



MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
FROM: Sean Rabé, City Manager
DATE: August 11, 2025
SUBJECT: City Manager Report for the August 11th 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:

Station A Post Office Reopening as Museum and Visitor's Center

According to the Placer County Historical Association, the long-anticipated plan to revitalize the historic Post Office in Old Town is officially moving forward. The Ramirez family, current owners of the property, has reached a tentative agreement that is now being drafted into a formal contract that will see the building used as a museum and visitors' center. The two-year lease agreement is expected to be signed on October 1.

The PCHS approached the City to inquire as to whether or not the City could help offset the cost of the lease. I have pledged a \$2400 City donation to the effort once the lease has been signed.

Fireworks Final Accounting

The City has received a total of \$19,000 in donations for the 2025 Family Fireworks event, with an anticipated cost of \$22,500 – meaning the City only needed to put in \$3,500, as opposed to the authorized \$9,000. Work is now underway to find a non-profit to take over the event.

Police Department:

National Night Out 2025 – A Huge Success!

Thank you to everyone who joined us for this year's National Night Out! The evening was filled with laughter, community spirit, and great conversations with our neighbors. From the fun games and activities to the chance to connect with local first responders, it was a night that truly showcased the strength of our community.

We were excited to welcome more vendors and community partners than last year, bringing even more activities, giveaways, and opportunities to connect. We're grateful to our amazing volunteers, city staff, and all the businesses and organizations who made this event possible. Your support helps keep Auburn a safe, connected, and vibrant place to live.

Pancakes with a Purpose!

Saturday, August 16th, from 7–10 AM, is the Auburn Jeep Club's Drive-Thru Pancake Breakfast benefiting the Placer County Law Enforcement Chaplaincy and the Auburn Police Officers Association. Taking place at 1225 Lincoln Way in Auburn (behind Auburn City Hall), this delicious breakfast is just \$10 per plate and includes two pancakes, two eggs, two sausages, and your choice of coffee or juice. Swing by, enjoy a hearty meal, and support our local heroes and community programs — all without even leaving your car!

Back to School Safety Success

Back to school at Placer High School was a success, with the Auburn Police Department providing a strong traffic presence to ensure students, parents, and staff had a safe and smooth start to the year. Officers were on hand to help manage busy school zones, keeping traffic flowing and ensuring pedestrian safety. Next up, EV Cain and Skyridge schools will begin their school year on August 13th, and our officers will be out once again to help ensure a safe return for all students.

Planning Department:

AB 130

AB 130 Passed on June 30th amending laws that limit the ability to make modifications to the California Building Standards Code relating to residential units unless certain conditions are met. Local jurisdictions will not be able to amend the building codes through ordinance unless related to home hardening, deemed emergency standards by the commission, or previously filed and in effect. The Building division has been trying to navigate these restrictions while taking into consideration the very high fire hazard of the city as we start the 2025 code adoption process.

Tyler Permitting Software

Heading into our sixth month of Tyler and we have already made a vast improvement on simplifying the permit process. Currently we are working on configuring the system to notify the applicant through email when certain tasks have been completed on their permit such as an approved review. Much like the streamlined solar permit process we are in trial of a streamlined water heater

permit that an applicant can apply, pay fees and immediately be issued a permit no matter the time of day.

July Permits

The Building Division remained busy throughout July, conducting 141 inspections, issuing 78 permits, finalizing 43 permits, and receiving 65 new permit applications.

Economic Development:

Entertainment Zones Discussions

Talks are ongoing with both Old Town and Downtown regarding the potential designation of all or part of their districts as entertainment zones. In January, new legislation was passed allowing cities to adopt ordinances that permit alcohol consumption in designated public spaces, opening the door for this type of district-wide activation. This change could enhance the visitor experience, support local businesses, and create a more vibrant atmosphere for events and daily activity and give people another reason to linger and shop.

Wayfinding signs Incoming

The first batch of the City's new wayfinding signs has officially arrived, and installation kicks off this week, starting with the Downtown parking lots. These signs have been in the works for over two years as part of the Downtown Business Association's ARPA-funded project, aimed at helping visitors find their way into Downtown. Although led by the Downtown group, the project also included Old Town and both areas are contributing to the cost of the new signage. Keep an eye out, signs will start popping up in and around historic Auburn, starting with the public parking lots.

Finance Department:

General Fund Surplus Estimate

Early indicators point to meeting or exceeding the FY 2024-25 year-end estimate for the General Fund surplus. The largest outliers yet to materialize are final sales tax revenues and final calculations of grant-funded reimbursements to be accrued. The Finance department will have a better pulse on these items by September, with the final outcome in December after the external auditors verify our accounting records. That said, FY 2025-26 is in full swing, and the City Council can expect Finance staff to deliver a status update on preliminary year-end and first quarter financials in the next couple of months.

Funding Unfunded Liabilities

Arriving soon for City Council's consideration is a recommendation on how best to utilize \$1 million from the City's General Fund Reserves designated for funding pension liabilities. The reserve was established a few years ago as a set-aside of one-time funds to help mitigate the ongoing impacts of the required payments to CalPERS for the City's share of the CalPERS unfunded liability. Statewide, CalPERS has an unfunded liability for pensions of about \$180 billion. This means, the estimated amount of pensions CalPERS needs to pay out on future benefits exceeds the value of their current assets. In this respect, carrying an unfunded liability is not cause for immediate concern because the employees in focus have not yet retired. What it does mean is that local governments across the State have a share in this unfunded liability based on the number and type of employees they have. In addition, local governments have to pay interest (of currently 6.8%) on the unfunded amount. The City's share is about \$11 million, which equates to about 13% short of the total we'd need to pay our future retirees (i.e. Auburn has a funded ratio of 87%). Each year, local governments including Auburn, pay CalPERS additional money to reduce this liability. Ideally, governments want to be between 90-95% funded, so Auburn has a few percentage points to go. There are a couple of ways our City can utilize our \$1 million reserve to capitalize on the opportunity to both reduce our unfunded liability and eliminate interest charges. Finance staff are actively preparing those scenarios now and are optimistic about taking this next step towards securing our employees' future.

Fire Department:

Auburn Fire Department - Staffing Update

Firefighter Nate Steil left the Auburn Fire Department on July 16th to accept a Firefighter/Paramedic position with a Bay Area fire department. We thank Nate for his service to the Auburn community and wish him continued success in his career. The department has already taken steps to fill the vacancy, and a local firefighter is currently working through the background process. In the meantime, Auburn Firefighters are working collaboratively to fill the vacancy. We also recognize Battalion Chief Matt McCarthy for completing his first year with the fire department on August 2, 2025.

Auburn Fire Department/Auburn Hook and Ladder Co. #1 - Supports National Night Out

The Auburn Fire Department and Auburn Hook and Ladder Co. #1 supported the Auburn Police Department at this year's National Night Out on August 5th in Old Town. Approximately 30 members of the Hook and Ladder Co. #1 volunteered their time, serving complimentary hot dogs and water to attendees. The Auburn Grocery Outlet generously donated the supplies, helping make the evening a success for the community.

Public Works Department:

Staff anticipates having a remediation plan finalized shortly for the side entrance to City Hall. We have received one bid for the project, and the design is currently being developed to retain the existing footprint. The goal is to deliver a structurally sound solution that does not impact adjacent properties. Staff intends to present this plan to the City Council at the next scheduled meeting.

In addition, the Notice to Proceed has been issued and accepted by both the roofing contractor and the electrical contractor for the solar project at the Police Department. Construction is expected to begin before the end of the month. This schedule positions the City to take full advantage of the federal Investment Tax Credit, which is set to expire at the end of the year, as well as the NEM 2.0 application benefits.

Separately, staff has initiated the design and permitting process for a solar Shade/Charging infrastructure project at the Corporation Yard. This project will utilize SB-125 funding to support the City's transition to electric fleet vehicles by expanding charging infrastructure.

Human Resources:

Introducing Our New Team Member!

We're excited to welcome Kim Wilson, who starts with the City of Auburn on August 11th!

Kim will be joining us as an Administrative Services Technician supporting both Human Resources and Finance, with a primary focus on payroll and we are thrilled to have her onboard!

If you see her around, be sure to say hello and give her a warm Auburn welcome!

Celebrating July Work Anniversaries!

Every month, we take a moment to cheer for the amazing people who keep the City of Auburn thriving. Your dedication, passion, and hard work make our community stronger — and we're so grateful for everything you do!

Let's give a huge shout-out to these rockstars for hitting their milestones:

- ❖ John Rogers – 26 years
- ❖ Carlos Castaner – 18 years

- ◆ Bryan Morrison – 9 years
- ◆ Matt Chesterman – 2 years

Thank you for your continued contributions — you truly make Auburn a better place every day. Here's to many more years of success and celebration!

City Clerk:

City Hall & Police Department Lawns to Go Green—Literally and Figuratively

The City of Auburn is officially enrolled in the Lawn Replacement Rebate Program and Irrigation Efficiencies Rebate Program, courtesy of the Placer County Water Agency (PCWA)—and the City's Sustainability Advisory Committee is leading the charge. The applications were submitted by the City Clerk, ensuring Auburn got a head start before funding runs out.

This move comes ahead of Assembly Bill 1572, which goes into effect January 1, 2027, requiring state and local government properties to ditch decorative grass in favor of more sustainable landscapes. The goal? Conserve water and meet California's growing environmental goals—without sacrificing curb appeal.

Together, the two sites—City Hall and the Auburn Police Department—are replacing a combined 7,772 square feet of traditional turf. That's 3,469 sq. ft. at City Hall and 4,303 sq. ft. at the PD, all slated to be transformed into water-efficient, climate-resilient landscaping.

Thanks to PCWA's rebate program, the City could receive \$3 per square foot, up to a maximum of \$15,000 per meter—a much-appreciated boost to offset the cost of going drought-tolerant. Rebates will be applied as bill credits and are available first-come, first-served, so getting in early was key.

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



Sean Rabé, City Manager