



City of Aurora Federal Legislative Priorities

Buckley Space Force Base (SFB)

Urging Congress to move forward appropriations funding for Buckley Space Force Base energy grid project from fiscal year 2027 to fiscal year 2025.

Buckley SFB is seeking greater energy and power independence to account for growing infrastructure on base as well as increasing base resilience. This project will create an on-base power generation plant and infrastructure to meet modern mission standards. The energy grid project will reach 35% design completion by January 2024 and 100% design completion by summer 2024 and will be ready for execution in 2025. Funding for this project is currently in the FY2027 Department of Defense budget. However, opportunities have arisen for the project to be moved forward to FY2025. The City encourages Congress and U.S. Space Force Leadership to approve moving the project to the FY2025 Budget.

Encourage and promote solutions to the aging F-16 fighter jets at the Air National Guard's 140th Wing to keep an active runway at Buckley Space Force Base.

The City encourages the U.S. Air Force and Department of Defense leadership to consider creative solutions to ensure the continued and uninterrupted operation of Buckley SFB runways. The City encourages solutions such as replacing existing F-16's with those that have a longer service life. Additionally, looking into the possibility of having the Colorado Air National Guard receive the F-15EX or the F-35s as a replacement aircraft for the F-16s. The City supports maintaining an active runway at Buckley SFB in the interests of national security.

The City of Aurora asks the Colorado Congressional delegation to continue support of Buckley Space Force Base in the annual Defense Appropriations Bill and assist in directing future missions to the base.

The City supports the Defense Community Infrastructure Program, created in the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Appropriations Act, which provides critical funding for off-base but adjacent community infrastructure projects that are key to supporting the Buckley mission. In addition, the City of Aurora seeks support for future requests of the Defense Community Infrastructure Program as the city protects the viability of the Base's operations and defense capabilities.

Housing & Homelessness

Support grant funding for programs that provide non-traditional sheltering options, such as safe parking, safe outdoor spaces, and employment focused sheltering.

The City of Aurora is committed to preventing and ending homelessness by connecting those without shelter to resources, support, and services to help them regain stability and improve well-being. While health and human services typically fall to county governments, the Aurora City Council has designated significant resources to support programs and partnerships with



community and nonprofit organizations to assist those experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness.

Addressing Housing and Urban Development income restrictions and rate calculations.

The City encourages re-evaluation and re-investment in federal housing programming and supports the following:

- An increase of the HUD maximum income restrictions for the down payment assistance and the rental assistance program in order to stay relevant in the current market.
- Reevaluate and raise the Area Median Income Limit rate calculations for high cost of living areas.
- An expansion of the housing choice vouchers program which would sharply reduce homelessness, housing instability, and overcrowding.
- Investments in housing and development programs including rental vouchers and mortgage assistance programs to prevent individuals and families from falling into homelessness.

Infrastructure

Pursue and support funding opportunities that will support the City's approach to transportation, growth, and connectivity.

The City will evaluate programs and funding that will support our approach to transportation including surface transportation and transit in order to support job and growth centers to connect people throughout Aurora to jobs and opportunities. The City will specifically seek funding for the East Colfax Bus Rapid Transit Extension project. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a premium transit service with upgraded buses, high service frequency, enhanced stations, and dedicated transit lanes whenever possible. The East Colfax BRT Extension project is a strategic investment that will extend the East Colfax BRT project, to create a single BRT corridor to foster key connections from the core of Aurora to significant ongoing and planned developments including the Aerotropolis area north of I-70, multiple Amazon distribution centers, and many other existing, planned and pending developments east of I-225 and immediately adjacent to E-470 and along the I-70 corridor.

This new service would allow the region to more fully leverage the USDOT BUILD Grant-funded I-70/ Picadilly interchange to access industrial and distribution centers north of I-70 and further interact with a future mobility hub proximate to that interchange with future transit services. The Colfax BRT Extension project allows the City of Aurora to transform the way people move throughout our corridor, making it more efficient, safe, and sustainable.

Legislation that promotes efficient permitting processes, planning, and development of water storage and resources.

Aurora Water enhances and protects the quality of life for Aurora citizens by providing safe, dependable and sustainable water, sewer and stormwater services, today and in the future. Water supply and water quality challenges can be eased or complicated through regulatory and



legislative decisions that effect the affordability, quality, and quantity of water available for the multiple uses statewide.

Public Safety

Support funding for programs that support public safety services including police, fire, and behavioral health.

The City of Aurora currently provides two crisis intervention models that provide trauma informed care through a multidisciplinary partnership between Aurora first responders and behavioral health professionals and supports additional resources for this work. City hired six new clinicians and two care coordinators to staff its 911-dispatched behavioral health care programs through a new partnership with UCHealth. The City supports funding for law enforcement co-responder models and medical alternative response models through the expansion of crisis services.

The City also supports continued funding for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program. This funding aids local law enforcement agencies operating in areas determined to be critical drug-trafficking regions of the United States. The RAVEN taskforce, which Aurora is part of and serves as the fiduciary agent, received \$614,000 from this program in 2023 to respond to violent crime in the region.

Support federal programs that address youth violence prevention at the municipal level.

The Aurora S.A.V.E (Standing Against Violence Everyday) is a focused deterrence strategy and a collaboration between the Aurora Police Department (APD), Youth Violence Prevention Program (YVPP) and community partners with strong support from Aurora leaders. It's focused on offenders ages 15 through 25 who have committed minor crimes or have ties to criminal groups. The City will seek federal opportunities and support to fund S.A.V.E programming.

Tax and Licensing

Addressing discrepancies between federal, state, and local banking regulations for the cannabis industry.

In May of 2014, the City Council approved the licensure of retail marijuana establishments throughout the city of Aurora. The Council authorized 24 retail marijuana store licenses, with four licenses allowed in each of the six Council wards. However, the use, possession, and sale of cannabis remains a federal crime. This conflict in federal and local marijuana laws has made it difficult for legitimate recreational marijuana businesses to access basic banking services. With financial institutions hesitant to provide services to cannabis businesses, the industry has become cash reliant, creating public safety issues and the potential for money laundering to become more prevalent.



- The City of Aurora asks the Colorado Congressional delegation to lift the illegality of banking services to the cannabis industry.
- The City of Aurora supports re-scheduling marijuana from a schedule I to a schedule III drug to ensure fair federal tax treatment.

Encourage and support legislation related to expanding tax-exempt advance refunding for municipalities.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA) repealed public issuers' ability to advance refund bonds on a tax-exempt basis. This prohibition of tax-exempt advance refundings precluded municipalities from realizing interest savings which could be realized through reduced interest rates. Currently, such advance refundings may only be issued on a taxable basis, which are not as advantageous from a savings perspective. By allowing tax-exempt advance refundings, the City would be able to realize interest savings upon refinancings prior to the call date of the bonds, should interest rates be allowed. The City of Aurora supports legislation that will restore tax-exempt advance refunding for municipal bonds so state and local governments can more efficiently invest in projects throughout their communities.

Broadband & Fiber Infrastructure

Leverage funding to further improve cybersecurity capabilities that allows local governments to define their cybersecurity needs.

The City currently provides free Wi-Fi access to the community at its facilities. As the City builds fiber connectivity the City will interconnect libraries, recreation centers, along the path of the fiber as it is being built. This will allow the city to expand access to computers and free Wi-Fi at all those facilities for underserved residents to gain access to digital services such as telehealth, tele-education, job aids, career building service, pay their bills online; and access digital government services. The city has a need for broadband infrastructure to support many city operations and functions. All city buildings currently use carrier-provided services for basic data connectivity and internet access to support their operations. The City needs federal funding to deploy city-owned broadband to support these current and future needs.