



Let Aurora be Aurora.

Not just a suburb. Not just a neighborhood. Not just the second largest city in the State.
Not “just” anything.

Aurora, Illinois is a city of rich opportunity and cultural diversity unlike anywhere else. More than ever, we can be a place where everyone is valued, where everyone contributes – and where everyone wants to invest, to work and to live.

What does it take to fully realize that potential? It takes all of us. That’s why the Guzman Campaign began with a listening tour and a “Platform 1.0” document that consisted of a summary of ideas and concepts that could move this City forward. This fuller, more detailed “Platform 2.0” is a collaborative, living document that gives voice to the hundreds who contributed their thoughts or concerns—or their own vision and hopes for the future of Aurora.

What follows is a vision for Aurora’s next great chapter. Over the last decade, our city has made great strides. Investment has soared. Crime rates have sunk. For many in Aurora, life is richer and opportunity is greater than it has been in a long time. But that’s not enough. Not nearly. We want more.

Rick Guzman’s campaign for Mayor of Aurora is about what happens when the limited resources of local government meet the unlimited potential of community. It’s about doubling down on progress we’ve already made. It’s about recognizing that every resident is a resource and every voice is valuable.

We’re voting for more progress and more participation. We’re voting to make Aurora more itself. We’re voting to do **more. Together.**

Independent Leadership – Proven Results

Rick Guzman’s proven leadership style will ensure an independent, collaborative government that serves Aurora taxpayers – not special interests. Partisan politics have crippled our state. Guzman has extensive experience helping leaders in both political parties develop common sense solutions to improve people’s lives. By focusing on tangible results, he has proven that government can rise above politics.

Aurora is undeniably a stronger and safer community than it was nearly 12 years ago when Mayor Tom Weisner first took office. Rick Guzman believes that we must continue along this path while seizing new opportunities that simply were not possible during the height of the greatest recession in most of our lifetimes.

No other candidate for mayor has anything approaching Rick Guzman’s experience at the Executive Level of government—whether that’s in the Aurora Mayor’s Office, Illinois Governor’s Office or as a Gubernatorial appointee in one of the state’s largest agencies. In his five years in the Mayor’s Office, Guzman has been directly responsible for attracting tens of millions of



dollars in private equity investment to Aurora. His work helped Aurora set an all-time record for building/development activity in 2015

Guzman will work hard to continue to attract outside investment so that we can grow our tax base. Guzman's fiscally conservative approach to maximizing private investment by strategically leveraging the city's limited public resources will propel Aurora to even greater heights.

Public Safety as a Top Priority

Much of Aurora's growth and the largest reason for the wealth of opportunities facing Aurora at this moment can be attributed to Aurora's historic drops in crime. Much attention has been paid to the fact that Aurora's murder rate has gone from 4 - 5x the national average during the 90's and early 2000's to a rate that is *below* the national average in the current decade. However, it is the dedication of Aurora's police force and all of its citizens to continuing to lower the *overall crime rate* that has made Aurora one of the safest mid-sized cities in the entire nation.

Public Safety—and the development that can come from continued record low crime rates—is Rick's top priority. Guzman has proposed the following initiatives to ensure Aurora continues to be a safe community:

- **Expand the Community Oriented Policing** strategy to the entire Aurora Police Department (APD)—and not just the C.O.P. unit. This will help Aurora build trust with the community and ultimately bring peace and stability to those last few stubborn neighborhoods where residents are still being disproportionately impacted by crime.
- **Increase the number of Sworn Officers on the streets.** Not only will Rick continue to prioritize providing our officers with state-of-the-art tools and technology to work smarter, he will also prioritize getting more officers on the street to keep crime low and deal with minor offenses before they become major problems.
- **Ensure fair and impartial policing** by reinforcing rigorous police training programs. Rick will work closely with Police Chief Kristen Ziman to implement "*implicit bias training*" on top of the important diversity and cultural sensitivity training that is already a regular part of the APD's routine and regular training regimen.
- **Provide more support to Neighborhood and Homeowner Groups.** In his role with the City, Guzman helped to initiate the Neighborhood Group Support Program, which encourages and facilitates the development of new or revitalized neighborhood groups to establish stronger sense of community. As Mayor, Rick would expand this program to reach existing homeowner's associations and school-based leadership groups. Neighborhood groups not only serve as an important platform to *build trust with neighborhood residents*, but the safe and trusting environment can be a valuable and reliable source of community intelligence that can benefit the City's Community Oriented Policing strategy.
- **Protect Aurora's Crime Free Housing Ordinance.** The "crime free housing" ordinance has successfully shifted the burden of allowing easily preventable crime to run rampant in a



rental property from taxpayers to problematic or absentee landlords. This strategy, predicated on the proven success of the “**broken windows approach**”, not only reduces crime, but dramatically improves the quality of life and opportunities for development in many of the neighborhoods most primed for increased investment. Unfortunately, these policies are under attack across Illinois, and Rick pledges fight efforts by Springfield to weaken this critical tool.

- **Maintain and Strengthen Key Partnerships** with both county, state and federal law enforcement agencies—along with local non-profits working with our community’s youth, domestically abused, vulnerable or substance addicted populations.
- **Save time, money and opportunity costs by focusing on Police & Fire “Super-Users”** or those individuals who are chronically transported (sometimes multiple times in a day) by City ambulances to area emergency rooms for intoxication or other mental health or substance abuse reasons. Studies have shown that considerable taxpayer savings can be achieved through “Housing First” interventions that are focused on stabilizing an individual through supportive housing in order to better address underlying mental health or substance abuse issues.

Fire Safety and Emergency Response will be an equally important part of the Guzman Administration’s focus on public safety by maintaining and improving fire stations and facilities—including rebuilding or expanding those facilities or fleets when necessary. Fire Station 7 on the City’s near-West side has been planned and budgeted for expansion this year and this critical initiative (along with the addition of an ambulance) will be a top priority to maintain some of our area’s best emergency response times—and to be able to do so equitably throughout the City. Partnerships and Inter-Governmental Agreements with neighboring forces will also ensure fiscal responsibility and efficiency in our region.

Keeping Taxes Low, Leveling the Tax Burden & Broadening the Tax Base

Dollar for dollar, the citizens of Aurora receive a great value for the portion of their property taxes paid to the City. Property taxes collected *per capita* for city services has typically been better than most comparable and surrounding cities and the level of city services is as good—or better—than any comparable municipality. *However*, more must be done to diversify and expand the City’s property tax base in order to lower residential property taxes.

Rick Guzman will maintain a dual focus of investing in neighborhoods while bringing more commercial development and corporate tax payers to the City’s commercial and industrial corridors. An expanded commercial tax base combined with efforts to increase home values and home-ownership rates in areas that were hardest hit following the National Foreclosure Crisis will help to lessen the disproportionate burden that has been placed on newer homes or those in those neighborhoods that saw less foreclosure activity.

In order to provide tax relief to residential property tax payers, Rick will continue to work on attracting new investment to downtown Aurora, along with creating specific, localized



revitalization plans for each of Aurora's older commercial districts along Galena Blvd., Lake Street, Farnsworth, New York, Route 59 and more. At the same time, he plans to strategically expand new commercial districts near Orchard Road, Eola Road and Farnsworth, north of the Tollway.

A New Senior Citizen Property Tax Rebate Program: would be established within the first year of the Guzman Administration, which would effectively cap the amount that the City's portion of property taxes could rise in a single year. The program would offer any Aurora senior the ability to apply for a property tax rebate equivalent to any amount of the City's operational property tax line that goes up more than 3% above any average increase for their area. A resident's "area" would be defined largely by the township within which their home is located and rebates would not be available for rises in property taxes attributable to home improvements such as building additions that naturally increase the value and taxes on a home. Unlike senior property tax rebates in other cities, the Aurora program would be relatively straightforward and would not require the home-owner to have lived in the property for a long period of time.

Making Aurora the Top Choice for New Home-buyers

Where else in Chicagoland can one walk, bike, or drive and park for free and have nearly continuous access to award winning theater, internationally renowned music performers, comedians or entertainers combined with an eclectic mix of restaurants, great parks and water-sports recreation? Aurora's "secret" value is already well known to the many residents who have helped make Aurora the vibrant, diverse and strong community that it is today. The time has come to reach out to the region's middle and upper-income earners to help them see the unparalleled value in Aurora's diverse and historic housing stock.

Expand Choose Aurora: An annual "Choose Aurora" event has already been established by the City in partnership with the Realtors Association of the Fox Valley. However, a more collaborated effort involving the Park District, the School Districts, and the Chambers of Commerce will serve to broaden the group of home-owners looking to put down roots in our great city. Aurora already has so much to offer, but a coordinated effort across multiple stakeholders and all of the community's institutions, would begin to make it clearer to more people that the City of Lights offers the best value and best overall quality of life in the region.

Revitalize Historic Districts: As gaming tax and other revenues shrink, Aurora will need to prioritize a new funding source to ensure meaningful historic preservation code enforcement and incentives for owner-occupants to restore or beautify historic homes. Aurora's five historic districts and other neighborhoods bordering the downtown offer the best combination of quality and affordability in the region, and a revitalized downtown will increase the attractiveness of these neighborhoods helping to assure the level of investment needed to maintain and/or renovate much of the City's historic housing stock.



Increasing Home-Ownership: While much of the near-term development in Aurora will come from the growing market for quality rental housing development, the opportunity to see 1,000 new or additional home-owners across much of the economic spectrum also exists. This would help stabilize neighborhoods, improve the tax base and create increased community wealth as more would-be renters begin building wealth through home-ownership. As co-founders of *Emmanuel House*, Rick Guzman and his wife, Desiree, have worked for more than a decade to transition stable renters to homeowners.

In 2016, the Guzman's Emmanuel House model was recognized as “one of the most innovative social programs in the world” as a finalist for the Classy Awards presented in partnership with the *United Nations Foundation* and the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. As a finalist in this premiere recognition of non-profit innovation world-wide Rick Guzman was recognized as one of “*the brightest minds and boldest leaders that are solving problems through innovation.*” The City can and should support additional homeownership efforts by offering its bond cap and federal pass-through dollars as sources to create down-payment assistance and home-owner education programs to first time homebuyers.

Employer Assisted Housing Incentives. The State of Illinois has passed laws making it nearly impossible to require employees to live in the communities they work in, however, having our policemen, fire fighters, teachers and more live in our community helps stabilize neighborhoods and supports the local economy. That's why I am proposing creating employer assisted housing incentives to provide down payment assistance to employees who choose to live in Aurora. The City of Aurora should also partner with other major employers and institutions—such as school districts and hospitals—who also want to provide incentives for their employees to choose Aurora.

Downtown Revitalization & Development:

The Guzman Administration will work closely with the property and business owners that make up the Aurora Downtown Committee in order to bring about the Committee's vision “*for a successful downtown that has a true city feel, full of old buildings repurposed for new uses... A genuinely integrated environment where people of many cultures, tastes, ethnicities and income levels intermingle and benefit from one another... A [place] filled both with residents and with independent businesses... Downtown will be organic, energetic and colorful.*”

Aurora is blessed with some truly great and significant architecture—including vacant or underutilized buildings that can be re-purposed to add additional housing to the downtown. Additionally, downtown is ripe for what is called **Transportation Oriented Development (T.O.D.)** where new residents are drawn to areas that combine proximity to mass transit with nearby amenities like parks, retail, entertainment venues, restaurants and improved pedestrian environments. And more housing in the downtown will increase the viability and attractiveness of developing additional retail and entertainment.



More Together: A Collaborative & Inclusive Vision for Aurora's Next Great Chapter

Rick Guzman has already delivered some of the most significant housing and historic preservation projects that Aurora has seen in decades by combining Aurora's unique architectural assets with an expertise in building public-private partnerships that can successfully leverage tens of millions of dollars in tax credit financing at levels Aurora has never before seen. The two largest and most recent projects include:

- The renovation of the long-vacant/dilapidated, former St. Charles Hospital, which broke ground in February, 2016. This public-private partnership that Rick assembled as assistant chief-of-staff for Aurora, preserves a national historic registry building right on the Eastern gateway to Aurora's downtown and has converted to Senior housing—leveraging over \$20 million of private investment and costing local property tax payers nothing.
- Creating the new Aurora Arts Center by re-purposing the former "Carson's" & "Stanley" department store buildings (most recently WCC former campus) – became an even more significant project and partnership assembled by Rick Guzman. The overall \$35 million project (which received a \$15 million competitive tax credit award in September of 2016) will bring a new restaurant, new housing & a top-notch school for performing arts to Aurora's downtown—creating an incredible opportunity for Aurora's youth to get a top-notch arts education and driving up to 200,000 more visitors to the downtown each year.

Finally, the city must continue to promote and/or fund business promotion programs that provide incentives or assistance with starting new businesses or growing existing ones so that the number of downtown office workers is also dramatically increased. Ensuring that the City can work equally well with both very large and fairly small or start-up businesses will be an important part of *growing a business-friendly downtown*. A thriving downtown benefits the entire City of Aurora as it helps to both define our city and set it apart from all of our neighbors. Nowhere else in the entire Western Suburbs can one find the level of architectural significance combined with a thriving arts and culture scene set against the dramatic river-front backdrop.

Double the number of housing units in the downtown: while there are already approximately 650 housing units in Aurora's downtown, there is a need for an additional *1,000 – 1,500 downtown housing units* to improve the viability of many of the vacant or under-utilized downtown storefronts and add vibrant nightlife options to an already thriving arts scene. There are at least six downtown locations that offer opportunities for ***new construction housing*** to be built or begun by the year 2021 and six more that could see new construction by 2025. On top of that, there are over a dozen *downtown, historic buildings* that lend themselves to near-term, adaptive re-use for either exclusively residential or mixed-use re-purposing.

Transportation Oriented Development (T.O.D.) is a big opportunity for Aurora's downtown. Aurora already boasts the best example of an infill T.O.D. in the region with 1,400 units of townhomes and higher-end apartments recently developed along Station Blvd. near the Route 59 train station (the busiest Metra station in all of Chicagoland). Aurora's other train stop, in downtown Aurora, is the next best opportunity to develop and investors and developers are already taking notice.



Establish additional first floor restaurants and retail by continuing and expanding commercial training and incentive programs or adapting the City's "Finish Line" grant to require and/or incentivize the build-out of first floor retail spaces to make them more move-in ready for new business uses. Furthermore, the City should continue to work with Invest Aurora to utilize resources like Buxton and Realty Trac to identify and recruit new restaurants and retail stores that often locate in areas with demographics similar to the current and shifting/future demographics.

Develop pre-determined incentive packages for developments/uses that residents want to see: Preliminary results and surveys from the downtown master planning process currently underway through a technical assistance grant from CMAP shows that most residents want to see additional restaurants and entertainment options.¹ While many of these uses will follow with the increase in housing built for populations ranging from young professionals to retiring baby-boomers, many developers or would-be investors are unaware of the many development opportunities or incentives that are often already available to them.

In the past, Aurora was almost entirely reactionary in its development philosophy. In big growth years, there were plenty of developments being proposed to the City and the City often just reacted to whatever was proposed and rarely proactively sought out particular types of developments. Over the past few years, the city has taken a more proactive approach to development—especially for more prime development parcels and/or projects requiring City assistance or variances. The formation of *Invest Aurora*, a public/private development partnership with the City has been a step in the right direction.

Even more can be done, however, through the assistance of both housing and commercial development consultants that can create bundled incentive packages demonstrating how locally controlled incentives can be layered with additional outside sources and/or private equity investment. The combination of "advertising" or otherwise making it clear which types of developments the City is willing to incent—combined with pre-bundled incentive packages showing how significant percentages of a developer's total investment can be funded or financed will not only increase development opportunities, but will also improve the desirability of those developments.

Complete and construct the planned pedestrian bridge between Wilder & RiverEdge Parks: Over ten million dollars of outside grant dollars (Kane Co. Forest Preserve and a Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) grant) has been secured for this Bridge. Constructing the bridge will immediately improve the development potential of city-owned property along the stretch of River Street to the North of New York St. as this entire area would become just a short walk or bike ride across the bridge to reach the Rte. 25 Metra Commuter Station, RiverEdge Park or

¹ CMAP's Aurora Downtown Master Plan is in progress – see: <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/Ita/aurora>



other amenities such as Two Brothers Roundhouse. This would allow several acres of river-front property to be returned to the tax rolls and to be redeveloped into high property-tax yield developments and breathe new life and interest into the nearby Tanner Historic District area.

Finalize, Adopt and Implement New Downtown Master Plan with CMAP: The City of Aurora received a technical assistance grant from the regional planning agency, CMAP, which is working with City staff and residents on an update to the 2006 “Seize the Future Master Plan” for downtown. The goal is to strengthen downtown Aurora’s vitality and create a more livable, walkable downtown. As Mayor, Rick Guzman will continue to engage citizens through the roll out and implementation of the plan, which includes initiatives to strengthen the City’s Built Environment; Natural Environment; Transportation Infrastructure; Economy & Jobs; Health & Safety; as well as Education, Arts & Community Services.

Encourage non-profit/social service agencies to locate outside of the downtown or on the downtown fringe: Fewer social service agency headquarters or offices need to be located in the downtown. By encouraging these organizations to relocate to the outskirts of downtown or other areas of town, it frees up space for tax paying businesses to locate downtown.

Embracing Entertainment, Arts & Culture:

For the first three-quarters of the 20th Century, Aurora’s downtown was a regional destination point drawing both Aurorans and non-Aurorans alike to shop at its many department stores and boutique shops. As shopping patterns shifted from Main Street to shopping malls and increasingly to online sales, it no longer makes sense to focus making downtown Aurora a retail shopping destination. The future of downtown Aurora rests in two of the things that no amount of money can buy: a beautiful river and an accomplished, home-grown, established Arts Culture.

Arts & Culture—and a New School for Performing Arts: On Stolp Island, the Paramount’s dramatic growth and success should be capitalized upon through the establishment of a *School for Performing Arts* (focused primarily on elementary & secondary students) drawing tens of thousands more parents and students to the downtown on a monthly basis and further solidifying the Paramount—and Aurora—as the regional, artistic powerhouse it has become. The Fox Valley Orchestra youth program and Waubensee Community College’s own arts faculty are other local assets that could become key partners/collaborators as well.

Arts Center and Artisan Incubator: The City of Aurora and Invest Aurora should collaborate with Aurora Downtown and the Aurora Area Chamber of Commerce to subsidize an artisan incubator space targeting artisans involved in wildly successful and important First Fridays and Aurora’s Farmers Market events. The space could take on a “French Market” feel and be a destination/attraction for visitors to the downtown looking for more consistent access to artists and artisans that have participated in First Fridays’ “pop-up shops” while simultaneously offering an opportunity to grow and develop in a very low cost setting. By working with Invest



Aurora, the Women's Business Development Center, Aurora Downtown and Waubensee Community College, artisans would additionally receive access to training, business planning services and ultimately access to capital for expanding and improving their business.

Fox River Clean-Up & Recreation: As the new CMAP downtown master plan points out, "*The river provides recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, and drinking water. Unfortunately, it suffers from impaired water quality throughout the region, attributed to man-made dams, urban runoff, combined sewer overflows, and point source discharges.*" Therefore, the City must continue to make progress on its green initiatives that will reduce runoff and incompatible uses along the river while increasing activities and gathering spaces for residents and visitors.

Building on the successful Rocktown Adventures kayak shop and RiverEdge Park concert venue, the environmental restoration and re-development of Aurora's downtown riverfront will be one of the key, strategic goals and investments during the 2017- 2021-time period. Forcing the relocation of proven and repeat offending polluters who cannot come into compliance (like the former Kiddie Car/Triad Auto) and incentivizing the transition of other more industrial uses that no longer make sense or have any need for riverfront properties will open up several opportunities for the river to be enjoyed and developed for both residential and recreational uses.

As opportunities re-emerge for significant development in the southern half of the downtown, the City should continue to work with developers to help expand the Riverwalk and develop the riverbanks for living, commerce, and leisure.

Business Retention and Attraction

Establish a City Permit Ombudsman's Office: While the City's development staff and Buildings & Permits division, specifically, have received numerous awards from industry groups—and while the office does very well with larger and mid-sized developers, often smaller and/or first-time developers get lost and frustrated by the system. Less experienced developers or building owners often struggle to figure out the needed steps or appropriate sequencing to move a project from concept to reality. A dedicated, *bilingual* small-business liaison between the City's buildings and permits office and the *Invest Aurora* development staff will help shepherd small, but serious entrepreneurs through the involved, but important permitting process.

Improved support for Minority-owned and start-up businesses: *Invest Aurora* must focus on its recent successes to reach out to Hispanic and minority businesses and develop its capacity and capability to increase minority business participation and inclusion in the forthcoming development opportunities across the city. Much of this can be done through closer collaboration with other organizations, chambers or small-business support groups.



Commission a study and plan for a multi-cultural “Mercado Business District:” The 2006 Seize the future master plan for downtown included the concept of a “Mercado Neighborhood” featuring multi-cultural shops, restaurants and entertainment venues. This plan should be updated through the current 2016 Downtown Master Plan process currently underway—especially given the significant growth in new immigrant groups that Aurora has recently experienced. A study should be commissioned to obtain data on the contributions of immigrants and opportunities to more fully engage them in the local economy. New, non-traditional businesses either catering to new immigrant groups or leveraging their unique cultural offerings for a broader audience should be fully explored. The results of the study should be reviewed by a local task-force tasked with crafting a vision and strategy to make the community more inclusive and economically vibrant.

Establish and maintain a Revolving Micro-Loan Fund: Access to smaller loans (in the range of \$500 - \$25,000) can often be hard to get for many small, local businesses. But locally controlled dollars, such as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars can be used to leverage additional federal funds specifically targeted for small business access to capital through H.U.D., the S.B.A. or the E.D.A. These opportunities for capital should be able to be used as part of a “tool-kit” that can combine resources with Invest Aurora’s “Finish-Line Grants,” Aurora Downtown’s support programs, *ScaleUp Aurora’s* training and access to capital along with ongoing supports through Waubensee Community College.

Enact model “local preference” ordinance for Aurora-based contractors: A new city ordinance will need to be carefully crafted so as not to deter outside contractors from bidding on projects and maintaining a competitive environment for city contracts paid for by taxpayers. However, it should be the policy of the City to procure goods and services from qualified local bidders to the greatest extent possible. The ordinance should be structured in such a way that it does NOT cost local taxpayers anything, but instead functions to offer qualified local bidders the opportunity to match the bid price of the lowest responsible bidder. Furthermore, the offer to a local contractor to match the lowest responsible non-local contractor bid should only be given if the local contractor’s bid is within a certain percentage as determined by the City Council. This percentage should not exceed 5% for smaller contracts and would need to be pre-determined and set in a graduated table that eventually goes down to only ½ or 1% for the largest contracts.

Attracting well-paying Employers and Encouraging Entrepreneurship and Business Start-ups:

Invest Aurora can build upon its track record of helping existing Aurora businesses to expand their operations within the City limits *and* attract new employers by:

- Making effective use of the Buxton reports/analysis of missed retail opportunities;
- Maintaining an openness to and assistance for businesses of all shapes and sizes
- Recognizing non-traditional business opportunities based on Aurora’s evolving demographics
- Strengthening the *Pathways to Prosperity Initiative*: With an average of 10,000 baby-boomers retiring *every day*, Aurora’s higher than average population of young people,



positions us well to provide for the workforce needs of companies looking for places to expand or anchor their operations. But ensuring that these young people are well educated, trained and equipped to meet these workforce needs will require that the multi-jurisdictional collaboration started under the *Pathways to Prosperity* initiative is taken to the next level. The new Weisner Family Technical Training Center being built by West Aurora School District 129 is the type of resource that has the potential to serve other public and private high school students to better equip them for 21st Century jobs. However, the City must continue to convene the multiple school districts and educational institutions and work to strengthen this collaborative work. By partnering with local school districts and institutions of Higher Education such as Aurora University and Waubesa Community College, the City can assist these educators in building a “*talent pipeline*” of high school and college graduates with more than just diplomas— but also certifications and credentials that have market currency. By partnering with education to provide the skills training that regional employers have found to be in short supply, Aurora can attract additional employers to the City.

Make permanent the geographically targeted business forums started by Invest Aurora: Invest Aurora should establish ongoing advisory groups that meet 2 – 4 times per year to hear about and assist with the various challenges that are unique to some of the areas older retail corridors including, but not limited to:

- West Galena Commercial Corridor;
- East New York St. Commercial Corridor;
- Farnsworth Avenue Commercial Corridor;
- Eola Road Commercial Corridor; and
- Rte. 59 – Commons area

Leverage OnLight Aurora to attract more companies that benefit from access to high-speed internet: Access to the City's powerful and extensive fiber-optic network will aid in *bringing more tech-based firms* to join the likes of Support Techs, Expocad and Bureau Gravity in the downtown. City-wide, this network can help the city attract higher-end users along the City's remaining Tollway frontage and business park space similar to the recently relocated Aldi IT department building off of Farnsworth Avenue.

Maintaining and Strengthening Aurora's Infrastructure

Under Mayor Tom Weisner, major infrastructure improvement initiatives have put Aurora in a much better position than many other Illinois municipalities. Most of the City's major bridges have been repaired or replaced entirely and the City has made significant strides toward the need to separate its 100+ year old combined sewer system. These initiatives must continue to receive a high priority. While few people get excited about infrastructure upgrades and improvements, the need to continue to make responsible investments in existing transportation and infrastructure assets is necessary to keep Illinois competitive in an



increasingly global economy. Maintenance and modernization efforts will continue to be a top priority.

Reducing congestion and emissions: The City's investment in a strong, extensive fiber-optic network provides Aurora with a distinct advantage over our neighboring municipalities and Aurora should continue to aggressively pursue grant dollars that these investments have helped leverage. The City's coordinated traffic management system must be maintained to help improve incident response, traffic signal and work zone operations all while reducing idle time and improving commute times.

Best Practices and Benchmarking Results

As the State of Illinois' second largest city, Aurora is well positioned to take advantage of the world-class planning organizations with whom Aurora has increasingly partnered over the past 10 years including the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus, Metro West, DuPage Mayor's and Managers, the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), the Metropolitan Planning Council and more. The newly launched "ON TO 2050" regional planning initiative provides Aurora a great chance to participate and benefit from best practices and inter-jurisdictional collaborations addressing key issues.

Research and Implement National Best Practices. We must seize opportunities to research and emulate Best Practices in other areas of the country. My administration will become actively involved in national groups that highlight best practices among municipal governments such as the U.S. Conference of Mayors and International City/County Management Association and What Works Cities so that we can become a model community nationwide.

Benchmarking Results. Aurora's key indicators of community sustainability will be benchmarked against similarly situated communities in Illinois and across the country and reported out on the City's website. By understanding how we stack up to similar cities, we can better position Aurora for future success.

Education and Youth

Establish Aurora Birth to Career/Collective Impact Model: Aurora must build on its successes from the Early Childhood S.P.A.R.K. (Strong Prepared And Ready for Kindergarten), the Aurora University STEM school and the Pathways to Prosperity initiative. But instead of three separate initiatives, the City should act as convener of Early Childhood Education providers, the City's multiple school districts and institutions of Higher Education to create an Aurora Educational Council that engages educational leaders across multiple initiatives and educational age groups in preparing Aurora's youth for future success.

As Mayor, Rick Guzman will seek commitments from these different sectors to rally around a common agenda for solving Aurora's educational, achievement and skills gap. The newly



created independent collaborative will be supported by a shared measurement system, mutually reinforcing activities and ongoing communication.

Build a Community Center on City's Near-East Side. Following the sale of the Fred Rogers Community Center located on the near East side of Aurora, the City has an opportunity to use low-interest federal dollars offered through HUD's Section 108 loan program to finance the renovation of a facility located in or around the City's targeted NRSA's geographic area, which encompasses the city's highest need census tracts. The loan can subsequently be repaid by tapping into the occupancy costs already being paid by some of the non-profit organizations already providing services on the Near-East Side. The community center will offer programs for youth that can take place within the 60505 zip code, which in some cases, are not being offered due to the lack of an appropriate space. The East Aurora School District has some of the City's most significant space constraints and yet its school district boundary is the only one of the City's major school districts that currently lacks a community center. Budgetary pressures from unfunded Springfield mandates combined with flat tax levies even as the City's population continues to grow, means that the old model of a community center that relies on taxpayer dollars to acquire a facility, rehab that facility and operate that facility is no longer feasible. Under a new paradigm, the City can help establish a community center through primarily existing resources and without any significant costs to local taxpayers.

Maximizing Every Auroran's Ability to Contribute

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) will be a pillar of the Guzman Administration. So much of what Aurora needs to reach the next level of development already exists within the City's diverse and talented citizenry. Many of the solutions and/or resources needed to solve community problems already exist and simply need to be bundled with other resources, leveraged and/or unleashed. So rather than focusing on the community's deficiencies, Aurora will be more successful by honing and leveraging its existing strengths, resources, skills and experience. The following principles of ABDC will guide not only policymaking but policy-methodology:

1. Everyone has gifts: each person in a community has something to contribute;
2. Relationships build a community: people must be connected in order for sustainable community development to take place;
3. Citizens at the center: citizens should be viewed as actors—not recipients—in development;
4. Leaders involve others: community development is strongest when it involves a broad base of community action;
5. People care: challenge notions of "apathy" by listening to people's interests;
6. Listen: decisions should come from conversations where people are heard;
7. Ask: asking for ideas is more sustainable than giving solutions;



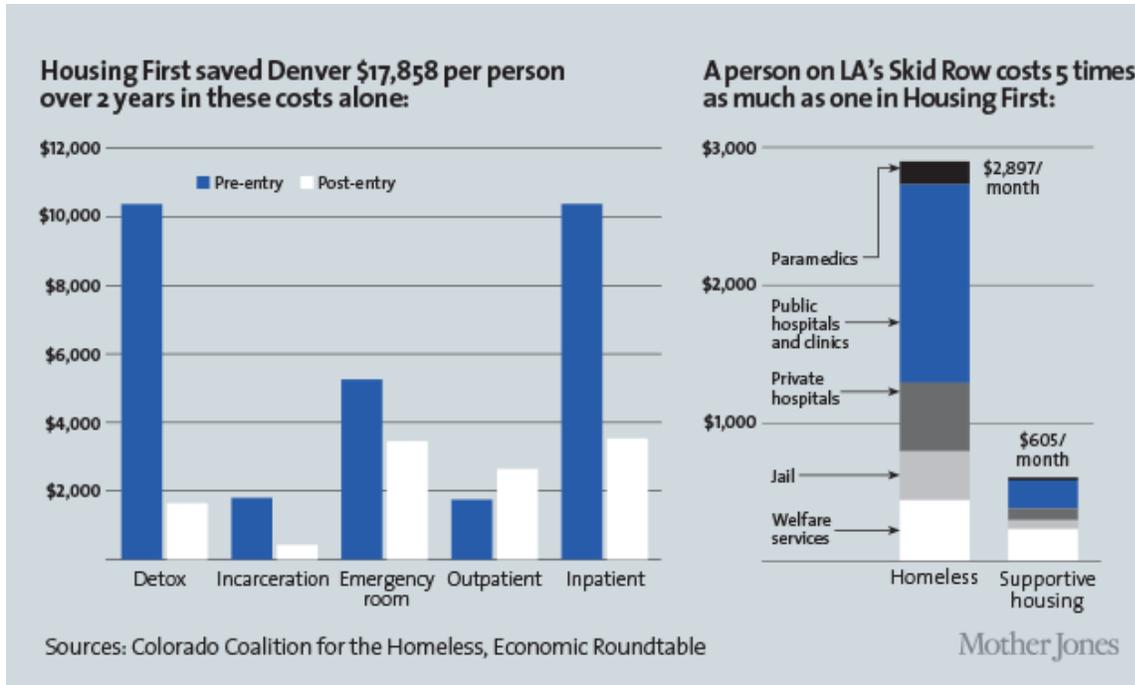
More Together: A Collaborative & Inclusive Vision for Aurora's Next Great Chapter

Building on and benefiting from Aurora's Economic and Ethnic Diversity: As the investor website, WalletHub noted, *"In an ideal America, no one in any city would live below the poverty line. But the closest we can get to a healthy city is one with a balanced diversity of residents from all socioeconomic backgrounds who can happily coexist."* When it comes to city and other publicly provided resources, this balanced diversity of residents *"ensures children from low-income households receive as fair a chance as their privileged peers. Surrounding disadvantaged kids with successful role models might also provide them with aspirations to move up the economic ladder. To recognize the cities that demonstrate a healthy society — that is, areas where economic class is most balanced or mixed — WalletHub analyzed 350 of the most populated U.S. cities."* **Aurora ranked #6 in the entire nation and was deemed the most economically diverse city East of the Mississippi.** Factoring in other measures of community diversity—including racial and ethnic diversity—Aurora again ranked toward the top of the national list and was the highest-ranking city in the entire Midwest. WalletHub concluded their studies with the rhetorical question: ***"Recognizing that economic opportunity follows diversity, where in the U.S. would you rather live?"*** As a founder of the ROOTS Aurora annual, multi-cultural festival, Rick Guzman will continue to champion the benefits and blessings that such a powerfully diverse community can provide.

Maintain a non-partisan citizens' committee that includes community-minded Republicans, Democrats and Independents, all of whom favor open, honest, non-partisan government at City Hall. Moreover, as Mayor, Rick Guzman will ensure that appointments to City Boards and Commissions will be representative of the City overall by including women and men from all age groups, from all Aurora neighborhoods, from all ethnic or cultural groups and from all walks of life.

Create or Revive Mayor's Advisory Boards for (1) Business owners; (2) non-profit leaders; and (3) faith-based communities: each semi-formal group would meet once per quarter so that there would be a meeting to touch base with one of the three advisory groups each month.

Ending Long-Term, Chronic Homelessness: Establish a "Pay for Success" model leveraging state funding resources such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits and Social Impact Bonds to implement a local "housing first" model that has all but ended long-term, chronic homelessness in cities including Salt Lake City and several major Canadian cities. Additional funding for permanent supportive housing (housing that includes wrap around supports and services) would be generated from savings from local stakeholders such as hospitals who stand to gain from seeing "frequent users" of emergency room and ambulance transports become stabilized. Taxpayers are perhaps the largest beneficiaries of "Housing First" programs as study after study have shown drastic reductions in publicly funded services (see below):



More Attention to Services for Adults and Children with Disabilities

Rick Guzman has already worked to expand the number of supportive housing units that are available to adults living with disabilities and who are in need of ongoing services in supportive but independent living environments (housing units at both the St. Charles hospital renovation and the planned, downtown Coulter Court renovation—which was part of the Aurora Arts Centre deal—have units set aside for local persons in need of supportive services AND have service agreements with local agencies such as the Association for Individual Development (AID)). The City-convened Task Force pulling together the many other organizations and institutions that serve those with mental or developmental disabilities should be continued in order to identify more strategic partnerships, joint-ventures and/or opportunities for grant funding and collaboration to better serve this population.

Housing Code Enforcement & Holding absentee owners accountable

Crime can often breed in poorly maintained neighborhoods. Enforcement of the City’s Housing Code and recently established Vacant Property Ordinance will help ensure a good quality of life for residents in rental housing and reduce the number of vacant/idle buildings that are pulling down neighborhood property values and/or eventually becoming liabilities for taxpayer funded demolitions. These codes must be continually examined, however, to make sure that they are fairly applied and stay current with the actual issues they were attended to address.

Professionalizing Government

The City’s new, budgeted Enterprise Resource Platform (ERP) will allow for much enhanced performance management by being able to make effective use of data—across city departments and divisions—to inform decision-making. True outcome measurements will begin



to be possible (instead of simply measuring “outputs”) as the City’s antiquated data collection systems will soon allow for cross-departmental comparisons facilitating the further breakdown of city work being conducted in “silos.” This will allow the City to deliver on its goal of measurably improving the delivery of public services and making a strong commitment to increasing levels of customer Service.

Customer Service

Aurora is one of the few City’s its size to have established a call center that allows a citizen to speak with a live person in a one-stop “311” style customer service line (630-256-INFO established by Mayor Weisner). As Aurora’s next Mayor, Rick Guzman is committed to keeping this service available to the public and making it even easier for Aurora residents to more quickly and easily submit service requests for issues such as tall weeds/grass, graffiti and potholes. The City’s new customer relationship management software will assist in the accomplishment of this goal—along with the development of a new mobile app.