

2026-4-16

# Don't backtrack on Aurora's progress

GTK

It's encouraging the council majority, so far, hasn't attempted to dismantle all the progress of the past several years. We'll be watching — and hoping for the best ... Will they keep it that way?

The Denver Gazette · 16 Apr 2026 · B1

A Denver Gazette report last weekend reminded readers of the anticipated tilt to the left by the Aurora City Council following a changing of the guard in last November's election.

Council members Danielle Jurinsky, Steve Sundberg and Amsalu Kassaw were replaced by Rob Andrews, Amy Wiles and Alli Jackson. Electing Gianina Horton and reelecting Ruben Medina left the council with a new, politically progressive, 6-4 majority.

It's too early to render a verdict, but let's hope the new majority is reluctant to undo groundbreaking policies put in place by the previous council. They're game changers that have been much needed in Aurora.

The new majority's views on immigration and ICE are already evident. All six progressives passed a resolution condemning "overreach by ICE agents" following two shooting deaths at protests in Minnesota, including a woman originally from Colorado Springs.

The council did not repeal Aurora's 2024 resolution affirming its "non-sanctuary" status, however, and the privately-run ICE Processing Center in Aurora is all but certain to stay after operating there for decades.

Those are promising signs that perhaps Aurora won't be the kind of impediment to federal immigration enforcement that Denver has become.

The previous council also had real success in tackling crime.

Among cities reviewed by the nonpartisan Common Sense Institute last fall, Aurora's violent crime rate dropped the most — by over 36%, well above Denver's 14% decline and 21% statewide. Aurora also saw a 44% drop in property crime, the second largest since 2021.

This is genuine progress, which the Aurora Police Department credits to "proactive policing" and long-term prevention efforts.

Horton and Wiles want an oversight committee for the Aurora Police Department. The committee has funding and approval but it's unclear what its mission will be.

We're wary of the high likelihood for politics to impact the committee, and it's unclear how it would contribute to what the Council's Public Safety, Courts and Civil Service Policy Committee already does. It's essential that politics not interfere with the crackdown on crime.

"Our focus is on ensuring that the right individuals are being held accountable through arrest, while also being careful not to over-police specific areas, locations or events," a spokesperson said.

With Aurora residents at last having reason to feel safer, the last thing they need is to tie the hands of law enforcement.

NOTE

Of considerable concern is the message sent by the new council majority in appointing Andrews to chair the public-safety committee — a post he maintains even after he was arrested on suspicion of DUI at three times the legal limit earlier this year shortly after taking office.

As Denver Gazette columnist Michael Hancock wrote in January, “Impaired driving is a public safety issue, and the accused is the chair of Public Safety ... It strikes at the credibility of the committee and the seriousness of city leadership.”

Perhaps the greatest potential for success concerns homelessness. Aurora has charted a better path than Denver, prioritizing “tough love” over “housing first.”

Aurora has enacted a camping ban, created a court system for low-level offenses and opened a navigation campus with tiered support based on participants’ commitment to achieving independent living. Unfortunately, the new council passed Andrews’ 72-hour notice for homeless encampment sweeps. That waters down a key cleanup measure that was making real progress in the city — though it doesn’t represent a significant policy change so far.

It’s encouraging the council majority, so far, hasn’t attempted to dismantle all the progress of the past several years. We’ll be watching — and hoping for the best.

Aurora’s new majority inherited a city on the mend. Will they keep it that way?