

# THE Beacon-News

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## Millions for roads, water projects OK'd

### Aurora City Council approves funding to update infrastructure

By R. Christian Smith  
AURORA BEACON-NEWS

The Aurora City Council last week approved millions of dollars for various road and water infrastructure projects across the city. The largest dollar amount of any single one of the projects was the \$4.6 million allocated towards annual road resurfacing work on the west and north sections of the city. A similar project, which focused on the East Side at a cost of around

\$4.4 million, was approved late last month.

In total, the two projects are expected to resurface a total of 44 lane miles of city streets, according to a staff report included online with the City Council's Tuesday meeting agenda. Staff wrote that the city maintains nearly 1,300 lane miles of streets, which have a surface life expectancy of 20 to 25 years.

A \$4.6 million contract for the work was awarded to Geneva Construction Company, which had the lowest qualifying bid, the city staff report said. The company is expected to repave, in part or in whole, over 60 streets throughout the project.

Those roads include: Stephen

Street, Stephen Court, Sarah Lane, Westbury Lane, Foxford Lane, Hermes Avenue, Kenmore Avenue, Arbor Lane, Everwood Court, Everwood Lane, Washington Street, Superior Street, Spring Street, Solfsburg Avenue, North Commonwealth Avenue, South Lancaster Avenue, South Glenwood Place, Plum Street, Park Manor, Merrimac Place, Monona Avenue, Kenilworth Place, Alameda Drive, Richard Street, Coral Avenue, Robert Street, Robert Court, Cypress Drive, Cambridge Drive, Cambridge Court, Chatham Drive, Chatham Circle, Manchester Way, Sumac Drive, Meadowsedge Lane, Woodside Court, Walden Circle, Surrey Court, North Queensbury

Court, Maplewood Lane, Middle Queensbury Court, Wyckwood Court, Iowa Avenue, Huntington Drive, North Fordham Avenue, Grandview Drive, Greenlake Drive, Wilton Lane, Peacetreer Circle, Pensacola Court, Grand Cypress Court and North Avenue, plus a number of alleyways.

Work is expected to begin in May and be completed around November, according to the city staff report. Work on each street will take around eight to 10 weeks, city staff said, and there will be some impact to local traffic.

The next most-expensive project approved by the Aurora City Council on May 12 was a water main replacement project, at a cost

of around \$1.1 million.

The Gerardi Sewer and Water company — which had the lowest qualifying bid and was awarded the contract — will replace the water main underneath nearly all of North Fordham Avenue, which is near McCleery Elementary School, according to plans included with the online city staff report.

Many of the service lines connecting homes in the area to the water main are made of lead, and so they will be replaced through the project with homeowners approval, city staff said in the report.

Another repaving project, this one for two city-owned parking lots,

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State Sen. Adriane Johnson, right, speaks to state Sen. Omar Aquino on the Senate floor before the session begins at the Illinois Capitol building in Springfield on May 7. EILEEN T. MESLAR/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

## Aurora launches new grant program

### Neighborhood festivals' organizers can receive up to \$1,000 per event

AURORA BEACON-NEWS

The city of Aurora is launching a new grant program designed to help support neighborhood festivals scheduled to take place in 2026.

The Neighborhood Festival Funding Grant Program is offering up to \$1,000 per event, which could be used to pay equipment rental, rental of tables or chairs, general liability insurance, security or emergency personnel and other similar needs, according to a news release from the city of Aurora.

The grants are available to organizations and neighborhood groups planning public community events that connect residents with each other, while also educating them about Aurora, city officials said in the news release.

Aurora has funded other community-based events in the past, the city news release said, including Juneteenth and Dia De Los Muertos celebrations.

More information on how to apply, including further eligibility requirements and key documents, can be found at [aurora.il.us/NFF](http://aurora.il.us/NFF).

Documents needed to apply can also be obtained at the Community Services Department's office at City Hall, 44 E. Downer Place.

Once completed, applications should be emailed to [COANFF@aurora.il.us](mailto:COANFF@aurora.il.us).

The deadline to submit applications is July 31, but review of applications will begin Monday and continue on a rolling basis, according to the city news release.

City officials said that questions about the Neighborhood Festival Funding Grant Program should be directed to Diana Martinez at 630-256-3408.

## New law's goal was to expose diversity gaps at top nonprofits

### Almost none of them are complying

By Dan Petrella  
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

As June 2024 came to a close, Gov. JB Pritzker was characteristically bullish while he marked the end of Pride Month by signing into law a requirement that Illinois' largest nonprofit foundations disclose the demographic makeup of their boards of directors and officers.

"Here in Illinois, we reject hate, bigotry, and discrimination and embrace the ethos of Pride through not only our laws but through our actions and shared

values," Pritzker said in a statement released after a bill-signing event at the Fat Cat bar and restaurant in Uptown. He soon added that the disclosure requirement represented an expansion of his "administration's work to better serve the LGBTQ+ community of Illinois."

But nearly two years later, the measure has shed little light on who actually runs these organizations — and may never do so.

As of mid-April, only three of the largest grantmaking foundations in Illinois had published the required demographic informa-

tion on their websites as the law outlines — disclosing the makeup of their leadership across categories including LGBTQ+ identity, gender, race and ethnicity, disability status and military service: the MacArthur Foundation, the Polk Bros. Foundation and the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, according to a Tribune review. A fourth, the Chicago Community Trust, had some demographic information available on its website and added more data after being contacted by the Tribune.

The reasons the law hasn't had as dramatic an effect as originally advertised are multifold.

Some cited the Pritzker administration's slow pace in releasing "a

standardized list of demographic classifications" for nonprofits to report. One nonprofit said it simply didn't know the requirement existed.

"Frankly, it's a bit of a head-scratcher that we're hearing about this from you and not the state, or our compliance partner, or our attorney," Jim O'Kelley, the director of the Elks National Foundation, told the Tribune.

While the Chicago Community Trust declined to comment on why complete demographic data had not been posted before the Tribune inquired, the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation said it

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## Naperville teacher surprised with Golden Apple award



Scullen Middle School orchestra director Matthew White, center, celebrates being named a Golden Apple award recipient with students and colleagues gathered around him on Thursday. MICHELLE MULLINS/NAPERVILLE SUN

### Superintendent: White is D204's first recipient in more than 20 years

By Michelle Mullins  
FOR THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Students at Scullen Middle School waved pompoms, blew on kazoo and led a chant of "Mr. White, Mr. White" as their orchestra director was surprised Thursday with a Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Matthew White, who is in his 11th year of teaching at the Naperville school, said he was overwhelmed by the love and support shown to him at the announcement event. The school community, students, friends and colleagues inspire him to be creative, kind and curious, he said.

"I see examples of kindness and collaboration everywhere," White said. "I'm mostly inspired by the people I am surrounded by. ... I'm proud to be a part of this community and all the cool things we do together."

White is one of 10 award winners in Illinois selected in a highly competitive process in which nearly 600 nominations were considered.

He was nominated by seventh grade student Tharun Manikandan, 13, who learned to play a violin despite having profound hearing loss.

Tharun, with help from his sign language interpreter, Samantha Krippel, said White helped lead him on a journey so he can hear music just like others thanks to an aux cord connecting an electric violin to his cochlear implant. It allowed

him hear the notes he was playing instead of noise and vibrations.

White reflected on the moment when Tharun heard his instrument for the first time.

"His face was a lighthouse," White said. "It was the most amazing thing. I get goosebumps thinking about it. He was so excited to share that with everybody that he had a violin that he could play."

White said there was nothing better than the feeling of sharing his love of music with someone else and seeing them want to share that with others too.

"I am so inspired by (Tharun)," he said. "He has inspired a lot of other people. He's doing it. He's in class doing it just like everybody else. He's just an awesome, positive

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WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY H: 82 L: 69

TUE. H: 76 L: 49

WED. H: 60 L: 45

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