

open line

a monthly newsletter for you, our residents.

SEPTEMBER 2021



City of Auburn



New parking deck brings 350 spaces to downtown

As this is being written, the new Wright Street Parking Deck is expected to open in early August, bringing 350 more public parking spaces to downtown Auburn. The new deck, located at 140 Wright St., includes six levels of public parking spaces with the Baptist Student Union on a portion of the ground floor. Drivers can access the deck from Wright Street, and pedestrian entrances are available on both Wright and North College streets. The property also includes a greenspace that fronts North College Street with benches and a sidewalk from the deck to North College lined with pedestrian lighting.

The deck is open 24/7 at a rate of \$1 per hour up to \$15 per 24-hour period. Per City Code, the city manager has the discretion to set day-rates for special events such as home football game days. Any changes to the \$1 per hour rate will be publicized through the City's website and social media accounts.

Along with bringing more spaces to downtown Auburn, the new deck provides an option for downtown workers and visitors who want to spend a longer period of time enjoying all downtown has to offer. On-street parking downtown and parking in the Gay Street Parking Lot will continue to have a two-hour time limit to encourage parking turnover in these convenient spots.

With the addition of this deck and the new AuburnBank parking deck, there are about 1,350 publicly available parking spaces in downtown. It is our hope that all who want to visit downtown Auburn will have plenty of parking for years to come.

Fall Sundown Concert Series

SEPT. 23 & 30 • 5 P.M.

Join Auburn Parks and Recreation for an evening of music and fun at beautiful Kiesel Park. Concerts will be held on Sept. 23 and 30 from 5-7 p.m. Bring your lawn chair and blanket, and kick back and enjoy the music. A food vendor will be on site both nights with great tasting bites for sale. Dogs on a leash are welcome. The Fall Sundown Concerts are a great way to start Auburn Football Game weekends! Both concerts are FREE to the public.



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Labor Day holiday schedules

Most City facilities will be closed on Monday, Sept. 6, in observance of Labor Day. Public Safety services including police, fire and communications will remain on their regular schedules. Garbage, trash and recycling collection will be delayed by one day during the week of Sept. 6 as follows:

Monday, Sept. 6	HOLIDAY
Tuesday, Sept. 7	Monday's Route
Wednesday, Sept. 8	Tuesday's Route
Thursday, Sept. 9	Wednesday's Route
Friday, Sept. 10	Thursday's Route

The Auburn Public Library's book drops will remain open, and the online collection of e-books, e-audiobooks and digital magazines is always available at auburnalabama.org/library. All Parks and Recreation facilities will be closed on Sept. 6 with the exception of Samford Pool and the Yarbrough Tennis Center. Both the pool and the tennis center will be open regular hours.



East Alabama Health recognizes Auburn for vaccine clinic investment

At the second council meeting in July, East Alabama Health presented the City of Auburn and the Auburn Chamber of Commerce with plaques recognizing the organizations' investment in the community COVID-19 vaccine clinic, which was responsible for giving more than 90,000 vaccinations this spring.

East Alabama Health first began distributing vaccines in December at its education center. As vaccine eligibility and availability expanded, it was clear that a more robust facility was needed to serve our community. The hospital reached out to the City of Auburn, the City of Opelika and other partners in Lee County to get the ball rolling.

The first step was finding a location. The City of Auburn quickly worked to secure the former Tuesday Morning building on Opelika Road, covering the cost of rent to keep the clinic open from February to June. Over the span of a weekend, members of the City's Public Safety, Public Works and Environmental Services departments worked with the Lee County EMA and local contractors and vendors to transform the former retail building into a medical clinic. The hospital quickly mobilized to provide and set up the clinical needs, and the facility opened on Feb. 1.

City staff joined hundreds of community volunteers — organized by Auburn United Methodist Church — to make the operation run as smoothly as possible. City personnel served more than 4,250 hours at the clinic, and community volunteers served another 8,900 hours. Volunteers helped with wayfinding and registration, and Public Safety staff helped with clinical observation and assistance, traffic control, venue security and facilities management. In addition to staff time, the City invested a total of \$136,579 to ensure our community had access to vaccines.

"It's wonderful when you pull a team together, and it's wonderful when the team members come to play. And Auburn absolutely came to play," Bruce Zartman, East Alabama Health's vice president of support services, said during the council meeting. "We could not have done it without your support."



City of Auburn employees Anne Randle (left) and Renee Delaney (right) work with Alyssa Humphries (center) to man a registration table at the community vaccine clinic.

TAILGATES & TURKEYS reading challenge

The Auburn Public Library invites you take part in this fall's Tailgates and Turkeys Reading Challenge! The challenge: Read 1,000 minutes in 60 days. Reading the recommended 20 minutes a day will allow you to complete the challenge in 50 days. Participants who complete the challenge will be entered into a grand prize drawing for a \$50 Kroger gift card to use for your next tailgate party or holiday get-together.

The challenge begins Sept. 1 and ends Oct. 31. Happy Learning! Have questions? Email libraryevents@auburnalabama.org for more information.

City receives high scores from bond rating agencies



Standard & Poor's Financial Services, LLC (S&P) and Moody's Investors Service, Inc. (Moody's) have affirmed the City of Auburn's bond ratings of AA+ and Aa2, respectively. The City requested ratings ahead of the issuance of approximately \$38.6 million of general obligation warrants. \$18.2 million in warrants will fund construction of a new elementary school in north Auburn and improvements to East Samford School. \$20.4 million in warrants will be used to refinance outstanding debt, utilizing current favorable market conditions and saving the citizens of Auburn more than \$1.4 million in interest over the life of the debt.

Bond ratings help investors determine the credit worthiness of the City. In other words, investors have a better idea about the likelihood that we will repay our debt. Strong bond ratings allow us to enjoy lower interest rates, which helps us spend more on long-term capital projects and less on interest.

S&P reported that Auburn's "strong economy, with a local stabilizing institutional influence, very strong management, with strong financial policies and practices, strong budgetary performance, and very strong liquidity" were all contributing factors to the affirmation of the AA+ rating. Moody's reported that "the Aa2 rating reflects a healthy financial position, marked by strong reserve and liquidity levels and formalized fiscal policies."

The City has maintained top-tier ratings for more than 10 years because of the work City employees do every day. From producing annual reports to receiving the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association for more than 30 years — it all plays a part in displaying that the City of Auburn's finances are well looked after and will continue to be so in the future.

City welcomes new Planning director

In late July, we welcomed Steve Foote as Auburn's new Planning director. Foote joins the team with more than 30 years of experience in municipal planning and community development. As director, Foote administers the City's Land Use Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.



Before coming to Auburn, Foote worked for the City of Spring Hill, Tennessee, the City of Dunwoody, Georgia, and the City of Gulf Shores, Alabama. Foote brings a unique background to his new role in Auburn, having helped cities develop strategies to manage community development in a way that cultivates a high quality of life for both citizens and businesses.

In Gulf Shores, Foote initiated the use of smart growth, sustainable planning, access management and context sensitive design principles. In Dunwoody, he managed planning, zoning, sustainability, building, GIS and engineering operations. Foote led efforts to improve processes and operations, delivering better customer service to the public, developers and the business community. During this time, he helped coordinate the development of the 2.2 million-square-foot State Farm Regional Campus.

"It's an honor to join the City of Auburn as Planning director," Foote said. "I am impressed with the leadership, staff and development of Auburn and the professionalism of the City. Throughout my career I have been an advocate for smart growth and development that improves the quality of life for residents. I look forward to working with the City in promoting and achieving great outcomes for our community."

Foote is certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners and has served as the president of the Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association and in other voluntary state and community organizations.

Moving forward, Foote will lead the review and update of Auburn's land use plan and will collaborate with City staff on other strategic planning efforts.

"We're excited about the insight, leadership and knowledge that Steve brings to our Planning Services Department," said Auburn City Manager Megan McGowen Crouch. "With decades of experience, we look forward to the impact he will make as we continue to plan for Auburn's future."

Board & commission vacancies

One vacancy on the Lee County Youth Development Center Board of Directors will be announced at the Aug. 3 Auburn City Council meeting and will be filled at the Sept. 7 meeting. Applications will close at 5 p.m. on Aug. 30. Learn more about the board and find a link to apply at auburnalabama.org/boards.

city council

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SEPTEMBER 2021 **upcoming events**

Open Line is produced by the Office of the City Manager

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S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	<p>Auburn Public Library auburnlabama.org/library</p> <p>City Meetings auburnlabama.org/boards</p> <p>Parks & Recreation auburnlabama.org/parks</p>	<p>Programs & events are subject to change.</p> <p>Find up-to-date information at auburnlabama.org.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Story Time (in person/virtual) Wednesdays @ 9:30 a.m. & 1 p.m.</p> <p>Story Time (virtual) Wednesdays @ 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>Board of Zoning Adjustment 4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Story Time (in person/virtual) Thursdays @ 9:30 a.m. & 1 p.m.</p> <p>Story Time (virtual) Thursdays @ 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Story Time (in person/virtual) Fridays @ 9:30 a.m. & 1 p.m.</p> <p>Puppet Shows (in person/virtual) Fridays @ 10:30 a.m. & 3:30 p.m.</p> <p>Tree Commission 11:30 a.m.</p> <p>City Council Agenda Review Meeting Noon</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Story Time (in person/virtual) Saturdays @ 9:30 a.m. & 1 p.m.</p> <p>Story Time (virtual) Saturdays @ 10:30 a.m.</p>
5	6	<p>Story Time (in person/virtual) Tuesdays @ 9:30 a.m. & 1 p.m.</p> <p>Story Time (virtual) Tuesdays @ 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>Parks & Recreation Advisory Board 11:45 a.m.</p> <p>Committee of the Whole TBD</p> <p>City Council 7 p.m.</p> <p>Jingle Jog Online Registration Opens</p>	8	9	10	11
	<p>Planning Commission Packet Meeting Noon</p> <p>Cemetery Advisory Board 4 p.m.</p> <p>Ward 4 Meeting 5:30 p.m.</p> <p>Last day of the pool season</p>			<p>Planning Commission 5 p.m.</p>		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
		<p>Historic Preservation Commission 4 p.m.</p>				<p>Family Movie Matinee 2 p.m.</p>
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	<p>Youth/High School Basketball Online Registration Begins</p>	<p>Library Board 10 a.m.</p> <p>Greenspace Advisory Board Noon</p> <p>Reader's Review Virtual Adult Book Club 5:30 p.m.</p> <p>Committee of the Whole TBD</p> <p>City Council 7 p.m.</p>		<p>Water Works Board 4 p.m.</p> <p>Sundown Concert Series @ Kiesel Park 5 p.m.</p>		
26	27	28	29	30		
				<p>Sundown Concert Series @ Kiesel Park 5 p.m.</p>		<p><i>Background Photo: Sundown Concert Series @ Kiesel Park</i></p>