



MEMORANDUM

TO:	Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
FROM:	Sean Rabé, City Manager
DATE:	September 9, 2024
SUBJECT:	City Manager Report for September 9 City Council Meeting

Mayor and Council Members,

The following report provides an update on some of the major activities City Staff has been working on recently:

City Manager's Department:

- *Chief of Police Recruitment and Interim Chief of Police:* As Council knows, Chief of Police Ryan Kinnan's last day with the City will be September 14. He has been selected as the next Chief for the City of Woodland.

To prepare for his departure, I have selected retired Chief of Police Ted Stec to fill in as Interim Chief, until we are able to recruit for our next permanent Chief of Police. Ted was recently Interim Chief of Police in Nevada City, where he worked with Auburn's former Interim City Manager Joan Phillipe. He comes highly recommended by Joan. His calm demeanor will certainly help the positive momentum in the department. I will be bringing forward Ted's contract for Council approval at the September 23 Council meeting. We will have our two Police Department Lieutenants rotate as Acting Chiefs until Ted is able to start.

Human Resources Director Jennifer Leal will begin the recruitment for our next permanent Chief of Police shortly. We will be handling the recruitment ourselves, rather than hiring a recruitment firm (and thus avoiding that significant cost).

- *TOT Measure:* With the Council's adoption of Resolution #24-80, the City placed a ballot measure on the November General Election that would both increase the City's Transient Occupancy Tax rate from 8 percent to 10 percent and would also require short-term rentals to pay the TOT.

The measure has been assigned Measure F on the ballot. We have had an argument in favor of the Measure and an argument opposing the Measure submitted, as well as rebuttals to each.

The City has created an informational page on our website providing factual information on Measure F. You can find that here:

<https://www.auburn.ca.gov/701/Measure-F>.

We have also created a one-page informational handout, which is attached to this report.

- *Recreational Cannabis Meeting Held with Grass Valley:* Staff had a meeting last week with our Grass Valley counterparts to glean best practices for a potential recreational cannabis ordinance, per the City Council's direction earlier this year. Grass Valley and City staff met on Thursday to discuss the process that Grass Valley followed and how Auburn could modify that process for our use. We also had an impromptu tour of the dispensary in Grass Valley, which was honestly quite surprising – it seemed very well run and was quite nice.

Police Department:

- *APD Busy at Events:* The police department has been busy over the past couple of weeks. Thursday, we participated in the fourth annual Kidzapalooza event hosted at Recreation Park. The fair was also this past weekend, and our staff worked closely with the California Highway Patrol to ensure everyone had a safe and fun time in and around the fairgrounds. This Friday, September 13th, the final Cruise Nite event will be taking place in Downtown Auburn. The final Cruise Nite will be the annual 9/11 ceremony and the PD honor guard will be in attendance.

Planning/Economic Department:

- *Hotel Feasibility Project:* The Department is still working on evaluating and ranking the responses to an RFP for a hotel feasibility study. Of the respondents, some had to be excluded based on the overall cost but there were still several that appear to be qualified and financially feasible. The Department hopes to have this project on its way to contract in time for an October City Council meeting.
- *Business District ARPA Projects:* The City's Downtown ARPA project continues to move forward. Last week City staff was presented with the mapping for signage placement, and draft signage design. These items are to be presented to the Downtown Business Association Board on Tuesday and once we have their feedback, the project will move into final design. The final design will then be presented to the City Council, likely at the second meeting in October.

It should be noted that some real strategy is being developed by the design team. For example, public parking is hard to find yet abundant in Downtown

and Old Town. Instead of a “P” with an arrow or naming the parking areas by the names that locals know them by (i.e., East Placer Lot, Magnolia Lot, etc.), the consultant team decided to name the parking areas after the landmarks they are in proximity to, thus making it easier for locals to find and, at the same time, identifying our many points of interest.

Old Town’s Washington Square project is still in the design phase with the engineer and once final design is done it will be rolled out to the district and stakeholders. This is likely to occur late this month.

- ***Form-Based Code:*** The City’s form-based code project is slated to return to the Planning Commission for a second workshop. After the first workshop several questions were raised that staff will return to address at this next one. It is anticipated that a final draft of the new regulations will be the outcome of that meeting thus setting the document up for a future hearing and recommendation from the Planning Commission.



Finance Department:

- ***Year-End Process Underway:*** The Finance Department is working on a variety of FY 2023-24 year-end tasks to record the governmentwide financial activities required for the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). These activities include, but are not limited to, the annual calculations for asset depreciation and capitalization, debt obligation adjustments, GASB 68 Pension & GASB 75 OPEB liability adjustments, revenue and expenditure accruals, and Federal grant reporting.

The City’s independent external auditors, Eide Bailly LLP, are expected to begin their formal auditing the first week in October. That means the Finance Department will be done, “soft closing,” the fiscal year by the end of September. The remaining accounting adjustments that Finance will make for FY 2023-24 will only be at the direction of the auditors. The FY 2023-24 ACFR is estimated to be completed in December 2024.

In parallel with these efforts, the Finance Department is at the initial stages of designing our new budget software to be available for all Departments for the FY 2025-26 budget year that starts in January 2025. And, upcoming at the September 23rd City Council meeting, the Finance Director will present a FY 2023-24 year-end fiscal update to summarize the financial condition of the General Fund.

City Clerk's Department:

- *New Phone System Rolling Out Soon:* The City Clerk is implementing a new phone system (and provider) which will save the City money because its bundled with our internet service. Work is currently taking place to meet with each director and improve the automatic attendant to make the callers experience easier to use, and more importantly, easier to reach someone. The switch over happens on September 27th.

Fire Department:

- *Presentation to Placer County Association of Realtors:* On September 5th, Chief Rogers presented the newly adopted Defensible Space Inspection Ordinance to the Placer County Association of Realtors at their weekly marketing meeting. The presentation covered several topics, including a summary of the ordinance, the inspection request process, and how to navigate the fire department website for more information. Chief Rogers also reviewed the inspection criteria and outlined the boundaries of the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.

In addition, the presentation provided an overview of Auburn's City limits, explained defensible space terminology, and recapped current fire prevention efforts by the Auburn Fire Department. Information about FireWise Communities and the Greater Auburn Area Fire Safe Council was also shared. The presentation was well-received, and attendees engaged in a productive discussion.

- *Labor Day Weekend Calls:* Between Friday, August 30th, and Monday, September 2nd, the Auburn Fire Department responded to 27 incidents, including:
 - 14 Medical Aids
 - 7 Fire-related Incidents
 - 3 Vehicle Accidents
 - 3 Rescues
- *Automatic Aid Response:* Auburn Fire provided automatic aid to CAL FIRE/Placer County Fire for a commercial structure fire at a linen shop on Sutherland Drive, where Auburn Fire units assisted CAL FIRE/Placer County Fire with command and control of the incident. The fire was held to the area of origin, with no major damage to the structure. Auburn Fire also responded to a major injury vehicle accident in the American River Canyon, where personnel provided critical patient care alongside AMR, continuing assistance all the way to the hospital.

Public Works Department:

- *Lift Station Progress:* The Diamond Ridge lift station was scheduled to switch over to the new wet well on September 5, 2024. However, during the installation of the pumps, two of the tracks along the guide rails cracked. This issue is likely due to manufacturing defects or the use of unsuitable materials. We are

currently working closely with the pump manufacturer to resolve the problem and move forward with completing this project. The project has faced multiple delays, from part shortages to unfavorable weather conditions, but staff is working diligently with the contractor to ensure it is completed well before the winter season.

- *SCADA Project Moving Forward:* The SCADA project is progressing smoothly, with only two lift stations remaining to receive updates. The entire project is expected to be completed within the next four weeks. For those wondering about the significance of this upgrade for our wastewater infrastructure, it means the City will be fully self-reliant in detecting anomalies at any of our lift stations, such as excessive flow, pump issues, generator failures, or other potential problems. This will eliminate the need to rely on external reports or wait until a scheduled inspection to catch issues, significantly reducing downtime and costly post-failure remediation.
- *Aeolia Sewer Line Project Update:* The Aeolia Sewer line project, we are making good progress, though a complete set of plans is not yet ready for bid. Significant strides have been made in the design process, including scoping all homes to locate their laterals. Additional geotechnical work has been initiated to ensure that the placement of the new line will not be affected by any existing conditions. Staff has also begun discussions with the Placer County Water Agency to coordinate upgrades to their infrastructure as part of this project, ensuring there will be no need for further subgrade work once the roadway moratorium is in place.

QUESTIONS? Please contact me at the phone number below or by email at srabe@auburn.ca.gov.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean Rabé". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Sean" and the last name "Rabé" clearly visible.

Sean Rabé, City Manager