



It's a pleasure to welcome you to the City of Aurora.

The City of Aurora, celebrating its 200th Year Bicentennial in 2019, sits along a regional corridor in vibrant Dearborn County next to our sister cities of Lawrenceburg, Greendale and Rising Sun. Located 45 minutes from Cincinnati, Ohio & Boone County, Kentucky, Aurora is within 1.5 hours from Indianapolis, Indiana. Year-long celebrations for Aurora's Bicentennial include the arrival of the LST, Aurora's Red White & Boom, Aurora Farmers Fair, the City Picnic on Second St. and many more events. Visit www.aurora.in.us for upcoming events and memorabilia for purchase thru Main Street Aurora.

As a fourth term Mayor, having grown up in the City of Aurora, I share with you the vision of Aurora's "Big 5" Ideas which focus and highlight on Downtown Revitalization, Neighborhood Revitalization, Tourism/Outdoor Recreation, Riverfront Development and Quality of Life & Community Connections. Following major utility infrastructure improvements and capital improvement projects, Aurora next looks to reinvest in our core assets – the Ohio River and our historic downtown.

Our most challenging, yet greatest asset, is the Ohio River. A large portion of our historic business district sits within the 100 year floodway creating issues with local flood insurance requirements, business reinvestment limitations and ineligibility or severe restrictions for several state and federal funding resources towards streetscape projects, infrastructure and sidewalks. In essence – our greatest asset, the Ohio River, has contributed to blighted areas in need of redevelopment. Therefore, it became the mission of Aurora to create "Doable" programs and projects for the City of Aurora, with significant progress in motion, to set the stage for priority redevelopment during the next several decades.

Be assured trails and the Ohio River are treasured community assets. From a recreational viewpoint, trail ways help retain our population and provide healthy incentives for local or relocating businesses to our area. At this time 5 local cities have pedestrian-bicycle trails either in the planning or implementation status. The River Cities Bike Share Program has the capacity from a regional perspective to target tourism growth and economic vitality thru a river gateway destination portal. Destination landmarks and connectivity play a critical role in safety, economic vitality and recreational enjoyment in the Cities of Aurora & Lawrenceburg.

The River Cities Bike Share Program is based on a user friendly RENT, RIDE & RETURN premise with each location having parking access on site. The 3 bike station locations are Downtown Aurora (Main Street across from City Hall), Dearborn Trail (Next to the Ohio River and the Aurora Dog Park) and Downtown Lawrenceburg (in front of the Lawrenceburg Ivy Tech Riverfront Campus and the Lawrenceburg Event Center). The Dearborn Trail provides a connectivity trail route between the cities that has expansion plans on either side to Greendale and Rising Sun in the works. Visit rivercitiesbikeshare.com or aurora.in.us for more information about this fun opportunity to explore.

I share with many Mayors across Indiana the same footprint of vacant buildings, struggling businesses and limited funding resources for our commercial corridor. Next we've focused on another City of Aurora core asset – our historic downtown. With City Council and community support the 2016-2017 Downtown Strategic Revitalization Plan was initiated.

The Downtown Strategic Revitalization project goals stimulate efforts to improve the streetscape appearance and gateway enhancement of the historic downtown Aurora's central business facades and in doing so, helped stimulate the business environment of downtown Aurora. Among our most successful project under that plan has been our Facade Improvement Matching Grant Program (FIMG). Community partners included City Council, the City Manager, Main Street Aurora, the FIMG Design Committee, Indiana Landmarks, OCRA and the Rising Sun Regional Foundation.

The viability of downtown Aurora is vital to the commercial viability of Aurora as a whole. Central to downtown revitalization, the Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program focused on owner occupied residential, commercial, retail or church properties located within the core business district. \$5000 matching grants were limited to exterior preservation, restoration or rehabilitation of real properties identified within the Historic District as eligible sites. Applicants addressed storefront entryways, lighting, tuck-pointing, painting, windows, roofing and signage. Over \$735,309 in community reinvestment projects have been initiated from public and private community investment funds with an overwhelming 72% return from the community. I can guarantee there are at least 10 other stimulus projects that were pursued without FIMG grant assistance as well.

City of Aurora Downtown Strategic Revitalization Plan
Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program (FIMG) Success Index

City of Aurora Matching Grants	\$184,242	28%	Municipal & Main Street Aurora
Main Street Aurora	\$ 20,000		
<u>Community Funding</u>	<u>\$531,067</u>	<u>72%</u>	<u>Community Investment</u>
<u>Total Community Enhancement Projects \$735,309</u>			

The overwhelming success of the City of Aurora's Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program stems from the premise of shared vision, local support and funding ingenuity. The City of Aurora is the winner for the AIM (Accelerate Indiana Municipalities) Community Municipal Innovation Award presented at the 2017 AIM Ideas Summit Annual Awards in October. To stimulate another highly anticipated round of community investment the Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program and Sign Grant Program will continue in 2019. Contact Guinevere Emery, City Manager, at gemery@aurora.in.us or 513-505-7647 for more information.

At this time the City of Aurora is coordinating completion of several Historic Business District enhancements that include Second Street reconstruction with storm-water utility improvements, all new paving between US 50 to Judiciary St., 26 new street light replacements, new ADA sidewalks and brick crosswalk intersections. Currently the City of Aurora is pursuing 20 roadway improvement projects thru the INDOT Community Crossings Matching Grant Program for 2019 if awarded. A total of \$514,295 has been awarded for 2016-2017 for Community Crossings projects and \$2,331,559 FHWA funds have been awarded for Market Street reconstruction.

The Gabbard Riverfront Park development continues with a Pergola Swing Corridor grant in partnership with Main Street Aurora as their 20 Year Anniversary Legacy Project. The City of Aurora is offering a special Memorial Tribute Sponsorship package to honor loved ones or services as part of our Master Parks Plan in our city parks. The beautiful Aurora Park Bench or Swing with the custom laser print ribbon "Aurora Est. 1819" is available to sponsor. Contact the City Manager or our website www.aurora.in.us for more information.

As you can tell Aurora has an exciting future landscape that offers road map solutions for local business investment, quality of life enhancements, growth strategies and population retainment for families or companies looking to relocate or expand within our neighborhood community. Come enjoy the historic charm of Aurora in Dearborn County. Visit and stay a while. We will be glad to welcome you home.

Sincerely,

Mayor Donnie Hastings, Jr.