



AGENDA

Planning and Economic Development Policy Committee

March 12, 2025

8:30 am

VIRTUAL MEETING

Public Participation Dialing Instructions

Call in Number: (720)388-8447

Access Code: 370 413 450#

Council Member Françoise Bergan, Chair

Council Member Curtis Gardner, Vice Chair

Council Member Danielle Jurinsky, 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**

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February 12, 2025 Draft Subject to Approval Councilmember Bergan

3. **General Business**

3.a **2024 Retail Sales Update**

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2024 Retail Sales Update

Staff Source/Legal Source: Robert Oliva, Senior Project Manager/Rachel Allen, Deputy City Attorney

Estimated Time 15 mins, 10 mins questions

4. **Miscellaneous Matters for Consideration**

4.a **Aurora Economic Development Council**

NO REPORT

4.b **Havana Business Improvement District**

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Chance Horiuchi

Please see the HBID updates in the agenda packet.

4.c Aurora Chamber of Commerce

Naomi Colwell

4.d Planning Commission

NO REPORT

4.e Oil and Gas Committee

NO REPORT

4.f Business Advisory Board

NO REPORT

4.g Retail

NO REPORT

4.h Small Business

NO REPORT

4.i Visit Aurora

NO REPORT

5. Confirm Next Meeting Date

Tentatively scheduled for April 9, 2025, at 8:30 AM MT.

6. Adjournment

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES

Date: **February 12, 2024**
Time: **8:30 am**

Members Present Chair: Council Member Francoise Bergan, Vice Chair: Council Member Curtis Gardner, Council Member Danielle Jurinsky

Others Present Aja Tibbs, Alison Lueck, Andrea Amonick, Ani Karabashian, Ariana Muca, Ashvina Patel, Becky Hogan, Brad Pierce, Brandon Cammarata, Brenda Kenney, Brian Rulla, Brit Vigil, Bruce Dalton, Cathy DeWolf, Cesarina Dancy, Chad Argentari, Chad Giron, Chance Horiuchi, Crystal Vigil, Daniel Krzyzanowski, Darcy Dodd, David Schoonmaker, Deborah Bickmire, Diana Rael, Jacob Cox, Jake Calegari, James Schireman, Jeannine Rustad, Jeffrey Moore, Jennifer Orozco, Jeremiah Fettig, Jose Rodriguez, Julie Patterson, Kelly Bish, Laura Perry, Laurie Womer, Leah Ramsey, Lena McClelland, Leticia Callanen, Linda Garnett, Mac Callison, Maria Alvarez, Marisa Noble, Maurice Healy, Mayor Michael Coffman, Mindy Parnes, Morgan Cullen, Morgan Jennings, Naomi Colwell, Rachel Allen, Robert Oliva, Sarah Pulliam, Sarah Wile, Scott Berg, Stacy Wasinger, Stephen E. Rodriguez, Stephen Gubrud, Steve Timms, Sunny Banka, Susan Sherman, Thomas Blevins, Tod Kuntzelman, Yuriy Gorlov

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 11, 2024, DRAFT MINUTES–COUNCIL MEMBER BERGAN

2.a. The approval of the December 2024 meeting minutes was postponed.

3. GENERAL BUSINESS

3.a. 2024 PED Recap

Summary of Issue and Discussion:

Jeannine Rustad, Director of Planning & Development Services

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Jeannine Rustad, Director of Planning and Business Development, opened the presentation and expressed amusement at managing the presentation herself and proceeded to provide an overview of the department's activities in 2024.

J. Rustad began with updates on items that had moved forward to the council. She highlighted two grant applications for the 13th Avenue area, specifically around the parking lot at the RTD light rail station. The grants, totaling four million dollars, would enable the design and construction of a bridge necessary to facilitate future housing development in the area, with an emphasis on affordable housing at the RTD site. She noted that the predominant theme for the year had been the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) process updates, which were set for final approval in early 2025. She provided a timeline for the next steps, stating that the first phase of the UDO housing analysis had begun, reflecting the council's and staff's prioritization of housing issues. Additional amendments were already in progress, and a later presentation would cover phase two of the housing analysis.

J. Rustad also referred to a resolution concerning the Lowry former base located within Aurora. She explained that this project was currently on hold while coordination efforts continued with the Community Colleges of Colorado. She described the site as a large vacant area in need of revitalization. Additionally, minor text amendments have been made to the city code regarding oil and gas regulations.

Transitioning to broader city updates, J. Rustad provided an overview of the year's key reports and initiatives. The city had regularly delivered quarterly retail development updates, including progress on the retail strategy, which was now in its final stages. The council had previously received an update on this during their winter workshop, and staff were working towards its completion and approval within the year. In addition, quarterly development review updates have been provided, with further discussion scheduled for the current meeting, led by Jacob Cox, with Rustad assisting.

She highlighted a new initiative in 2024—the summary of land use legislation—emphasizing its importance due to state legislative actions affecting local land use authority. Aurora Places, the city's comprehensive plan, has also undergone updates to track implementation progress. Additionally, improvements have been made to the HOA and community group registration process, now requiring two points of contact to prevent disruptions when board members changed positions. J. Rustad further noted that the city had received its annual Energy and Environment Division update and had conducted a review of potential improvements to Gun Club Road.

J. Rustad acknowledged the increasing inclusion of external organizations in presentations, citing annual updates from the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and Visit Aurora. She mentioned that while the Aurora Economic Development Council (AEDC) had also provided updates, it was unintentionally omitted from her prepared summary, which CM Bergan confirmed. J. Rustad assured that AEDC would be

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invited back and added that the city hoped to receive an update from the Havana Business Improvement District in the coming year.

Addressing upcoming priorities for 2025, J. Rustad identified housing amendments as a major focus. She explained that small-lot developments were under consideration, with attention to factors such as parking. The scope of these amendments would be detailed in a subsequent presentation. Compliance with state legislation was another key area of work, including regulations on accessory dwelling units (ADUs), parking requirements around transit-oriented centers, and the lifting of restrictions on the number of unrelated individuals allowed to reside in a household.

J. Rustad outlined continued efforts to improve the development review process. She provided a tentative schedule for UDO amendments related to process improvements, stating that the Planning and Zoning Commission would review the amendments on February 26, followed by a council study session on March 10. A public hearing and first reading were scheduled for March 24, with a second reading set for April 17, leading to an effective date in May. She emphasized that implementation efforts would involve multiple departments, including planning, public works, and Aurora Water. Designated core team members would act as subject matter experts within their respective departments, guiding their colleagues through the transition. She also reiterated that these changes had been developed in collaboration with the development community.

J. Rustad then turned to retail as another key focus area for 2025. She anticipated the adoption of the retail strategy, which would include prioritization of policies and target areas. Quarterly retail updates would continue, and in May, the city would participate in the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) conference. Council members Bergan and Lawson were set to attend. J. Rustad noted that the event would be slightly smaller than previous years due to ongoing construction at the Las Vegas Convention Center but assured that Aurora's presence at the conference would remain strong.

Providing an overview of upcoming project updates, J. Rustad mentioned the Fitzsimmons Innovation Community's Master Plan, which was undergoing revisions. Other anticipated updates included progress on Aerotropolis, continued implementation of the comprehensive plan, and additional area-wide planning efforts. She anticipated further developments regarding the 13th Avenue station. Concluding her presentation, she invited questions and suggestions from the council.

- CM. Bergan expressed gratitude for the presentation and opened the floor to questions.
- CM Bergan thanked J. Rustad and opened the floor to questions from council members Jurinsky and Gardner.
- CM Bergan reflected on the prior year's updates, then inquired about the format of the upcoming project presentations. She referenced previous presentations that had provided an overview of the entire city's development,

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like the material prepared for ICSC conferences, and asked whether such an update would be included.

- J. Rustad confirmed that such a presentation could be arranged. She noted that updates often focused on the northeast area, where most development was occurring, but assured that broader coverage, including the Colfax corridor and other significant developments, could be incorporated.
- CM Bergan mentioned specific projects within her ward, including Prairie Point and Overlook, and expressed interest in updates on both commercial and residential developments citywide.
- J. Rustad affirmed that this information would be included in future presentations.
- Mr. Cox then suggested that the team could prepare ward-specific summaries for each council member.
- CM Bergan welcomed the proposal. She reiterated the importance of maintaining a citywide perspective while acknowledging the natural focus council members placed on their respective wards.

Outcome:

Information only.

Follow-up Action:

None required.

3.b. Development Review Recap and 2025 Initiatives**Summary of Issue and Discussion:**

Jacob Cox, Director of Development Services

Jacob J. Cox, Director of Development Services, opened the presentation by acknowledging Jeannine Rustad and stating that they would jointly cover the updates. He greeted the council members and outlined the purpose of the presentation, which was to review key highlights from the previous year, provide metrics, and address questions raised at the winter workshop.

J. Cox began by discussing code and manual updates, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder engagement with the development community. He explained that the department had been working closely with the Home Builders Association (HBA), consultants, and business leaders to ensure that policy changes were not developed in isolation by city staff but were instead responsive to industry needs. Over the past few years, significant progress has been made on Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) updates, roadway standards, drainage manuals, traffic policies, and Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) dedication criteria.

One of the notable accomplishments within the UDO updates was the introduction of a neighborhood plan. J. Cox explained that this initiative stemmed from ongoing discussions between staff and developers about streamlining infrastructure site plans for large master-planned communities such as Prairie Point, Aurora Highlands,

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Windler, and Painted Prairie. The goal was to improve efficiency in reviewing and approving infrastructure for large-scale residential developments, allowing builders to secure permits more quickly. The approach, which had existed in the city's code but had not been fully utilized, was successfully piloted over the past year. J. Cox invited questions about the initiative before transitioning to Rustad to elaborate on the UDO housing analysis and roundtables.

J. Rustad described the roundtables as an essential tool for gathering insights from developers regarding housing trends and regulatory needs. She emphasized that while city staff did not specialize in housing construction, the roundtables provided a platform for direct engagement with industry experts. She also highlighted Aurora's recognition by organizations such as the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and the American Planning Association (APA) for its proactive approach in piloting new policies rather than waiting for full code adoption before testing changes. She noted that a similar approach had been applied in discussions on easements around plugged wells, where the city had worked closely with oil and gas experts to develop a workable solution.

J. Cox then discussed efforts to streamline administrative decision documentation. Previously, multiple documents had been used for council member notifications and public notices, leading to inefficiencies. Staff have identified an opportunity to consolidate the process into two parallel documents, one for the council members and another for the public and applicants—allowing for more efficient communication.

Shifting focus to license agreements and dedicatory map documents, J. Cox described improvements made in response to feedback from the Red Tape Committee hearings. Working with Public Works and Risk Management, the city had developed a streamlined approach to consolidating license agreements, reducing the administrative burden on developers. He cited the example of industrial projects requiring numerous easement dedications, which had previously led to excessive paperwork and delays. By working with private-sector engineers, the city has developed a more efficient process that benefits both staff and developers.

J. Cox provided an update on the Amanda project, which was a significant technological initiative aimed at improving business processes. While the system had not yet been fully implemented for development applications, it was actively being tested on civil plans. He anticipated that once fully operational, it would greatly enhance efficiency and alignment with recent policy updates.

Discussing customer service and collaboration, J. Cox emphasized that the city viewed itself as a partner in the development process rather than an obstacle. He underscored the importance of timely and transparent communication, highlighting the shift toward direct engagement with developers and consultants rather than relying solely on formal review letters. He cited improvements in phone responsiveness, stating that staff were encouraged to call applicants to clarify issues rather than defaulting on written rejections.

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J. Cox then presented key performance metrics from 2024. He reported that across all stages—pre-application meetings, development applications, drainage plans, civil reviews, easements, and building inspections—the city had achieved a 90% on-time completion rate. He compared this to the challenges faced during the pandemic and the early days of the Red Tape Committee, noting that the team had made significant strides despite an increasing volume of applications. J. Rustad added that the team prioritized accuracy over meeting arbitrary deadlines, opting to work through minor issues with developers rather than issuing premature rejections.

Providing a breakdown of development activity, J. Cox noted that pre-application meetings had increased by 25%, with 181 meetings conducted in 2024. He emphasized that these meetings were an essential due diligence tool for developers, particularly small business owners unfamiliar with city processes. He predicted that a significant portion of pre-applications would transition into formal applications in the coming year. Civil plan approvals had risen by 41%, reflecting an increase in infrastructure projects, particularly in the northeastern part of the city along the E-470 corridor.

Regarding building permits, J. Cox observed a decline in new commercial and multifamily developments. Commercial building permits had dropped by 32%, while multifamily unit approvals had fallen by 56%. He attributed this decline to market saturation in the Denver metropolitan area. Responding to a previous inquiry from CM Bergan, he explained that lower capital impact fee revenue was a direct result of decreased multifamily unit approvals, which had led to an estimated \$7.6 million shortfall in projected revenue. However, he noted that renovation projects remained strong, increasing by 16%, with nearly 25,000 reviews completed.

J. Cox highlighted the efficiency of the city's building division, which had completed 16,000 plan reviews with a 99% on time rate, conducted 135,000 inspections with a 96% same-day completion rate, and answered over 78,000 permit calls, 97% of which were answered within 45 seconds. He commended the team's dedication to customer service and noted that the overall development review revenue had increased by 5%.

Looking ahead to 2025, J. Cox outlined key initiatives, including updates to the PROS manual, implementation of the neighborhood plan, continued work with Excel Energy to improve coordination, and efforts to align drainage warranty periods with road maintenance timelines. He also emphasized the city's focus on meeting the requirements of Proposition 123, which mandated that land use and civil plan reviews be completed within 90 days. Rustad affirmed that the city was already meeting this standard due to recent process improvements.

J. Cox described ongoing efforts to enhance meeting efficiency, ensuring that the appropriate staff were present for discussions without overburdening teams with unnecessary meetings. He emphasized the importance of transparency in decision-making and collaboration with developers.

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Concluding the presentation, J. Cox reiterated the city's commitment to improving process efficiency, reducing late-stage review comments, and maintaining a high standard of customer service. He emphasized that the goal was to facilitate project approvals while ensuring compliance with city regulations.

- CM Bergan thanked J. Cox and J. Rustad for the comprehensive update and invited questions.
- CM Gardner indicated that he had no questions.
- CM Bergan then proceeded to ask a few questions. She began by expressing appreciation for the comprehensive presentation, acknowledging the extensive work involved in refining development processes over the past few years. She reflected on the incremental improvements made through the Red Tape Committee and noted the significant progress evident in the presentation. She also recalled the challenges of the COVID-19 period when customer service ratings were low, and she commended the team for the improvements achieved since then. She extended her gratitude to everyone involved in development planning and review.
- CM Bergan highlighted the effectiveness of the roundtables, emphasizing their value in obtaining feedback from developers and identifying areas for improvement. She noted that developers, being experts in construction, provided critical insights that allowed the city to refine its processes. Transitioning to specific questions, she inquired about the Amanda system, asking whether code changes within the platform were implemented across all relevant departments, including traffic and Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS).
- J. Cox confirmed that Amanda was designed to integrate code changes across all applicable departments.
- J. Rustad elaborated on the UDO's process for incorporating feedback, explaining that updates were developed in consultation with engineers, reviewers, and maintenance personnel to ensure comprehensive alignment. She emphasized the importance of including multiple departments in discussions, particularly in complex areas such as housing, where multiple perspectives were necessary to shape effective policies. J. Rustad also mentioned upcoming staff reorganization efforts that would consolidate her team and Cox's team in the same workspace, allowing for greater collaboration.
- CM Bergan welcomed the update and asked Cox whether he was comfortable with the new office arrangement.
- J. Cox confirmed that the consolidation was beneficial, explaining that his staff had previously been spread across three different floors. The reorganization would bring all personnel together on a single floor, with J. Rustad and himself positioned at opposite ends of the workspace.
- CM Bergan then shifted the discussion to the three-year warranty period for drainage, noting that she had heard concerns from developers about the associated costs. She asked whether the extension from a one-year to a three-year period was a state mandate or a city policy.

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- J. Cox deferred to Laura Perry for additional details.
- L. Perry indicated that the matter required further discussion with Aurora Water, as it had been an early topic of conversation in 2024 and was on the city's agenda for continued analysis.
- CM Bergan then inquired about Proposition 123, asking for clarification on the funding received from the state. She noted that part of the agreement to participate in the program was tied to demonstrating that each stage of the development review process could be completed within 90 days.
- J. Rustad confirmed that the city was receiving funding and was required to meet the 90-day threshold by November 2025 to maintain eligibility.
- CM Bergan asked for details on the amount of funding provided, wondering whether it was automatically granted or required a formal application.
- J. Rustad explained that there were two funding sources. One portion was automatically allocated to housing initiatives, with the specific amount available from Jessica Prosser, Director of Housing and Community Development. The other portion consisted of grants for code updates and technical assistance. While the city had tracked potential grants, much of the planned work was already underway, and staff preferred not to delay projects to fit grant timelines. She added that if Aurora experienced an influx of affordable housing projects requiring additional development review resources, the city would apply for grant funding accordingly.
- CM Bergan then turned to staffing levels, acknowledging the increasing workload due to ongoing development. She asked whether staffing levels were keeping pace with the growing volume of work.
- J. Cox confirmed that seven positions had been added in the 2025 budget approved by the council the previous year. He emphasized the city's commitment to maintaining an efficient workforce while leveraging third-party reviews where necessary. He noted that staffing numbers had declined over the past five years, largely due to pandemic-related challenges, but had since stabilized.
- J. Cox reported that J. Rustad's team was nearly fully staffed, with only one position still in recruitment. His department was strategically hiring for key positions, particularly in building plan review and engineering, which required specialized expertise. He acknowledged that some positions were difficult to fill due to the need for highly qualified candidates who aligned with the city's customer service approach. However, he expressed confidence that the city had the necessary staffing levels to support development activities sustainably in 2025.
- CM Bergan thanked J. Cox and J. Rustad for the presentation, emphasizing her appreciation for the detailed updates.

Outcome:

Information only.

Follow-up Action:

None required.

3.c. Housing UDO Analysis Update**Summary of Issue and Discussion:**

Jeannine Rustad, Director of Planning & Development Services

Jeannine Rustad, Director of Planning and Business Development, began her presentation by setting the stage for phase two of the UDO housing analysis. She recalled that throughout the previous year, the department had provided nearly monthly updates on the project and had engaged the development community early on through roundtables. These initial discussions led to the establishment of goals, which were subsequently approved by the Planning and Economic Development (PED) Committee.

J. Rustad outlined the primary objective of the housing analysis: encouraging the production of more housing across all price points. She emphasized the importance of addressing deeply affordable housing needs, largely tied to Proposition 123, while also focusing on attainable housing for households earning between 80% and 120% of the area median income. J. Rustad highlighted the importance of maintaining Aurora's quality and sense of community, ensuring that increased housing flexibility did not come at the expense of thoughtful design and livability. Additionally, she stressed the necessity of aligning with state legislative requirements and meeting Proposition 123's deed-restricted housing goals. However, she clarified that the city was not requiring developers to deed-restrict properties but rather exploring ways to make housing more attainable through regulatory adjustments.

Another key goal was increasing density while maintaining livability. J. Rustad explained that the city sought to create integrated neighborhoods with diverse housing types and price points. She envisioned communities where residents could easily transition from starter homes to move-up homes, fostering long-term investment in Aurora. Walkability was a central component of this vision, ensuring that homes were within proximity to usable open space—whether public or private. She recounted an example from her experience in Oregon, where developers were able to count entry signs as part of their open space requirements, a practice Aurora sought to avoid.

J. Rustad also discussed the importance of the public realm, advocating for walkable blocks, architectural standards that are engaged with the street, and improved on-street parking. She noted that smaller lots, coupled with front-loaded garages and reduced parking requirements, necessitated a holistic approach to street design. Additionally, she emphasized the need for dense neighborhoods to have accessible retail and commercial spaces, allowing residents to meet their everyday needs without long commutes.

Another focus was reducing approval timelines while maintaining a balance between regulatory certainty and flexibility. J. Rustad acknowledged that the city had already addressed many process inefficiencies through the UDO updates. Additionally, staff

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worked closely with developers to quantify how regulatory proposals impacted housing costs. She cited ongoing collaboration with the Windler Group on issues such as one-car garages and pad parking, as well as discussions on alternative building materials that could reduce construction costs without compromising quality.

J. Rustad reiterated the city's commitment to pilot projects as a method of testing policy changes before full implementation. She reminded the committee that, following the adoption of the UDO in 2019, the city has allowed up to 50% of lots in new developments to be classified as small lots. She also noted that the definition of small lots had been updated, meaning that what was previously considered a small lot was now a regular-sized lot under current standards. Recognizing the need for more housing, the city was exploring additional adjustments to further accommodate smaller lots.

To formalize these efforts, J. Rustad announced the release of a request for proposals (RFP) seeking consultant assistance in codifying these pilot-tested concepts into regulatory language without making the code excessively complex. The RFP, scheduled for release on Friday, outlined key areas for refinement, including street networks, park accessibility, mixed-use development, and public realm enhancements. She stressed the importance of creating pedestrian-friendly environments through detached sidewalks, landscaping, and street-facing architectural elements. Additionally, she highlighted ongoing discussions about balancing front-loaded and alley-loaded parking solutions.

J. Rustad explained that the RFP also required the development of five design booklets featuring visual representations of proposed development patterns. These booklets would help quantify the impact of different housing configurations, including varying degrees of front-loaded and alley-loaded housing. The consultant would also prepare economic analysis papers to evaluate how these policies could improve housing affordability. Finally, the consultant would assist in drafting the necessary code amendments, ensuring that the regulations provided both predictability and flexibility.

J. Rustad underscored the city's commitment to maintaining two pathways for development approval: a streamlined process for projects that strictly adhered to code and an adjustment process for projects with unique conditions. She emphasized that while the adjustment process provided flexibility, staff had developed clearer guidelines on acceptable modifications, allowing developers to make informed decisions on whether to proceed with staff-recommended changes or bring their proposals directly to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

The goal was to complete this work by the end of the year. The target was to have a consultant onboard by April, but in the meantime, city staff would continue background research and engagement with the development community. She invited questions and feedback from the committee.

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- CM Bergan began by inquiring about the RFP, asking how it differed from the city's comprehensive plan updates, which occurred every ten years with consultant involvement.
- J. Rustad clarified that the RFP was specifically for the UDO, not the comprehensive plan. She explained that the 2019 UDO overhaul had been a multi-year process, and her goal was to avoid another large-scale rewrite in the future. Instead, the city was making incremental updates to keep the code current, with housing being the next major area of focus.
- CM Bergan expressed some confusion, noting that the city had already conducted extensive roundtables and received detailed feedback on necessary amendments. She questioned whether the consultant's work would add new insights beyond what staff had already gathered.
- J. Rustad explained that while some policy changes had already been implemented, others, particularly those related to small lots- required additional research. She noted that current regulations allowed up to 50% small lots in new developments, but the city needed to consider whether higher percentages should be permitted in certain areas. Additionally, unresolved questions remained regarding parking solutions, housing materials, and regulatory simplifications.
- CM Bergan then asked about the consultant's expertise, seeking clarity on whether they would provide design, economic, or legal analysis.
- J. Rustad responded that the consultant team would include a mix of professionals, including design experts, to address livability concerns and code writers, either planners or attorneys, with experience in drafting zoning regulations. She emphasized that internal city teams, including planning, transportation, and parks departments, would be actively involved in shaping the final recommendations.
- CM Bergan reiterated her concern about potential duplication of existing knowledge and sought assurance that the consultant's work would build upon, rather than repeat, prior findings.
- J. Rustad confirmed that the city was refining and expanding upon existing insights rather than starting from scratch.
- CM Bergan then inquired about the decision-making process following the consultant's recommendations.
- J. Rustad explained that key policy questions, such as adjustments to small-lot allowances, would first be brought to the Planning and Development Committee for input. The recommendations would then lead to a study session with the full council before any formal adoption process. Additionally, roundtables and discussions with the Development Review Advisory Board would ensure continued stakeholder engagement. The final product would not be merely a report but would include proposed code revisions, which would go through the standard adoption process.
- CM Bergan requested to review the RFP and confirmed that there were no further questions from the committee. She thanked J. Rustad for the presentation.

Outcome:

Information only.

Follow-up Action:

None required.

4. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**4. a. Aurora Economic Development Council**

- Yuri Gorlov

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

B. Pierce opened his report by summarizing the fourth-quarter oil and gas update for 2024. He noted that the full report was included in the meeting packet and was scheduled for discussion at the upcoming study session on February 24. B. Pierce informed the committee that, assuming the city council approval, two new members would be appointed, bringing the Oil and Gas Advisory Committee to a full complement of 11 members. However, he noted that several committee members, including representatives from the oil and gas industry and large property owners, would reach their term limits in June. As a result, the city would need to fill those vacancies later in the year.

4.f. Business Advisory Board

- Garrett Walls

NO REPORT

4.g. Retail

- Bob Oliva
- NO REPORT

4.h. Small Business

- Ashvina Patel

J. Rustad provided an introduction and expressed her enthusiasm in welcoming Ashvina Patel as the new executive director. She provided an overview of Patel's background, explaining that the selection process had been a nationwide search conducted in partnership with the state's Small Business Administration. She acknowledged the contributions of the outgoing director, Marcia McGilley, who had retired in December after many years in the role. J. Rustad highlighted Patel's deep ties to Aurora, noting that she was a resident and served as chair of the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Committee. She described A. Patel as passionate about ensuring equitable access to city resources and fostering economic growth. A. Patel's professional background included experience as an entrepreneur and business owner, as well as strategic leadership in business development and community-focused initiatives. J. Rustad commended A. Patel for her proactive approach in her first three weeks on the job, characterizing her leadership style as one of humble confidence.

A. Patel thanked J. Rustad for the introduction and greeted the council members and the Planning and Economic Development committee. She provided a summary of her professional experience, explaining that she had previously owned businesses and recently contributed to the expansion of a private-sector company. She expressed her passion for supporting business growth, emphasizing that successful businesses drive job creation, neighborhood revitalization, and innovation. A. Patel underscored her commitment to ensuring that entrepreneurs in Aurora had access to the resources, guidance, and support necessary for not only starting businesses but also sustaining and expanding them. She stated her intent to collaborate with city leaders, business owners, and community partners to foster economic growth that benefited the entire city. She expressed her eagerness to contribute to Aurora's thriving business environment.

4.i. Visit Aurora

- Bruce Dalton

B. Dalton provided an overview of the economic impact of travel in the city. He referenced the detailed report included in the meeting packet, which was produced by Dean Runyon and Associates, a leading resource for U.S. travel and tourism data. Dalton highlighted the report's clarity, noting that it clearly explained its methodology and data sources. He also commended the firm for its understanding of Aurora's unique geographic position, spanning parts of three counties, and for its collaboration with the Colorado Tourism Office and Visit Denver on annual economic impact reports.

B. Dalton shared key findings from the report, stating that direct travel spending in Aurora for 2023 totaled \$535.5 million, reflecting a 5.3% increase from 2022. He

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pointed out an interesting insight that had emerged from the data—the significant number of visitors to Aurora who stayed with friends and family rather than in hotels. This trend had been a key discussion point when Visit Aurora met with its consultant to develop a three-year strategic plan. As a result, Dalton emphasized the importance of ensuring that residents receive the city's visitor guide, as they played a role in shaping visitors' experiences.

He announced that Visit Aurora was preparing to distribute approximately 90,000 copies of its newly produced visitor guide via mail in the coming week. Additionally, 40,000 copies would be distributed throughout the region and provided to potential clients and individuals considering travel to Aurora. He also noted that a digital version of the guide was available and offered to share the link for review. Dalton concluded by mentioning that he planned to present the full three-year strategic plan to the Planning and Development Committee either in the following month or thereafter.

- CM Bergan thanked B. Dalton for his report and responded lightheartedly to the finding that many visitors stayed with family and friends. She asked whether Visit Aurora's goal was to encourage residents to direct their guests toward hotels instead.
- B. Dalton replied stating that in his household, three days was the maximum stay for guests, but he had experienced longer visits, reinforcing the notion that a shorter stay might be ideal. He reiterated that the data provided new insights into visitor habits and presented an opportunity to promote Aurora's many hotel options.
- CM Bergan acknowledged the point and noted the city's extensive hotel offerings. She thanked B. Dalton again and expressed anticipation for his upcoming presentation to the committee.

5. CONFIRM NEXT MEETING DATE

Scheduled for March 12, 2025, at 8:30 AM MT.

6. ADJOURNMENT

APPROVED: _____
Francoise Bergan, Committee Chair



CITY OF AURORA

Council Agenda Commentary

Item Title: 2024 Retail Sales Update

Item Initiator: Andrea Amonick, Business Development and Redevelopment Manager, Planning and Business Development

Staff Source/Legal Source: Bob Oliva, Senior Project Manager/Rachel Allen, Deputy City Attorney

Outside Speaker: N/A

Council Goal: 2012: 5.7--Develop and maintain an aggressive retail retention and expansion strategy

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)

Robert Oliva, Senior Project Manager / Rachel Allen, Deputy City Attorney
Estimated Time 15 mins, 10 mins questions

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

Approve Item and Move Forward to Study Session Approve Item as Proposed at Study Session

Approve Item and Move Forward to Regular Meeting Approve Item as Proposed at Regular Meeting

Information Only

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

PREVIOUS ACTIONS OR REVIEWS:

Policy Committee Name: Planning & Economic Development

Policy Committee Date: 11/13/2024

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.)*

Staff presents Retail Sales information to the Committee twice a year; an annual recap (usually presented in February) and a mid-year update (usually presented in August). At the request of the Committee, brief one page updates are presented for the first and third quarters in the Miscellaneous Matters for Consideration section under Retail.

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

Staff will present the 2024 Annual Sales Tax Report.

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.)

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.)

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.)

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.)

QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL

Information Only.

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 keep the council advised of the financial condition and future needs of the city and make such recommendations to the council for adoption as he may deem necessary or expedient. (City Charter Section 7-4(f)) (Allen)

APPROVED

- CM Gardner suggested partnering with developers to incorporate innovative retail design ideas, emphasizing the importance of avoiding outdated layouts that could lead to long-term vacancies.
- B. Oliva provided examples of non-traditional retail opportunities, such as Bowlero, entertainment complexes, and recreational uses like pickleball. He explained that non-traditional retail often presents unique challenges, such as zoning and parking, but can still contribute to activating spaces that would otherwise remain vacant. B. Oliva assured the Council that these considerations are being addressed in the strategy.
- CM Gardner emphasized that filling retail spaces, whether through traditional or non-traditional means, should remain a core part of the City's approach to maximize sales tax revenues and avoid economic stagnation in retail areas.
- B. Oliva and A. Amonick affirmed that the final strategy would include these elements, ensuring flexibility and forward-thinking solutions for both existing and future retail development.

Outcome:

Information only.

Follow-up Action:

None required.

3.e. Retail Update 3rd Q 2024**Summary of Issue and Discussion:**

Robert Oliva, Senior Project Manager

Robert Oliva, Senior Project Manager, presented the third-quarter retail sales tax generation report for 2024, highlighting a 4.5% year-over-year increase compared to the same period in 2023. He explained that home improvement sales grew by 4.3%, driven by homeowners preparing properties for sale or renovation. Auto dealers faced declining vehicle sales due to high prices, but parts and service departments saw increased activity as consumers maintained older vehicles.

R. Oliva noted an 8.8% decline in electronics and computers due to reduced demand for durable goods and lengthened upgrade cycles. Grocery stores reported consistent growth, fueled by increased hard good offerings generating additional taxable revenue. Clothing and accessories sales declined, affected by unseasonably warm weather delaying back-to-school shopping and a slowdown in fast fashion due to environmental concerns and economic uncertainty.

R. Oliva reported a 2.9% increase in beer, wine, and liquor sales, though smaller liquor stores faced challenges from grocery store competition. Department stores continued to decline as consumers favored specialized retailers, and he emphasized the need to reimagine these spaces to address evolving retail trends.

- Council Member Bergan suggested adding bars in department stores.
- R. Oliva noted some upscale stores, like Bergdorf Goodman, already do.
- Council Member Sundberg added that Nordstrom also features bars.

APPROVED

- R. Oliva provided an update on the third-quarter retail sales tax trends for 2024, highlighting sector-specific insights. Sporting goods experienced a continued decline due to an overhang from COVID-era purchases of durable items like bikes and camping gear, although a slight uptick was attributed to back-to-school spending on team-related goods. Furniture and home furnishings declined by 18.2%, driven by reduced housing market activity and a halt in post-COVID consumer spending in this sector. Oliva noted that recovery in this area hinges on housing market improvements and lower interest rates. R. Oliva explained that bars, restaurants, and eating establishments saw increases, primarily driven by promotional strategies from national chains like Chili's and McDonald's, which successfully used pricing and marketing campaigns to boost sales. However, local establishments struggled to compete, with high costs and less flexibility to offer aggressive promotions. He noted the disparities in performance between national chains and smaller businesses, emphasizing the challenging environment for independent operators.
- CM Sundberg discussed the broader economic challenges, observing that locally owned establishments and home improvement businesses were struggling, which he attributed to inflation and reduced disposable income.
- Sundberg suggested the economy might already be in a recession, despite ongoing debates.
- R. Oliva acknowledged the complex economic landscape, describing it as a potential turning point and expressing hope for a rebound, contingent on improved consumer confidence and economic clarity.

Outcome:

Information only.

Follow-up Action:

None required.

3.f. Housing UDO Analysis Update**Summary of Issue and Discussion:**

Steve Timms, Planning Supervisor

Steve Timms, Planning Supervisor, provided an update on the Housing UDO analysis, focusing on upcoming changes and current discussions. He noted that the duplex on motor courts proposal is moving forward, and internal work is ongoing to address state legislative requirements. A recent parking roundtable with developers, the Home Builders Association, and realtors addressed multifamily and single-family parking challenges, including the adequacy of garages, carports, and parking pads. He emphasized the importance of balancing development needs with creating livable communities.

S. Timms explained that a consultant would be brought on after the new year to further analyze parking issues, particularly as lot sizes shrink. He mentioned ongoing research into innovative financing tools and policies related to parking. Small lot and design standard discussions are set to ramp up after the holidays, as these topics are complex and require detailed consideration.

2024 – Annual Retail Sales Update

**Aurora
Business Development and
Redevelopment Division**

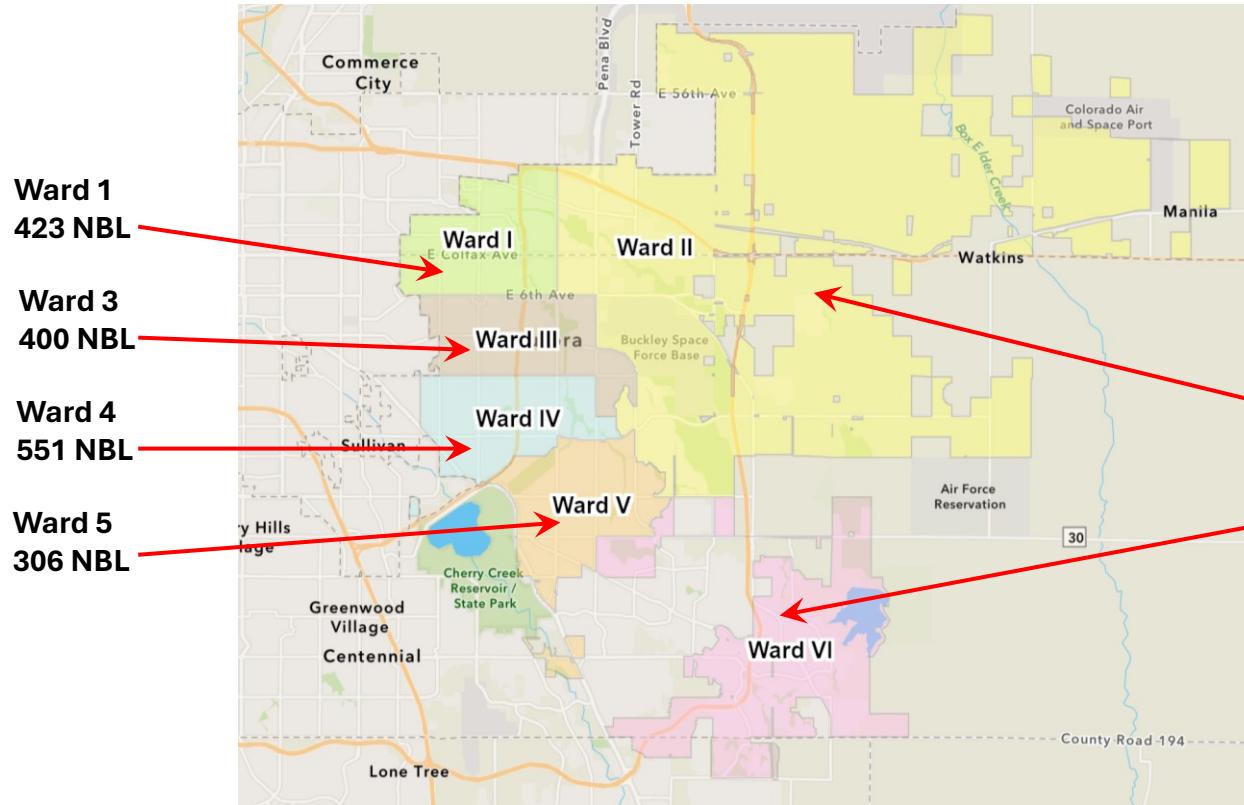
**Sales Tax Data from the:
Aurora Finance and Budget Dept.**



January 30, 2025



2024 New Business Licenses (NBL) by Ward



Orejano Casual Latin Cuisine



Cerebral Brewing Taproom



Lucky Strike

Handel's Ice Cream



Leezakaya - Japanese Restaurant

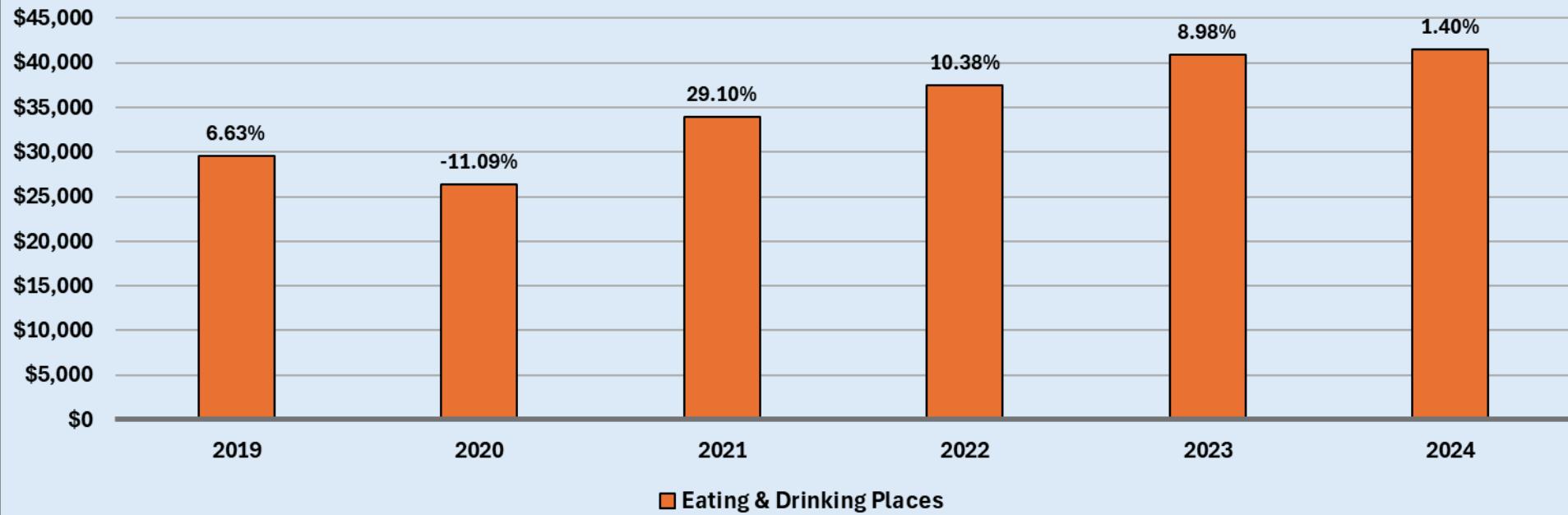


Alpaca Chasqui Charbroiled Chicken

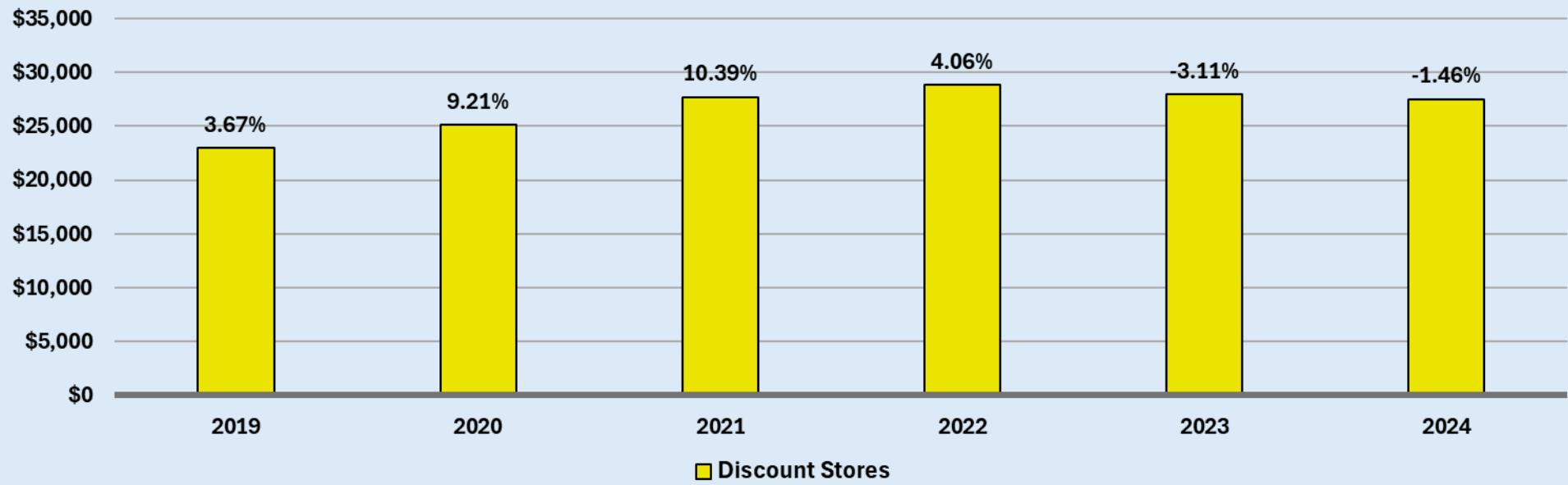
839 followers • 91 following

Incentivized Retail Projects

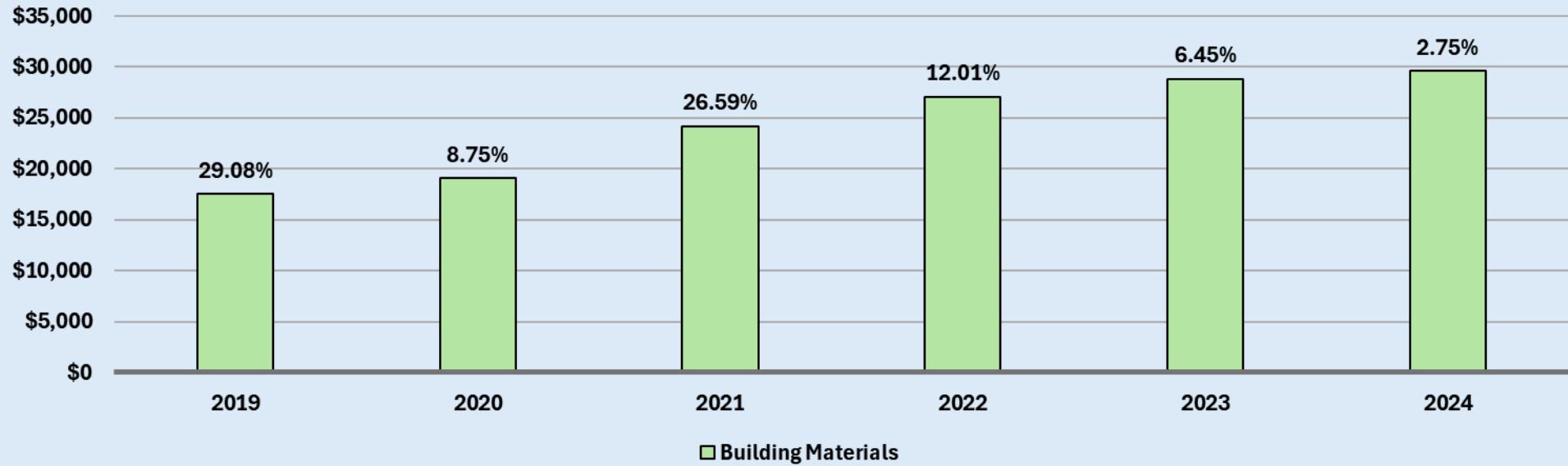
1. Eating & Drinking Places (\$ Aurora sales tax in thousands)



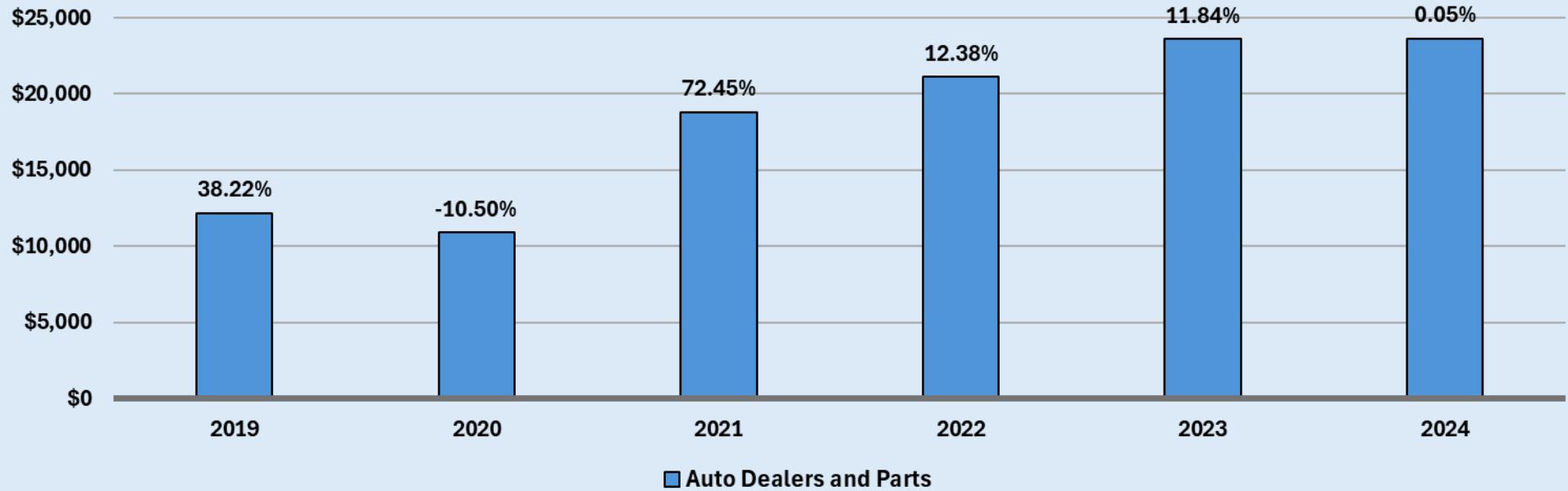
2. Discount Stores (\$ Aurora sales tax in thousands)



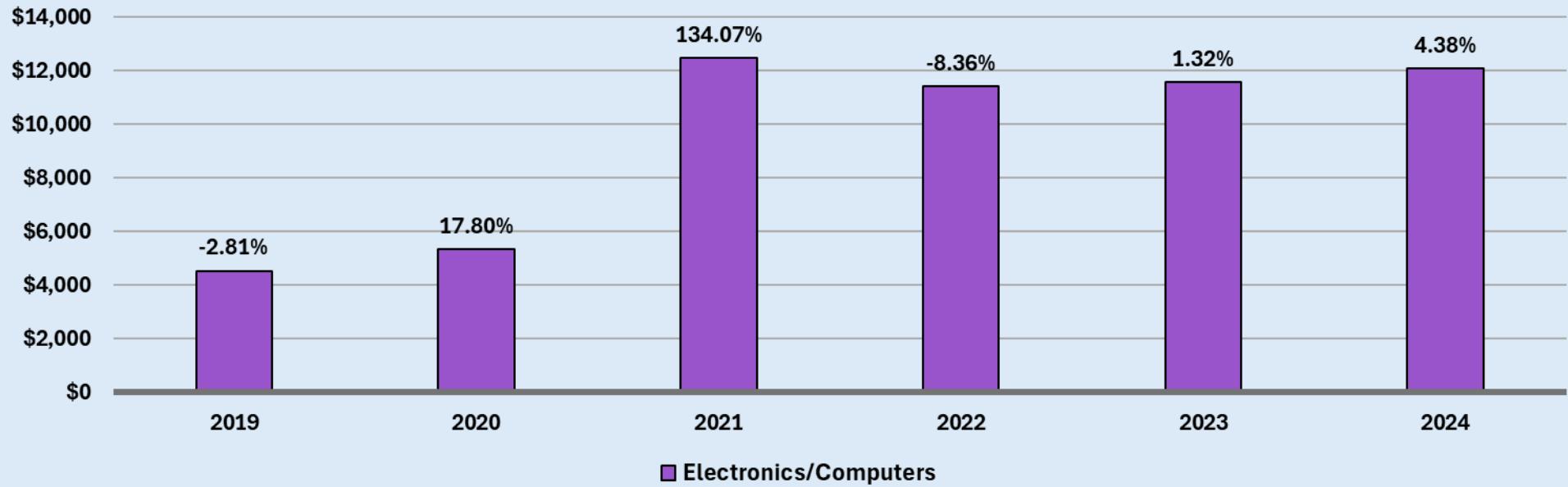
3. Building Materials (\$ Aurora sales tax in thousands)



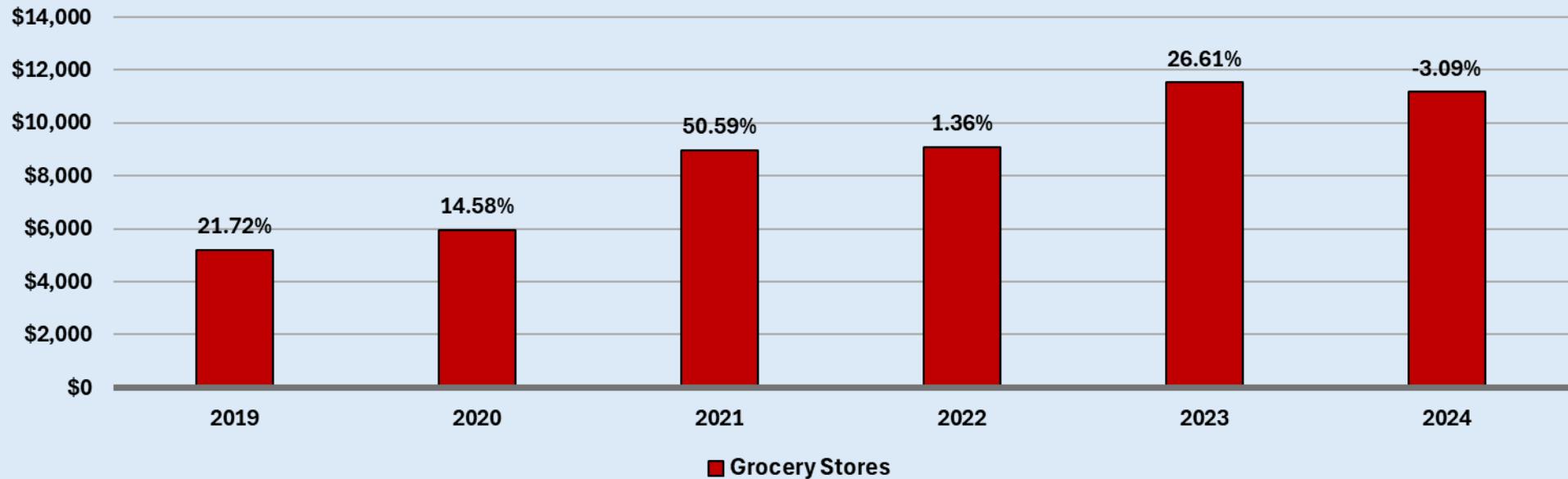
4. Auto Dealers and Parts (\$ Aurora sales tax in thousands)



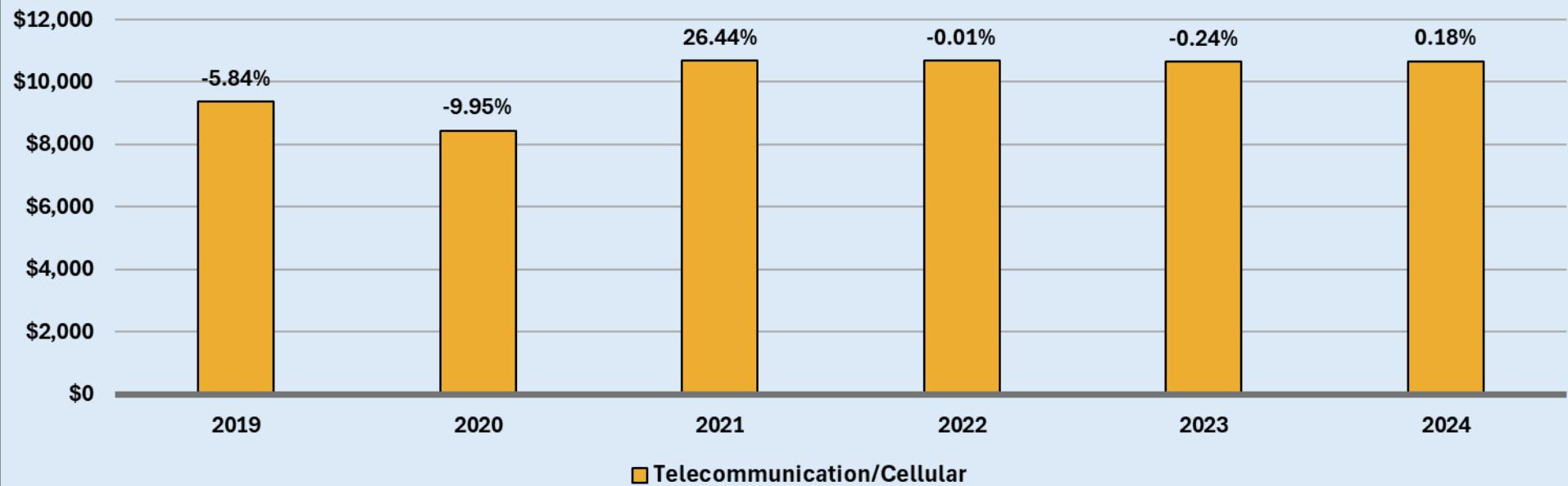
5. Electronics / Computers (\$ Aurora sales tax in thousands)



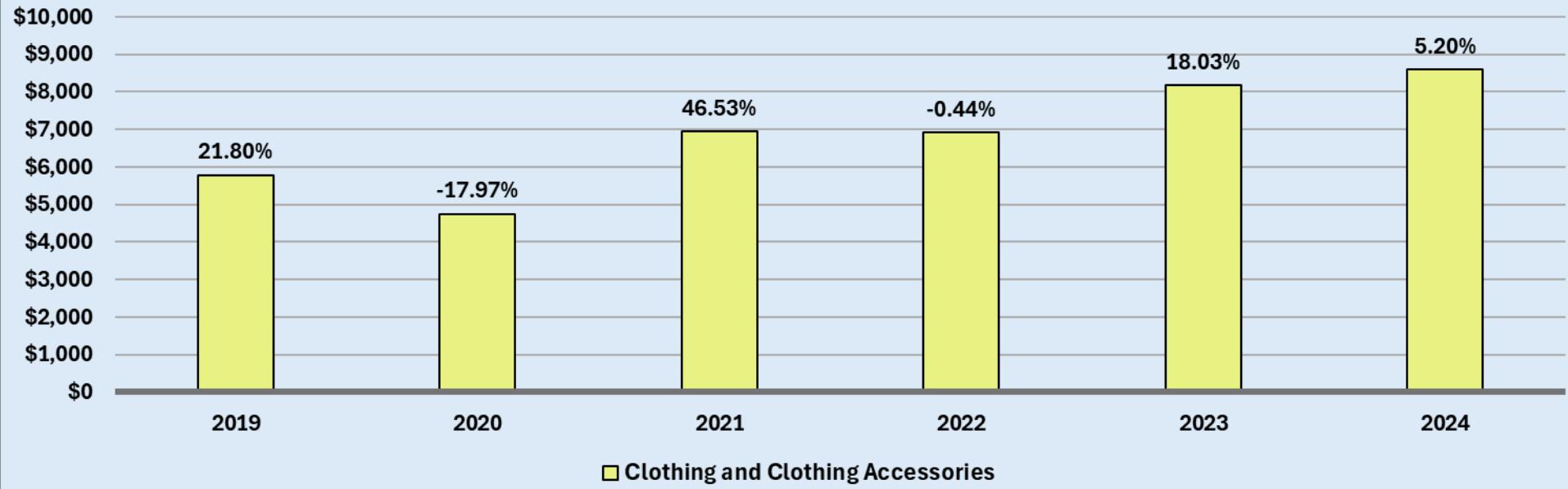
6. Grocery Stores (\$ Aurora sales tax in thousands)



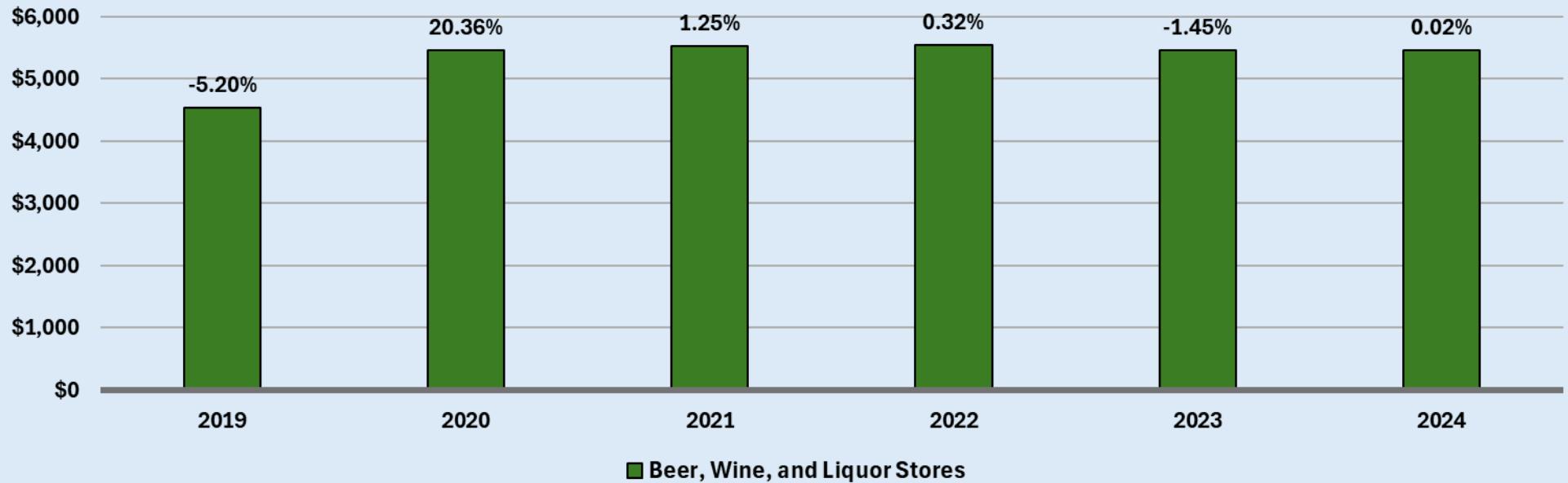
7. Telecommunication / Cellular (\$ Aurora sales tax in thousands)



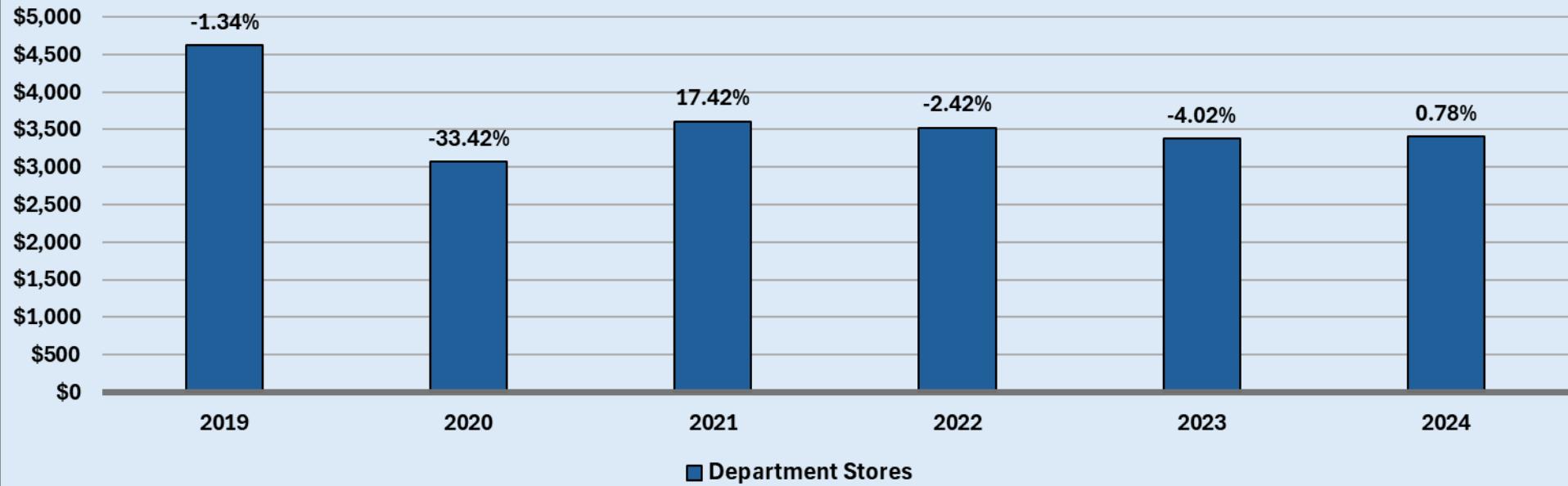
8. Clothing and Clothing Accessories (\$ Aurora sales tax in thousands)



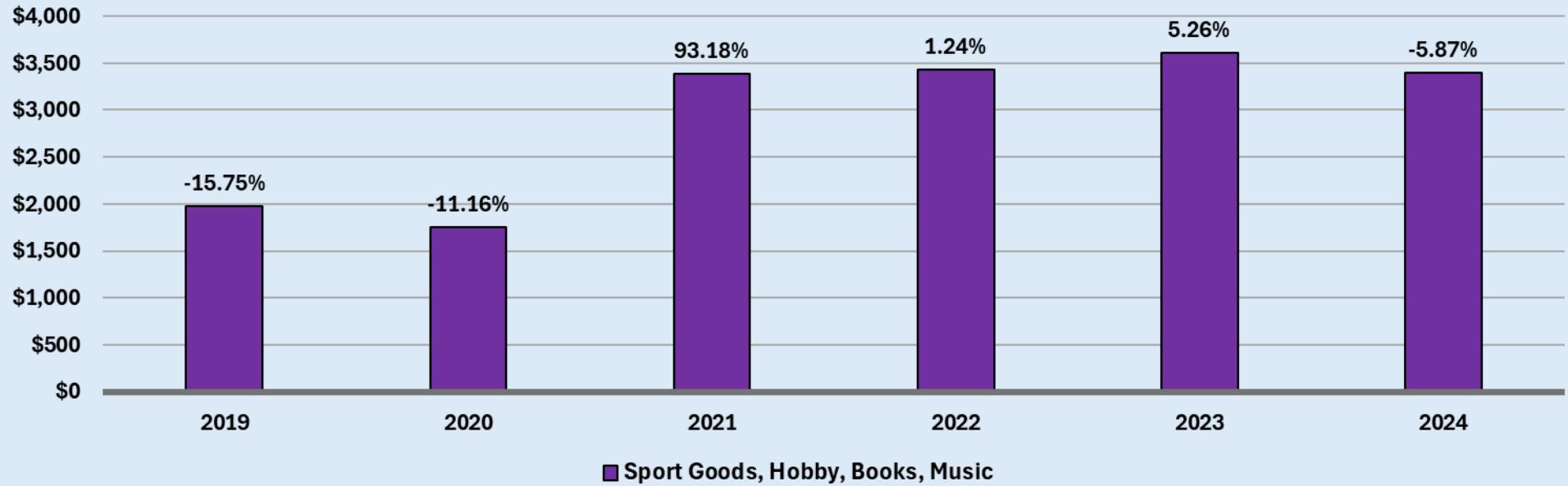
9. Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores (\$ Aurora sales tax in thousands)



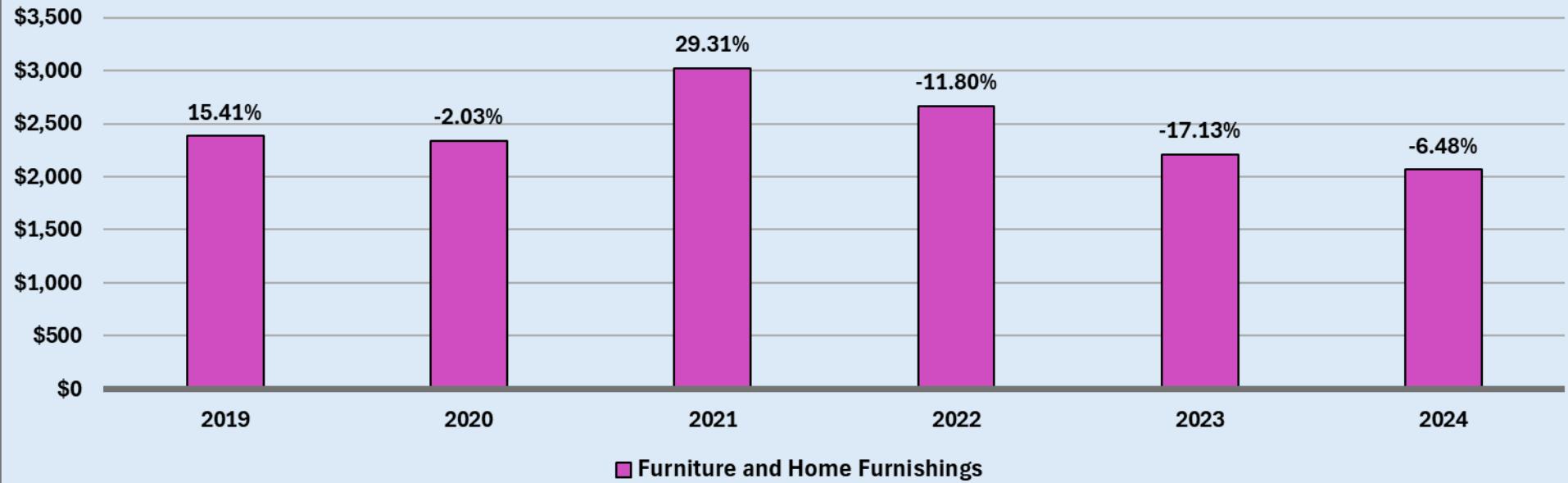
10. Department Stores (\$ Aurora sales tax in thousands)



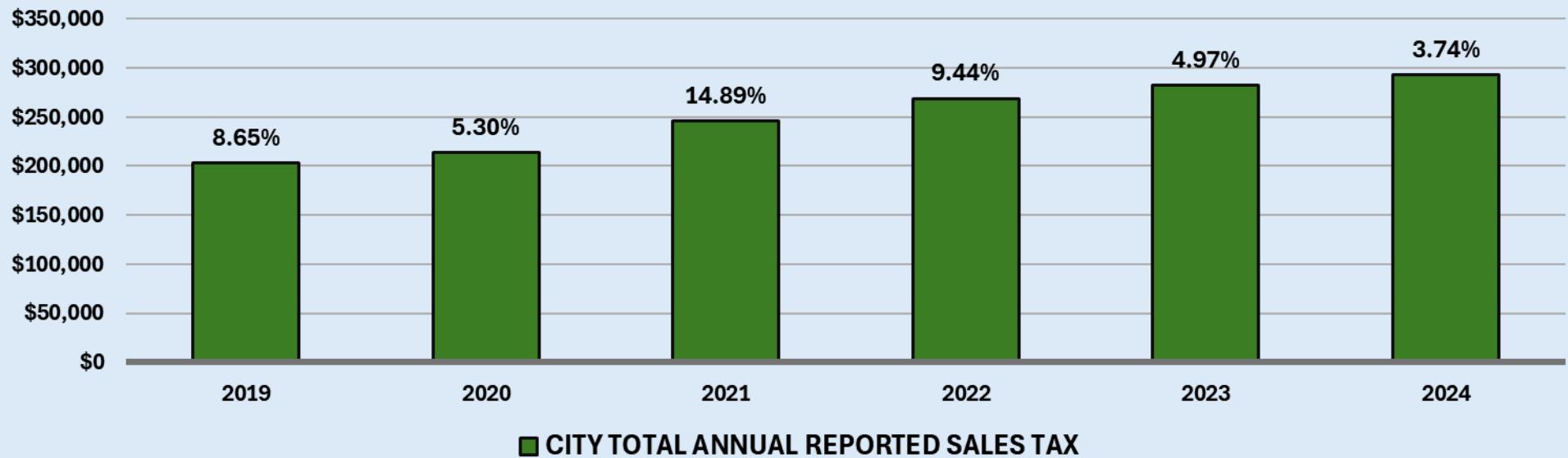
11. Sport Goods, Hobby, Books, Music (\$ Aurora sales tax in thousands)



12. Furniture and Home Furnishings (\$ Aurora sales tax in thousands)



13. CITY TOTAL ANNUAL REPORTED SALES TAX (\$ Aurora sales tax in thousands)



Questions?



We welcome, PED and City staff to join us at our upcoming networking event. RSVP and details here:



Small Business Month Networking at Mariscos El Rey
Dos 2025 - On Havana Street Aurora, CO
onhavanastreet.com

Tuesday, March 11, 2025 4 pm-6 pm FREE

Small Business Month Networking at Mariscos El Rey Dos 2025

Other events to be posted here: <https://onhavanastreet.com/events/>

Save the dates for the night markets: <https://onhavanastreet.com/events/2025-havana-street-night-markets/>

2025 Havana Street Night Markets - May 31, June 28, July 26, August 30, & September 27 6 pm - 10 pm FREE

2025 Havana Street Night Markets – Last Saturdays of the Month – May to September

Upcoming grand openings include: Daiso at Village on the Park, Orejano and L Cafe & Food Court in March 2025.