



## MEMORANDUM

<b>TO:</b>	Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
<b>FROM:</b>	Sean Rabé, City Manager
<b>DATE:</b>	October 13, 2025
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	City Manager Report for the October 13 <sup>th</sup> 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:**

#### *League Lessons from Long Beach*

This past week I traveled to Long Beach for the annual League of California Cities Annual Conference, along with about 2000 other city officials from throughout the State.

Each year, the League of California Cities Annual Conference brings together local government leaders from across the state to share ideas, discuss challenges, and learn from one another. For City Managers, this event is more than just a professional conference—it's an opportunity to strengthen our communities through collaboration, innovation, and continued learning.

The conference offers direct access to the latest legislative updates, best practices in city management, and emerging trends that affect how we serve our residents. It's also a rare chance to network with both peers and elected officials who understand the unique challenges of leading a city organization—whether it's balancing budgets, addressing housing needs, or navigating ever evolving state mandates. Most of the sessions I attended focused on wildfire risk, statewide finance issues that impact City services, or communication-based session.

These conversations often lead to fresh ideas and creative solutions that can be brought back to Auburn and put into practice.

### **Planning Department:**

#### *PG&E Lot to Receive Upgrades*

The PG&E lot on Sacramento Street, located near the fairgrounds parking area is set for a significant upgrade following the recent approval of a site improvement permit. Currently used for PG&E vehicle parking, the lot will be enhanced with a new black steel fence, designed to align with the existing fencing across the street. This

improvement will replace the current fencing and contribute to a more cohesive visual appearance in the area.

**Inspector's Insights: Ever wonder why stair risers have to be uniform?**

Building codes require that all stair risers (the vertical part of each step) be nearly identical in height — typically within **3/8 of an inch** of each other. That's because our brains and muscles memorize a rhythm when we climb stairs. Even a small difference can throw off your stride — and that's why uneven stairs are one of the top hidden trip hazards inspectors look for!

**Economic Development:**

**Commercial Property Owners Workshop**

Staff has been preparing for the upcoming Commercial Property Owners Workshop scheduled for October 30 at 6:00 p.m. in the Rose Room at City Hall. The workshop was initiated at the request of the City Council to engage directly with commercial property owners in Old Town and Downtown to better understand the challenges contributing to long-term vacancies and to identify potential solutions. Invitations have been mailed to property owners, and staff is finalizing the agenda and discussion topics, which will focus on barriers to occupancy, City processes, and opportunities for partnership to strengthen the local business environment.

**Auburn Fall Festival**

October 25, 2025, the City is preparing for the Auburn Fall Festival, scheduled for Saturday, October 25, 2025, from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM in Downtown Auburn. This vibrant, family-friendly event will feature a Costume Contest, Prizes & Giveaways, Activities & Art, a Kids Zone, Live Music, and a Vendors & Makers Market. The festival offers a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together and celebrate the season. City staff is coordinating with event organizers to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for all attendees.

**Finance Department:**

**CalPERS Board News**

As Finance evaluates options for to pay for its share of unfunded pension liability, a couple of actions taken by the CalPERS Board last month will aid in the analysis of how the City could proceed. The discount rate is always watched closely, as it is the estimated return rate that CalPERS has used to calculate government agency unfunded liabilities. The discount rate has held steady at 6.8% for the past few years even though CalPERS investments have returned much higher yields. Typically, in years where CalPERS investment returns are higher than the discount rate, there is pressure on CalPERS to decrease the discount rate. Decreasing the discount rate is bad for governments because it increases their share of the unfunded liability. The good news is that CalPERS has agreed not to change the discount rate for another

year, and the higher returns over the past two years translate to a decrease in the City's liability share. However, there is other factor that could result in an increase in costs to the City.

Another factor used by CalPERS to calculate everyone's share of their unfunded liability is called the experience study. The study evaluates economic and demographic assumptions, such as the cost of labor and inflation, mortality rates, and the number of employees retiring vs. terminating earlier. Aside from the cost of labor and inflation, all other assumptions are not expected to have a material impact on the unfunded liability costs. That said, there will be financial impacts to the City that generally tend to be in the form of increased payments required to CalPERS. As the City evaluates its best option for mitigating the ups and downs of the ongoing unfunded liability, the recent decisions by CalPERS help us focus on making an educated choice. During the Finance Department's mid-year financial update to City Council in the Spring of 2026, the presentation will include the City's municipal advisor, NHA Advisors, who will present an overview of what's changed since the City's issued its 2021 Pension Obligation Bond. The Finance Department will also introduce options for utilizing its \$1 million pension reserve towards pension-specific investments with the insights gleaned from our municipal advisor.

### **Fire Department:**

#### *AMR Placer County Contract*

On October 10<sup>th</sup>, the Sierra-Sacramento Valley EMS Agency (S-SV) Board of Directors will consider approving a two-year Exclusive Operating Agreement (EOA) with American Medical Response (AMR). The current EOA expires on November 30, 2025. The existing agreement was executed by S-SV in 2005 as a non-competitive process covering all applicable areas within Placer County.

For background, there are three transporting ambulance providers in western Placer County: AMR, the Foresthill Fire Protection District, and the South Placer Fire Protection District. S-SV's initial intent was to negotiate a long-term contract extension with AMR; however, after discussions with EMS system stakeholders, they determined that pursuing an alternate process would better serve Placer County. This decision reflects the county's significant population growth and numerous statutory, regulatory, and policy changes that have occurred since the original EOA was established. In addition, a comprehensive assessment of the Western Placer County EMS system has never been completed and is currently being conducted by Healthcare Strategists. Additional information on this process can be found on S-SV's website.

The proposed EOA will not impact AMR's response time standards within the City of Auburn, as the applicable S-SV policy and agreement provisions remain unchanged.

### ***Automatic Aid Structure Fire in North Auburn***

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, the Auburn Fire Department assisted CALFIRE/Placer County Fire with extinguishing a structure fire in North Auburn. The fire originated in a barn and extended into nearby vegetation. Captain Bowers, Engineer Rea, and Firefighter Costa supported extinguishment, salvage, and overhaul operations for the duration of the incident. The fire spread into the surrounding vegetation, consuming approximately one acre of fuel. South Placer Fire District Engine 20 provided city coverage for approximately three hours while Auburn Fire personnel were committed to the incident.

### **Public Works Department:**

#### ***The Root of the Problem***

Over the weekend, staff responded to an unexpected sewer line issue that required cleanup and remediation at a private residence off Live Oak Street. The cause was traced to an oak tree root system that had infiltrated the sewer line, resulting in a blockage. The takeaway, be mindful of where you plant trees!

#### ***Roundabout Update***

Caltrans has expanded work at the roundabout to a six-day-per-week schedule, with the goal of completing the project by year's end. The City's portion of the work, including utility relocations, is well underway and progressing quickly. Once the underground work is complete, Council can expect to receive a three-week lookahead schedule, as this stage of the project involves fewer unknowns and will help expedite the final phases. Additionally, staff has initiated coordination with Caltrans to begin the approval process for the art installation, which is being led Staff with the assistance of Doreen Drake.

### **Human Resources:**

#### ***Current Recruitments:***

- **Police Officer** (Lateral/Academy Graduate)
- **Bus Driver I** (Part-time)
- **Police Officer Reserve – Level I** (Part-time)
- **Firefighter** Closes 10/31/25 (to create an eligibility list)

QUESTIONS? Please contact me at the phone number below or by email at [srabe@auburn.ca.gov](mailto:srabe@auburn.ca.gov).



Sean Rabé, City Manager