

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE

Approval of the Countryside Vision Plan, the Riverfront Vision Plan and the Seize the Future Mater Plan implementing smart growth and sustainable development into long-range planning and policy efforts.

Planned for the development of a new community-gathering place: RiverEdge Park. This regional park along the Fox River will emphasize use of environmental best management practices and create urban green space.

Coordinated with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning as part of their regional study to report on local greenhouse gas emissions and energy usage. The Aurora Energy and Emissions Profile illustrates usage across different sectors of Aurora with comparisons between 2000 and 2005, and offers guidance on developing strategies to conserve energy and reduce emissions.

Developed the Public Art Commission Sculpture Garden along Downer Place incorporating native vegetation, public art and space for public interaction.

Began enhancing the Fox River Walk by providing uninterrupted green, open space along both sides of the riverfront. Part of this ongoing effort is making progress to close the Fox River Trail gap in collaboration with the Fox Valley Park District and Forest Preserve.

Completed six long-range neighborhood planning processes to help residents and other local stakeholders (e.g. business owners, employees, school faculty) shape the way their neighborhood will evolve and enhance its quality of life. (Aurora Neighborhood Planning Initiative - ANPI).

Created the LaSalle Street & Lincoln Avenue Overlay District to maintain the historic character of the neighborhood while encouraging redevelopment that is compatible with and supportive of the positive qualities of the residential neighborhoods nearby.

Modified residential property zoning designations (downzoning) and offered reconversion incentives (RCIP) to protect overloaded infrastructure and preserve the character of established single-family neighborhoods. In 2007, the City increased its financial commitment to open space and green space by pledging additional funds to create neighborhood parks and density reduction efforts.

Planned and permitted the 'new urbanist' style Hometown development to foster community interaction and energy efficiency. Hometown implements smart growth concepts such as mixed land uses, walkability and public open spaces.

Established the Aurora Tree Board and approved a new city tree ordinance for arboreal best management practices. The city has been honored by Tree City USA for 12 consecutive years with a Tree City USA Award. The Tree City USA program provides direction, technical assistance, public attention, and national recognition for urban and community forestry programs.

Instituted the HOME Maintenance Empowerment Program providing financial assistance for income-qualified homeowners who are eligible for electrical upgrades, mechanical upgrades, plumbing, roof repairs and ADA modifications.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Received the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's (IEPA) Green Fleets designation in 2006. Aurora was one of the first cities to receive this designation; a voluntary program that recognizes progressive efforts in using environmentally friendly vehicles and fuels to improve air quality.

Implemented vehicle efficiency standards for the purchase of new fleet vehicles; the City currently operates over 60 E-85 (ethanol mix) flex fuel vehicles and 189 B-5 (soy mix) diesel fuel vehicles. Alternative energy electric vehicles were purchased such as Segways for downtown parking enforcement and Gem cars for transportation in Phillips Park. In addition, the City partnered with Clean Air Counts in 2007 to successfully retrofit nine municipal heavy-duty dump trucks with diesel oxidation catalyst mufflers.

Instituted a 'No Idle' policy in 2006 for all municipal fleet equipment and vehicles minimizing exhaust emissions, engine wear and petroleum usage. This requires any city vehicle or equipment that isn't performing an emergency operation to turn off the engine after 30 seconds.

Encourage sustainable transportation and infrastructure techniques in private developments such as the use of pervious surfaces in Waubensee Community College's downtown campus. Also, a boulevard street system with trolley service and a street roundabout was specified in the planned development for Station Boulevard.

Approved the City's first Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in 2009. This plan identifies improvements in the design, construction and promotion of activities that increase bicycle ridership and walkability throughout the city. The Plan promotes overall improvements to transportation safety, congestion reduction and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.

Upgraded multiple traffic signals, street lights and parking lot lights to more energy-efficient lighting systems citywide. In 2007, traffic signal bulb replacement in the downtown with LED lamps helped decreased energy usage 12-fold.

Specify 15% recycled asphalt mix in the resurfacing of streets citywide. In addition, street maintenance services have tested beet-based GeoMelt street treatment to reduce the need for street salting during the winter season.

Began participation in 'Bike to Work Week' in 2008 leading to City employees biking over 1,100 combined miles. This was complimented by education and engagement efforts in partnership with local bicycle shops.

Repaired donated bikes for a green bike-sharing pilot program during the 2008 GreenTown: The Future of Community environmentally-themed event in downtown Aurora. These shared bikes are continued to be used by employees for short-trip purposes.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Drafted legislation and partnered with state officials for approval of the GreenCities Grant Program which encourages the incorporation of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building standards in municipal and private development through incentive programs. The City prioritized energy efficiency through the LEED certification process in the planning and construction of the 200,000 square foot Aurora Police and Courts Facility; one of the largest municipal construction projects in the State of Illinois.

Conduct code enforcement for commercial redevelopment projects under the 2006 International Energy Conservation Code. This building code section allows flexibility for adaptive reuses of existing buildings.

Conducted energy audits of high consumption municipal facilities, such as the Water Treatment Plant. These energy audits helped identify improvement goals for the purposes cost-effective and energy efficient upgrades.

Retrofitted lighting systems in municipal buildings with technologies such as motion detectors, zoned systems and energy efficient light bulbs; visible example include the LED light fixtures outside the Phillips Park Reptile House.

Implemented multiple energy savings and conservation techniques in public libraries such as computer automatic shut-off settings, use of eco-friendly office and cleaning supplies and 'green' resources for patrons at the front desks.

Began sponsoring the Green Historic Preservation Bike Tour in 2008. This tour highlights history and conservation success stories throughout Aurora without the need of automobile transportation.

Waste Minimization, Reuse and/or Recycling

Implemented citywide residential recycling by contracting waste management services to provide curbside recycling. Internally, the City provides comingled recycling in city buildings and provides services for employees to properly dispose toner cartridges and fluorescent tubes. Services were also expanded to public facilities such as the Metra train stations at Route 59 and Route 25.

Provides recycling services at hosted events such as Downtown Alive and Fiesta De Luces. The City was awarded the Coca Cola Recycling Grant which supports recycling programs for community events. Recycling contracts are also required for all other city-sponsored events. Other environmental disposal services are incorporated into events as well. For example, expired prescription drug collections have been implemented at the Phillips Park Festival and the Kiwanis Club Indian Creek Clean-Up event in partnership with the Fox F.R.E.S.H. Medication Take Back Group.

Instituted a 'Buy Recycled' procurement policy in 1992 for the purchasing of recycled products. This establishes sound practice of reduction, reuse, recycle and recovery of waste generation within City buildings and facilities. The City's central services also uses wall paints with low volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that are less toxic than conventional paint products.

Transitions municipal operations from paper to electronic distribution of information when possible through technologies such as Click2Gov and Microsoft SharePoint. Currently, Click2Gov offers online information for building and permitting activities (i.e. inspection scheduling and reports) and current information on development review processes. City staff have begun transitioning to a Microsoft SharePoint intranet service for paperless interaction (i.e. announcements, paid time off sheets, employee information).

Practices reduction and reuse of office materials across all departments (i.e. ACTV Public Access Channel recycles over a thousand tapes every couple years). Equipment Services, the city division with largest production of waste, reduced landfill waste by 33%. This effort was initiated by a waste audit, and was achieved by implementing new recycling procedures and employee education.

Replaced fifteen metal garbage barrels with 3 solar-powered trash compacting units in the City's Phillips Park. The new trash units have an attached recycling bin for plastic bottles and cans and engage visitors in sustainable waste management practices.

WATER QUALITY AND CONSERVATION

Awarded the Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program Grant by the IEPA in 2007 to assist in preparing a plan that integrates green infrastructure and stormwater best management practices (BMPs) in a study area adjacent to the Fox River. Efforts have also been increased to decombine sewer systems, especially in the downtown areas, to reduce the amount of diverted overflow into the river.

Partnered with the State of Illinois to pass Rivers Edge Redevelopment Initiative legislation allocating EPA grants in the amount of \$2 million to help with environmental remediation along the Riverfront. This legislation also allows up to 20 million dollars in tax incentives and funding to help revitalize downtown riverfronts in Aurora, Rockford and E. St. Louis (River Edge Redevelopment Zones). In 2007, the City partnered with the IEPA and cleaned a 1.5 acre landfill site (KiddieKar) adjacent to the Fox River. This former landfill site is planned to be part of the future RiverEdge Park development.

Began an annual water conservation education campaign and permanent summer watering restrictions in 2006. Developers are also provided educational information on water efficiency measures for new construction projects during the permitting process.

Recognized for exceptional tap water quality and received the Illinois Section American Water Works Association Water award in 1999, 2000, 2007, 2008 and 2009. Aurora has also won the Kane County Water Association Water Taste Test award in 1998, 2000, 2006 and 2008.

EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Aurora is the first among five other communities to receive the Clean Air Counts Platinum Award. This award requires a multifaceted, rigorous approach to air quality improvement. Examples of outreach include the “What You Can Do To Improve Air Quality” and the “Together We Care for Clean Air” informational brochures. In addition to education and outreach efforts, participating communities report on energy efficiency, low VOC, and native landscaping or workplace transportation options. In 2007, the City partnered with Clean Air Counts and held two public events handing out over 200 environmentally-friendly gas cans in exchange for aged gas cans. The Clean Air Counts program was also promoted to the business sector through a partnership with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

Conducts ongoing water conservation and quality outreach as part of the EPA Clean Waters Act Section 319 which emphasizes nonpoint source water pollution reduction. Outreach has included information on rainbarrels and other resource conservation practices at events such as the City Expo and Fiesta de Luces.

Includes ‘green’ information in the quarterly Aurora Borealis newsletter that is distributed citywide. Past editions have incorporated information on resource conservation, emissions reduction, recycling and local environmentally themed events.

Host annual Mayor’s Awards for Historic Preservation and Excellence in Downtown Property Improvements. This engages and awards adaptive reuse property owners for redeveloping in the city core.

Operate the Aurora Farmers Market from June to October in partnership with local product and service providers such as organic farmers and local craftspeople.

Implemented and promoted employee recycling by placing media such as ‘Green Guideline’ posters at the Central Garage and informing and training employees on proper use.

Partnered with the World Wildlife Foundation to promote Earth Hour 2008 in a symbolic effort to reduce energy consumption by turning off all non-essential lights for one hour. Earth Hour 2008 was described as the largest demonstration of public concern about climate change in history; lights went out in 4,085 cities in 88 countries worldwide.