

CITY OF AURORA SPECIAL CENSUS UPDATE

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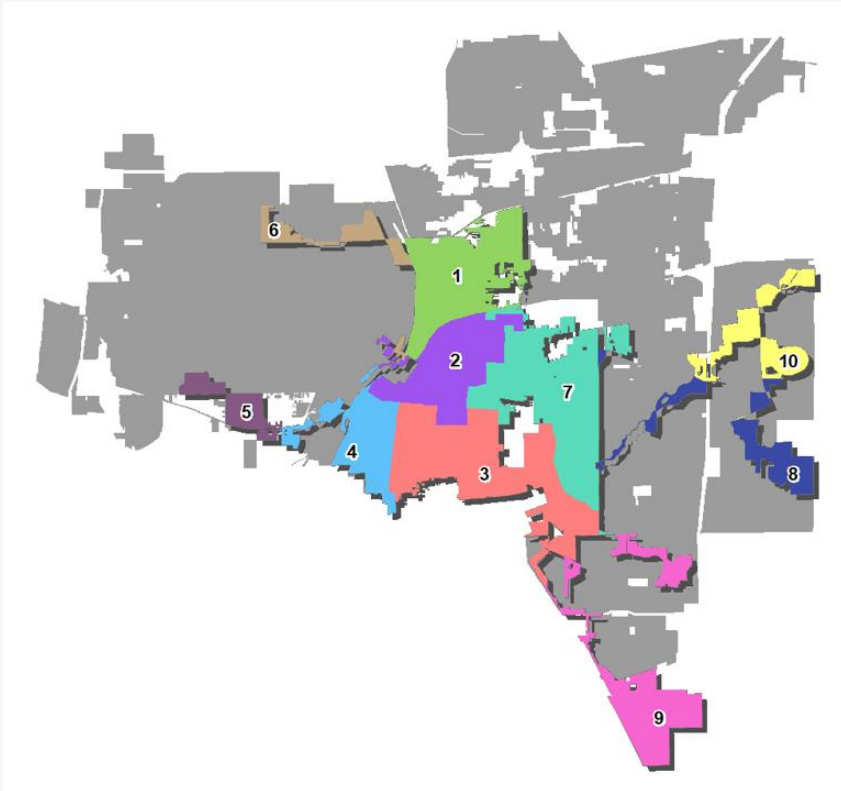
OVERVIEW



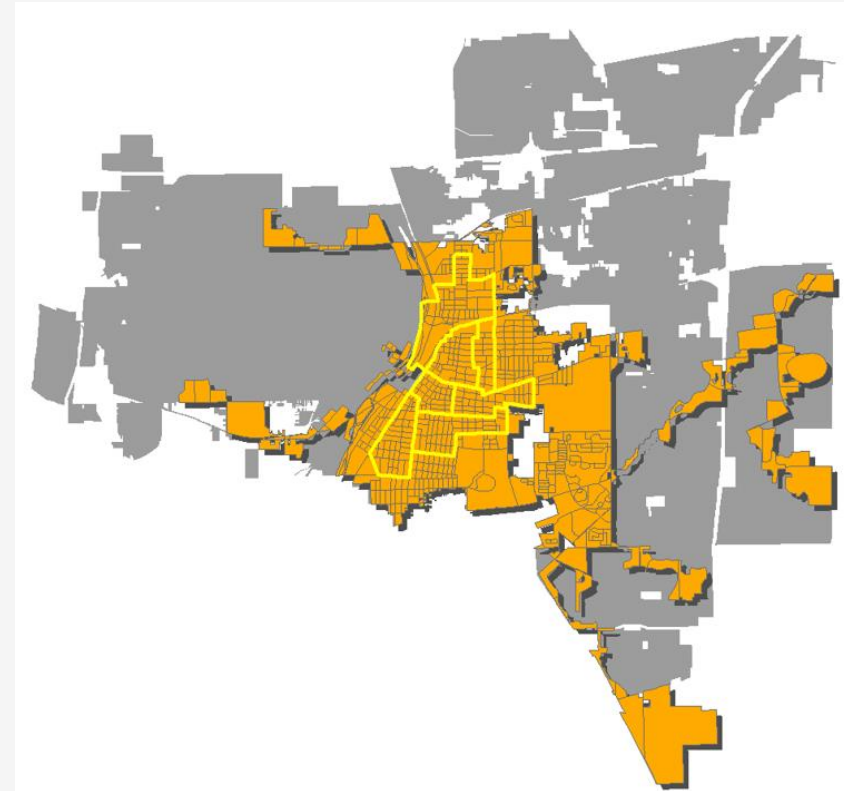
- The City of Aurora was scheduled to complete a Special Census beginning on February 3, 2025
- The effort arose after the City was said to have lost approximately 17,000 people during the 2020 Census, resulting in a loss of \$4.3 million per year in revenue
- With the inauguration of the new Presidential Administration, a Federal hiring freeze was enacted, effectively preventing the City from conducting the Special Census
- The Census Bureau has received a temporary hiring waiver, allowing the agency to hire temporary field staff to support the Special Census Program in calendar year 2025 only
- As a result, the City of Aurora is currently scheduled to begin the Special Census on August 1, 2025, with field enumeration set to begin in mid to late-August
- **With this expedited timeline, the City is contemplating whether to proceed with the August 1 date, delay the Special Census, or withdraw from the Special Census altogether**

TIMELINE & LOGISTICAL REALITIES

- The Special Census will begin on August 1, 2025, but the Internet Self Response (ISR) Period will begin on July 1, 2025
- The deadline to hire temporary workers for the Special Census is December 31, 2025



2025 Census Blocks



2025 Census Tracts

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES



Time Constraints

- The City has less than one month to build community awareness and public trust
- Currently, the City has only one full-time staff member in the Community Engagement Division
- Today, the City has a limited resource capacity due to the Mayoral transition and 2026 budget planning

Recruitment and Staffing

- Per the Census Bureau, 53 local Census workers must be hired to complete the Special Census
- The City had 22 past applicants who qualified, but current interest from them is unknown
- Internal staffing gaps exist: The City had access to more resources in the past, including a Harvard Fellow, a team of interns, and several team members with institutional knowledge on the Special Census
- The City's contracted Special Census consultant, Joan Cameron, is still available for utilization

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES



Community Barriers

- Recent sightings of ICE and fear of Federal officials is prevalent
- Strong messaging in immigrant communities to **NOT** open doors
- Language access issues/barriers
- Partnerships with school districts are not available, as the Special Census will take place during the Summer months
- Locked apartment buildings make in-person outreach difficult

Risk of Undercount

- After completing the Special Census, if the City's count decreases, the certification can lower the population count, leading to more revenue loss
- If the Special Census is not complete by December 31, the City forfeits the remaining time and resources, meaning that the count could begin, but may not finish

RESOURCES & STRENGTHS



Budget Status

- The City paid the Census Bureau about \$1 million to complete the Special Census, and the Bureau has spent less than \$100,000
- The City has an ad credit with Univision Media for \$40,000, conducted outreach in the past in anticipation of the February Special Census, and has relationships with some community organizations to get messaging out

Communication Readiness

- Messaging, materials, and a communication plan have already been developed
- Digital advertisements are ready to launch (two-week lead time needed to push ads on Univision and Telemundo)

Existing Support

- Census Consultant Joan Cameron can provide immediate assistance
- Some local applicants, related to field enumerators, may still be available to work for the Special Census



OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Option 1: Proceed with August 1 Start

- **PROS:** The current plan will continue, resulting in no delays from the Census Bureau, and certain infrastructure is already in place to support the initiative
- **CONS:** A high risk of an undercount exists due to current barriers, limited time and staff, and the potential for wasted resources

Option 2: Request Delayed Start

- **PROS:** More time is available to organize, recruit job candidates, and build public trust
- **CONS:** The December 31 hiring cut-off reduces the amount of time available to conduct the Special Census, and there exists no guarantee of availability for a new date

Option 3: Request To Re-Enter The Queue

- **PROS:** Preserves the opportunity for a future attempt at completing the Special Census
- **CONS:** The Special Census will likely be postponed beyond 2025, and the future window in which it will occur is very uncertain

Option 4: Withdraw From The Special Census

- **PROS:** The City will receive its approximately \$900,000 from the Federal government and avoid the risk of a lower count
- **CONS:** This loses the opportunity for the City to potentially increase its population count, and, in turn, its yearly revenue

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL



1. Is our City positioned to effectively and equitably implement this count?
2. Can we ensure that hard-to-count populations will be included?
3. Are we willing to accept the risk of a lower certified population?
4. Is it fiscally responsible to proceed given the City's current staffing and capacity?

NEXT STEPS...



- City Council Discussion
- Decision Deadline: Wednesday, June 4, 2025
- If the Council chooses to proceed, the City must finalize its hiring strategy, launch its communication efforts, and activate its community partners
- Questions?