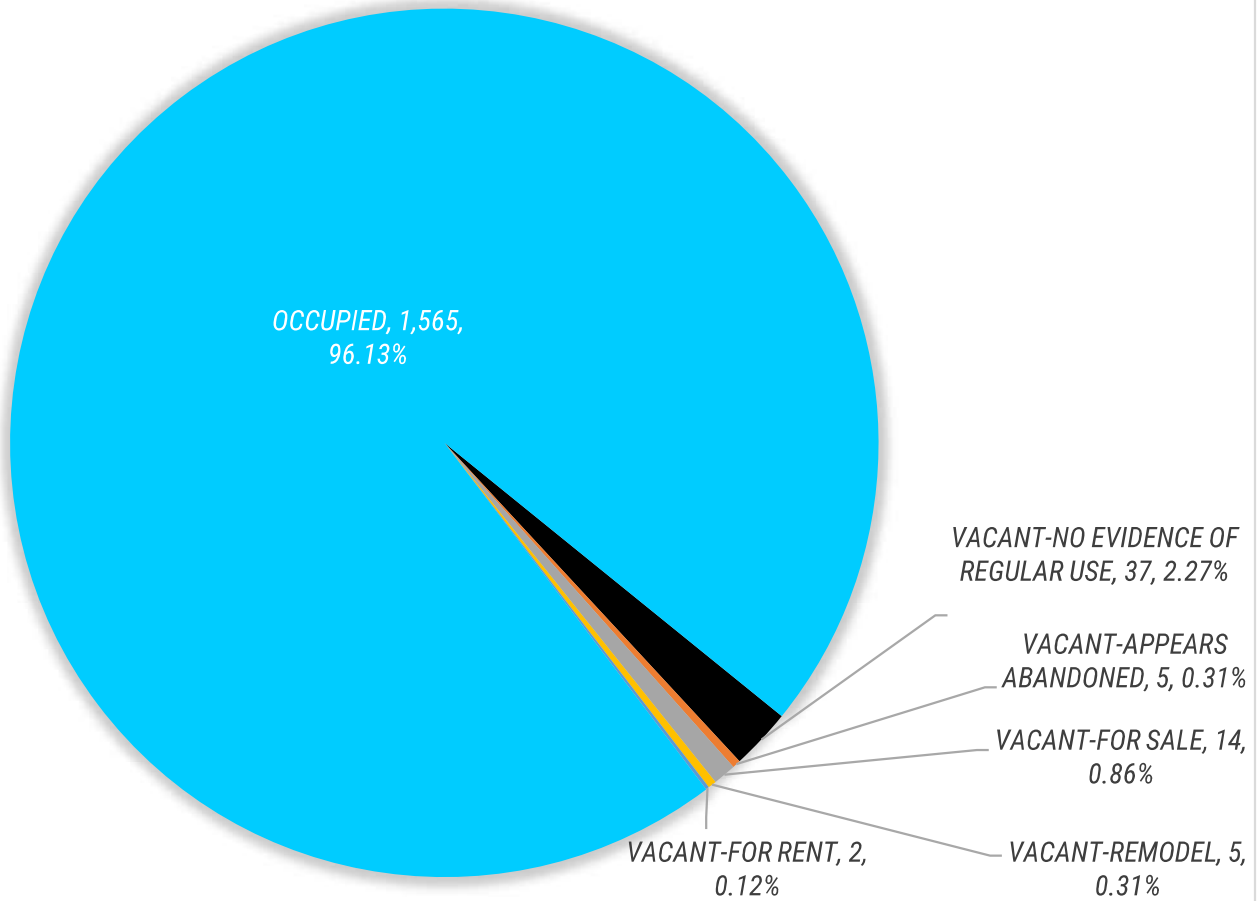
### Single Family (SF) Residential-Occupancy Status

The land use inventory counted a total of 68 vacant units, with 5 appearing abandoned and 37 appearing as though they are not being utilized daily as a home. Twenty-one units were vacant at the time of the inventory yet appeared as though the owners intend to reoccupy the units in the near future (for sale, for rent, being remodeled).

The true vacancy rate for single family homes appears to be closer to 4%; when only considering units available at the time of the inventory or shortly after the inventory's completion (for sale, for rent, being remodeled), the vacancy rate of single-family residential homes is approximately 1%.

VACANT-NO EVIDENCE OF REGULAR USE	37
VACANT-APPEARS ABANDONED	5
VACANT-FOR SALE	14
VACANT-REMODEL	5
VACANT-FOR RENT	2
OCCUPIED	1,565
<b>TOTAL SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING UNITS</b>	<b>1,628</b>
<hr/>	
TOTAL OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS	1,565
TOTAL VACANT UNITS	63
<b>VACANCY RATE</b>	<b>4.03%</b>
SOURCE: FIVE RULE LAND USE INVENTORY, OCTOBER 2019	

**CHART 3.8 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, OCCUPANCY STATUS  
(FIVE RULE INVENTORY OCT 2019)**



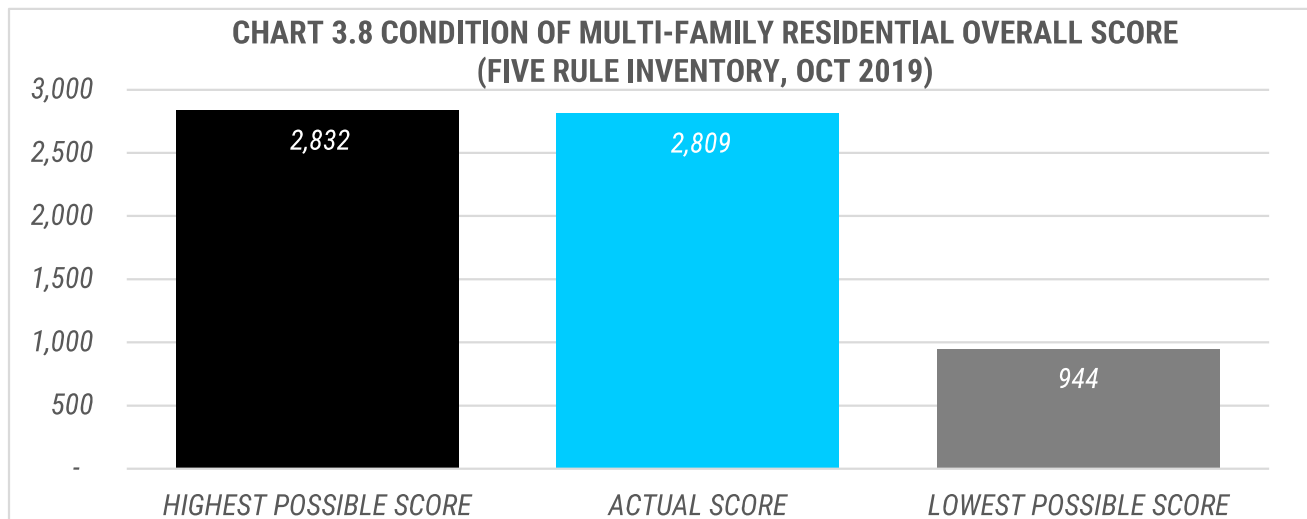
### Multi-Family (MF) Residential-Condition

A total of 944 SF residential units were counted when completing the inventory. Out of that total count of structures, 921 were rated as excellent and the remainder were rated as having major wear.

The scoring system for rating the condition of structures in Aurora would have produced a total score of 2,832 if every MF unit in Aurora had been rated as Fair to Excellent.

The actual score earned by all MF units in Aurora was 2,809; the overall condition of multi-family units in Aurora is also very good.

TABLE 3.7 OVERALL CONDITION: MULTI-FAMILY HOMES	
<b>SCORING SYSTEM</b>	
FAIR TO EXCELLENT	3
MAJOR WEAR	2
DILAPIDATED	1
<b>TOTAL MF DWELLINGS</b>	
	944
<b>HIGHEST POSSIBLE SCORE</b>	
	2,832
<b>ACTUAL SCORE</b>	
FAIR TO EXCELLENT (921 x 3)	2,763
MAJOR WEAR (23 x 2)	46
DILAPIDATED (3 x 1)	0
<b>TOTAL ACTUAL SCORE</b>	<b>2,809</b>
<b>MF HOUSING CONDITION GRADE</b>	<b>99%</b>
SOURCE: FIVE RULE LAND USE INVENTORY, OCTOBER 2019	



**Multi-Family (MF) Residential-Occupancy Status**

The land use inventory counted a total of 944 units available within 56 separate structures. Similar to the rating method of the SF residential structures, the inventory attempted to break down the vacancy status. At the time of the inventory, only one structure was classified as vacant with no evidence of daily use. According to the land use inventory, every structure but one is currently occupied, thereby creating a MF Residential vacancy rate of 1.8%.

**Mobile Home (MH) Residential-Condition**

A total of 68 MH residential lots were counted when completing the inventory; 61 of those lots were occupied by mobile homes.

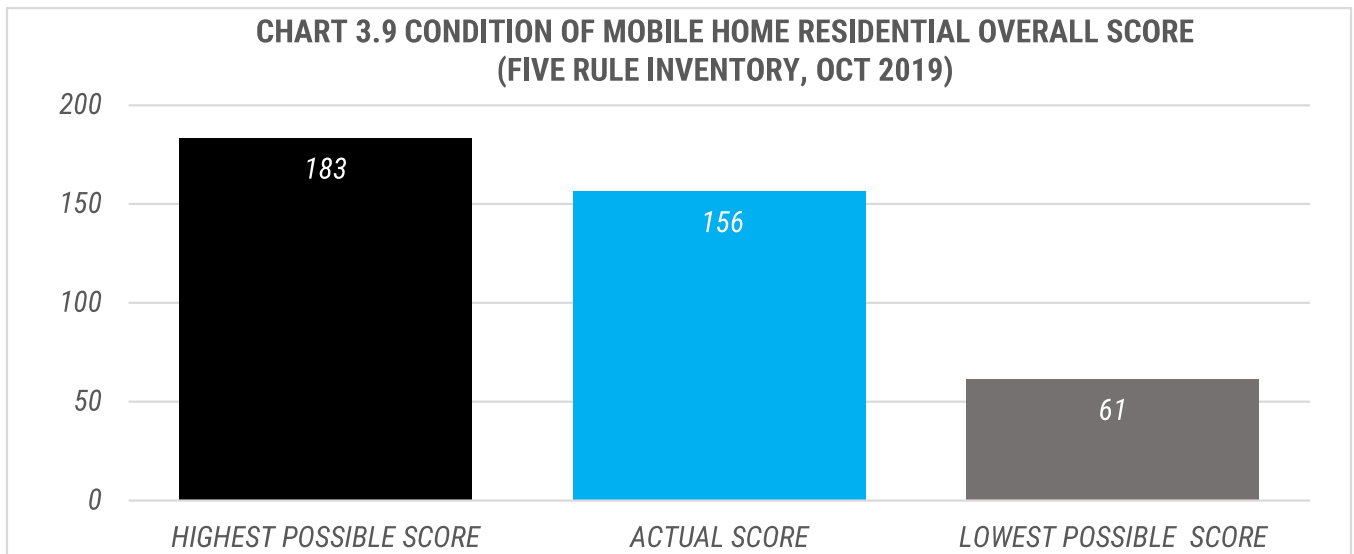
The scoring system for rating the condition of those MH residential units in Aurora would have produced a total score of 81 if every unit in Aurora had been rated as Fair to Excellent.

The actual score earned by all MH units in Aurora was 156; while some mobile homes in Aurora are still well maintained, this type of housing is by far the poorest quality of housing stock currently in Aurora.

**TABLE 3.8**  
**OVERALL CONDITION: MOBILE HOME RESIDENTIAL UNITS**

<b>SCORING SYSTEM</b>	
FAIR TO EXCELLENT	3
MAJOR WEAR	2
DILAPIDATED	1
<b>TOTAL MH DWELLINGS</b>	
HIGHEST POSSIBLE SCORE	183
<b>ACTUAL SCORE</b>	
FAIR TO EXCELLENT (22 x 3)	66
MAJOR WEAR (12 x 2)	54
DILAPIDATED (3 x 11)	36
TOTAL ACTUAL SCORE	156
<b>MH HOUSING CONDITION GRADE</b>	<b>85.25%</b>

SOURCE: FIVE RULE LAND USE INVENTORY, OCTOBER 2019



### **Mobile Home (MH) Residential-Occupancy Status**

The land use inventory counted a total of 61 MH units. Similar to the rating method of the SF and MF residential structures, the inventory attempted to break down the vacancy status. At the time of the inventory, 2 structures were classified as vacant with no evidence of daily use and 1 structure appeared abandoned, thereby creating a MH Residential vacancy rate of 4.9%.

## **FUTURE LAND USE MAP**

Map 3.3 represents the vision of the Aurora community by illustrating attributes of the existing land use maps that the city would like to change in the next ten years. The city's vision for annexation as well as redevelopment of already incorporated areas is communicated through the Future Land Use Map.

The Future Land Use (FLU) Map was presented to the Aurora community during the open house in January of 2020. Comments from the community were incorporated into the proposed future land use map. Following the Open House, the Planning Commission was presented with the revised FLU map and voted to approve the map.

### **Future Land Use Map Policy Statements**

The Future Land Use map represents the following goals of the Planning Commission:

- In order to sustain current growth rates and support potential future growth rates, the growing need for more homes must be met. The City's current housing stock is mostly occupied and well maintained. Therefore, if the City is going to increase housing options it will have to look mostly to new development.
  - ~ The need for more varied options based upon incomes and ability to rent/own is also recognized as the City will need to find ways to produce new units that are priced so that working families are able to afford the monthly costs of housing in Aurora.
- The City envisions residential uses expanding outside of the current corporate boundary and has land reserved for future residential as a result. The City does envision these residential developments as being neighborhoods, incorporated into the Aurora City boundary and served by the City's infrastructure (streets, water, sanitary sewer).
- Since the 1990s, Aurora has outpaced the growth rates of several regional cities. In order to continue to grow yet maintain its current high quality of life, the City expects to see the preservation of some lands for open space and park space.
- The I-80 Corridor stretching from the interstate to Aurora proper is prime commercial land. Though it has not begun to reach its potential since being reserved by the 2010 comprehensive planning process, it should continue to be preserved in anticipation of high-quality development opportunities.
- The Aurora Community prides itself on being a business-friendly environment. As such, it will continue to reserve space for and support the development of industrial lands on the west side of town.

**ACCEPTABLE SUB-USES**

Acceptable sub-uses within each land use category are listed as follows.

**Agriculture**

City of Aurora (Utility/Trash Storage/Landfill/Recycling)

**Industrial**

City of Aurora Utilities (Utility/Trash Storage/Landfill/Recycling)

**Commercial**

Civic Uses (Religious/Educational)

City of Aurora (Office/Library/Community Center)

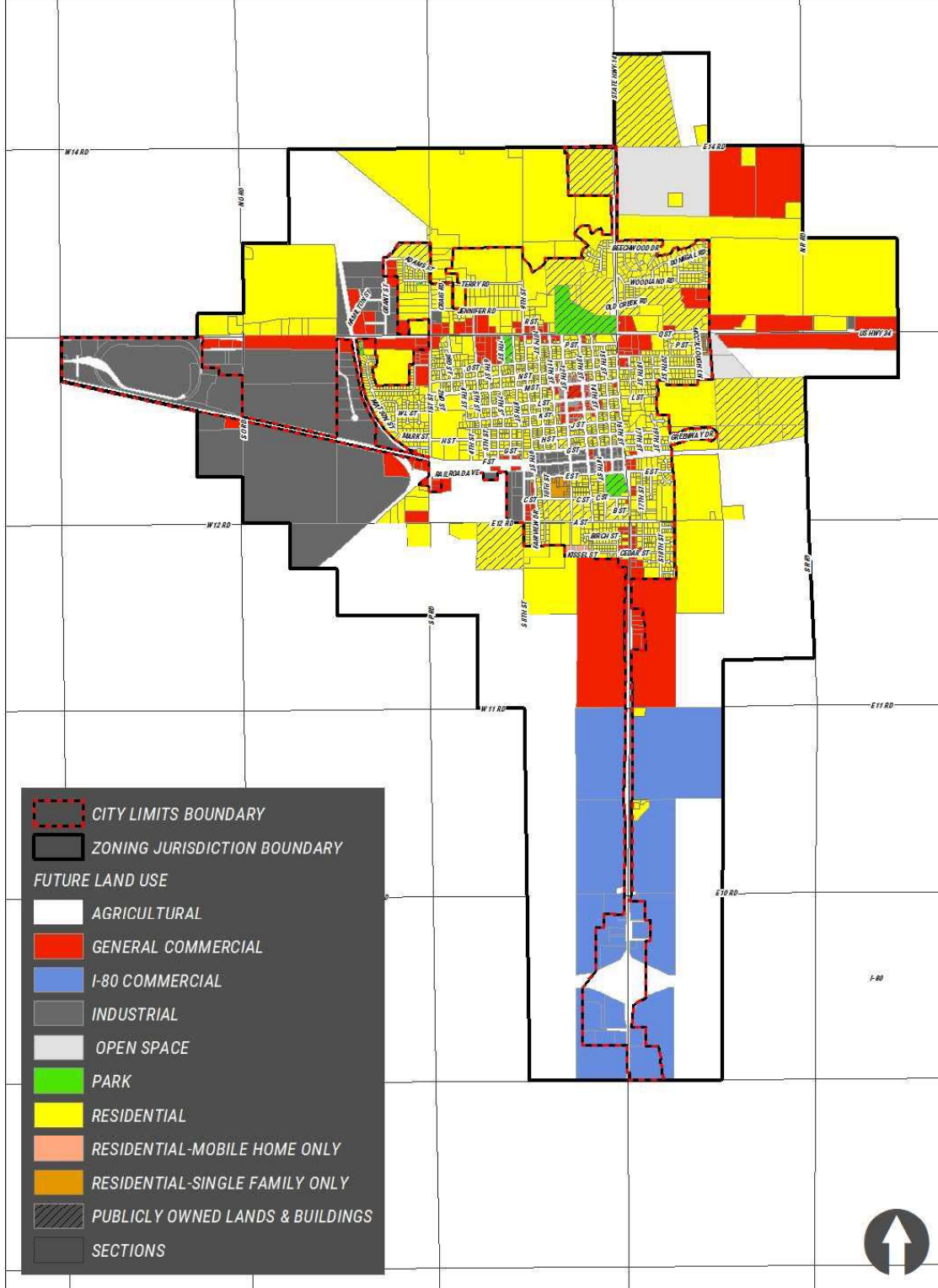
**Residential**

Civic Uses (Religious/Educational)

City of Aurora (Office/Library/Community Center/Park space)



# MAP 3.3 AURORA ZONING JURISDICTION FUTURE LAND USE MAP



## IV. TRANSPORTATION ROUTES AND FACILITIES

### NRS § 19-903

The general location, character, and extent of existing and proposed major roads, streets, and highways, and air and other transportation routes and facilities;

#### TRANSPORTATION ROUTES

The City of Aurora transportation routes consists of several surface transportation assets that are displayed on Map 4.1:

- Interstate highway system
- State highway system
- Burlington Northern rail system
- Collector streets
- Local streets
- Local sidewalk system
- City trail system

The major routes that impact Aurora are Interstate 80, U.S. Highway 34 (Q Street), and State Highway 14 (16<sup>th</sup> Street). Those major highways serve as arterial streets; streets that carry people into and out of the City. The city is also served by a small group of collector streets, which deliver residents and visitors to local streets. The remainder of streets in Aurora are classified as local streets that deliver residents and visitors directly to their homes or destinations. Map 4.2 displays the City's Major Street Plan, which provides guidance on required setbacks along certain routes within the City's zoning jurisdiction.

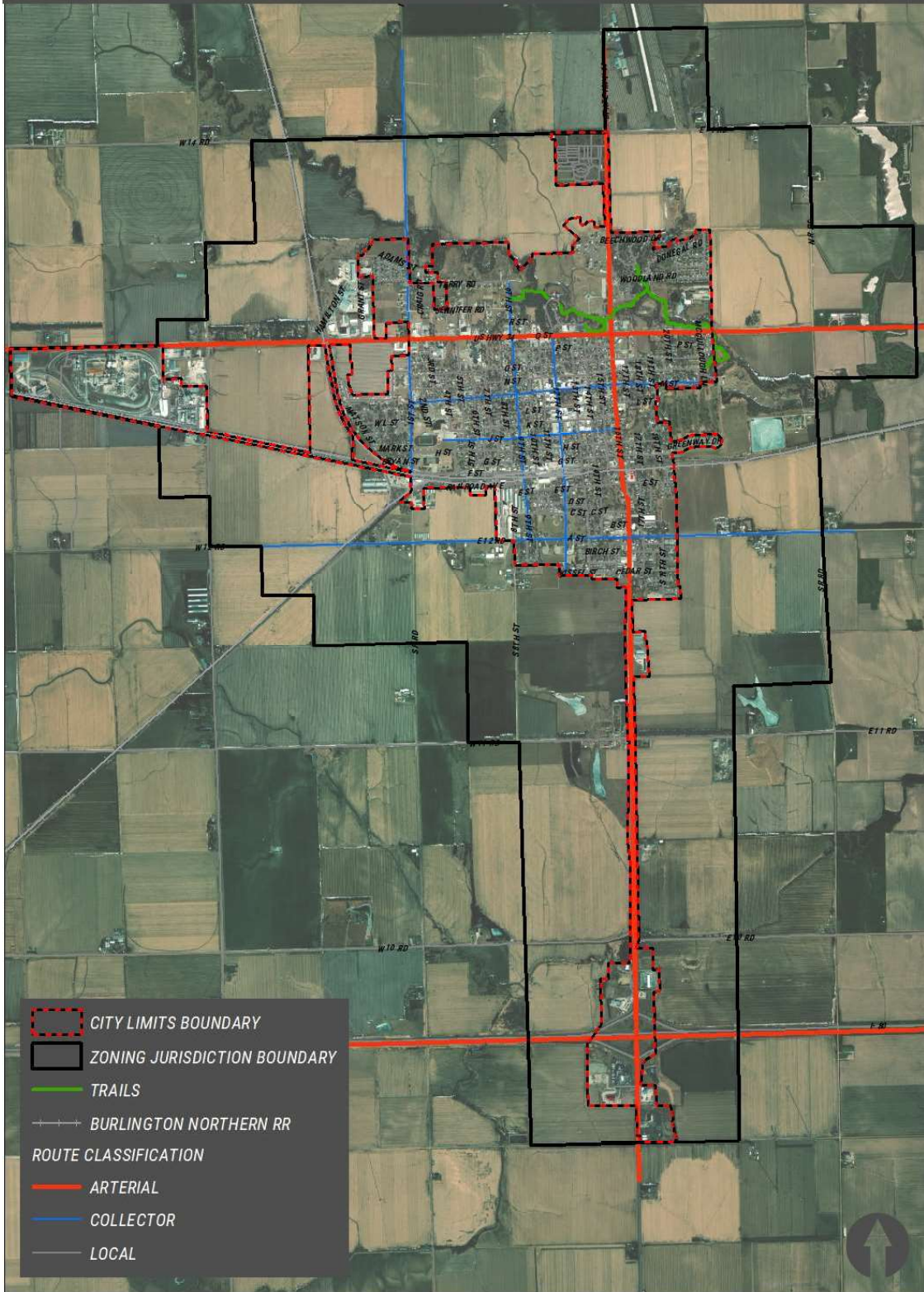
#### Major Economic Development Routes

Although not a part of the city's street system, the Burlington Northern rail system also serves the industrial and commercial uses in the City. The economic development potential of the City is significantly improved due to its location along numerous national transportation routes. Protecting these corridors by preserving open lands for important opportunities and also regulating the visual appearance of existing uses along these corridors is important to ensuring these economic development assets remain strong.

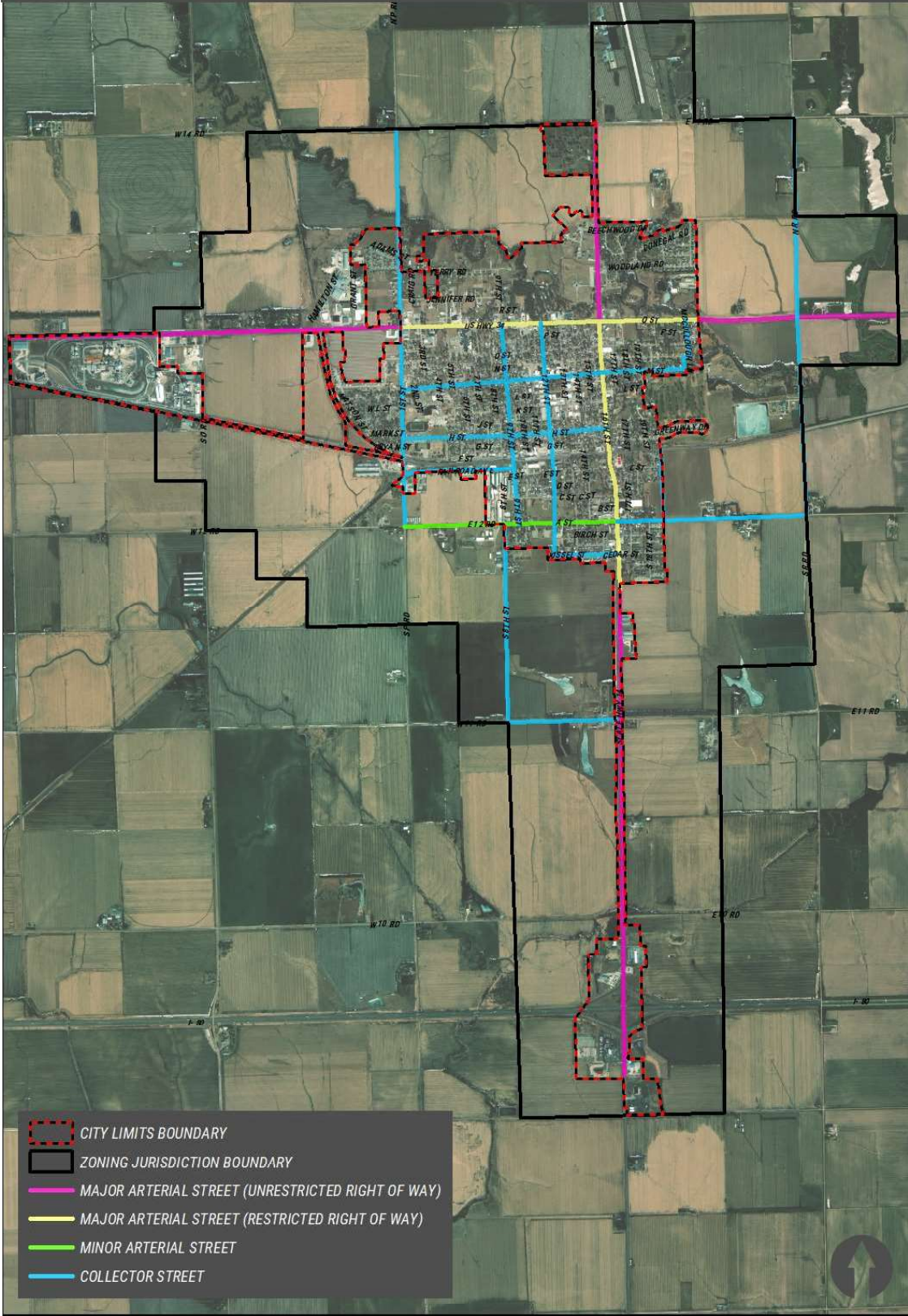
#### Collector Street System

Very few collector streets exist north of Highway 34. This is due to the manner in which the city's parks and housing have developed. This development pattern has created nice neighborhoods that are undoubtedly enjoyed by local residents. However, continuing to allow the street system to develop without a sufficient amount of through streets will impact the city's ability to continue to develop. Preservation of Right of Way (ROW) must be a consideration when reviewing future residential and commercial plats. This is especially true in northern Aurora where expanded residential development is envisioned by the Future Land Use Map.

# MAP 4.1 MAIN TRANSPORTATION ROUTES



# MAP 4.2 MAJOR STREET PLAN



- CITY LIMITS BOUNDARY
- ZONING JURISDICTION BOUNDARY
- MAJOR ARTERIAL STREET (UNRESTRICTED RIGHT OF WAY)
- MAJOR ARTERIAL STREET (RESTRICTED RIGHT OF WAY)
- MINOR ARTERIAL STREET
- COLLECTOR STREET

## STREET CONDITION

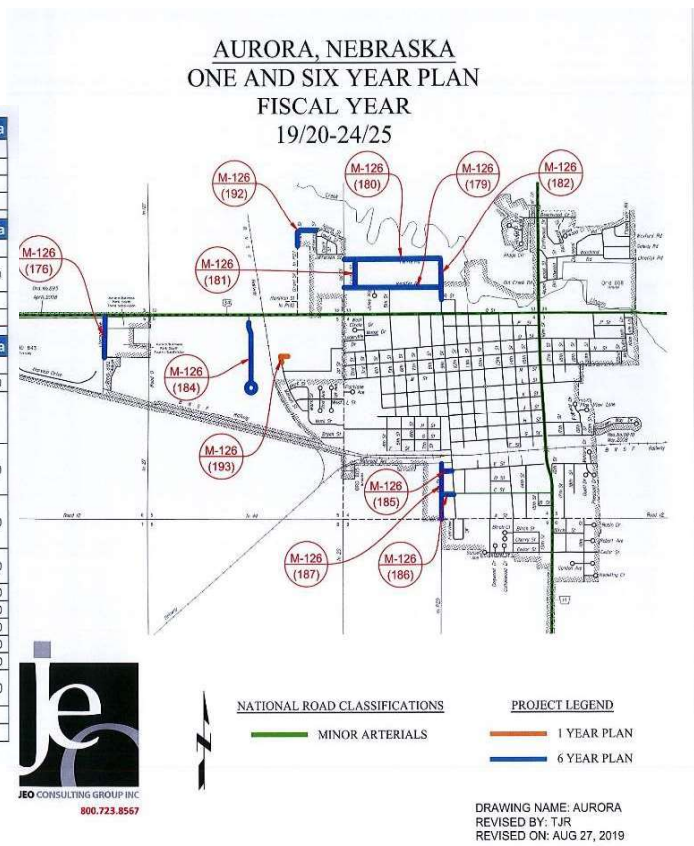
Map 4.3 on the following page displays the material and condition of Aurora’s streets. This information was recorded during the land use inventory, completed in October 2019. Aurora’s street system consists mainly of concrete, asphalt, and brick (other) streets.

The streets near the core of the City (Downtown Aurora) and along the railroad were in worse condition than those in greater Aurora.

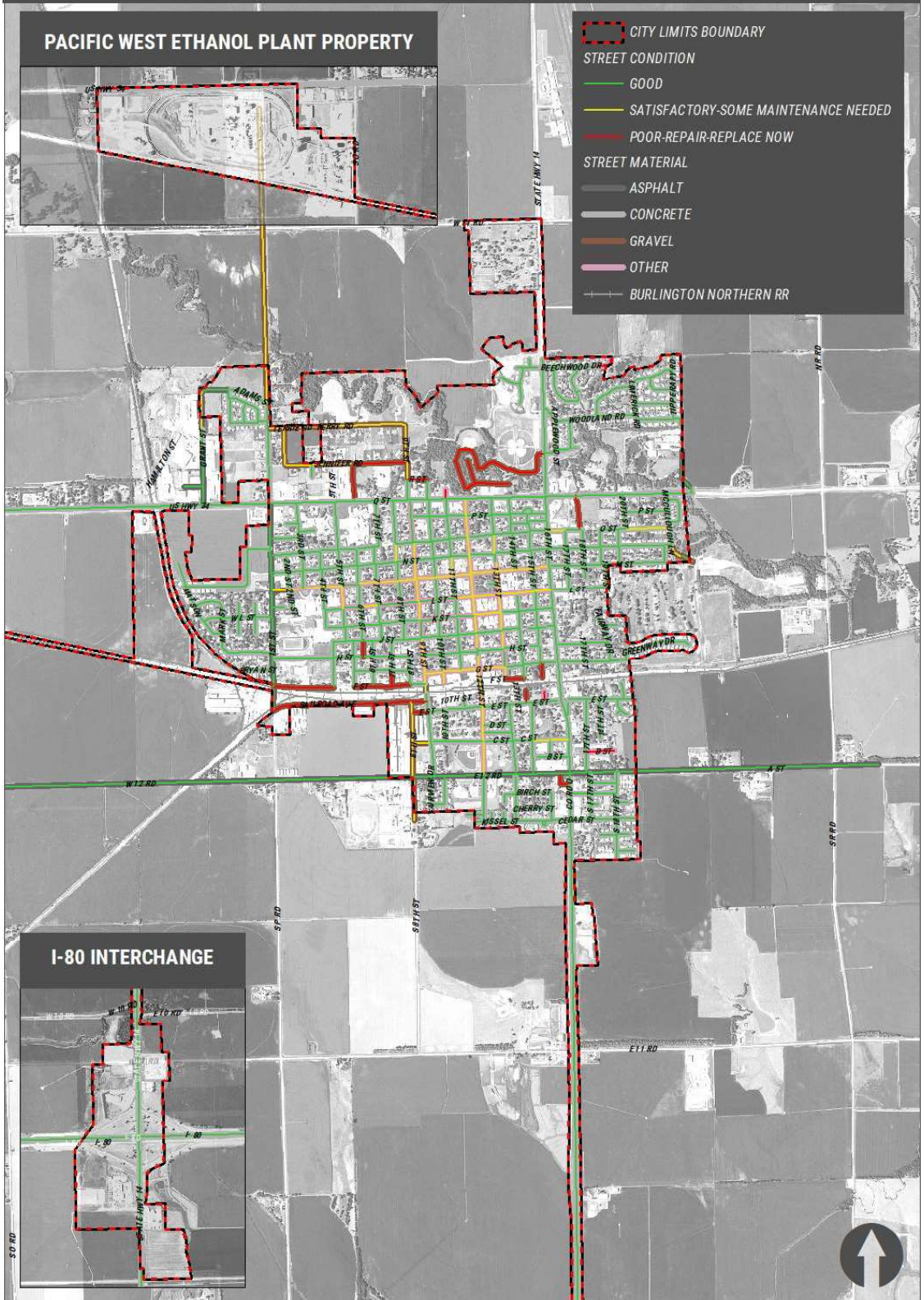
The one-and six-year street plan was formally a requirement by NDOT to ensure municipalities are adequately planning the funding and completion of street improvements and to encourage local governments to plan ahead. The City of Aurora is required to update their plan every year by Council Resolution. Street projects that the City is most interested in completing are on this plan.

The City’s current one-and six-year plan was prepared by JEO Consulting Group in the fall of 2019. Projects appearing on this plan are priorities for the City. Several of the street lengths that were rated as poor also appear on the one-and-six-year plan.

Completed Projects (FY 18/19)							City of Aurora	
Project #	Street Name	Start	End	Description of Work	Length (mi)	Final Cost		
				Normal Maintenance				
One Year Plan - Fiscal Year 2019/2020 Projects (October 1st to September 30th)							City of Aurora	
Project #	Street Name	Start	End	Description of Work	Length (mi)	Est. Cost		
M-126-(193)	Matson St.	Matson St. North	Matson St. East	Concrete, Grading	0.1	\$ 100,000		
Six Year Plan - Fiscal Year 2020/2021 to 2024/2025 Projects (October 1st to September 30th)							City of Aurora	
Project #	Street Name	Start	End	Description of Work	Length (mi)	Est. Cost		
M-126-(192)	Adams Street	Grant Street	Jefferson St	Asphalt, Milling	0.1	\$ 50,000		
	Grant Street	Adams Street	South to Corporate Limits					
M-126-(176)	Lincoln Ave	Highway 34	1,000' South of Highway 34	Concrete, Grading, Storm Sewer, Erosion Control	0.2	\$ 280,000		
M-126-(184)	Matson Industrial Ave	500' South of Highway 34	Cul de sac	Concrete, Grading, Storm Sewer, Erosion Control	0.3	\$ 400,000		
M-126-(181)	Craig Street	Jennifer Road	Terry Road	Concrete, Grading, Storm Sewer, Erosion Control	0.1	\$ 120,000		
M-126-(179)	Jennifer Road	1st Street	9th Street	Concrete, Grading, Storm Sewer, Erosion Control	0.5	\$ 750,000		
M-126-(180)	Terry Road	1st Street	9th Street	Concrete, Grading, Storm Sewer, Erosion Control	0.5	\$ 750,000		
M-126-(182)	9th Street	R Street	Terry Road	Concrete, Grading, Storm Sewer, Erosion Control	0.2	\$ 330,000		
M-126-(185)	E Street	8th Street	9th Street	Concrete, Grading, Storm Sewer, Erosion Control	0.1	\$ 100,000		
M-126-(186)	C Street	8th Street	9th Street	Concrete, Grading, Storm Sewer, Erosion Control	0.1	\$ 100,000		
M-126-(187)	8th Street	A Street	Railroad Ave	Concrete, Grading, Storm Sewer, Erosion Control	0.3	\$ 350,000		



# MAP 4.3 AURORA STREETS MATERIAL & CONDITION



### **SIDEWALK CONDITION**

Map 4.4 displays the overall condition and presence of sidewalks throughout the main portion of Aurora, where sidewalks are most likely to be needed and safely utilized.

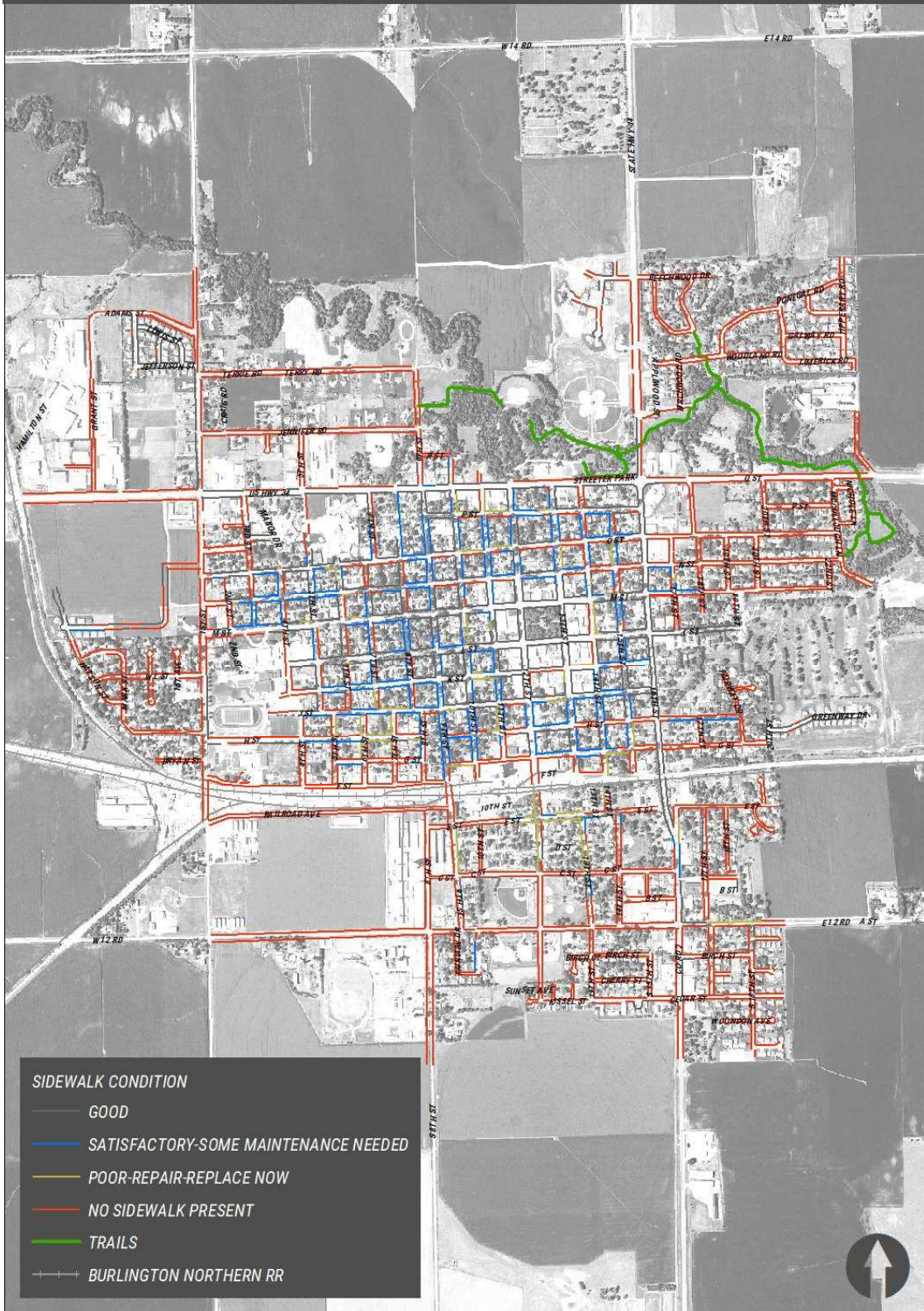
The center of the City as well as the oldest neighborhoods in Aurora have the most consistent and maintained sidewalk system. Newer neighborhoods have been mostly developed without any sidewalk system. It is likely that pedestrians and vehicles in Aurora are accustomed to sharing the road, which would be the city street.

### **TRAIL SYSTEM EXPANSION | SIDEWALK SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT**

Due to the lack of sidewalks in those neighborhoods north of Highway 34, the trail system is especially important to connecting residents to the city’s amenities such as Streeter Park, the aquatic center, and the soccer and ball fields.



# MAP 4.4 AURORA SIDEWALKS-PRESENCE & CONDITION





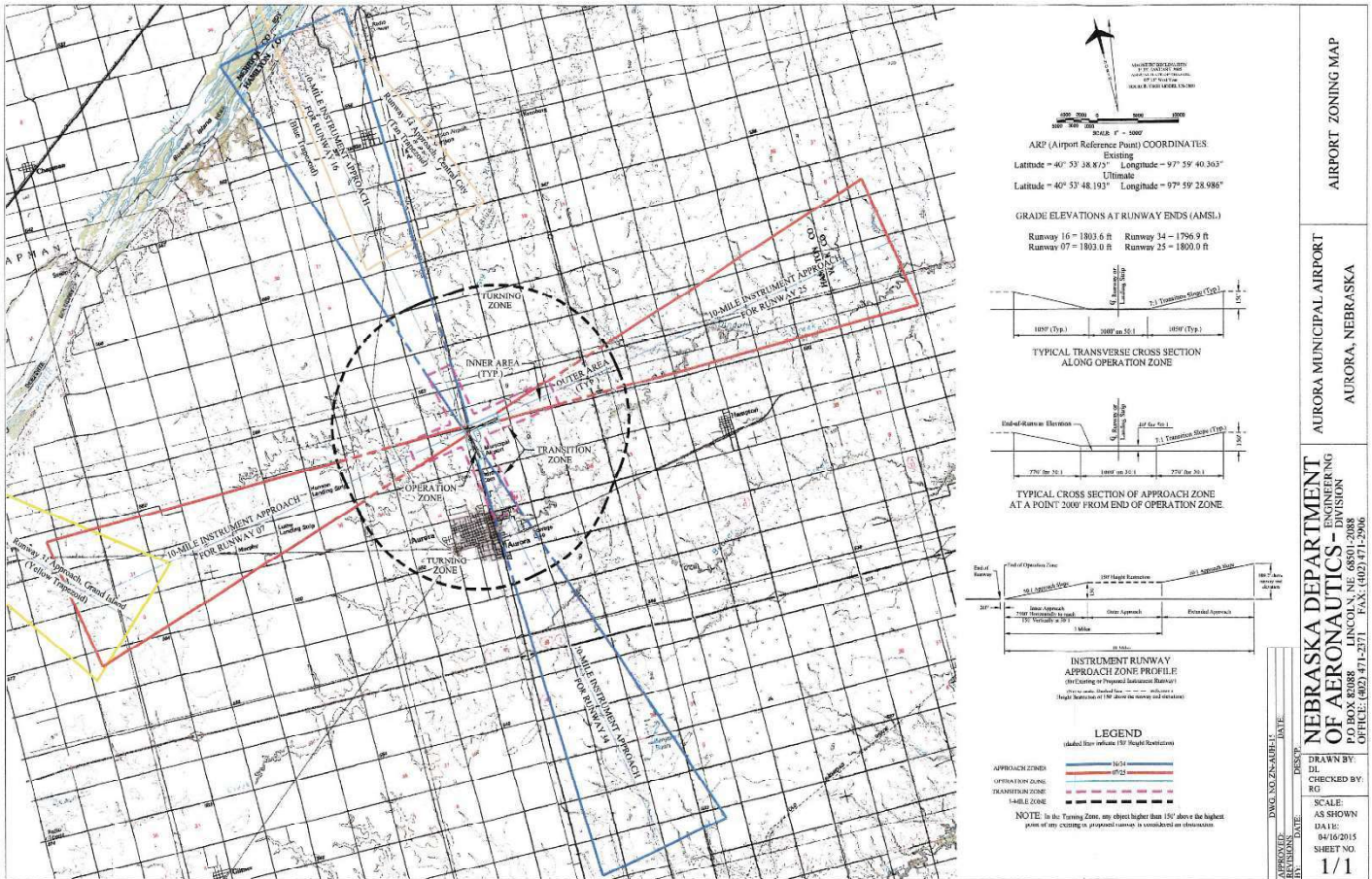
# Aurora Municipal Airport

Commercial air service is not available in Aurora. The nearest commercial air service is available in Grand Island, 20 miles to the west and Lincoln, 70 miles to the east.

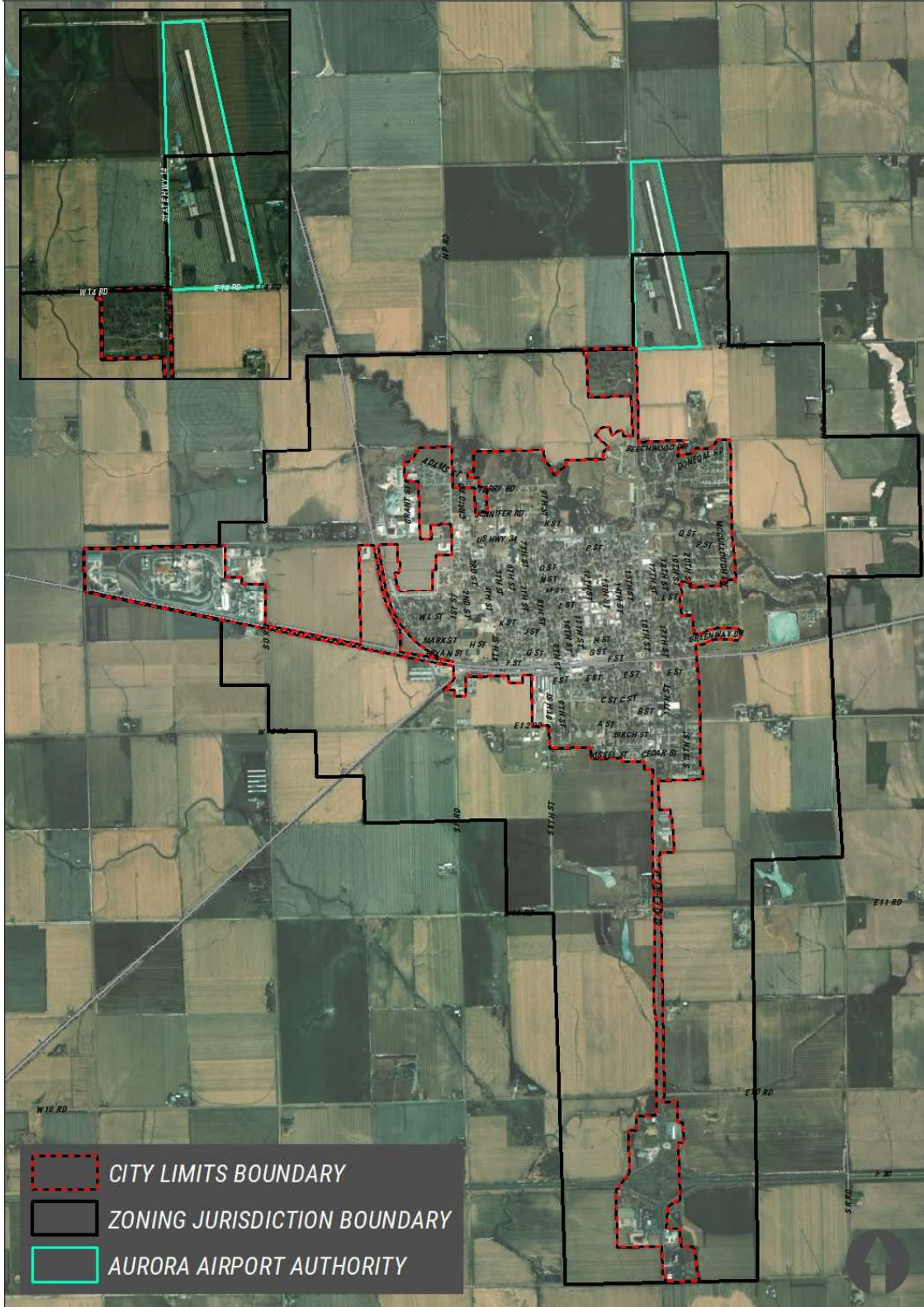
The City is served by a municipal airfield, which is displayed on Map 4.5 and provides service to small aircraft. The airport, located just north of the urban area of the City, provides a 4,300 by 70 foot hard-surfaced and lighted runway with a 200 foot grass overrun, a parallel taxiway, lighted wind tree, radio beacon, hanger space for 28 aircraft and a newly installed Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) system. Services include major and minor aircraft repairs, courtesy car, Unicom/common traffic advisory frequency, fuel, rest rooms and a flight planning area with weather observation/prediction capabilities.

The continued functionality and safety at the airport are partially protected by airport hazard zoning regulations which provide a structure and building height limitations within 3 miles of the airport. Such regulations are incorporated into the City's zoning regulations and will continue to be considered and enforced.

The Nebraska Department of Aeronautics-Engineering Division has provided an Airport Zoning Map that is on file with the City of Aurora. The Airport Zoning Map is consulted for every zoning and building action with the 3 miles surrounding the airport.



# MAP 4.5 AURORA MUNICIPAL AIRPORT



## **TRANSPORTATION ROUTES AND FACILITIES - KEY TAKEAWAYS**

The city's primary routes are local streets and sidewalks. Major routes that connect the city to other cities are state and US transportation routes.

### **Economic Development Routes**

The City of Aurora is fortunate to be located along an interstate highway, U.S. Highway, Nebraska State Highway and active rail line. The uses along these corridors need to make the most of these opportunities. When considering zoning permit applications and development opportunities, three key factors must be taken into consideration: 1) the highest and best use of the land; 2) ease of access into and out of Aurora; and 3) the appearance of properties along these important corridors and the message it delivers to travelers passing through Aurora.

### **Collector/Through Streets**

Original Town Aurora and subsequent developments were constructed on a through street grid system. More recent developments, especially residential neighborhoods, have developed in a pattern that has not left very much room for through streets and thus ongoing development. Neighborhoods developed on a grid street system dramatically improve the possibility of continued development beyond the neighborhood currently being constructed. The ability to add residential neighborhoods is currently crucial to Aurora's ongoing growth. As such, the City will need to balance the desire to have homes on cul de sacs and its need to develop in a connected and sustainable manner.

### **Sidewalks and Trails**

The sidewalk system in northern Aurora is inconsistent; few sidewalks are in good condition and many neighborhoods have no sidewalks. Since the City adopted its comprehensive plan and zoning regulations in 2010, the zoning permitting process has required the installation of sidewalks. This requirement should continue with this update.

The City is off to a good start with its trail system development. The next step for the trail system should consist of connecting to an established sidewalk artery on the south side of Highway 34. That established sidewalk system could be widened and improved, thereby expanding the overall trail system and improving pedestrian transportation options.

Should the City decide that sidewalks are a priority for new and current residents, it could take these steps toward improving the consistency of its sidewalk system:

1. Determine the most important north/south and east/west arteries for pedestrians to move safely around Aurora and take actions along those routes to improve the safety and overall experience for pedestrians.
2. Continue to develop the trail system to the south, utilizing the existing sidewalk system; identify those sidewalks that could be part of the trail system and improve only those [already existing] sidewalks with expanded widths and improved surfaces.

3. Continue to require the installation of sidewalks for any new construction project within residential and commercial districts. This would not include the I-80 commercial district.

## V. PRESENTED AND PROJECTED COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### NRS § 19-903

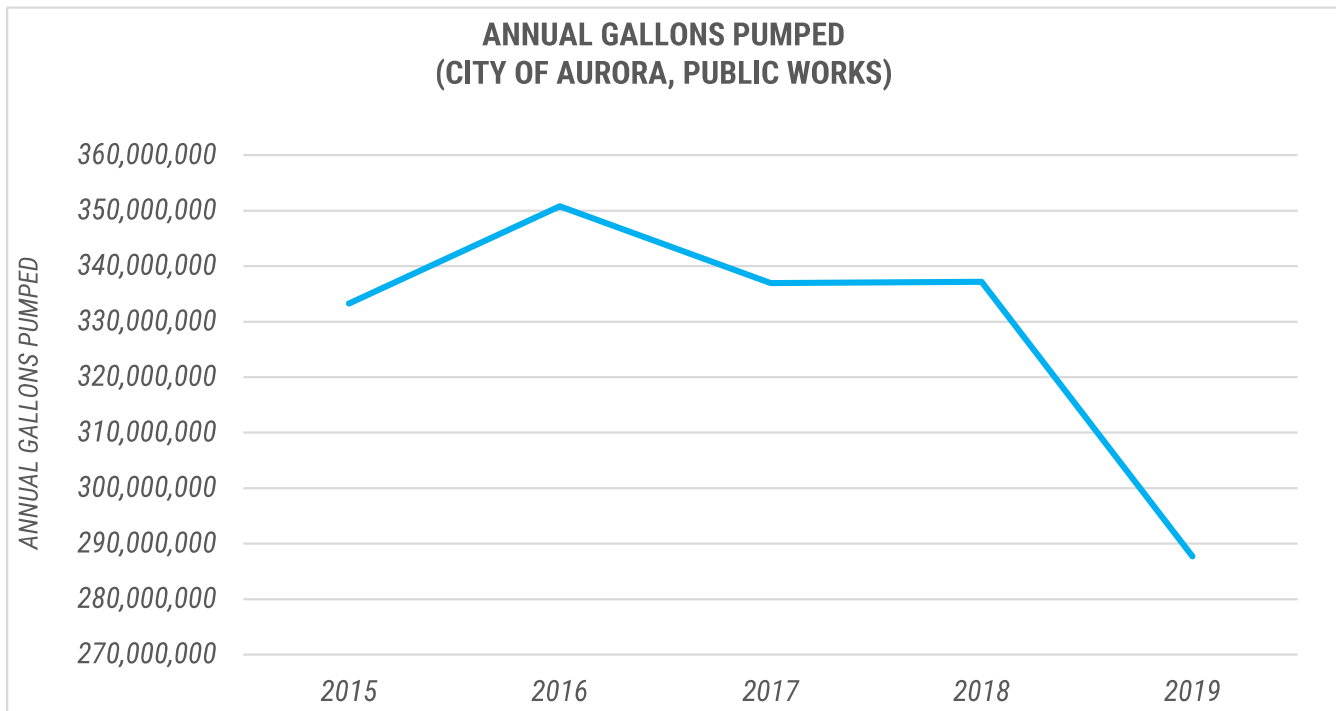
The general location, type, capacity, and area served of present and projected or needed community facilities including recreation facilities, schools, libraries, other public buildings, and public utilities and services.

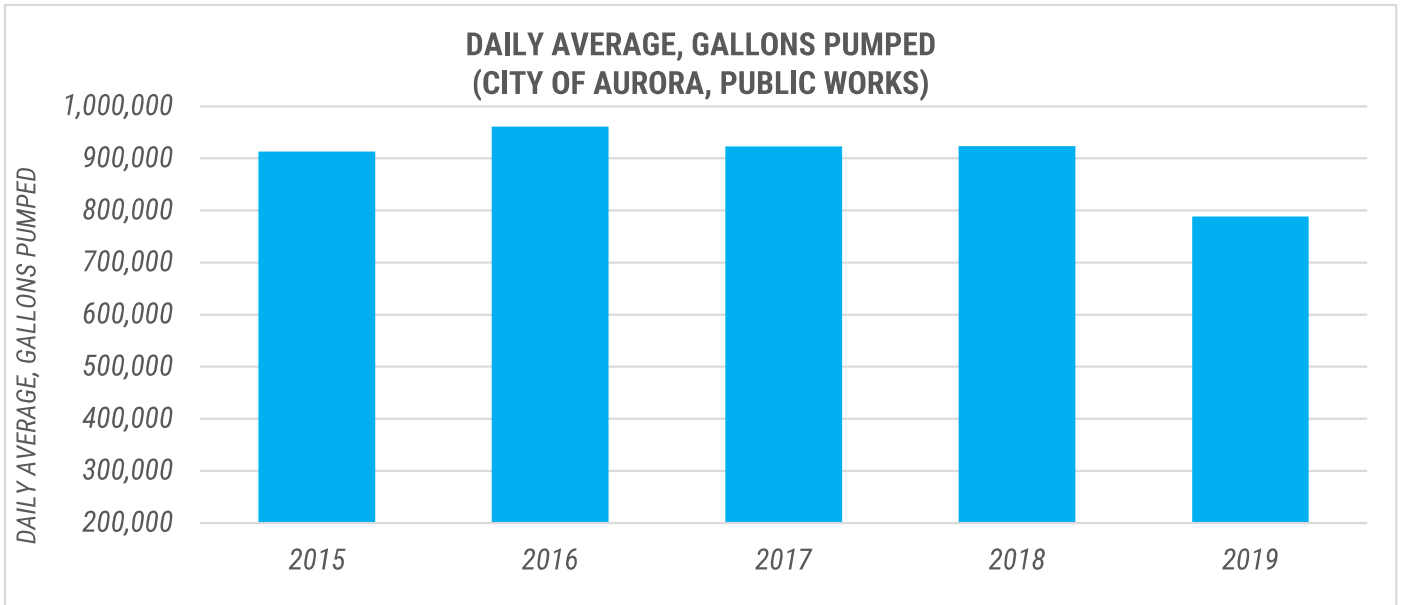
#### PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM

The source of domestic water for the City of Aurora is ground water, which is water that is found beneath the earth's surface that supplies wells and springs.

According to the City Public works department, the City's water system covers almost 2,000 acres and consists of 55 miles of water mains ranging from 2" to 16" in diameter. Approximately, 2,229 separate connections serve the community. The city water supply is provided by wells and a 300,000-gallon water tower that was constructed in 1956.

A total of 7 wells supply the City to pump an average of 790,000 gallons of water per day as of 2019. The City's oldest well was constructed in 1956, while the newest well was constructed as recently as 2018. Despite the increase in the number of wells available and the increasing city population, the amount of water demanded by the City dramatically decreased in 2019. This was most likely due to the unseasonably wet year that 2019 was for South Central Nebraska and the majority of the Midwest experienced in 2019.





The City of Aurora complies with Nebraska Department Health and Human Services requirements and provides water quality reports to its residents.

Not unlike several communities in Nebraska, the City has taken steps to address common water quality issues caused by high nitrates and chloroform.

According to the 2019 report displayed on this page, the City has taken steps in the past to comply with the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act.

Although, the City had no violations in 2019, the city will continue to test and report on its water quality annually.

**TEST RESULTS** Date Printed: 3/26/2020 NE3100101

Microbiological	Highest No. of Positive Samples	MCL	MCLG	Likely Source Of Contamination	Violations Present
COLIFORM (TCR)	In the month of August, 4 sample(s) were positive	Treatment Technique Trigger	0	Naturally present in the environment	No

Lead and Copper	Monitoring Period	90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Range	Unit	AL	Sites Over AL	Likely Source Of Contamination
COPPER, FREE	2017 - 2019	1.23	0.174 - 1.44	ppm	1.3	1	Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservatives; Corrosion of household plumbing.
LEAD	2017 - 2019	2.31	0.525 - 3.23	ppb	15	0	Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservatives; Corrosion of household plumbing.

Regulated Contaminants	Collection Date	Highest Value	Range	Unit	MCL	MCLG	Likely Source Of Contamination
ARSENIC	12/2/2019	5.96	5.19 - 5.96	ppb	10	0	Erosion of natural deposits; runoff from orchards; runoff from glass and electronics production wastes.
BARIUM	7/8/2019	0.166	0.0995 - 0.166	ppm	2	2	Discharge from drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits.
CHROMIUM	7/8/2019	0.802	0.692 - 0.802	ppb	100	100	Discharge from steel and pulp mills; Erosion of natural deposits.
FLUORIDE	10/7/2019	0.466	0.399 - 0.466	ppm	4	4	Erosion of natural deposits; water additive which promotes strong teeth; Fertilizer discharge.
NITRATE-NITRITE	1/8/2019	10	1 - 10	ppm	10	10	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
SELENIUM	7/8/2019	5.66	3.53 - 5.66	ppb	50	50	Erosion of natural deposits

Radiological Contaminants	Collection Date	Highest Value	Range	Unit	MCL	MCLG	Likely Source Of Contamination
COMBINED RADIUM (-226 & -228)	10/15/2019	0.736	0.736	pCi/L	5	0	Erosion of natural deposits
COMBINED URANIUM	1/8/2019	2.49	2.49	pCi/l		0	Erosion of natural deposits
GROSS ALPHA, EXCL. RADON & U	1/8/2019	1.95	1.95	pCi/L	15	0	Erosion of natural deposits
GROSS ALPHA, INCL. RADON & U	6/27/2019	6.95	4.05 - 6.95	pCi/L	15	0	Erosion of natural deposits
RADIUM-228	10/15/2019	0.736	0.736	pCi/L		0	Erosion of natural deposits

Unregulated Water Quality Data	Collection Date	Highest Value	Range	Unit	Secondary MCL
SULFATE	10/21/2019	38.7	37.5 - 38.7	mg/L	250

During the 2019 calendar year, we had the below noted violation(s) of drinking water regulations.

Type	Category	Analyte	Compliance Period
No Violations Occurred in the Calendar Year of 2019			

- The City of Aurora has taken the following actions to return to compliance with the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act:**
- During the past year one Level 2 assessments were required to be completed for our water system. one Level 2 assessments were completed. In addition, we were required to take two corrective actions and we completed two of these actions.
  - Coliforms are bacteria that are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other, potentially harmful, waterborne pathogens may be present or that a potential pathway exists through which contamination may enter the drinking water distribution system. We found coliforms indicating the need to look for potential problems in water treatment or distribution. When this occurs, we are required to conduct assessment(s) to identify problems and to correct any problems that were found during these assessments.
  - While your drinking water meets EPA's standard for arsenic, it does contain low levels of arsenic. EPA's standard balances the current understanding of arsenic's possible health effects against the costs of removing arsenic from drinking water. EPA continues to research the health effects of low levels of arsenic which is a mineral known to cause cancer in humans at high concentrations and is linked to other health effects such as skin damage and circulatory problems.
  - Coliforms are bacteria that are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other potentially harmful bacteria may be present. Coliforms were found in more samples than allowed and this was a warning of potential problems.
  - There are no additional required health effects violation notices.

The State of Nebraska also encourages public water supply systems to implement a Wellhead Protection Plan meant to protect public drinking water supply wells from contamination. The City of Aurora has had a Wellhead Protection Plan on file with the Upper Big Blue NRD since February, 2016. As wells are added the City will need to continue to update that plan in order to protect its supply.

### **SANITARY SEWER**

The City's sanitary sewer system covers roughly 2,000 acres, consisting of: almost 45 miles of sewer mains ranging from 4" to 24" in diameter; four lift stations; and approximately 7,500 lineal foot of 8" force main. The collection system currently carries an average load of 920,000 gallons of wastewater per day from 2,090 connections. The sewage is delivered to the city's wastewater treatment plant, which processes approximately 337 million gallons of waste per year.

The wastewater plant was originally constructed in 1995. In 2012, the city completed a \$2.8 million expansion. According to the City of Aurora, the Plant has four 360,000-gallon aerobic digesters and dewaterers by using a 2.1-meter Ashbrook belt press. The Plant produces 700 tons of biosolids each year that are stored on site until land applied each spring and fall. The City also has a 14-acre facultative lagoon that can be used to divert flow during maintenance and allow for additional capacity.

In 2017, the City added a 480kW solar array at the plant. The project is designed to offset 84% of the plant's electricity cost.

*AURORA WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT, JUNE 2020*



## PARKS

The Aurora Community enjoys an expansive park system that provides several amenities to its residents. The City of Aurora owns some recreational facilities while local community groups own other facilities.

The City owns four parks that serve local neighborhoods as well as the community: Streeter Park, Refshauge Park, Cole Park, and Lincoln Creek Park.

Ballfields are also provided at Mitchell Field, Edgerton Field, and Optimist Fields on the south side of Aurora and Lions Fields as well as the softball complex, which is a four-plex of ball diamonds on the north side of Aurora.

Streeter Park provides the majority of recreational amenities as it is the location of the City's recently added soccer fields and tennis courts. The aquatic center is also located at Streeter Park.

In 2017, a dog park was added to the community as the result of a partnership between a local non-profit, Aurora Dog Park, Inc. and the City of Aurora. While the Aurora Dog Park, Inc. continues to invest in the park, the Aurora Dog Park is maintained by the City of Aurora Parks and Recreation Department. The park is located on the east side of Aurora, northeast of Poco Creek Golf Course.

*AURORA DOG PARK, JUNE 2020*





### Access to parks

Map 5.1 on the following page includes a ½ mile buffer around each of the four neighborhood parks. These four parks are displayed with a buffer because they are the most likely to provide basic park amenities that any resident in Aurora could use. Based on the map provided, neighborhoods on the northeast corner and west/southwest corner of Aurora do not live within ½ mile of a park.

If the City follows its Future Land Use plan and continues to add residential developments to the north sides of town, more park space should be prioritized. It should also be noted that Lincoln Creek Park is currently less than 1 acre. If this park is intended to serve future residential developments to the northwest side of Aurora, this park should be expanded or more park space should be added on the northwest side of Aurora.

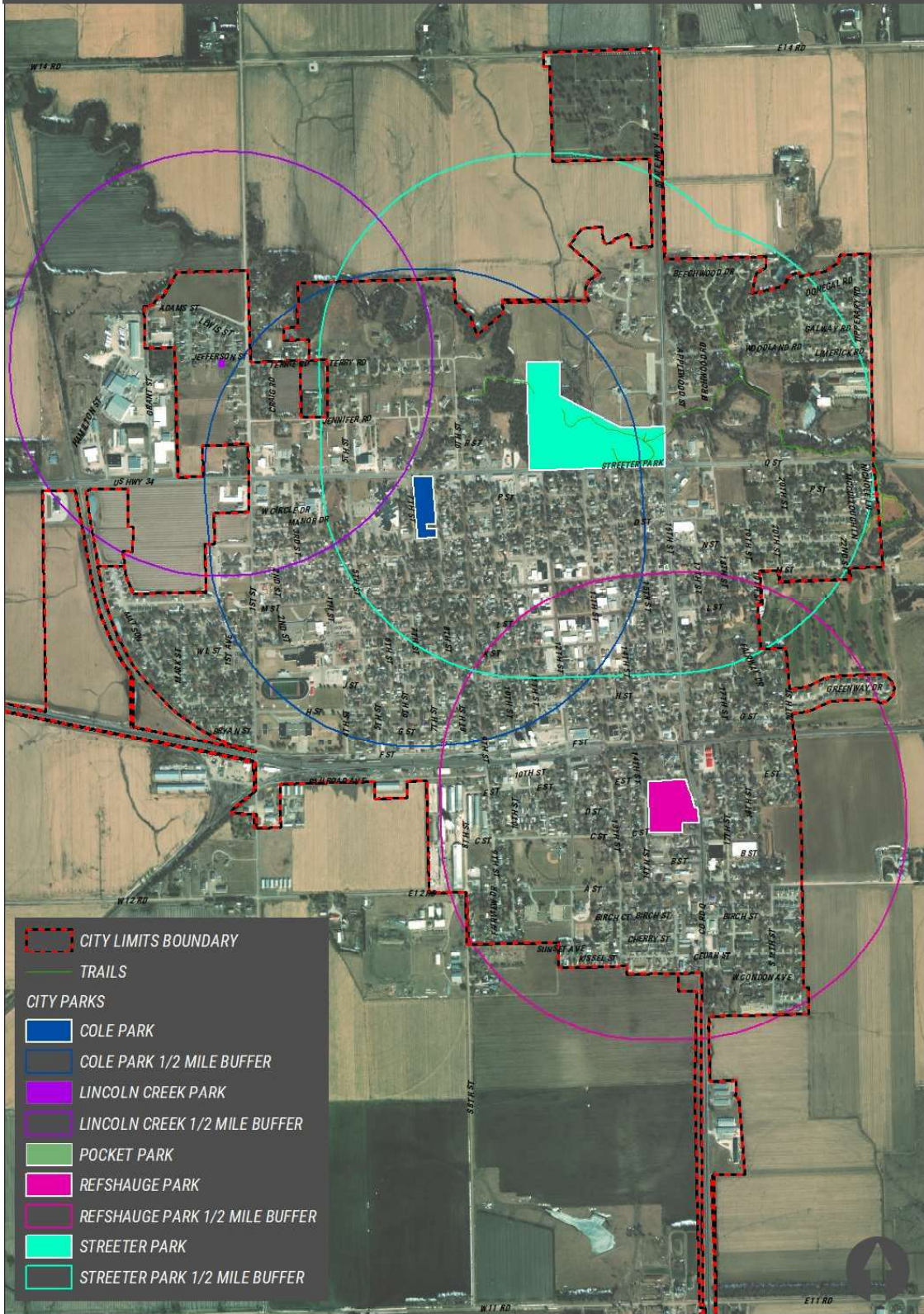
### Amount of park space

As a general guide the American Planning Association recommends that a community have two acres of park space for every 100 residents. With a population of approximately 4,500 the Aurora community should have 50 acres of park space.

<i>PARK</i>	<i>TOTAL AREA (ACRES)</i>
Streeter Park	32
Lincoln Creek Park	.22
Refshauge Park	8
Cole Park	4
Total acres of park space in Aurora	44.22
Recommended amount of park space	50
<b>Current shortage of park space</b>	<b>-5.78</b>

Based upon this recommendation, the City currently has a shortage of 5.78 acres. Because the majority of park space is accounted for in Streeter Park, it is likely that the park space shortage is actually greater than 5.78 acres.

# MAP 5.1 AURORA CITY PARKS



## CULTURAL FACILITIES, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND SERVICES

A combination of publicly owned lands, buildings, and utility structures are scattered across the city (see next page). Thought, the majority of land owned by the city is open space for parks and the city cemetery.

Buildings owned by the City include:

- City Hall
- City Shop Building
- Parks and Recreation Storage Building
- Law Enforcement Center
- Aurora Volunteer Fire Department
- Alice M. Farr Library
- Aurora Cemetery

### City Hall

The offices of the Mayor, City Administrator, Public Works Director, City Clerk, and other support staff are located within this building. The Council Chambers and NPPD payment center are also housed in this building. City Hall was constructed in 2002 and is in excellent condition.



### **City Shop Building**

The City Shop Building, located south of the downtown on J Street is a concrete building that was rated in good condition in 2010. Within the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, it was stated that this building is in need of expansion. There has been no change to this building’s status since 2010.

### **Parks and Recreation Storage Building**

The 2010 Plan also stated that the expansion of the City Shop Building would be in addition to maintaining the use of the Parks and Recreation storage building, which is located four blocks west of the City Shop Building. There has been no change to this building’s status since 2010.

### **Law Enforcement Center**

The City Law Enforcement Center is located houses the Aurora City Police Department, Hamilton County Sheriff, and provides operational space for the Nebraska State Patrol.



*LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER, COURTESY OF CITYOFAURORA.ORG, JUNE 2020*

Since 2010, the LEC building has undergone several improvements, to include:

- adding a more secure patron entrance;
- increasing workspace for several tasks to include reporting, meeting, interviewing/investigating, and performing administrative tasks;
- adding men’s and women’s restrooms;
- and updating technology and video visitation resources.

### **Aurora Volunteer Fire Department**

The Aurora Volunteer Fire Department building is located across the street from City Hall and houses equipment and vehicles for the Aurora Volunteer Fire Department and the Aurora Rural Fire District. Recently a storage building was added to the campus, immediately to the East of the fire department building.

As a result of a Feasibility Study for a City Operated, Fire Based EMS Service, the City of Aurora is moving forward on upgrading this facility to house full time emergency response personnel and equipment.



### **Alice M. Farr Library**

The Alice M. Farr Library was constructed in 1990. In addition to housing over 42,000 loanable volumes and periodicals, the building provides space for meetings and adult education classes. Since 2010, the Library has had a roof and A/C unit replaced. The facility continues to be in good condition and as it surpasses its 30<sup>th</sup> birthday, its need for maintenance upgrades will continue to grow and should be planned for accordingly.



### **Aurora City Waste Site**

The Aurora City Waste Site is owned by the City of Aurora.

The City accepts most solid waste to include compost, brush, metal, and most household goods.

A recycling site is also available for residents within the City, located at corner of 16th and F.

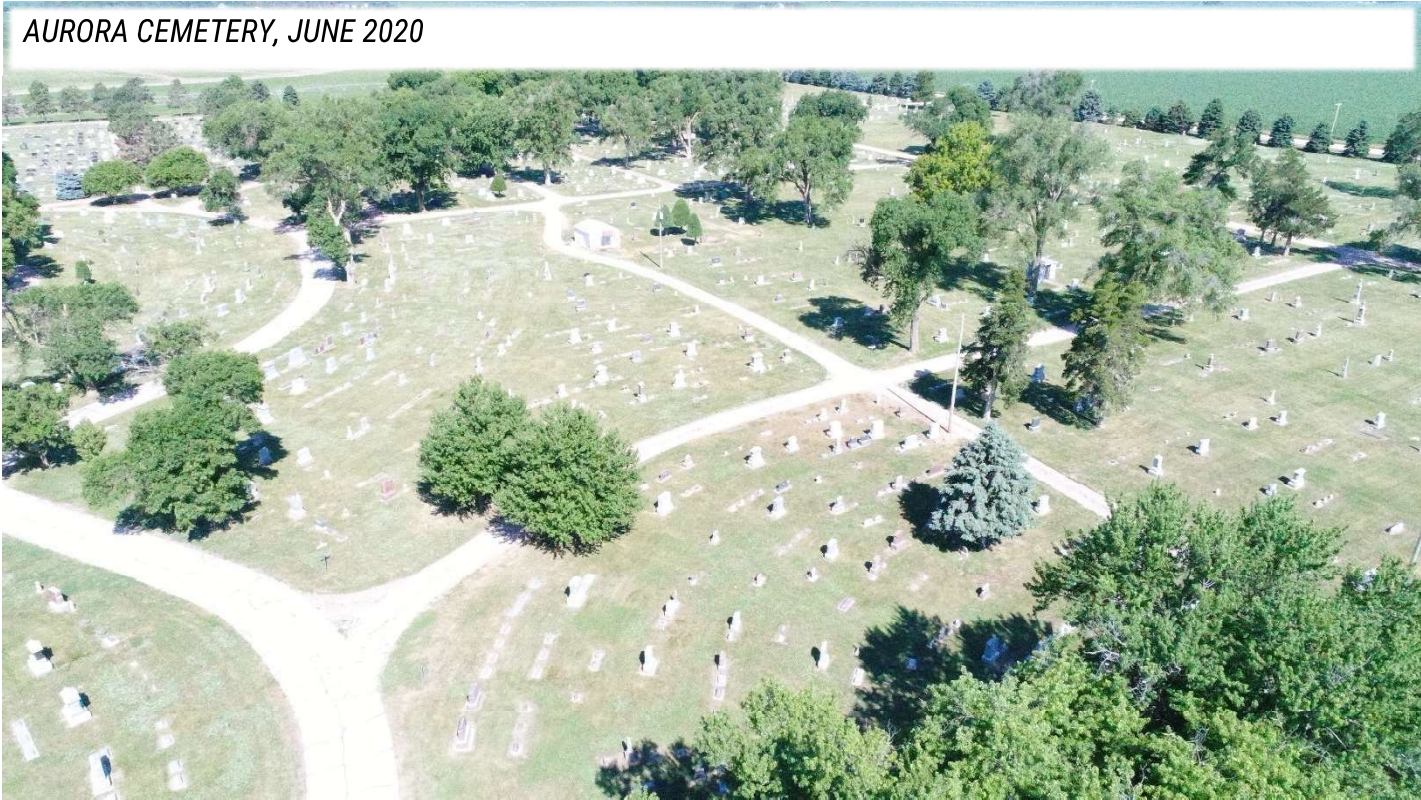


**Aurora Cemetery**

The Aurora Cemetery is located along State Highway 14, one mile north of the city. The cemetery is 40 acres in total area and has 22,000 burial sites. The cemetery originated in 1877 when land was purchased from the Union Pacific Railroad. The cemetery is well maintained by the city's Cemetery staff. A protected informational kiosk was added to the cemetery in 2018, along with a parking lot and upgrades to the cemetery office and grounds.



*AURORA CEMETERY KIOSK, JUNE 2020*



*AURORA CEMETERY, JUNE 2020*

## ADDITIONAL CITY SERVICES

The following services are also provided to the residents of Aurora:

**Police Protection:** The Aurora Police Department is made up of nine police officers, an animal control officer, and an administrative assistant.

**Fire Protection:** According to information provided by the City Fire Chief, Tom Cox, the City of Aurora Volunteer Fire Department currently provides fire services to the residents, visitors, and businesses of Aurora. The fire department also provides public safety programs, building safety inspections, and emergency management and communications.

The fire department consists of 32 members that are all volunteer and are led by officers of the department, which include a Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, and a Training Officer. Every member of the department is professionally trained and meets/exceeds all minimum training requirements to perform various functions of fire and other types of emergencies. The department also belongs to the Hamilton County Rural Fire District and has a mutual aid agreement with all neighboring communities.

**Emergency Services:** Beginning June 1, 2020, the Hamilton County/City of Aurora fire-based emergency medical services are owned and operated by the City of Aurora. The service is staffed by full time emergency response personnel and responds to all calls in Hamilton County.

**Solid Waste Disposal:** In addition to providing water and sanitary sewer services to residents, the City of Aurora provides solid waste pick up services to residents. Mid-Nebraska Disposal provides trash pick up services and transports the waste to back to Grand Island. Mid-Nebraska also transports waste deposited at the City Waste Site back to Grand Island.

**Recycling Services:** The City also coordinates curbside recycling services currently offered by Mid-Nebraska Disposal. A recycling site, located at 16th and F, that accepts aluminum, cardboard, tin, plastic, and newspaper is also made available by the City to its residents. The Aurora Lion's Club and the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity also recycle one or more of aluminum cans and newspaper.



## **PRESENT AND PROJECTED COMMUNITY FACILITIES-KEY TAKEAWAYS**

The City of Aurora provides a high quality of life for its residents and prioritizes maintenance of its utilities, facilities, and amenities. As such, local residents have access to many recreational opportunities that most small cities are not able to offer. As the region continues to add population and the city continues to grow, the City Council will also need to continue to address the expansion of community facilities and services. Therefore, the maintenance and expansion of community services and amenities will remain a priority.

### **Growth Preparedness**

The Public Works Department's planning and investment in its water and sanitary sewer infrastructure have put the City in a position to support ongoing residential growth. This will assist with efforts to accommodate the demand for housing that was cited in Chapter 2 of this document.

### **Park Space**

As the city grows over the next decade the demand for better access to park space will grow as well. According to the APA's recommended standards, the City has a shortage of available park space based upon current population counts. Therefore, additional park space should be a consideration when reviewing any potential plat for a new housing subdivision.

While the Aurora community is fortunate to enjoy numerous recreational assets, access to ample park space is not currently equitable for all residents based upon the location of their residence.

### **City/County Emergency Services**

As the City of Aurora and Hamilton County governments continue to coordinate law enforcement, emergency medical response, and emergency management services, the need for space to house personnel and equipment will need to continue to be accommodated by the City of Aurora. Centralization of emergency management assets will be important to maintaining and improving the efficiency and quality of emergency response and management services. Therefore, these agencies should continue to be housed within the City of Aurora, as such, the City should continue to make building construction and improvement decisions with this responsibility in mind.

## VI. ENERGY ELEMENT

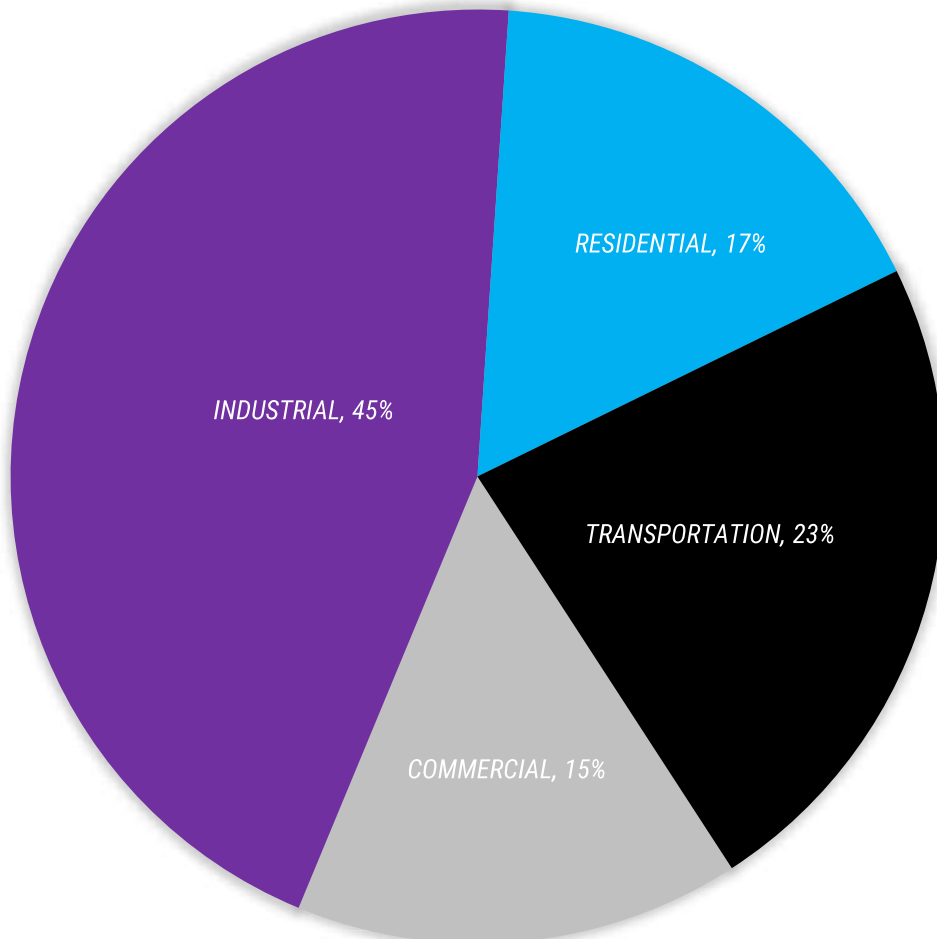
### NRS § 19-903

When a new comprehensive plan or a full update to an existing comprehensive plan is developed on or after July 15, 2010, but not later than January 1, 2015, an energy element which: Assesses energy infrastructure and energy use by sector, including residential, commercial, and industrial sectors; evaluates utilization of renewable energy sources; and promotes energy conservation measures that benefit the community.

#### ENERGY PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION IN NEBRASKA

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the industrial sector is the largest consumer of energy in Nebraska. Agricultural and food processing activities are considered a part of the industrial sector, which groups Nebraska within the top ten energy consumers in the country. The primary users of land within Aurora are also residential, commercial, and industrial.

**CHART 6.1 NEBRASKA ENERGY CONSUMPTION BY SECTOR  
(ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION, 2017)**



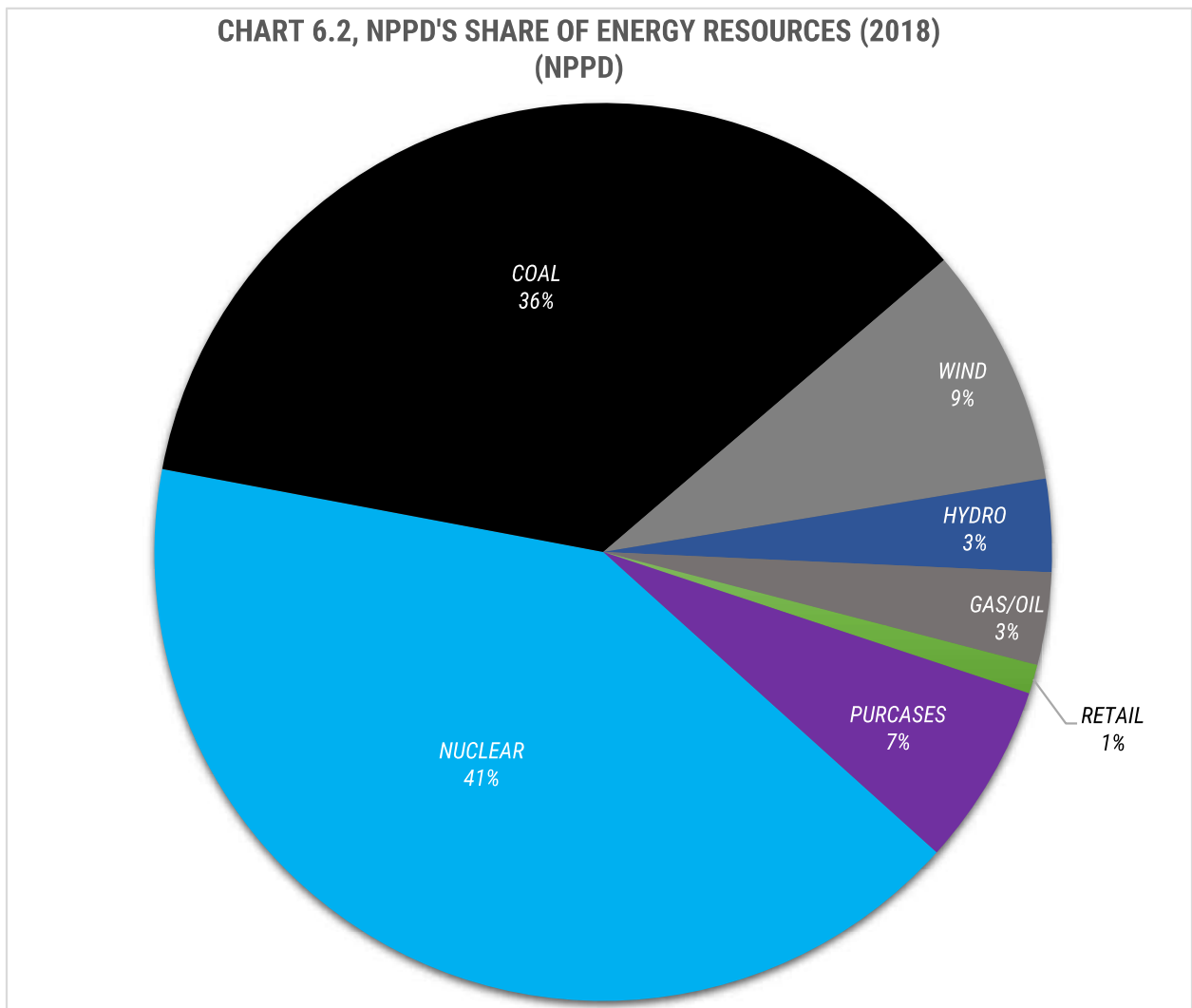
As shown on the Cart 6.2 the top three sources of energy for Nebraska consumers, businesses and producers is electricity, natural gas, and biofuels.

**ENERGY PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION IN AURORA**

The primary sources of energy for residents and businesses in Aurora are provided by Nebraska Public Power District (electricity) and Northwestern Energy (natural gas).

**Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD)**

NPPD’s primary sources of energy are coal, nuclear, and wind generation. Wind power generation has grown as a source of energy and should continue to grow. The demand for wind power could impact the city within its zoning jurisdiction.



The City of Aurora receives an energy credit each year based upon the energy saving realized by the solar field installed at the city's wastewater treatment plant in 2012. NPPD offers a series of EnergyWise programs that can assist residents, businesses, and producers in Aurora to conserve energy and cut costs.



**2019 EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup> Programs**

A brief summary of current programs for 2019 is provided below. Contact your local electric utility for more program details as some stipulations and restrictions apply.

**High Efficiency Heat Pumps**

Residential customers who install a high efficiency heat pump, (minimum 15 SEER & 8.5 HSPF), are eligible for an incentive of \$300 to \$2,500, depending on the efficiency. Or, customers can choose a low interest loan (currently at 1.5% interest) through the Nebraska Energy Office. The installing contractor is required to complete a performance verification test in order for the customer to receive their incentive.

**Low Interest Loan Program**

NPPD has invested a total of \$1,000,000 since 2009 into the Nebraska Energy Office's Dollar and Energy Savings Loan Program. This investment allowed NPPD's wholesale utilities and retail customers to receive a 1.5% loan for selected technologies. In coordination with the wholesale utility working groups, high efficiency heat pumps were selected to qualify for the program.

**Attic Insulation**

Residential customers who have 6" or less of attic insulation and have electric heating systems are eligible for an incentive of \$.15 per square foot if they add at least 6", or an additional R-19, of insulation to their attic space. Maximum incentive amount is \$300 per dwelling.

**Smart Thermostat**

Residential customers can receive up to \$100 for installing a qualifying smart thermostat. Smart thermostats must be listed on the ENERGY STAR website.

**Cooling System Tune-Up**

Residential customers are eligible for a \$30 incentive (every 3 years) to have their cooling system tuned up by an HVAC contractor.

**Electric Vehicle Charging Station**

A \$200 incentive is available for installing a residential electric vehicle charging station.

**Heat Pump Water Heater**

A \$300 incentive is available for installing an air source heat pump water heater (EF > 1.9), or \$500 for installing a water/ground source heat pump water heater (COP > 2.8).

**Lighting – Prescriptive and Custom**

LED lighting incentives are provided for commercial and industrial customers via a prescriptive program (an incentive based on a table for predetermined fixture replacements) or a custom program where the incentive is calculated based on the specific lighting energy improvements.

**Variable Frequency Drives**

Commercial and industrial customers can receive an incentive to install variable frequency drives (VFDs) on centrifugal fans and pumps. The incentive is \$30 per horsepower for VFDs from 1 to 200 horsepower, operating a minimum of 2000 hours annually.

**Commercial HVAC**

Incentives are provided to commercial and industrial customers for installing high efficiency HVAC equipment via a prescriptive program where the incentive is calculated based on the specific efficiency improvement.

**HVAC System Optimization**

Incentives are provided to commercial and industrial customers for improving the efficiency of their existing heating, cooling, and ventilating systems.

**Industrial Process Incentive**

Incentives are provided to industrial customers for improving the efficiency of their processes.

**Irrigation Corner Pivot (VFD)**

A \$12 per rated variable frequency drive (VFD) horsepower is available for the installation of a VFD on a new or existing corner pivot system.

**Custom Irrigation**

Customers can receive reimbursement for a system efficiency test on their irrigation systems, and for modifications leading to efficiency improvements.

**Agricultural Efficiency**

Customers can receive reimbursement for installing electric heating mats in their hog farrowing operations. Incentives range from \$40 to \$80 per mat.

**Black Hills Energy**

From a natural gas standpoint Black Hills Energy works with communities on “renewable” natural gas; utilization of natural gas from landfills that is cleaned and then put back into the natural gas distribution system.

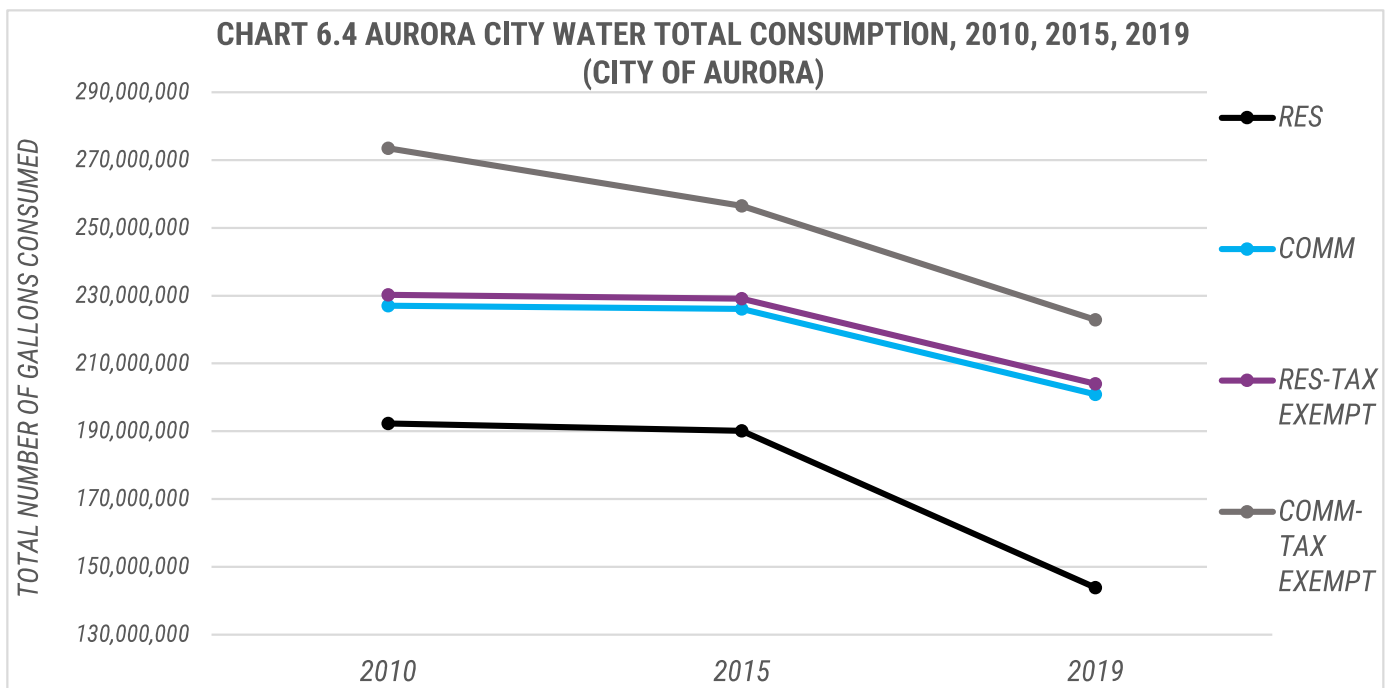
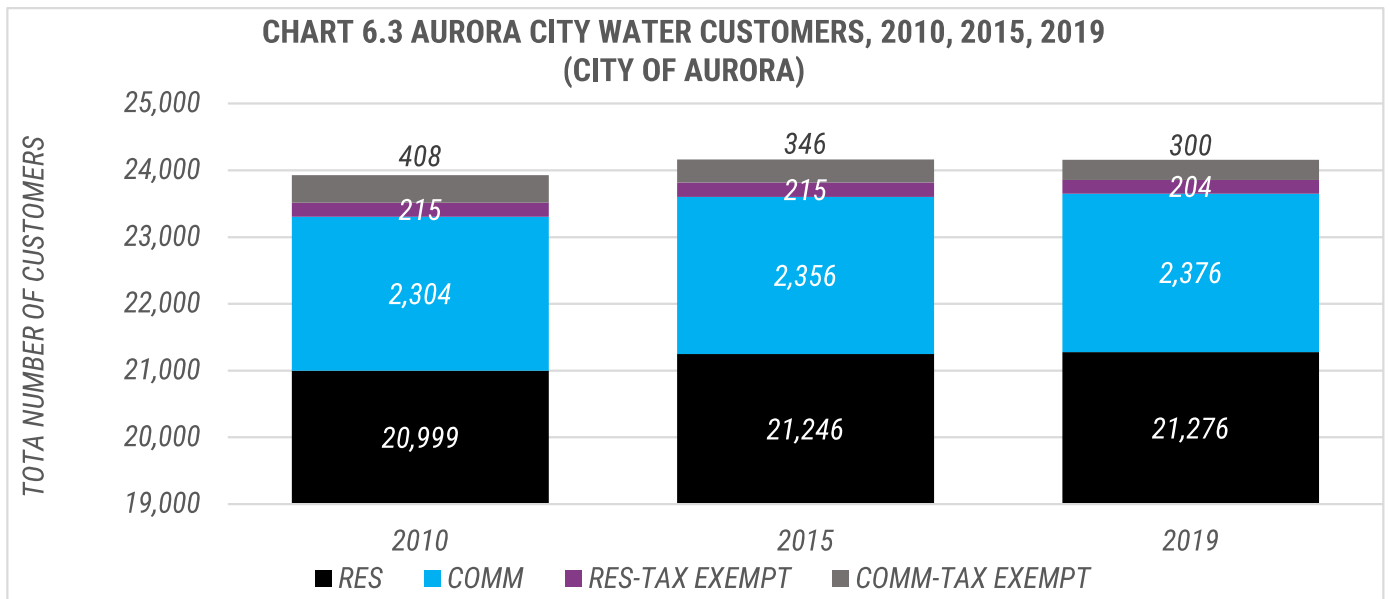
Black Hills works closely with customers to help save energy. Natural gas usage per household has decreased even as the overall demand for energy has risen. This trend is due in part to installation of better windows and doors, insulation and the increasingly more efficient natural gas appliances.

Overall, Black Hills is committed to advancing new technologies, such as renewable natural gas, liquefied natural gas and power to gas to create cleaner options. Black Hills also shares its energy to strengthen the communities that they serve and support growth and development.

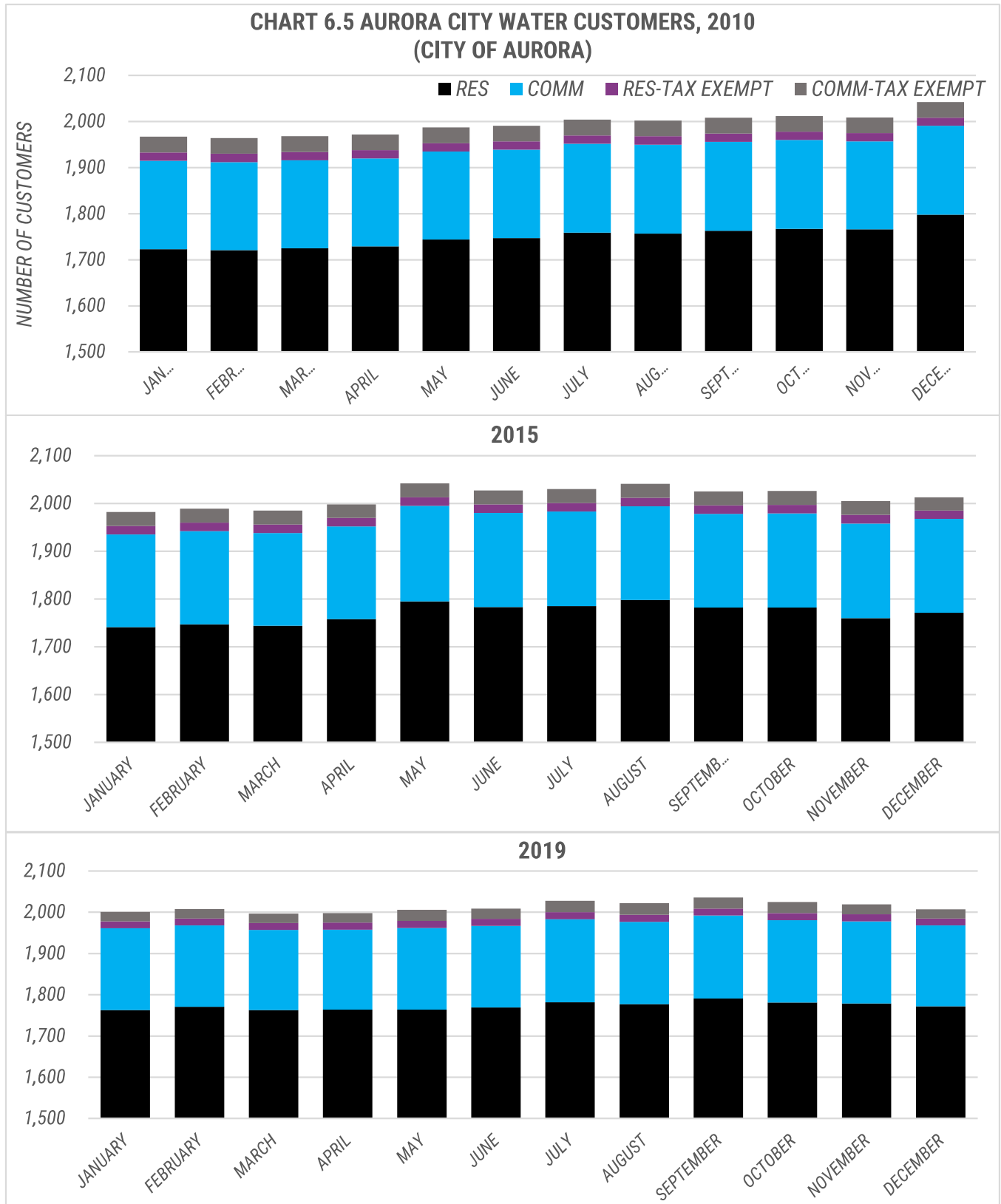
### WATER CONSUMPTION IN AURORA

The main natural resource consumed by the residents and businesses in Aurora is water, which is pumped into the city by seven different wells.

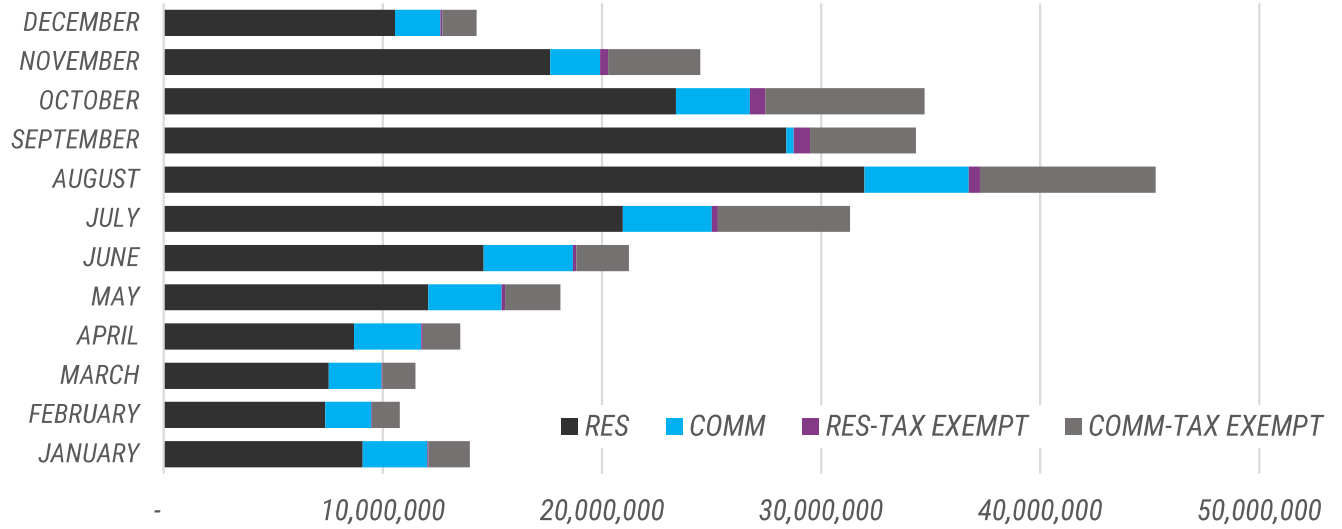
The largest consumer of water in Aurora is residential customers, as almost ten times more residential customers are served in Aurora than commercial. The number of users in Aurora has actually slightly decreased since 2015 as the total number of users in 2015 was 24,163 while the total number of customers in 2019 was 24,156. Consumption of water has also decreased in Aurora as a total of approximately 273 million gallons of water were consumed in 2010 while roughly 222 million gallons were consumed in 2019.



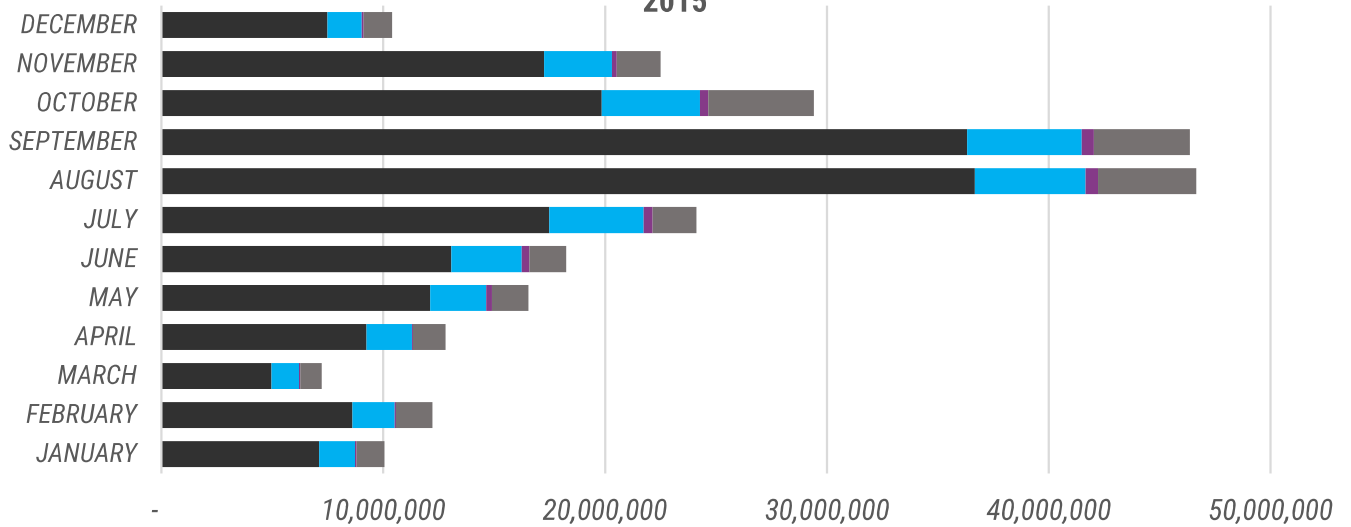
The following charts display the change in type of customer and consumption from month to month for the years 2010, 2015, and 2019.



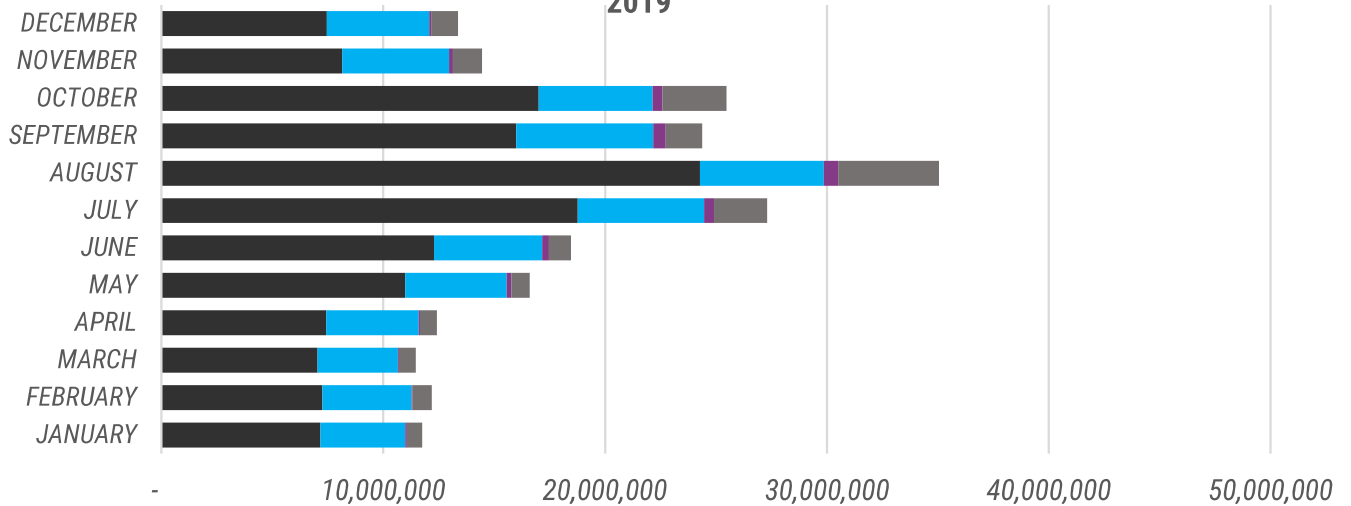
**CHART 6.8 AURORA CITY WATER TOTAL CONSUMPTION, 2010  
(CITY OF AURORA)**



**2015**



**2019**



### **ENERGY ELEMENT-KEY TAKEAWAYS**

The amount of electricity generated from coal is gradually, yet steadily declining. Coal once produced more than half of the electricity utilized in Nebraska. According to information provided by NPPD, wind energy accounts for almost 10% of the electricity now provided to its customers.

Renewable sources of energy such as sun and wind have been and will continue to grow in production and use in Nebraska. Much like the solar panel project at the City's wastewater treatment plant, the City of Aurora should continue to look for opportunities to reduce its consumption of non-renewable sources and overall energy costs.

Though it is steadily declining in usage, the main consumer of water in Aurora is residential customers. The City should continue to work with NPPD and Black Hills Energy to incentivize residents to find ways to conserve its use of energy and develop sources of renewable energy.

While the use of renewable sources of energy and the conservation of water and energy should be encouraged, these practices will impact land use needs and patterns in Aurora. Accordingly, the City will need to be proactive to plan for ways to accommodate its residents and businesses that are attempting to create ways to provide renewable energy and conserve water. The City's leadership will also need to find a balance between accommodating creative land uses, preserving the current built environment, and respecting the rights and desires of all property owners within the City's zoning jurisdiction.



## VII. A REMINDER OF WHY WE PLAN

This comprehensive plan document is the City's guidebook as to how it will approach land use development. While every land use decision will be unique, the City of Aurora will rely upon the same principles communicated through the Future Land Use Map (Map 3.4) and key takeaways provided throughout this document to guide its land use decision making processes. The City recognizes the growth opportunities and challenges that it is facing over the next decade (2020-2030). As such, it has adopted this plan to ensure it is taking steps in the right direction to address those challenges and capitalize upon those opportunities.

The overall intention of the comprehensive plan is to attract and encourage predictable and manageable growth that serves the city's current residents while also improving the community's outlook.

With every decision that is made the City's leadership will be asked to consider whether or not the proposed action/s will bring the community closer to its growth goals. Those goals were identified at the beginning of the plan and are also listed below.

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Growth goals that the City intends to accomplish through this plan update are listed below:

- ~ Expanding housing choices for all income levels.
- ~ Increasing the amount of available park space at the same rate as new residents are added to the city.
- ~ Ensuring that neighborhoods can continue to expand in a sustainable and predictable manner.
- ~ Attracting workforce to the city that is needed by area employers.
- ~ Creating an attractive commercial corridor from the city to Interstate 80.
- ~ Encouraging the start-up, expansion, and re-location of companies to Aurora that provide jobs and services to the area.
- ~ Maintaining the City of Aurora as a regional leader in continuing to provide a community that is a great place to live, work, and play.