AGENDA

Planning and Economic Development Policy Committee

Wednesday, October 28, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING

Public Participation Dialing Instructions
Call in Number: 720.388.8447
Access Code: 324 694 090#

Click here to join the Teams meeting

Council Member Amy Wiles, Chair
Council Member Françoise Bergan, Vice Chair
Council Member Alli Jackson, Member

Council Goal: Be a great place to locate, expand and operate a business and provide for well-planned growth and development.

Pages

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Approval of Minutes** 1

   September 18, 2026 Draft Subject to Approval - Council Member Wiles

3. **General Business**

   3.a **Business Development – Retail Strategy Implementation Plan** 5

   Sponsor: Françoise Bergan, Council Member
   Staff Source/Legal Source: Cindie Perry, Business Development Manager/Lena McClelland, Senior Assistant City Attorney
   Estimated Time:25 Minutes

4. **Miscellaneous Matters for Consideration**

   4.a **Aurora Economic Development Council**

   NO REPORT

   4.b **Havana Business Improvement District**

NO REPORT

4.c Aurora Chamber of Commerce

NO REPORT

4.d Planning Commission

NO REPORT

4.e Oil and Gas Committee

34

Brad Pierce

Please see the Oil and Gas Committee updates in the agenda packet.

4.f Business Advisory Board

NO REPORT

4.g Retail

NO REPORT

4.h Small Business

NO REPORT

4.i Visit Aurora

36

Randi Morritt

Please see the Visit Aurora updates in the agenda packet.

5. Confirm Next Meeting Date

Tentatively scheduled for December 11, 2026, at 10:00 AM MT.

6. Adjournment

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date: **September 18, 2026**
Time: **1:30 p.m.**

Members Present	Chair, Council Member Amy Wiles, Vice Chair, Council Member Françoise Bergan, Council Member Alli Jackson
Others Present	Aja Tibbs, Alison Lueck, Ashvina Patel, Becky Hogan, Bill Wichterman, Brandon Cammarata, Brenda Kenney, Cesarina Dancy, Chris Fellows, Cindie Perry, Cindy Shearon, Claudia Yanez, Crystal Baca, Daniel Krzyzanowski, Darcy Dodd, Darren Akrie, David Schoonmaker, Deborah Bickmire, Diana Rael, Jake Calegari, Jeannine Rustad, Jeffrey Moore, Jeremiah Fettig, Jonathan Woodward, Julie Patterson, Justin Andrews, Kelly Bish, Laura Perry, Lena McClelland, Leticia Callanen, Maria Alvarez, Maurice Healy, Sarah Wile, Taryn Farber, Tom Oldenburg, Wendy Vue

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wiles called the virtual meeting to order and noted that all committee members were present.

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2. APPROVAL OF AUGUST 26, 2026, DRAFT MINUTES–COUNCIL MEMBER WILES

2.a. The minutes were approved.

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3. GENERAL BUSINESS

3.a. SBDC 2025 Annual Update

Summary of Issue and Discussion:

Ashvina Patel, Executive Director SBDC Aurora South Metro; Jeannine Rustad, Director of Planning and Business Development; Cindie Perry, Business Development Manager

Ashvina Patel presented the Colorado Small Business Development Center (SBDC) annual update, emphasizing confidential advising, training, resource referrals, and integration with city programs rather than parallel services. Aurora's 2025 results included 474 clients advised, 619 advising hours, 14 business starts, 23 jobs created or retained, $620,261 in increased sales, and $2,143,000 in capital formation.
A. Patel cautioned that impact reporting relied on client surveys with approximately 10%–15% participation and did not measure the center's full economic impact.

Programs included Fired Up startup and acquisition training, TechSource, child care assistance, and exit planning. Statewide TechSource's 2024 results included 17 SBIR and STTR awards exceeding $12 million, over $56 million raised, and 88 jobs created. Exit planning addressed nearly 50,000 projected U.S. business-owner retirements monthly over the next decade. LivePlan, the Small Business Scorecard, and quarterly Funding Fridays supported proactive planning, financial health, and financing.

CM Bergan requested startup types, sales-growth information, and business openings and training participation by ward, emphasizing outreach to Southeast Aurora. A. Patel offered aggregated data and an attempt to map results by ward. She described citywide outreach through newsletters, libraries, and retail-center marketing partners. Jeannine Rustad described plans for a customer relations management (CRM) tool to improve business-impact reporting. Cindie Perry explained that it would identify new businesses, report monthly business exits, and flag SBDC referrals; coordination with SBDC's separate system remained necessary. CM Bergan expressed interest in a business town hall. C. Perry planned publicly sourced contacts and geographically targeted invitations; A. Patel could distribute invitations but could not release confidential client lists.

CM Jackson asked about service costs. A. Patel confirmed that advising, resources, and most training were free, although some software-based courses cost approximately $30–$40. In response to CM Wiles, A. Patel explained that a pitch competition had awarded a $25,000 developmental grant and that another depended on sponsor funding. CM Wiles planned to connect her with another interested company. A. Patel encouraged members to promote newsletters and events and coordinate business-attended town halls.

Outcome:
Information only.

Follow-up Action:
A. Patel offered to review the 2025 startup and sales data, provide aggregated findings, and attempt ward-level mapping. C. Perry and A. Patel planned to coordinate CRM referral and impact reporting. C. Perry planned to develop public business contacts for targeted outreach, and A. Patel offered to support a business town hall requested by CM Bergan. CM Wiles planned to connect A. Patel with a company interested in a pitch competition.

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4. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.a. Aurora Economic Development Council

- Jonathan Woodward
  - NO REPORT

4.b. Havana Business Improvement District
- Chance Horiuchi
  - NO REPORT

4.c. Aurora Chamber of Commerce
- Naomi Colwell
  - NO REPORT

4.d. Planning Commission
- Becky Hogan
  - NO REPORT

4.e. Oil and Gas Committee
- Brad Pierce
  - NO REPORT

4.f. Business Advisory Board
- Garrett Walls
  - NO REPORT

4.g. Retail
- Cindie Perry
  - Report included in agenda packet.

Summary of Issue and Discussion:
Cindie Perry, Business Development Manager; Jeannine Rustad, Director of Planning and Business Development
Cindie Perry introduced Aurora Biz Insider, a new two-sided business development newsletter, and presented a correction to its regional retail comparison. She attributed the inflated retail-construction figure to CoStar's inadvertent use of county data which was also counted twice. During review of the corrected display, CM Bergan identified 6,150 square feet under construction. C. Perry clarified that Aurora's 22.3 million square feet of inventory represented total existing retail space, not space available for lease. CM Bergan also noted the 4.2% vacancy rate. Committee members were invited to suggest subjects for future editions.

CM Wiles asked about the CRM implementation timeline. Jeannine Rustad said staff hoped for October while coordinating the trial period, payment timing, and budget. J. Rustad and C. Perry expected the tool to reduce manual work and improve data and communications. CM Wiles welcomed the prospect of CRM dashboards and acknowledged staff outreach to Better Buzz. C. Perry planned to maintain regular contact with the company regarding a possible future Colorado location.

4.h. Small Business

- Ashvina Patel
  - NO REPORT

4.i. Visit Aurora

- Randi Morritt
  - Report included in agenda packet.

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5. CONFIRM NEXT MEETING DATE

Chair Wiles confirmed that the next meeting was scheduled for October 28, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. MT. J. Rustad planned to coordinate with members through Laura Perry regarding an alternative November meeting date because the regular date fell immediately before Thanksgiving.

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6. ADJOURNMENT

APPROVED: _____

Amy Wiles, Committee Chair

CITY OF AURORA
Council Agenda Commentary

Item Title: Business Development – Retail Strategy Implementation Plan
Item Initiator: Cindie Perry, Business Development Manager
Staff Source/Legal Source: Cindie Perry, Business Development Manager, Planning & Business Development; Lena McClelland, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Outside Speaker: n/a
Strategic Outcome: Economically Strong: Building a conducive development climate, a diverse mix of industries and housing options, and fostering economic growth so that our community thrives and remains resilient.

COUNCIL MEETING DATES:

Study Session: N/A

Regular Meeting: N/A

2nd Regular Meeting (if applicable): N/A

Item requires a Public Hearing: ☐ Yes ☒ No

ITEM DETAILS *(Click in highlighted area below bullet point list to enter applicable information.)*

- Waiver of reconsideration requested, and if so, why
- Sponsor name
- Staff source name and title / Legal source name and title
- Outside speaker name and organization
- Estimated time: (For Study Session items only indicate combined time needed for presentation and discussion)

Sponsor: Françoise Bergan, Council Member
Staff Source: Cindie Perry, Business Development Manager, Planning and Business Development / Lena McClelland, Senior Assistant City Attorney

ACTIONS(S) PROPOSED *(Check all appropriate actions)*

☒ Approve Item and Move Forward to Study Session

☐ Approve Item and Move Forward to Regular Meeting

☐ Information Only

☐ Approve Item with Waiver of Reconsideration
Reason for waiver is described in the Item Details field above.

☐ Approve Item as Proposed at Policy Committee

☐ Approve Item as Proposed at Study Session

☐ Approve Item as Proposed at Regular Meeting

PREVIOUS ACTIONS OR REVIEWS:

Policy Committee Name: Planning & Economic Development

Policy Committee Date: N/A

Action Taken/Follow-up: ***(Check all that apply)***

☐ Recommends Approval

☐ Does Not Recommend Approval

☐ Forwarded Without Recommendation

☐ Minutes Not Available

☐ Minutes Attached

HISTORY *(Dates reviewed by City council, Policy Committees, Boards and Commissions, or Staff. Summarize pertinent comments. ATTACH MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS, POLICY COMMITTEES AND BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.)*

At a December 15, 2025 City Council Study Session, staff presented a Retail Strategy framework and outreach plan. On January 12, 2026, City Council approved a Resolution supporting targeted engagement to develop implementation tools for the City's Retail Strategy.

Staff presented Retail Strategy Implementation Plan status updates to Planning & Economic Development Committee on February 25, 2026, March 25, 2026 and April 27, 2026. As part of the Retail Strategy development process, in 2025 staff canvassed approximately 10% of the retail businesses throughout the city to obtain feedback on city processes and priority concerns. Additionally, in alignment with the approved engagement plan, four meetings were held in 2026 with two steering committees comprised of developers, brokers and center owners to gain input from private sector partners on city development processes and tools to support redevelopment, tenant attraction/expansion/retention, and greenfield development. Throughout the summer, staff also completed internal partner reviews for the proposed Retail Strategy Implementation Plan with city leadership, department heads, Small Business Development Center, and Aurora Urban Renewal Authority.

ITEM SUMMARY *(Brief description of item, discussion, key points, recommendations, etc.)*

The Business Development Team is responsible for retail and small commercial business attraction, retention and expansion, which includes completion of the Retail Strategy Implementation Plan, program development and building relationships. The City's Retail Strategy recognizes that while retail is primarily private sector driven, the City has a clear role in creating the conditions that support reinvestment, adaptability, and customer confidence. This report shares staff's proposed Retail Strategy Implementation Plan and three items for policy discussion input for City Council.

RETAIL STRATEGY UPDATE:

The Retail Strategy Implementation Plan was informed through city council input, staff canvassing of approximately 10% of Aurora retail businesses and private sector partner input. Feedback priorities from our business community included: 1) a clean and safe city; 2) streamlined and flexible city processes (permits, events); and 3) general operating cost concerns – many of which are outside of the city's direct control, but within our purview to provide external resources and training with our partners. Feedback priorities from our development community included: 1) speed to market through streamlined city processes; 2) a predictable process; and 3) incentives to support business attraction and rising development and infrastsructure costs.

The Retail Strategy Implementation Plan includes one to five year goals and is intended to function as a living document, with annual updates to City Council.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS:

The Retail Strategy Implementation Plan is our tool to react and adapt strategically with our internal and external regional partners to changing consumer behavior/desires, economic shifts, development trends, and even workforce needs. There are three short term (1 year) policy decisions for discussion with several others identified for late 2027 - 2030 which would be presented at a later date.

YEAR 1 2026-2027 Policy Questions:

1) Should the city create a structured Economic Partnership (Incentive) Policy framework to prioritize strategic incentive criteria, funding sources by incentive type (i.e. sales tax sharing and/or general fund appropriations) and establish review and approval procedures;
2) Should the city, as a subset of the Economic Partnership Policy, create a façade grant program tied to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) improvements. This program is proposed as direct support to the business community priority of Clean & Safe. Business Development staff would work in partnership with

Aurora Police Department PAR officers, the Retail Crime Prevention Program recently launched by Aurora Police Department and Code Compliance/Licensing. This program would require a future general fund budget appropriation in an amount not yet determined or AURA board approval for urban renewal areas; and
3) Should city staff explore code changes to streamline permitting for same use re-occupancy build outs (i.e. restaurant to restaurant).

Any other policy considerations would be brought forward as the Retail Strategy Implementation Plan evolves.

FISCAL IMPACT

Select all that apply. (If no fiscal impact, click that box and skip to "Questions for Council")

☐ Revenue Impact ☐ Budgeted Expenditure Impact ☐ Non-Budgeted Expenditure Impact
☐ Workload Impact ☒ No Fiscal Impact

REVENUE IMPACT
Provide the revenue impact or N/A if no impact. (What is the estimated impact on revenue? What funds would be impacted? Provide additional detail as necessary.)

There is no fiscal impact with moving this item forward to City Council Study Session. Depending on policy decisions made by City Council, there may be fiscal impact for City Council consideration for a future budget cycle.

BUDGETED EXPENDITURE IMPACT
Provide the budgeted expenditure impact or N/A if no impact. (List Org/Account # and fund. What is the amount of budget to be used? Does this shift existing budget away from existing programs/services? Provide additional detail as necessary.)

N/A

NON-BUDGETED EXPENDITURE IMPACT
Provide the non-budgeted expenditure impact or N/A if no impact. (Provide information on non-budgeted costs. Include Personal Services, Supplies and Services, Interfund Charges, and Capital needs. Provide additional detail as necessary.)

No expenditure impact at this time. Depending on policy decisions made by City Council, there is a potential for an unknown fiscal impact for City Council consideration for a future budget cycle.

WORKLOAD IMPACT
Provide the workload impact or N/A if no impact. (Will more staff be needed or is the change absorbable? If new FTE(s) are needed, provide numbers and types of positions, and a duty summary. Provide additional detail as necessary.)

N/A

QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL

N/A

LEGAL COMMENTS

The city manager shall be responsible to the council for the proper administration of all affairs of the city placed in his charge, and to that end he shall have the power and duty to inform the public concerning plans and activities of the council and city administration. (City Charter Section 7-4(j)) (McClelland)

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – OCTOBER 28, 2026

Retail Strategy Implementation Plan

Sponsor: Councilmember Francoise Bergan

From framework to action: priorities, progress and policy recommendations for City Council

Business Development Division · City of Aurora

Today’s Goals
Three things we need from PED

1

Your questions

On the plan's approach, priorities and the work already underway

2

Your input

Overall and on the three policy recommendations for City Council

3

Recommend next step

Forward the Plan and policy items to a City Council Study Session

HOW THE PLAN WAS BUILT

Market-informed, internally vetted

Retail Steering Committee

Developers, brokers, businesses, center managers and industry experts shaped the actions and priorities

Internal review

City Manager's Office, Aurora-South Metro SBDC, Aurora Urban Renewal Authority staff, and city department heads

10

near-term priorities

25

timed action steps

6

ward focused profiles

18

funding sources mapped*

*Funding sources dependent upon availability

PLAN APPROACH

4 goals, 10 pillars, 25 timed actions

GOAL 1

Strengthen, reactivate or redevelop centers

P1 Support existing centers

P2 Adaptive reuse

P3 Business retention

P4 Targeted, transparent incentives

GOAL 2

Improve appearance, safety and walkability

P5 Customer confidence and safety (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design – CPTED)

GOAL 3

Balanced tenant mix and community identity

P6 Owner, operator and broker communication

P7 Right-sizing retail

P8 Growth-ready local businesses

GOAL 4

Frequent visits and activation

P9 Activate and promote retail areas

P10 Support small business hybrid and digital retail capacity

Sequenced
Ongoing → 2028

Resourced
Low / Moderate / High

Funded
18 sources mapped

Measured
2027 baseline

WARD SNAPSHOT

One citywide plan, a different focus in each ward

Ward	Sales tax*	Vacancy	Focus
W1 Original Aurora / Colfax / Stanley Market	$14.7M	4.34%	New DDA, Arts District, local merchants
W2 Northeast / I-70 / DIA / Murphy Creek	$24.3M	.60%	Growth corridors, retail right-sizing
W3 I-225 / Havana / City Center / Mershops Aurora Town Center	$36.0M	5.23%	Town Center, City Center, Havana BID
W4 Havana / South of Mississippi	$37.6M	4.73%	Retain destination centers
W5 South / Seven Hills / Cornerstar	$23.5M	4.63%	Aging secondary and micro-centers
W6 Southeast / Southlands	$23.5M	4.07%	Big-box backfill, lifecycle upkeep

*2025 Business Development figures. Based on brick and mortar commercial sales only, excludes use tax, online and home based business sales tax.

2026 NEAR-TERM PRIORITIES

Ten actions lead in 2026

01 Revised incentive policy for Council
In progress · Q4 2026

02 1–2 priority reinvestment properties per ward
In progress

03 Business Retention, Expansion & Attraction Program
Targeted program delayed due to staffing resources · some work is in progress

04 Xcel Energy LED and efficiency partnership
Not started

05 Urban renewal and downtown redevelopment
Ongoing

06 Quarterly Business Advisory Board updates
Not started

07 Permitting group: fast-track small fit-outs
Not started · 2026–27

08 Annual ICSC report on leads
In progress · annual report in January

09 SBDC support: high-potential and at-risk sectors
Active

10 Business communications strategy
Active · Comms Plan underway

ALREADY UNDERWAY

Staff has begun work on several non-policy tasks

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

“A World of Opportunity”

Sept	Identity artwork, Business Opportunity Brief
Oct	Monthly newsletter, AuroraGov.org/Opportunity Flip book, retail fact sheet, monthly business or partner spotlight
Nov	Ward area fact sheets, Developer & Broker Toolkit, AuroraTV feature, recognition awards

Targets: +20% engagement in 12 months · 1,000+ page views in 6 months · 1 story a month · 1 media placement a quarter

Incentive policy draft
Target Q4 2026, shaped by today

BRE&A program
Broker tours, roundtables, CRM

Priority properties
1–2 per ward being identified

SBDC referrals and ICSC
Businesses flagged; leads tracked

Urban renewal / DDA
Ongoing with AURA and launching with Aurora DDA

TACTICAL VS. POLICY

Most of the plan is for staff to execute

Tactical: staff-led, existing authority

- BRE&A, broker tours, roundtables
- Priority properties by ward
- Communications and branding – BisNow activation
- SBDC referrals, ICSC report, BAB updates
- Center performance review, data hub
- Xcel partnership, grant sourcing
- Colfax partnership, wayfinding, entry package
- Supply chain attraction, incubation, skills training

Policy: needs Council direction

1. Economic Partnership Policy / guidelines
2. CPTED facade grant (appropriation)
3. Fast-track code: fit-outs, same-use reoccupancy

LATER PHASE CONSIDERATIONS

Sales tax increment fund (2029+) · retail right-sizing code (late 2027-28) · overlay districts · code flexibility for small footprints, master plan process review (2027-28)

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 1

Formalize an Economic Partnership Policy

A policy or Council-adopted guidelines with priority criteria, so incentive decisions are transparent, consistent and tied to Retail Strategy goals.

Sample priority criteria · illustrative only, not proposed guidelines

High net **new** sales tax

New to Aurora, or high-profile expansion

Missing use types

Concepts not in Aurora today; recapture leakage

Sense of place

Draws visits and feeds adjacent sales tax producers

Reinvestment

Aging centers and ward priority properties; tax increment sharing model

Clear process

But-for test, cost-benefit review, performance terms

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 2

Requires AURA approval or general fund budget appropriation

CPTED facade improvement grant

What it funds

- Exterior lighting
- Sightline-friendly landscaping
- Visibility and access control
- Facade and signage upgrades
- APD-compatible cameras

Why

Safer, better-looking centers (goals G1 and G2); mimics prior security grant

Where

Aging centers and corridors, especially W1, W3, W4, W5

How

Owner match; APD CPTED review before award; reimbursed on completion

Leverage

Potential Xcel LED/sign grants (~15% owner match); AURA; Future DDA funds



POLICY RECOMMENDATION 3

Fast-track code for small spaces

Pursue code changes that create a fast-track path for small tenant fit-outs and same-use reoccupancy.

PROBLEM

Small vacancies take too long and cost too much to fill

APPROACH

A working group defines size limits and review tracks, then drafts code changes

OUTCOME

Faster openings: a non-financial incentive with no budget cost

Working group: Current Planning, Development Services/Building, Fire, APD, Licensing, SBDC, DDA, BIDs · Also: explore temporary use permits process for events

FUTURE CONSIDERATION

Policy items for later phases

Item	What it would do	Timing
Sales tax increment fund	Reinvest a share of sales tax growth	Explore
Retail right-sizing standards	Criteria to reduce planned retail (W2)	2027
Code flexibility	Smaller footprints, pop-ups, signage	2027
Overlay districts, tax abatement	District tools and eligibility rules	Explore
Restaurant / grease trap grant	Offset $30K–$100K build-out costs	With budget
Redevelopment regulations	Code review, center access fixes	2028

No action requested today. These come back as the plan advances.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Forward Retail Strategy Implementation Plan to a City Council Study Session to include policy recommendations outlined below

1. Draft an Economic Partnership Policy or guidelines with priority criteria
2. Create a CPTED facade grant, with a budget appropriation request
3. Pursue code changes to fast-track small fit-outs and same-use reoccupancy

Questions for PED

- Right sample criteria for incentives? What's missing?
- Formal incentive policy or guidelines?
- Which item should lead at the Study Session?

Questions?

CITY OF AURORA

RETAIL STRATEGY

Implementation Plan

DRAFT — 2026

Business Development Division
City of Aurora, Colorado

DRAFT

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Aurora's Retail Strategy Framework, approved by City Council in January 2026, establishes an outline for strengthening Aurora's retail and commercial economy. This Implementation Plan, targeted for City Council approval in summer 2026, translates the Retail Strategy's goals and pillars into concrete, actionable steps with assigned partners, timelines, resource levels, and funding sources.

This document was developed in partnership with a steering committee of brokers, developers, and local center managers who contributed implementation ideas, priorities, and insights grounded in Aurora's real-world commercial landscape. The Implementation Matrix incorporates ward-specific strategies and identifies applicable Ward(s) for each action to help focus resources and attention geographically. Ward-level detailed narratives are provided in Appendix A.

2. NEAR-TERM PRIORITIES (2026)

The following actions are recommended as immediate priorities for 2026, based on steering committee input and staff assessment. These items are drawn from the full Implementation Matrix and represent the highest-impact near-term opportunities.

1. Draft a revised incentive policy program (financial and non-financial) for Council consideration, including redevelopment, façade and safety improvements, and shop-local programs. *[2026 Q4 — In Progress]*
2. Identify 1-2 priority properties per Ward for targeted reinvestment outreach. *[2026 — In Progress]*
3. Create a Business Retention, Expansion & Attraction Program (BRE&A) *[2026 — In Progress]*
4. Reconnect with Xcel Energy to reestablish partnership programs such as LED lighting and energy efficiency programs. *[2026 — Not Started]*
5. Continue to identify opportunities for urban renewal and downtown redevelopment for qualifying centers. *[Ongoing — In Progress]*
6. Provide a quarterly update to the Business Advisory Board; identify strategic priorities. *[2026+ — Not Started]*
7. Convene a permitting strategy working group to develop fast-track pathways for small tenant fit-outs and same use re-occupancy. *[2026-27 — Not Started]*
8. Prepare annual ICSC report to track connections and leads generated. *[2026+ — In Progress]*
9. Identify high-potential small businesses (>$50K sales tax/ward) and at-risk businesses (3 year average declining sales tax) and connect with Small Business Development Center advisory support. *[2026 — In Progress]*
10. Launch communications strategies to include city business branding, investment success stories, livability, new businesses, workforce stories, growth messaging (2026/27)

3. GOALS, PILLARS & CODE REFERENCE

The following table is taken from the Retal Strategy framework approved by City Council in January 2026 and cross-references each Pillar to its overarching Goal and lists the key strategic actions. Actions may span multiple Pillars.

Goal (Code)	Pillar (Code)	Key Strategic Actions
Strengthen, Reactivate, or Redevelop Retail Centers (G1)	**Strengthen Existing Retail Centers (P1)**	*Prioritize reinvestment in aging centers; support owner modernization of facades; encourage flexible reconfiguration of spaces; promote coordinated maintenance standards and visual consistency across corridors; partner with property owners to attract healthy tenant mixes*
	Enable Adaptive Reuse and Flexibility (P2)	*Allow flexible use of vacant spaces; streamline signage & exterior approvals; enable pop-up retail; encourage adaptive/creative reuse and activation.*
	Business Retention (P3)	*Proactive monitoring of center performance data; regular check-ins with owners & tenants; identify early signs of distress*
	Deploy Targeted, Transparent Incentive Tools (P4)	*Draft incentive policy (redevelopment, catalytic new development, small business, facade, shop local); deploy Urban Renewal and Downtown Redevelopment tools; explore overlay districts & tax tools*
Improve Appearance, Safety & Walkability of Commercial Areas (G2)	**Improve Customer Confidence and Safety (P5)**	*Support Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies; cross-departmental safety collaboration; clarify City vs. owner responsibilities; strengthen Business Advisory Board coordination*
Promote a Balanced Tenant Mix / Community Identity (G3)	**Facilitate Communication Among Owners, Brokers & Operators (P6)**	*Leverage ICSC connections; work with developers and center owners in redevelopment and growth areas; assist expanding tenants; regular roundtables with owners, brokers & retailers*
	Ensure Right-Sizing of Retail citywide and by Ward. (P7)	*Develop criteria for studies to justify reduction of retail space in master planned communities; maintain retail visibility & accessibility on key corridors*
	Offer Assistance to Local Businesses Poised for Growth (P8)	*Identify high-potential businesses; provide tailored SBDC advisory support; build data-driven insights; support underrepresented businesses; attract supply chain producers*
Encourage Frequent Visits / Activation of Retail Centers (G4)	**Activate and Promote Retail Districts (P9)**	*Support neighborhood branding & wayfinding; highlight investment success stories; launch 'We Are Aurora' and 'Shop Local' campaigns; coordinate with local and regional partners*
	Support Local/Small Business Hybrid & Digital Retail Capacity (P10)	*Provide digital marketing & e-commerce training; connect retailers to online marketplaces; explore business incubation partnerships*

4. IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The matrix below presents recommended implementation action steps sorted by timing, with nearest-term actions first. Partners, Timing, Resource Intensity (L/M/H), and Status (see key). Rows are color-coded by Timing Year for quick visual reference, with Notes appearing in a shaded sub-row where applicable.

Resource Intensity: L = Low (primarily staff time / coordination) M = Moderate (staff time + budget or policy work) H = High (significant budget, capital, or legislative action required)

Color Key (by Timing Year): Ongoing 2026 2026/27 2027 2028

Action Step	Partners	Timing	R.I.	Ward(s)
Deploy Urban Renewal and Downtown Redevelopment tools for blighted centers per state statute. (G1/P4)	Aurora Urban Renewal Authority, Aurora Downtown Development Authority, City Council, Finance	Ongoing	H	**W1, W3, W4**
Identify priority properties by Ward to target reinvestment in aging and underperforming centers (G1/P1)	Property Owners, Aurora Urban Renewal Authority, BIDs, Downtown Development Authority	2026	L	**All**
Identify grants or programs that support property owner-led modernization of facades, lighting, and landscaping (G1/P1)	Property Owners, Xcel Energy, Housing and Community Development	2026	M	**All**
Notes: *Reconnect with Xcel Energy to explore/reestablish LED/sign grant partnership (~15% owner match); facade improvement funding*				
Establish formalized Business Retention, Expansion & Attraction (BRE&A) program (G1, G3/P1, P6)	Property Owners, Brokers, ICSC, Small Business Development Center, ADWorks, Aurora Chamber, Center Managers	2026	M	**All**
Notes: *Leverage ICSC attendance; develop broker tours and open houses; CRM system beneficial for tracking, trend analysis, business communication; partner with property owners and retail brokers to attract healthy tenant mixes; regular roundtables with center owners, brokers, and retailers; communications plan*				
Draft revised incentive program / policy to include financial and non-financial incentives for Council approval (G1/P4)	City Council, City Manager, Legal, Finance, Aurora Police Dept, Code Enforcement, Licensing, Current Planning, Development Services, Aurora Water, Aurora Economic Development Council, Aurora Fire Department	2026	M/H	**All**
Notes: *Include financial and non-financial incentives (streamlining/permitting as non-cash incentive value); eligibility based primarily on 'but-for' test; focus on aged properties and new catalytic development; revisit prior security grant program and ensure police compatibility; revisit and refresh restaurant/grease trap grant program; explore zoning overlay districts and tax abatement eligibility criteria*				

Action Step	Partners	Timing	R.I.	Ward(s)
Provide a quarterly update to Business Advisory Board to strengthen information sharing and identify strategic priorities (G2/P5)	Aurora Police Dept, Business Advisory Board, Aurora Downtown Development Authority, Small Business Development Center	2026	L	**All**
Prepare annual ICSC report to Planning and Economic Development Committee to identify connections, leads generated and a follow up strategy (G3/P6)	Office of Development Assistance	2026	L	**All**
Launch communications strategies to include city business branding, investment success stories, livability, new businesses, workforce stories, growth messaging (G4/P9)	Communications, Aurora Economic Development Council, Aurora Chamber, AuroraTV, Visit Aurora, Downtown Development Authority, Aurora Urban Renewal Authority	2026	M	**All**
Notes: *Goal: elevate public perception; social media + regular AuroraTV business segment*				
Create a small business tenant roundtable program to assess current business conditions, support needs and to develop relevant programming (G3/P6)	Small Business Development Center, A/D Works, Aurora Chamber, property owners, brokers, DDA	2026	L	**All**
Identify high-potential small businesses and at-risk business sectors (3 year average declining sales tax); promote tailored SBDC advisory support (G3/P8)	Finance, Small Business Development Center, Aurora Chamber, A/D Works	2026	L	**All**
Notes: *Support focus on strategic planning, operations, digital presence, workforce readiness; priority focus on smaller independently owned merchants — W1, W3, W4, W5*				
Convene permitting strategy team: streamline intake/review workflow for small tenants; create fast-track same-use permitting; explore special event permitting (Temporary Use Permit) process improvements to drive foot traffic (G2/P5)	Current Planning, Development Services (including Building), Fire, Aurora Police Dept, Licensing, SBDC, Downtown Development Authority, BIDs	2026/27	M	**All**
Notes: *Target: existing tenant fit-outs; small space same-use reoccupancy; discussions in preparation for future work plans*				
Partner with Aurora Urban Renewal Authority, Aurora Downtown Development Authority (DDA), and Community Development Corporation (CDC) to create appealing shopping and entertainment gathering areas along the East Colfax corridor (G1/P4, P6)	Aurora Downtown Development Authority, Community Development Corp, Aurora Urban Renewal Authority	2027	M	**W1**
Notes: *Leverage Arts District; align BREA with Plan of Development; promote needed renovations and adaptive reuse; leverage dense population and walkability of Original Aurora; alignment with the Colfax Community Vision & Action Plan*				
Explore code revisions to encourage flexible reconfiguration of spaces to match today's smaller tenant footprints, mixed use, and/or pop-up retail activations; address repeat code adjustments and streamline signage, lighting, and exterior modification approvals (G1/P1, P2)	Property Owners, Planning, Development Review, Aurora Downtown Development Authority, Licensing, Building	2027	M	**All**
Notes: *Shared kitchens, co-retail, community-serving uses; fast-track permitting pathway for small spaces*				
Conduct an annual review of center performance based on sales tax, vacancy, and crime data (G1/P3)	Finance, Aurora Police Department, Current Planning, GIS	2027	L	**All**

Action Step	Partners	Timing	R.I.	Ward(s)
Build a data hub with hyper-local data — crime, traffic, housing growth, macro sales tax health (G1/P3)	Finance, Aurora Police Department, Public Works, Housing, GIS	2027	M	**All**
Notes: *Data hub to be accessible on city website; includes shopping center performance by ward*				
Review code to establish parameters and process for justifying reduction/'right-sizing' of commercial/retail space in master planned communities in alignment with modern retail trends (G3/P7)	Current Planning, Developers	2027	M	**W2**
Notes: *Make future decisions data driven, taking into account market trends and retail metrics; assess suitability in location and retail type — see Ward 2 focus areas in Appendix A*				
In partnership with Small Business Development Center and other partners, establish annual review process to assess access to certifications and programs for underrepresented businesses (G3/P8)	Small Business Development Center, A/D Works, Aurora Chamber, Minority Business Orgs, Aurora Community College, Tech/Trade Institutions, Finance	2027	L	**W1, W3, W4**
Notes: *Increase procurement and funding opportunities for local owners; enhance digital marketing and e-commerce*				
Working with Aurora Economic Development Council and Metro Denver EDC, create a system to identify and attract supply chain producers to fill city/regional supply chain gaps (G3/P8)	Aurora Economic Development Council, Metro Denver EDC, Property Owners, Denver International Airport	2027	M	**W2, W3**
Explore neighborhood branding, wayfinding, and small-scale activation programs/events in partnership with BIDs, Aurora Urban Renewal Authority, and Aurora Downtown Development Authority (G4/P9)	Aurora Urban Renewal Authority, Aurora Downtown Development Authority, BIDs, Business Groups, Marketing, Current Planning, Office of Development Assistance	2027	M	**W1, W3, W4**
Create an “Aurora Entry Package” campaign for greenfield development attraction	Communications, Aurora Economic Development Council, Aurora Chamber, Aurora TV, Visit Aurora, Current Planning (data; Property Owners/Area Developers	2027	L	**W2**
Notes: *Create an E-470/I70 ‘corridor’ marketing plan to retailers (demographics, rooftops, strategic anchors (DIA/Gaylord), strategic advantages*				
Promote programs connecting local retailers to online marketplaces and logistics support; encourage 'buy-local' campaigns (G4/P10)	Small Business Development Center, Aurora Chamber, Aurora Downtown Development Association, BIDs	2027	L	**All**
Explore areas and partnerships for business incubation centers (G4/P10)	Small Business Development Center, Aurora Community College, Property Owners, Aurora Economic Development Council	2028	H	**W1, W2**
Support skills training in disadvantaged communities focusing on high-demand sectors — healthcare, advanced manufacturing, construction, tech (G3/P8)	A/D Works, Aurora Community College, Employers, Aurora Public Schools, Fitzsimmons, Aurora Economic Development Council	2028	M	All

Action Step	Partners	Timing	R.I.	Ward(s)
Future: Explore all development regulations and requirements applicable to redevelopment and reuse (G1, G2/P1, P5)	Current Planning, Development Services	2028	H	**All**
Future: Identify underperforming centers with access issues; working with property owners, develop strategy for improvements (G1, G2/P1, P5)	Public Works, Traffic Engineering, Current Planning, Long Range Planning, Property Owners	2028	H	**W3, W4, W5**

4.1 Benchmarking Performance Against Regional and National Trends

To track whether implementation is moving the needle — not just whether actions are complete — staff will monitor a small set of business attraction and retention metrics annually, comparing Aurora's performance against its own prior-year baseline and against regional (Metro Denver) and national peer-city benchmarks where comparable data is available. This benchmarking approach is consistent with practices recommended by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) and the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), which distinguish between activity metrics (e.g., outreach volume) and outcome metrics (e.g., investment realized, net company gains).

Metric	What It Tracks
Investment Dollars	Total private capital investment (new construction, redevelopment, tenant build-out) tied to BRE&A-assisted projects, reported annually
Business Outreach (Contacts)	Number of direct contacts with property owners, brokers, and businesses through BRE&A engagement and visits, ICSC, and roundtables — a leading indicator of pipeline activity
New Companies	Count of new business licenses/storefronts opened citywide and by ward, tracked against new closures (net gain/loss)
Closed Companies	Count of business closures citywide and by ward, with cause noted where known (lease/lifecycle, relocation, market exit)
Technical Assistance Activity / Partner Referrals	Number of businesses referred to and engaged with SBDC, A/D Works, Aurora Chamber, or similar partners for advisory support

A note on interpretation: these metrics are intended to monitor trends and inform course correction — not to attribute citywide economic outcomes solely to BRE&A activity. Investment and company-count figures are influenced by broader market conditions (interest rates, regional growth, retailer expansion cycles) outside the City's control. Staff recommends establishing a 2027 baseline year for each metric above, then reporting year-over-year change alongside available regional and national context as part of the annual Implementation Report referenced in Section 6: Next Steps.

5. FUNDING SOURCES REFERENCE

Note: Sources marked * are unfunded/proposed programs requiring further exploration or Council authorization.

The following table summarizes federal, state, local, and partnership funding sources that may be leveraged to support implementation of the Retail Strategy. Staff will continue to monitor new or updated programs.

All funding sources noted below are subject to availability.

Funding Source	Description	Applicable Pillars/Goals
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	Annual HUD grants for cities to fund housing and economic development activities principally benefiting low-to-moderate income persons. Eligible uses include facade improvements, infrastructure, and business assistance.	G1–P1, P2, P4; G2–P5; G4–P10
Economic Development Administration (EDA) Planning Grants*	EDA Planning and Local Technical Assistance programs help communities develop economic development plans, studies and technical assistance. *Requires an active CEDS to qualify.	G1–P3, P4; G3–P8; All
RAISE / BUILD / TIGER Grants (USDOT)	Competitive federal grants for surface transportation infrastructure projects improving safety, sustainability, mobility, and community connectivity.	G1–P1; G2–P5; Future CIP
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)	Federally funded, state-run program supporting employment preparation, job placement, and earnings growth. City can connect residents/businesses through Colorado Workforce Centers.	G3–P8; G4–P10
Urban Renewal / Downtown Development Authority Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	Colorado Urban Renewal and Downtown Development Statutes allow Aurora's Urban Renewal and Downtown Development Authorities to capture incremental tax revenues in designated areas to fund reinvestment and redevelopment.	G1–P1, P4; G2–P5
Sales Tax Increment / Economic Development Fund	Establish a base year and set aside a percentage of incremental sales tax growth for targeted reinvestment.	G1–P4; G3–P8
Xcel Energy LED / Sign Grant Program *	Partnership with Xcel Energy providing grants for LED lighting upgrades and signage improvements. Property owners typically pay ~15% match. City should reconnect to reestablish availability.	G1–P1; G2–P5
Security Grant Program (City) *	City-administered grants to help property owners fund surveillance, lighting, and access control improvements. Ensure APD camera compatibility in program design.	G2–P5
Restaurant Infrastructure Grant / Grease Trap Program *	City grant to offset aging infrastructure costs (e.g., grease traps $30K–$100K) that limit food-tenant build-outs in older centers.	G1–P2; G2–P5
Colorado Advanced Industries Accelerator (AIA)	OEDIT program promoting growth in Colorado's advanced industries (Advanced Manufacturing, Aerospace, Bioscience, Defense and Homeland Security, Electronics, Energy and Natural Resources, Engineering, Quantum & Technology and Information) through grants, public-private partnerships, and early-stage capital access.	G3–P8; Supply Chain

Funding Source	Description	Applicable Pillars/Goals
Colorado Creative Districts Program (OEDIT)	Designates and supports communities leveraging arts, culture, and creativity for economic development. Certified districts gain access to technical assistance and Colorado Tourism Office partnerships.	G4–P9, P10
Colorado Main Street Program (DOLA)	The Colorado Main Street Program offers support for community-led downtown revitalization by helping communities thrive by providing a customizable framework to focus efforts, energy and resources. https://dlg.colorado.gov/main-street	G1–P1; G4-P9
Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)	Competitive grants for outdoor recreation, land conservation, and community open spaces. Applicable to landscape and public-realm improvements.	G1–P1; Future Landscape Code
Main Street America Grants	National Trust for Historic Preservation grants to improve vitality of downtown and commercial districts. Some grants are available to communities without formal Main Street designation.	G4–P9; G1–P1
AARP Community Challenge Grants	Part of the national Livable Communities Initiative; funds immediate improvements to public places, housing, and transportation supporting residents of all ages.	G2–P5; G4–P9
SBA Programs (SBDC / Microloan / 7(a))	Small Business Administration programs provide technical assistance (through SBDC), microloans, and access to capital for small businesses. Key partner for underrepresented business owners.	G3–P8; G4–P10
NeighborWorks America	National nonprofit providing grants and resources for community development, affordable housing access, and community strengthening.	G1–P4 (Housing-adjacent)
Capital Improvement Program (CIP – City)	City's multi-year capital budget for public infrastructure. Key vehicle for streetscape, traffic access, and public-realm investments benefiting commercial corridors.	G2–P5; G1–P1; Future

6. NEXT STEPS

Upon review and endorsement by City Council, the following steps are recommended:

1. Assign lead staff and partner responsibilities for each near-term priority action.
2. Incorporate key implementation actions into staff work plans and the City's annual budget process.
3. Establish semi-annual check-in cadence with the steering committee to review progress and adjust priorities.
4. Present an annual Implementation Report to City Council summarizing accomplishments, updated status, and revised priorities.
5. Integrate this Implementation Plan with Aurora's broader Comprehensive Plan update process.

APPENDIX A: WARD CHARACTERISTICS AND FOCUS AREAS

Many of the strategies in the Implementation Matrix apply across all wards. The following section outlines key retail development patterns and distinct focus areas specific to each ward. Full ward demographics and shopping center inventories are maintained in internal staff records and the City's retail data system.

* The sales tax figures are based on 2025 data for brick and mortar generated sales tax, and excludes use tax, online sales and home based businesses. Vacancy data Costar (9/15/26). Costar data is dependent upon broker/owner reporting.

Ward 1 — Original Aurora / East Colfax Corridor / Stanley Marketplace

Sales Tax Revenue	**$14.7 million**
Retail Rentable Area	**3.4 million sq. ft.**
Retail Vacancy Rate	**4.34%**
Median Household Income[1]	**$64,207**

Ward 1 is Aurora's oldest neighborhood and lowest median income ward. The Colfax Corridor — known as 'Original Aurora' — features a traditional walkable street grid with the greatest concentration and diversity of retail in the ward. Building conditions and business types vary significantly along the corridor. In November 2025, voters approved a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) for the area from Yosemite to Peoria, roughly between 14th and 16th Avenues. Recent closures of the Neighborhood Walmart and Walgreens on Colfax Avenue underscore the need for proactive investment strategies.

Focus Areas:

- Support the Aurora Downtown Development Authority and partner with the Community Development Corporation and Urban Renewal Authority to activate appealing shopping and entertainment areas along the corridor.
- Leverage the Arts District as an economic driver — promote needed renovations, adaptive reuse, and targeted redevelopment to restore corridor vibrancy.
- Support smaller independently owned merchants through specialized programs to educate, train, and connect them with financial resources — including SBDC advisory, certification access, and microloan programs.
- Leverage the ward's dense population and walkable street grid as retail assets in broker outreach and business attraction.
- Address safety and crime through CPTED strategies, cross-departmental coordination, and targeted security incentive programs.

Ward 2 — Northeast Aurora / I-70 / DIA Corridor / to Murphy Creek

Sales Tax Revenue	**$24.3 million**
Retail Rentable Area	**1.2 million sq. ft.**
Retail Vacancy Rate	**.60%**
Median Household Income[1]	**$110,489**

Ward 2 is Aurora's largest (approximately 99 square miles) and fastest-growing ward. Strategically located near Denver International Airport, Buckley Space Force Base, the Colorado Aerotropolis, and the Gaylord Rockies Resort (which generated more than 25% of ward sales tax revenues in 2024), Ward 2 is positioned for significant retail growth. Many master plans in this ward were developed under very different retail market conditions; past case-by-case reductions in commercial space have negatively impacted livability in communities like Murphy Creek, where residents travel significant distances for daily needs.

Focus Areas:

- Leverage major demand generators — Gaylord Rockies, Buckley Space Force Base, DIA, Colorado Aerotropolis, and Port Colorado — for cross-retail traffic and employer-driven amenity demand.
- Focus destination retail and entertainment on key transportation corridors: I-70, E-470, and East Colfax Avenue.

- Work with developers and small businesses in emerging 'main streets' and existing retail centers to service surrounding resident and worker needs.
- Make future decisions on allowing reductions in retail, commercial, and entertainment spaces data driven — accounting for market trends, retail metrics, and locational suitability. Codify parameters through the P7 code review process.
- Assist in attracting and retaining tenants that generate high consumer traffic and cross-shopping opportunities, particularly near major employment and hospitality anchors.

Ward 3 — I-225 / Havana / City Center / Mershops Aurora Town Center

Sales Tax Revenue	**$36.0 million**
Retail Rentable Area	**5.2 million sq. ft.**
Retail Vacancy Rate	**5.23%**
Median Household Income[1]	**$73,485**

Ward 3 is the second most dense ward (6,928 persons/sq. mile) with 51.3% multi-family housing and wide ethnic diversity. Key retail areas include the I-225 corridor — anchored by Mershops Town Center at Aurora — and the Havana Street corridor, supported by the Havana Business Improvement District. East of these corridors, many suburban-style centers have lost high-volume anchors and now lean toward non-retail tenants. City Center, a planned mixed-use urban district at the heart of the ward, represents a significant near-term opportunity.

Focus Areas:

- Collaborate with the Havana Business Improvement District (Havana BID) to further its economic development, identity, and event mission; monitor automobile dealership industry trends along Havana Street and respond proactively to redevelopment opportunities.
- Focus on retention of national anchors at the I-225/Town Center area; maintain destination appeal for retail and entertainment.
- Partner with the City Center developer to leverage the new Sprouts anchor and growing multi-family housing to attract complementary retail.
- Engage Mershops Town Center at Aurora on plans to develop additional mixed uses on the property.
- Encourage renovation and/or redevelopment of suburban-style secondary centers to foster a healthy mix of retail, entertainment, and services.
- Address safety and crime through CPTED strategies and cross-departmental coordination.

Ward 4 — Havana Street / South of Mississippi / I-225 South

Sales Tax Revenue	**$37.6 million**
Retail Rentable Area	**5.2 million sq. ft.**
Retail Vacancy Rate	**4.73%**
Median Household Income[1]	**$81,468**

Ward 4 is Aurora's smallest and most densely populated ward (7,124 persons/sq. mile) and its highest sales tax generating ward. The ward features a range of retail formats: destination centers (The Gardens on Havana, Village on the Park), numerous secondary centers and shadow areas, and value retailers along the I-225 corridor. Any negative change to Ward 4's retail health would have significant citywide fiscal impact.

Focus Areas:

- Focus on retention of existing retail, particularly in destination centers along Havana Street and I-225.
- Collaborate with the Havana BID; respond proactively to redevelopment opportunities along the Havana corridor; support small business development along the corridor.
- For secondary centers or centers that lose anchor tenants, encourage renovation and/or redevelopment to foster a healthy mix of retail, entertainment, and services.
- Leverage value retail along the I-225 corridor as a complementary format to destination centers.

- Address safety and crime through CPTED strategies and cross-departmental coordination.

Ward 5 — South Aurora / Seven Hills / Cornerstar

Sales Tax Revenue	**$23.5 million**
Retail Rentable Area	**4.0 million sq. ft.**
Retail Vacancy Rate	**4.63%**
Median Household Income[1]	**$91,984**

Ward 5 was developed primarily in the mid-1980s to 1990s. Demographics are strong — higher household incomes, home ownership (69.3%), and educational attainment than Aurora's average — supporting healthy retail demand. Eight thriving Power Centers generate approximately 69% of ward sales tax revenues. However, the remaining Secondary Centers and Micro-centers (31% of revenues) face end-of-lifecycle challenges including limited access, reduced drive-by visibility, and competition from newer nearby venues.

Focus Areas:

- Maintain healthy tenant mixes in thriving Primary Centers through active engagement and BRE&A outreach.
- Address end-of-lifecycle Secondary Centers and Micro-centers — encourage renovation or redevelopment to foster a healthy mix of retail, entertainment, and services; assist in filling vacancies for independently owned strip centers.
- Support smaller independently owned merchants through SBDC advisory, training, and financial connection programs.
- Monitor performance of Primary Centers and Shadow Areas; maintain open communications with all stakeholders.

Ward 6 — Southeast Aurora / Southlands

Sales Tax Revenue	**$23.5 million**
Retail Rentable Area	**3.2 million sq. ft.**
Retail Vacancy Rate	**4.07%**
Median Household Income[1]	**$146,611**

Ward 6 is Aurora's southernmost and highest-income ward (median household income $146,611 — highest in the city). Retail development is generally newer and reflects the era of large Power/Lifestyle Centers. The combination of newer development and high-income demographics supports strong anchor tenants and high aesthetic standards. However, Ward 6 faces a specific challenge: replacing big-box tenant vacancies with viable retail uses. Very few Secondary Centers exist due to relatively modern development.

Focus Areas:

- Support strong tenant mixes in Primary Centers and maintain complementary uses in adjacent Shadow Areas; work with center owners on quality and appearance standards as centers approach the 20-year lifecycle mark.
- Develop a proactive strategy for big-box vacancy backfill — identify alternative retail, mixed-use, or service uses compatible with the ward's demographics and center formats.
- Focus on maintaining sufficient space in undeveloped areas for future retail, consistent with market demand.
- Maintain open communications with all stakeholders and monitor changes in retail performance.

1 All median household income is 2024 data.

MEMO

TO: COUNCIL MEMBER AMY WILES, CHAIR PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE
COUNCIL MEMBER FRANCOISE BERGAN, VICE CHAIR
COUNCIL MEMBER ALLI JACKSON

FROM: BRAD PIERCE, CHAIR OIL AND GAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: OIL AND GAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE THIRD QUARTER 2026 REPORT

DATE: OCTOBER 28, 2026

I am pleased to provide the Third Quarter 2026 Report on the activities of the Oil and Gas Advisory Committee. We had one meeting on Microsoft Teams in the Third Quarter on July 15, 2026.

July 15, 2026 Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams:

- Approval of minutes of April 22, 2026 regular meeting.
- Public Comment
    - There was no public comment
- Committee Business Matters
    - Industry applicant interview – Kelsey Olson
        - Committee voted unanimously to recommend Ms. Olson for appointment by City Council
    - Discussed preparations and committee participation for upcoming Boards and Commissions Convention on August 6, 2026
    - Ordinance clarifying membership
        - Went to Council Study Session on June 8, 2026, moved forward to Regular Council meeting and was approved
    - Committee term expirations
        - No expirations in 2026
        - Three committee members are term limited in June 2027
- Staff provided updates on the following:
    - Permitting - Status of Applications since April 22, 2026
    - Inspections performed in the 2Q 2026 on production, pipeline and drilling and completion
    - General Division Updates

- A well was plugged and abandoned located along Jackson Gap Rd which was next to an Aurora Water line
- Update on Royalty Income received by the City
- Update on carbonmapper.org
- Upcoming field tour in August 2026
- 2026 Energy and Environment Symposium presentations have been posted online on the symposium website

Our next meeting was held on October 21, 2026 on Microsoft Teams.

Respectfully Submitted,



Brad Pierce
Chair, Oil and Gas Advisory Committee

Executive Brief

AURORA VISITOR ECONOMY TRENDS & OUTLOOK

Performance Period: **September 2026**

September 2026 Trends & Outlook

Aurora kept filling rooms in September, but the market is paying for occupancy with rate. City-wide occupancy ran 74.4%, up 5.2%, while ADR slipped to $147.12, down 2.4%. RevPAR still rose 2.7%, though the pace cooled sharply from August's double digits. Transient demand held up, up 4.2%, while group eased.

The backdrop weakened further. Consumer confidence fell to its lowest since 2014, the Fed raised rates for the first time since 2023, and Colorado gas reached $4.30, up 37% from a year ago.

The fall traveler is still driving and booking last minute, which favors Aurora's drive markets. The federal shutdown was averted into December, and a strong El Nino points to a better winter, but early-winter bookings are running behind. Rate discipline and group recovery are the near-term watch items.



Impact Legend Positive Growth | Flat/ Marginal Change | Negative Change

Positive Growth

Aurora Lodging Performance

Aurora filled more rooms in September, but the gains came at the expense of rate.

September Snapshot

- **All Aurora hotels occupancy 74.4%, up 5.2% YoY**
- ADR $147.12, down 2.4% YoY
- RevPAR $109.42, up 2.7% YoY
- Transient demand up 4.2%; group demand down 0.7%
- Full-service occupancy up 1.7%; ADR down 1.9%; RevPAR flat
- Group still 42% of room nights
- Full-service YTD RevPAR up 3.6%; ADR up 3.1%

Why This Matters to Aurora:
September extended the occupancy trend but flipped on price. Rooms filled, with occupancy up 5.2%, while ADR slipped 2.4%, so RevPAR growth cooled to 2.7%. The soft spot is pricing, with rate slipping even as rooms filled. Protecting rate and rebuilding group are now the priorities.

*Source: STR, City of Aurora CO+, 28 days ending September 26, 2026; Symphony Tourism Economics, Aurora Full Service+, September 2026



Flat/ Marginal Change

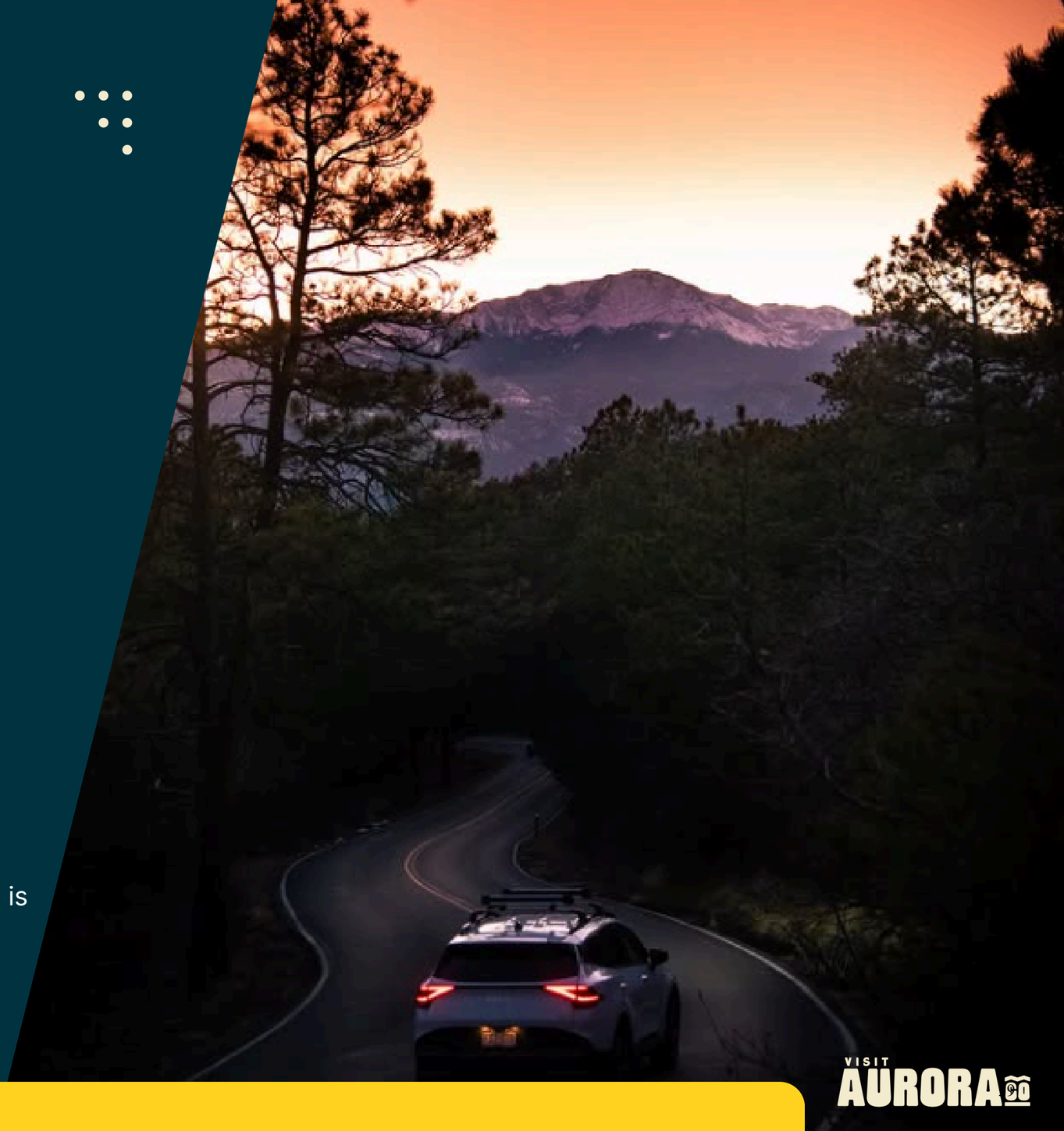
Who Is Visiting Aurora

Aurora's visitor base is overnight, repeat, and drive-market

- Average stay 1.7 days; 84% of trips are overnight;
  - 62% of visits are repeat trips
- Top origin states: Colorado 48.6%, Texas 6.8%, Florida 4.5%;
  - Colorado Springs leads metros at 21.9%, then Fort Collins-Loveland 10.9%
- DEN TSA volume 1.7M in September, down 15.9%; 17.3M YTD, down 2.8%
  - Top air origins Phoenix, Chicago, New York, Houston
- Overnight trip share is running ahead of both 2024 and 2025
  - Florida, Nebraska, and Missouri round out the out-of-state mix

Why this matters to Aurora:
The visitor profile explains why fuel matters. Nearly half of overnight visitors, 48.6%, are in-state, with Colorado Springs alone at 22%. Aurora is insulated from airfare swings but directly exposed to gas prices. Repeat share climbed to 62%.

Source: Azira / U.S. Census Bureau (August) and TSA via Symphony
Tourism Economics, September 2026



VISIT AURORA CO

Flat/ Marginal Change

Inflation & Consumer Sentiment

Inflation held steady, but consumer confidence fell to a decade low and the Fed raised rates.

- University of Michigan sentiment fell to 47.8, down 13.2% year over year
- Conference Board confidence dropped to 81.9, the lowest since 2014
- August CPI held at 3.4% YoY; core eased to 2.4%
- Gasoline up 27.4% and airfares up 23.4% from a year ago
- The Fed raised rates to 3.75 to 4.00%, its first increase since 2023

Why this matters to Aurora:
The mood is now clearly cautious. Confidence at a decade low, a rate hike, and high fuel all point to tighter household budgets. Aurora's value and mid-tier hotels should expect continued price sensitivity, shorter stays, and close-in booking through the fall.

*Source: University of Michigan; Conference Board; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; CADMO Destination Download, October 2026



Positive Growth

Culinary Tourism Win

The MICHELIN Guide went statewide, and Aurora's Annette earned a Bib Gourmand, Dan Da earned a Michelin Recommended

- MICHELIN added 15 Colorado restaurants on September 14, its first statewide edition
- Colorado now has 63 listed restaurants and 16 MICHELIN Key hotels
- Aurora's Annette earned a Bib Gourmand, the Guide's value-and-quality distinction and Dan Da earned a Michelin recommended
- Recognition is third-party credibility for content, media, and group sales

Why this matters to Aurora:
A MICHELIN nod for an Aurora restaurant is a rare, national-caliber marketing asset. It gives the destination a credible culinary hook for shoulder-season packages, media pitches, and leisure and group itineraries, and it strengthens the case that Aurora is a dining destination, not just a place to stay near the airport.



*Source: MICHELIN Guide; OEDIT; CADMO Destination Download, October 2026

Negative Change

Drive-Market Fuel Pressure

Fuel is Aurora's clearest downside risk because its visitor base is mostly drive markets.

- **Colorado regular gas averaged $4.30 on September 21, up $1.16 from a year ago**
- That is a 37% jump; the national average was $4.47 and some mountain counties topped $5
- Airfares are up 23.4% year over year, and airlines are trimming fall and winter flights
- Jet fuel jumped 6.1% in a week, with December schedules most at risk
- Nearly half of Aurora's overnight visitors are in-state, led by Front Range metros

Why this matters to Aurora:
Aurora's drive-market base is both a shield and an exposure. High gas raises the cost of the regional trips that fill its hotels, while rising airfares and thinner winter flight schedules pressure fly-in and connecting demand in the airport submarket. Lead with value and drive-time messaging into the fall.

*Source: AAA; IATA; CADMO Destination Download, October 2026



VISIT AURORA CO

Current Status



Stable Market

VISITOR ECONOMY DASHBOARD

Primary Risks

- Rate starting to erode: city ADR down 2.4% even as occupancy rose 5.2%
- Consumer confidence at a decade low; Fed raised rates for the first time since 2023
- Fuel at $4.30, up 37% YoY, with airfares up 23.4% and winter flights trimmed

Market Strengths

- Occupancy up 5.2% to 74.4%, with transient demand up 4.2%
- RevPAR up 2.7%, so Lodger's Tax revenue kept growing
- Aurora's Annette earned a MICHELIN Bib Gourmand, a culinary tourism win

Seasonal Conditions to Watch

- Rate stability and group retention are the keys into Q4
- Strong El Nino and snowpack against early-winter bookings running behind
- Federal funding deadline moved to December 11, into early ski season