Municipal Elections Overview

Aurora’s regular municipal election is held every two years on the first Tuesday in November in odd-numbered years for the purpose of voting on the City’s elected officials. All Aurora municipal elections are non-partisan, that is, persons are elected to office without consideration of political party affiliation. The Aurora elected offices include a mayor who is elected by all voters in the City, one council member from each of the City’s six wards elected by persons residing within the respective ward, and four council members at-large elected by all voters in the City. Each term of office is four years, beginning at the first regular council meeting in December following the election, and persons may serve three consecutive four-year terms. Only a portion of the offices are voted on at each election, thereby staggering the terms and providing continuity of government.

In 2017, the following municipal offices will be on the ballot: Wards I, II, and III and two council members at-large.

Elections may also be held at other times. Ballot issues, those which relate to financial matters such as taxes or debt can be voted on at the regular municipal election and may also be voted on at the November election held in even-numbered years, known as the state-wide general election. Nonfinancial matters may be voted on in November of both odd- and even-numbered years in accordance with timeframes set out in state statute and municipal charter and ordinance. Finally, a special election may be held on dates other than those set out above in accordance with state statute and the Aurora city code. All regular municipal elections of the City of Aurora are managed by the city clerk and are coordinated with the county clerks in Adams, Arapahoe, and Douglas counties. All election forms are obtained from the city clerk’s office and all filings are made therein. County clerks are responsible for all federal, state, and county elections.

The Aurora Election Commission is responsible for establishing new ward boundaries and providing input on election-related legislation as needed. In the event of a tie vote for any municipal office or on any ballot question or ballot issue, the Commission determines by lot the person(s) to be elected or the outcome of the ballot question or ballot issue.
Qualifications for Municipal Office

Persons wishing to serve as Aurora elected officials must meet the following requirements:
- Registered elector
- Citizen of the United States
- 21 years of age
- Resident in Aurora for at least one year prior to the date of the election
  If elected from a ward, a one-year resident and registered elector of that ward prior to the date of the election

Any person convicted of a felony shall not become a candidate nor hold elective office. No council member shall hold any other elective public office nor be a salaried employee of the City of Aurora.

Expectations of Elected Officials

The City Council meets regularly at least twice a month on Mondays. The regular meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. and is generally preceded by a study session and, if necessary, an executive session. Special meetings of the council may also be called. Except for executive sessions, all meetings where the transaction of business occurs are considered public meetings and are open to the public. Six members of the Council constitute a quorum.

Agendas and packets outlining matters to be decided by the City Council are available by the end of the day on Friday prior to the date of the regular meeting in order to afford members time to review the items they are being asked to consider and vote upon.

In addition to attendance at Council meetings, council members’ attendance is required at meetings of one or more of the City’s policy committees to which they have been appointed. Council members may also be selected to serve on boards or committees of regional, state, and national organizations. Council members regularly conduct ward meetings and also attend community and ward events and activities.

Three workshops are held each year, one in February (winter workshop), one in April (spring workshop), and one in the fall (budget workshop).

Powers of Elected Officials

The City of Aurora is a home-rule municipality with a council-manager form of government.

The mayor presides at all City Council meetings and votes only in order to break a tie. He is recognized as the head of City government for all ceremonial and legal
purposes and executes and authenticates all legal documents requiring the signature of such official.

A mayor pro tem is elected from within the City Council to serve in the mayor’s absence and with all of the powers granted to the mayor, except that the mayor pro tem may vote on all matters that come before the City Council. The members of the City Council are vested with all powers of the City of Aurora not otherwise limited or conferred upon by the city charter.

**Getting on the Ballot**

Persons wishing to run for municipal office must obtain from and file nomination petitions with the city clerk. The petitions shall be signed by registered electors residing within the corporate limits of Aurora if for mayor and city council at-large positions, and within the corporate limits of Aurora and the ward which the person wishes to represent as follows:

- For mayor and council members at-large 100 signatures
- For council members from within a ward 50 signatures

It is strongly recommended that more than the required number of signatures be obtained as some signatures may not qualify as valid.

Registered electors may sign nomination petitions as follows:

- One petition for the office of council member from within a ward
- One petition for the office of mayor
- Two petitions for the office of council member at-large

Registered electors are encouraged to sign in blue or black ink for legibility purposes and no person shall sign any nomination petition for another person.

Nomination petitions may be obtained from the city clerk’s office and circulated beginning on the 90th day prior to the election. Petitions must be filed no later than 5:00 p.m. on the 70th day prior to the election. For the November 7, 2017 regular municipal election, the first day to circulate petitions is **August 9** and the last day to file petitions is **August 29**.

If, after review of each signature, it is determined that any nomination petition does not contain the requisite number of signatures, a candidate has until 62 days before the date of the election (for the November 7, 2017 regular municipal election, until September 6) to amend the nomination petition by collecting additional signatures.

A candidate may circulate the petition himself or other persons may circulate the petitions on behalf of a candidate.
Withdrawal from Candidacy

A person who has been nominated as a candidate and has accepted the nomination may withdraw as a candidate by filing a written affidavit with the city clerk at any time prior to 63 days before the day of the election (for the 2017 regular municipal election, until September 4).

Write-in Candidates

No votes for a write-in candidate shall be counted unless a notice of intent to be a write-in candidate is filed with the city clerk prior to 63 days before the day of the election (for the November 7, 2017 regular municipal election, no later than September 4).

Additional Requirements

The Aurora city code contain provisions and set forth certain requirements for candidates regarding campaign contributions and expenditures. All filings are done electronically and the instructions and filing deadlines are included in the separate e-Filing manual.

Form of Elections

The Uniform Election Code of 1992, articles 1-13 of Title 1 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, provides that elections held in November of odd-numbered years are to be considered coordinated elections, ones in which several jurisdictions with overlapping boundaries and the same voters hold elections on the same day. It further provides that these elections are to be conducted by the county clerk and recorder. Since the adoption of the act, the City of Aurora has participated in coordinated elections. These elections are conducted as mail ballot elections. In a mail ballot election, ballots are automatically mailed to all active registered electors without their having to request a mail ballot.

Election Campaign Sign Requirements

Election campaign signs cannot exceed six (6) square feet in area and cannot be taller than four (4) feet from the ground. All signs must be removed seven (7) days after the election.

Aurora Municipal Election Code

Elections in the City of Aurora are governed by the Aurora Municipal Election Code, Chapter 54. A link to the code can be found on the City’s website at: http://www.municode.com/Library/CO/Aurora
IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES FOR CANDIDATES
CITY OF AURORA

Please note the following:

1) A person may become a candidate at any time and is considered a candidate when the following conditions are met: publicly announcing an intention to run for elective office AND has received a contribution or has made an expenditure in support of such candidacy. Such public announcement shall also include any intention to explore the possibility of seeking an office. Within ten (10) days after becoming a candidate, a “Candidate Affidavit and Statement of Qualifications” must be filed with the City Clerk.

2) Prior to accepting any contributions, a candidate must file a “Registration of Candidate Committee” with the City Clerk.

First day to circulate nomination petitions August 9, 2017
Pre-election campaign report due August 9, 2017
Last day to circulate nomination petitions August 29, 2017
Last day to amend nomination petitions September 5, 2017
Last day to withdraw from nomination September 4, 2017
Last day to file intent to be write-in candidate September 4, 2017
Last day to file petition for office due to vacancy in prior nomination September 4, 2017
Pre-election campaign report due October 17, 2017
Pre-election campaign report due November 3, 2017
Last day to register to vote November 7, 2017
**Election Day** November 7, 2017
Post-election campaign report due December 7, 2017
Financial disclosure report due (if elected) January 8, 2018
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When can I announce my candidacy?

A person may announce his candidacy at any time. For purposes of municipal campaign and financial disclosure, a person becomes a candidate for election if he has publicly announced an intention to seek public office and thereafter has received a contribution in support of the candidacy. A candidate affidavit must be filed with the city clerk within ten (10) days of announcing one’s candidacy.

How do I get nominated for office?

All nominations are made through the circulation of petitions which must be signed by 100 registered electors from within the corporate boundaries of Aurora if running for the offices of mayor or council member at-large or by 50 registered electors residing within the ward if running for a council ward position. Nomination petitions may be circulated beginning on the 90th day prior to the election and must be returned, with at a minimum, the requisite number of signatures by the end of the 70th day prior to the election.

When can I receive contributions or make expenditures?

A candidate may receive contributions after he has registered his committee with the city clerk on a form she provides. All contributions must be deposited in a financial institution in a separate account whose title includes the name of the candidate committee.

Are there any limits on the amount of money I can receive?

There are no contribution limits. However, a candidate committee shall not accept any cash contribution that is more than $100.

Are there any restrictions regarding who may contribute to my campaign?

Yes. A candidate committee shall not accept contributions from a candidate committee of another candidate, from any natural person who is not a citizen of the United States, from a foreign government, or from a foreign corporation that does not have authority to transact business in Colorado pursuant to Title 7, article 115, C.R.S.

Additionally, a candidate committee shall not accept a total contribution in excess of $25,000 from a prior candidate committee of the same person that was established for a different public office.
I know I have to file intermittent campaign finance reports. How and where do I file?

The City of Aurora has an online campaign filing system called e-Filing. Each candidate is provided with a unique password which is used to gain access to the system. Once the filing is completed and submitted, it is reviewed by the city clerk’s office and then becomes a public record.

What happens if I miss the campaign filing deadline?

The city clerk is authorized to fine a candidate $50 per day for each day any statement or other information that is required to be filed is not filed by the close of business on the date due.

If I have funds left in my candidate committee account, what can I do with it?

Unexpended campaign contributions to a candidate committee may be:
- contributed to a political party
- donated to a charitable organization recognized by the IRS
- returned to the contributors
- retained by the committee for use by the candidate in a subsequent campaign
- contributed to a candidate committee established by the same candidate for a different public office.

If elected to office, the office holder may use unexpended campaign contributions from his candidate committee as follows:
- voter registration
- political issue education
- postsecondary educational scholarships
- to defray reasonable and necessary expenses related to mailings and other communications to constituents
- any expenses that are directly related to official duties as an elected official, including purchase/lease of office equipment and supplies, room rental for public meetings, necessary travel and lodging expenses for legislative seminars, conferences and meetings, and telephone and pager services.

What if I change my mind about running for office?

If you have already filed your nomination petition, you can file a written, notarized affidavit declaring you are withdrawing your candidacy with the city clerk. The affidavit must be filed prior to sixty-three (63) days before the election.
What are the requirements for election signs?

The signs cannot be larger than six (6) square feet in size more than four (4) feet from the ground. They can only be placed on developed property in all zoning districts, cannot be placed on public property and in the public rights-of-way and must be removed seven (7) days following the date of the election.
DEFINITIONS

**Absentee ballot** means a ballot requested by an eligible elector to be sent to a designated address in lieu of the elector voting in person at a polling place.

**Active voter** means a person who has voted in the last general election.

**Ballot** means the list of candidates, ballot issues, and ballot questions an eligible elector can vote on at an election.

**Ballot drop-off location** means a place identified by the designated election official to which electors may return their mail-in ballots instead of returning them by mail.

**Ballot issue** means a non-recall, citizen-initiated petition or legislatively-referred measure which concerns local government matters arising under section 20 of article X of the state constitution, i.e., matters of taxes, debt, and other financial matters. Ballot issues can only be voted on at elections held each November.

**Ballot issue notice** means information sent to all registered electors consisting of the ballot title, full text of the proposed ballot issue, fiscal information, and two (2) summaries, one in favor of and one in opposition to the proposed ballot issue. The summaries are compiled from comments filed by interested eligible electors with the city clerk’s office. Petition representatives are required to prepare the summary of comments filed in favor of an initiated or referred ballot issue and may file comments as well. Summaries created from comments filed in opposition to the ballot issue are prepared by the city clerk. A ballot issue notice is sometimes referred to as the blue book or the TABOR notice.

**Ballot question** means any legislative matter involving a citizen-initiated or referred petition or legislatively-referred measure other than a ballot issue. Ballot questions can be voted on at elections held in November or at a special election, in accordance with state statute and the City’s municipal charter and code.

**Candidate** means a person who aspires to or is qualified for an elected office. At the municipal level, a person becomes a candidate after obtaining a specified number of signatures of registered electors on a nomination petition.

**Coordinated election** means an election where more than one political subdivision with overlapping boundaries or the same electors holds an election on the same day and the county clerk and recorder conducts the election on behalf of the political subdivisions.
**General election** means the statewide election held on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November of each even-numbered year.

**Initiative** means the right of registered electors to originate municipal legislation by obtaining signatures on a petition resulting in enactment of an ordinance by the governing body or in a vote by the electorate.

**Issue committee** means two or more persons who are elected, appointed, or chosen, or have associated themselves, for the purpose of accepting contributions and making expenditures to support or oppose any ballot issue or ballot question of the city.

**Mail ballot election** means an election where eligible electors may cast ballots by mail instead of in person. In a mail ballot election, ballots are automatically sent to all active voters without having to request one.

**Nomination petition** means the form used for obtaining the required number of signatures of registered electors which is circulated by or on behalf of a person seeking to become a candidate for political office.

**Political committee** means a special-interest group not endorsed by a candidate or political party organized to engage in the raising and spending of money for campaigning for (or against) a candidate.

**Primary election** means the partisan election held on the second Tuesday of August of each even-numbered year for the purpose of determining which candidates will appear on the statewide general election ballot.

**Recall** means the ability of eligible electors to remove an elected official from office through the voting process. An elected official cannot be the subject of a recall until he has held elective office for a period of six months.

**Referendum** means the rights of registered electors, within 30 days after publication of an ordinance and by obtaining signatures on a petition, to require the city council to reconsider the ordinance or to submit it to the electorate for a vote.

**Referred measure** means a ballot issue or ballot question placed on the ballot by the governing body of a political subdivision for a vote by the eligible electors of that political subdivision.

**Registered elector** means an elector who has complied with the registration requirements of the state of Colorado and who resides within or is eligible to vote in the political subdivision calling the election.

**Regular municipal election** means the election designated by state statute or municipal charter or ordinance that is held for the purpose of electing persons to office.
**Special election** means any election, other than the regular municipal election, called by the governing body for the purpose of voting on ballot issues and ballot questions.

**TABOR (Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights)** means Section 20, Article X of the Colorado Constitution, requiring elections on specified dates for the purpose of voting on ballot issues pertaining to taxes, debt, and other financial matters.

**Voter assistance and polling centers (vote centers)** means locations designated by the county clerk for the following purposes: register to vote; update voter registration; emergency registration; request a new mail-in ballot; request a replacement mail-in ballot; drop off a voted mail-in ballot; vote on an accessible voting machine.
CONTACT INFORMATION

The following information is provided to assist you with election related questions.

The Aurora city clerk’s office is the main point of contact for information regarding nomination petitions, election deadlines, campaign finance and filings, and general ballot information.

The various county clerk offices are the main point of contact for voter information and can provide candidates with voter registration lists and voter activity in prior election years.

Aurora City Clerk’s Office
15151 E. Alameda Parkway
Aurora, CO 80012
303-739-7094
Janice Napper, Assistant City Manager/City Clerk
Karen Goldman, Deputy City Clerk

Adams County Clerk and Recorder’s Office
4430 S. Adams County Parkway
Brighton, CO 80601
720-523-6020
Stan Martin, Clerk and Recorder

Arapahoe County Clerk and Recorder’s Office
5344 S. Prince St.
Littleton, CO 80120-1136
303-795-4200
Matt Crane, Clerk and Recorder

Douglas County Clerk and Recorder’s Office
125 Stephanie Place
Castle Rock, CO 80109
303-660-7444
Merlin Klotz, Clerk and Recorder
Although the election is still months away, Aurora Channel 8 has begun preparing its comprehensive city election and campaign coverage to help ensure that Aurora voters are informed regarding the Council candidates and their positions.

CANDIDATES FORUMS
In late September or early October, Aurora 8 will record and cablecast Candidate Forums for City Council seats up for election. Participating as a candidate in these forums will allow you to present your viewpoints directly to Aurora's electorate during a critical phase of your campaign. For additional exposure, the forums will be repeated on Aurora Channel 8 during the month prior to the election and also be available on-demand via the internet. In addition, the forums will be made available for check-out, through the Aurora Public Library system, so those citizens without cable television or internet access will have access to the information.

NEWS COVERAGE
We will also be providing limited coverage of the candidates and their activities during our information program "Aurora News Weekly." You should plan to have your campaign manager, scheduler or press representative keep us on your mailing list to inform us about your appearances, activities and position statements. As always, coverage is based on the availability of resources.

ELECTION NIGHT
You will be kept informed as the Election Night coverage format is developed and finalized as you will likely be contacted to appear for a television interview during the evening. Election Night is live television and frequently the schedule can be thrown off, so please be patient if you are scheduled for an interview. Please know that the production staff will do their best to get your interview completed as close as possible to the scheduled time. Otherwise, plan to watch Aurora 8 throughout the evening for the most current municipal election returns.

PAID POLITICAL ANNOUNCEMENTS
Consistent with Aurora Community Television policy, we offer the opportunity to purchase time on Channel 8 for paid political announcements. Information regarding paid announcements is contained in the attached "Aurora 8 Policy for Politically Oriented Programming during Elections."

INFORMATION REQUEST FORM
Also attached is an Information Request Form. Please complete this attachment and return it to the address indicated on the form. This will allow us to keep you informed of our election activities. I hope this information is helpful, if you have any questions or wish to schedule production or air time, please contact Randy Simpson at (303) 739-6605.
AURORA8 POLICY FOR POLITICALLY ORIENTED PROGRAMMING DURING ELECTIONS

Aurora 8’s responsibility during election years is to provide its viewers with information and forums pertaining to candidates and issues relevant to the Aurora electorate. Because these programs may contain controversial viewpoints, Aurora 8 has developed the following policy so that established guidelines will exist to ensure fairness in the presentation of issues on the channel.

Programming Policy
It shall be the policy of Aurora 8 to produce programs that feature only those candidates for public office or ballot issues and questions that have been legally certified by the city or county clerk’s office.

Aurora 8 staff may, from time to time, serve as hosts or moderators of politically oriented programming; the purpose of their position is not to offer political opinions but to simply act as a facilitator of such programs.

When programs produced or aired by Aurora 8 are determined by Aurora 8 to require a disclaimer, such disclaimers shall read:

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE FOLLOWING (OR PRECEEDING) PROGRAM ARE NOT THOSE OF THE CITY OF AURORA, OR THE STAFF OR MANAGEMENT OF AURORA 8.

This disclaimer shall appear at the head of the telecast and following the credits on the program; no other references in video or text shall appear in the program or before or after this disclaimer. Aurora 8 newscasts, news interviews, news documentaries and on-the-spot coverage of news events are exempt from the provisions of this policy as to be in accordance with Section 315(a) of the Communications Act of 1934 as amended.

Additionally, all paid political announcements are exempt from the provisions of this policy. Should a legally qualified candidate or registered organization wish to express an opposing viewpoint to that which was presented in an Aurora 8 production, the following procedures apply:

- Aurora 8 will respond within three (3) working days as to the disposition of their request.
- Aurora 8 reserves the right to determine the length allowed for responses and the order and sequence of appearance of the response. No responses to any program or viewpoint shall be scheduled so as to interrupt the content or flow of the original program.
- All responses must address only those points mentioned in the original program; no additional opinions, topics, or points of view will be allowed.
Aurora 8 reserves the right to ensure that all responses strictly adhere to the regulations and rules of the Communications Act of 1934 as amended. Any nonconforming responses may not be produced and/or aired on Aurora 8.

**Paid Political Announcements/Commercial Time**

Aurora 8 offers paid political announcements/commercial time. Fees for airing paid political announcements will be based on the following fee schedule:

- 12, thirty second spots - $360.00
- 12, sixty second spots - $720.00

Fees are subject to change on an annual basis as authorized by City Council.

Airing times for paid political announcements/commercial time are on a first come, first serve basis and will be limited to time available between scheduled programming - generally, one minute available following or proceeding each scheduled program.

Paid political announcements/commercial time aired must meet Aurora 8 technical standards for professionally produced video productions. Aurora 8 will produce candidate spots on a time available basis at rates in accordance with City of Aurora fee schedules. The fee schedule is available in the City's budget office and is approved by the City Council.

Paid political announcements/commercial time will be preceded by the following videotext message: "THE FOLLOWING IS A PAID POLITICAL ANNOUNCEMENT"

Paid political announcements/commercial time shall identify the organization that has paid for the announcement.
AURORA 8 ELECTION 2015
CANDIDATE INFORMATION REQUEST FORM

CANDIDATE

Name ________________________________
Address ______________________________
City ___________ State ____ Zip ________
Daytime telephone ________________
Home telephone _________________
Email ____________________________
(Information will not be shared with outside Organizations)

CAMPAIGN MANAGER

Name ________________________________
Address ______________________________
City ___________ State ____ Zip ________
Daytime telephone ________________
Home telephone _________________
Email ____________________________
(Information will not be shared with outside organizations)

Please include with this form the following information:

- Official Campaign Photograph
- Biography or Resume Vita
- Platform or Position Papers on the Issues

Please return this form and other information to:
RANDY SIMPSON, PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR
AURORA 8, Television Services
1st FLOOR SOUTH
15151 E. Alameda Pkwy
Aurora, CO, 80012