



CITY OF AUBURN

Placemaking Imagined by the Community

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University of Washington ○ College of the Built Environment
Urban Design and Planning

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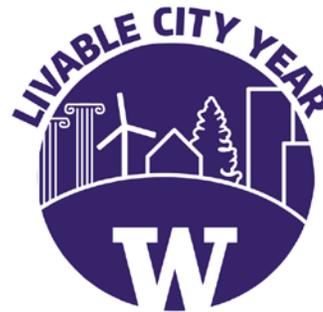
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Fall 2016

ABOUT LIVABLE CITY YEAR

The UW Livable City Year program (LCY) is an initiative that enables local governments to tap into the talents and energy of the University of Washington to address local sustainability and livability goals. LCY links UW courses and students with a Washington city or regional government for an entire academic year, partnering to work on projects identified by the community. LCY helps cities reach their goals for livability in an affordable way while providing opportunities for students to learn through real-life problem solving. LCY has partnered with the City of Auburn for the 2017-2018 academic year, the inaugural year of the program.

The UW's Livable City Year program is led by faculty directors Branden Born with the Department of Urban Design and Planning, and Jennifer Otten with the School of Public Health, in collaboration with UW Sustainability, Urban@UW and the Association of Washington Cities, and with foundational support from the College of Built Environments and Undergraduate Academic Affairs. For more information contact the program at uwlcy@uw.edu.



LIVABLE CITY YEAR: ONE YEAR. ONE CITY. DOZENS OF
UW FACULTY AND HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS, WORKING
TOGETHER TO CATALYZE LIVABILITY.

LCY.UW.EDU

ABOUT THE CITY OF AUBURN

The City of Auburn is well-positioned to take advantage of many of the opportunities in the Puget Sound region. Centrally located between Seattle and Tacoma, Auburn is home to more than 77,000 residents. It is the land of two rivers (White & Green), home to two nations (Muckleshoot Indian Tribe & City of Auburn) and spread across two counties (King & Pierce).

Auburn was founded in 1891 and has retained an historic downtown while also welcoming new, modern development. Known for its family-friendly, small-town feel, Auburn was initially an agricultural community, the city saw growth due to its location on railroad lines and, more recently, became a manufacturing and distribution center. Auburn is situated near the major north-south and east-west regional transportation routes, with two railroads and close proximity to the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma.

Auburn has more than two dozen elementary, middle and high schools, and is also home to Green River College, which is known for its strong international education programs. The city is one hour away from Mt. Rainier, and has many outdoor recreational opportunities.

The mission of the City of Auburn is to preserve and enhance the quality of life for all citizens of Auburn, providing public safety, human services, infrastructure, recreation and cultural services, public information services, planning, and economic development.



WWW.AUBURNWA.GOV



CITY OF AUBURN PLACEMAKING

IMAGINED BY THE COMMUNITY

AUT 2016

A project coordinated by the University of Washington Livable City Year, the City of Auburn, and Community, Environment, and Planning



LIVABLE
CITY YEAR

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Thank you,

Auburn Placemaking Team

This report represents original student work and recommendations prepared by students in the University of Washington's Livable City Year Program for the City of Auburn. Text and images contained in this report may be used for not-for-profit purposes. For citations please consider: Livable City Year 2017. Placemaking. University of Washington, Seattle, WA. Prepared for City of Auburn.

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INTRODUCTION

Context & Purpose

The neighborhoods of Auburn each have their own unique, context-specific needs, identity, and desires, specifically in regards to their relationship with the city at large. For various reasons – geographic, historic, or annexation – these neighborhoods lack a strong connection to the larger City of Auburn, and some lack a strong sense of connection to place and community within their smaller sub-communities.

Auburn is home to eight neighborhoods defined by the city – West Hill, North Auburn, Lea Hill, South Auburn, the Plateau, South East Auburn, Downtown and Lakeland. City of Auburn officials have expressed North and South Auburn are generally better connected to the Downtown central core of the city but, the remaining five communities are more disconnected, and lack a strong sense of community within them. Some of this disconnect is geographic: there are physical boundaries that separate certain sub-communities from the rest of Auburn. This is partially due to resources and opportunities, Auburn has less appealing shopping options than their neighbors in Kent and Covington. Additionally, some of this is tied to area annexation history: Lea Hill was annexed from Kent, and West Hill was annexed from Federal Way – perhaps creating a sense of confusion about neighborhood identity among residents. Our research, generally, supports the perceptions of city officials.



Project

Our project centers around how to create a sense of place and connection to place, both within sub-communities, and the larger City of Auburn. Our work first focuses on gaining an understanding for the reasons behind residents' feelings throughout Auburn and more specifically those in neighborhoods that do not feel as connected.

Placemaking is believed to be most successful when driven by the community, and driven by those for whom these spaces are home (Project for Public Spaces). We used this understanding as a framework for recommending specific solutions to create a strong sense of place and connection within these neighborhoods, and a stronger connection to the City of Auburn. Our recommendations are intentionally diverse and varied in focus to ensure that we were providing a broad range of recommendations that are flexible but tailored specifically to the context of Auburn, but all focus on a key concern of centering community members in the process of placemaking. These recommendations provide a foundation for strengthening relationships and support systems between residents of Auburn and city officials, and for cultivating sub-community identity while creating a stronger connection to the City of Auburn. These recommendations are:

- Coffee with your local city planner
- Community benefits program
- Neighborhood matching fund expansion
- Plaza redesign
- Vacant spaces program
- Signage and branding
- Muckleshoot engagement



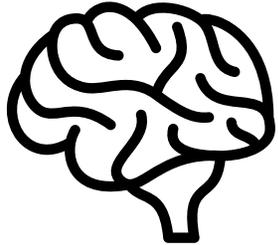


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a presentation of research done by a team of Community, Environment and Planning students at the University of Washington as part of the City of Auburn Livable City Year Program. This research centers around the question of sense of place in Auburn: whether current residents feel a sense of connection to their neighborhoods as designated

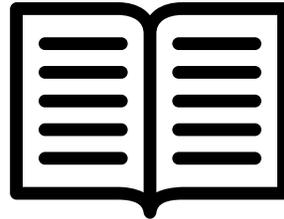
by the City of Auburn, and a sense of connection to the larger City of Auburn. Furthermore, our research asks what Auburn officials can do to facilitate a stronger sense of connection. This research is applied to a set of placemaking recommendations put together for the City of Auburn to better create a sense of individual community identity, and a stronger connection to Auburn more generally.





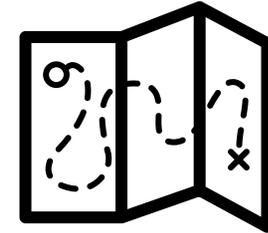
METHODS

To put together a set of recommendations that best fit the City of Auburn's needs, we chose to center our process around an understanding of community sentiment and feedback in regards to their spatial and emotional connection to their neighborhoods within Auburn, and the City of Auburn generally. You will see this choice reflected in our placemaking definition. We completed a survey and mapping exercise with Auburn residents. These exercises were aimed at getting a sense of current conceptions of Auburn and sub-communities within the city, as well as current conceptions of spatial location in terms of neighborhoods.



INITIAL RESEARCH

We began this process with a literature review to assess best practices in survey and mapping techniques within the sphere of planning. We took these best practices, and used them as a foundation for constructing survey questions and our mapping exercise to best allow for open responses that focused on sense of place, and perceived neighborhood boundaries.



SURVEY

We collected 49 surveys and 28 mapping exercises. The mapping results showed a lack of connection to sub-communities, or at least the names and designations of sub-communities determined by the city, as well as the greater Auburn area. These results confirmed that residents tend to spend money and leisure time outside of Auburn. These results do not show a lack of interest and desire for engagement on the part of residents. Surveying the residents of Auburn made it clear they have an interest in making Auburn a more cohesive, livable place.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In looking at both our mapping and survey together, there is a clear disconnect between Auburn residents living in sub-communities, downtown, and city officials' preconceptions.

We found that Auburn residents do not identify with their assigned neighborhoods as they are outlined by the City of Auburn and do not identify with downtown Auburn. There is a desire for a livable city, a strong sense of place, and for connections to downtown and city government.

From these findings, we have created a list of recommendations to improve sense of place within sub-communities and the entire community of Auburn. These recommendations are: coffee with your local city planner, community benefits program, neighborhood matching fund expansion, plaza redesign, vacant spaces program, signage and branding, and muckleshoot engagement. Implementing these recommendations will facilitate a stronger connection to place within smaller neighborhoods, and a stronger connection to the City of Auburn amongst residents.

Our recommendations are split into four phases, beginning with both phase 1 and one on-going phase. Phase 1 represents initial steps at creating a sense of place within the community of Auburn. From there, Phase 2 and 3 represents suggestions for more long-term goals, though still manageable, placemaking steps. Our recommendations for engaging with the Muckleshoot Tribe fall into an on-going category. Although all projects will ideally be on-going, we believe the relationship between the city and the Tribe is one that should be continuous.

What is Placemaking?

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN | INCLUSIVE | DYNAMIC | CONTEXT-SPECIFIC



We thoroughly researched the definition of placemaking to better understand the types of recommendations that we needed to make. Across sources we analyzed we defined placemaking as a concept in urban planning that pertains to community involvement. Some research has argued that most placemaking projects fall short and are unsuccessful in this regard. In *The Agile City*, James Russell (2014) describes how planners can avoid typical placemaking pitfalls by paying attention to existing and surrounding elements to produce solutions that have the most potential for sustainability with regards to overall community engagement and general city liability.

Our definition was chosen because it grounds placemaking as a process that is collaborative and community centered by focusing on the physical, cultural, and social. We believe that successful placemaking changes ought to center on the concerns of who the programs and plans are for and affect most directly. This definition informed our own process through our survey and mapping exercise, as well as our list of recommendations. The values of community-driven, inclusive, dynamic, and context-specific solutions inform and run through the recommendations outlined below.

PLACEMAKING DEFINED

“Placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. Placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution. Placemaking should be community-driven, inclusive, dynamic, and context-specific.”

~ Project for Public Spaces

THE SURVEY

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hands writing in a notebook on a wooden desk. The person is wearing a silver watch with a black face and a black strap. A laptop is visible in the background, and the overall scene is dimly lit, suggesting an office or study environment. The text 'THE SURVEY' is overlaid in the center in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Our survey consisted of fifteen questions, all crafted to engage with residents in an open and conversational manner, and to facilitate responses that were honest, and natural (See Appendix A for full survey).

Questions included:

- *What neighborhood do you live in?*
- *Do you consider yourself a part of Auburn?*
- *When you are not at work, school, or home, how and where do you spend most of your time?*
- *Do you shop, run errands, or eat out in Auburn? If yes, what neighborhood(s) do you go to?*

Results + Analysis

We collected 49 responses. The survey was conducted throughout the city and therefore a variety of neighborhoods were represented. We spoke with residents of Lea Hill, Lakeland, North Auburn, South Auburn, Downtown Auburn, and West Hill. Lea Hill was the most represented neighborhood, though several people responded with 'Auburn' and did not provide a more specified neighborhood, potentially indicating a lack of understanding of official neighborhood boundaries.

The survey provided an opportunity to get open-ended and opinion-based responses from the residents of Auburn. These questions provided insight on whether residents feel a connection to Auburn and to their sub-community, as well as information about where they spend their money, and their feelings about the current state of Auburn.

27% of participants said that they do not consider themselves to be part of Auburn. Several respondents explained that this was because they did not interact with or spend time in Auburn. 70% of participants did consider themselves to be part of Auburn, the mapping exercise results provided important nuance to the depth of this connection. When providing explanations, many stated that this was because they live, work, or attend school in the city. 25% of respondents said that Downtown Auburn was a neighborhood they liked to

spend time in. However, most respondents did note that they prefer getting their communications from the city online.

We asked residents: what are some of the first words that come to mind when you think of Auburn? These responses were telling in terms of current conceptions of Auburn, and potential space for increased placemaking efforts. Most sentiments about Auburn centered around feelings that: the city is quiet and peaceful, there is a lot of traffic and congestion, there is a lot of perceived crime and drug use, and there are shifting demographics – some residents felt that these changes were good, while others, mostly older Auburn residents, were not comfortable with this change. Those who lived in Downtown Auburn focused most on these changes. Our respondents from Lakeland focused on diversity, while also mentioning how parts of Auburn were unsafe. Most of the complaints about traffic and congestion came from Lea Hill Residents. Lea Hill residents also frequently mentioned families and kids, as well as Green River College.

Many people commute for work or run errands in neighboring communities, such as Kent and Federal Way. However, significant assets within Auburn include the outlet collection, Fred Meyer, and Safeway. Additionally, we found that residents appreciated the number of parks in the city and they enjoy spending time at community centers, such as the library.

The survey provided valuable insights on the perceptions and opinions regarding the city from the perspectives of residents. An additional mapping exercise was conducted to provide more tangible information on where they perceive their neighborhoods to be.



A close-up photograph of a hand pointing to a topographic map. The map shows contour lines, water bodies, and various geographical features. The word "MAPPING" is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image. The background is a semi-transparent dark blue-grey color.

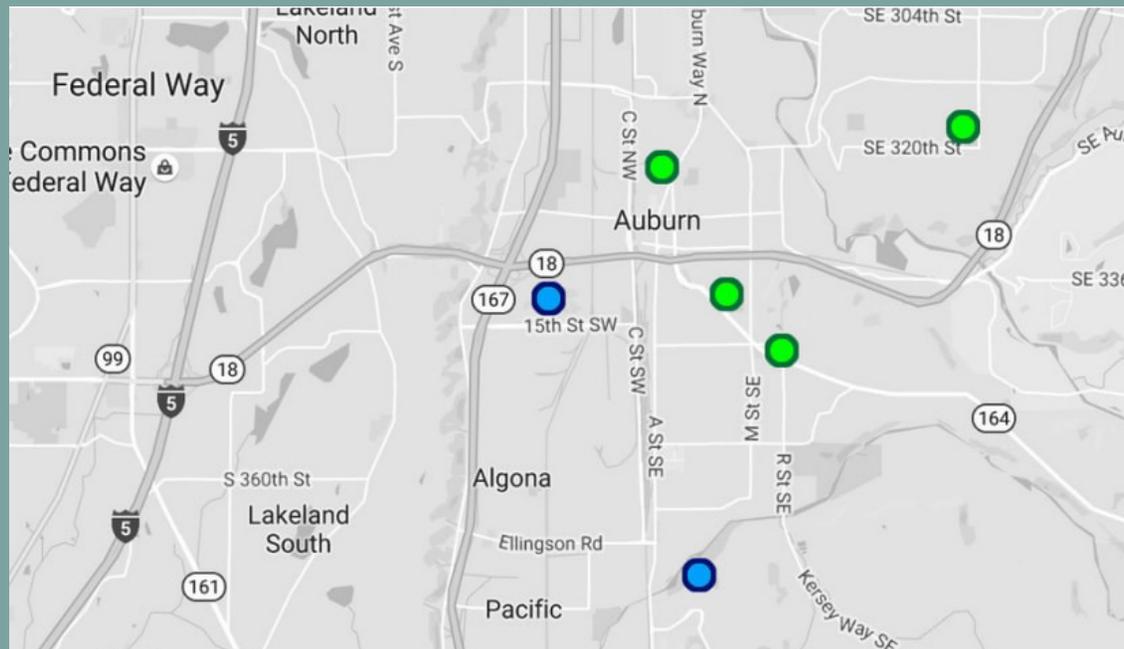
MAPPING

Conducting the Exercise

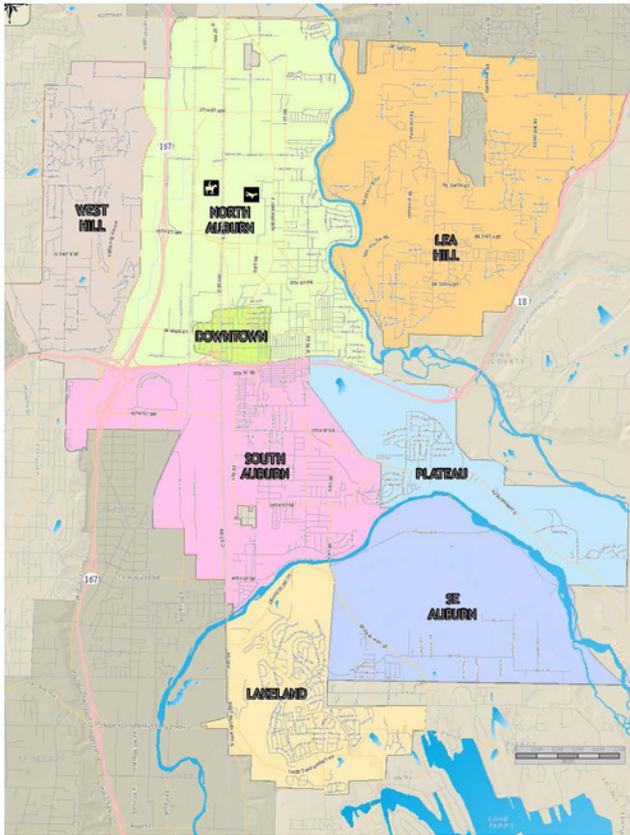
To determine if Auburn residents identify with neighborhoods defined by the city, specifically in a spatial sense, a mapping exercise was conducted. The intent of conducting this exercise within the community was to determine how residents identify their neighborhoods and if those responses accurately match the neighborhoods recognized by the city. This exercise also, like the survey, focused in part on where residents spend money, as well as frequent routes of travel.

The mapping exercise was conducted at several different locations within Auburn, to get a variety of responses. Four locations were selected; Fred Meyer in downtown Auburn, Goodwill, Lea Hill Park, and Les Gove Park. These locations are identified on the map below.

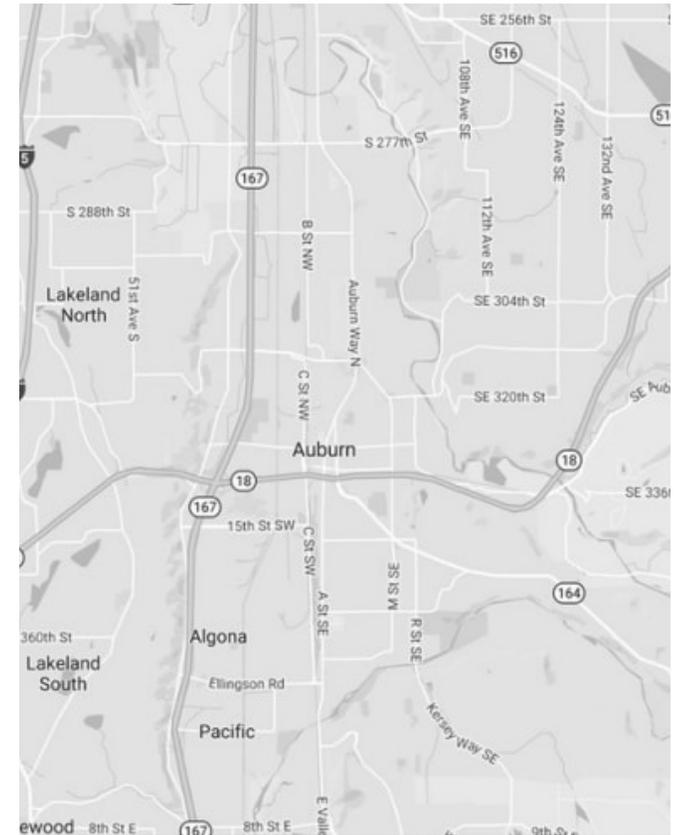
Two potential future sites for surveying include the Starbucks at the Outlet Commons and Mill Pond Park. They were areas suggested by city officials to the Auburn Connectivity team.



Official City of Auburn Neighborhood Map



Mapping Exercise View from Google Maps



The following figures are maps of the City of Auburn. On the left is the map provided by the city that depicts the designated Auburn neighborhoods. On the right is the map that was provided to participants in the exercise on which they outlined their own neighborhood. This map intentionally did not include the Auburn boundaries to get an idea of the residents' perceptions, without being influenced by the official city-recognized neighborhoods.

A total of 28 surveys were analyzed for this project.

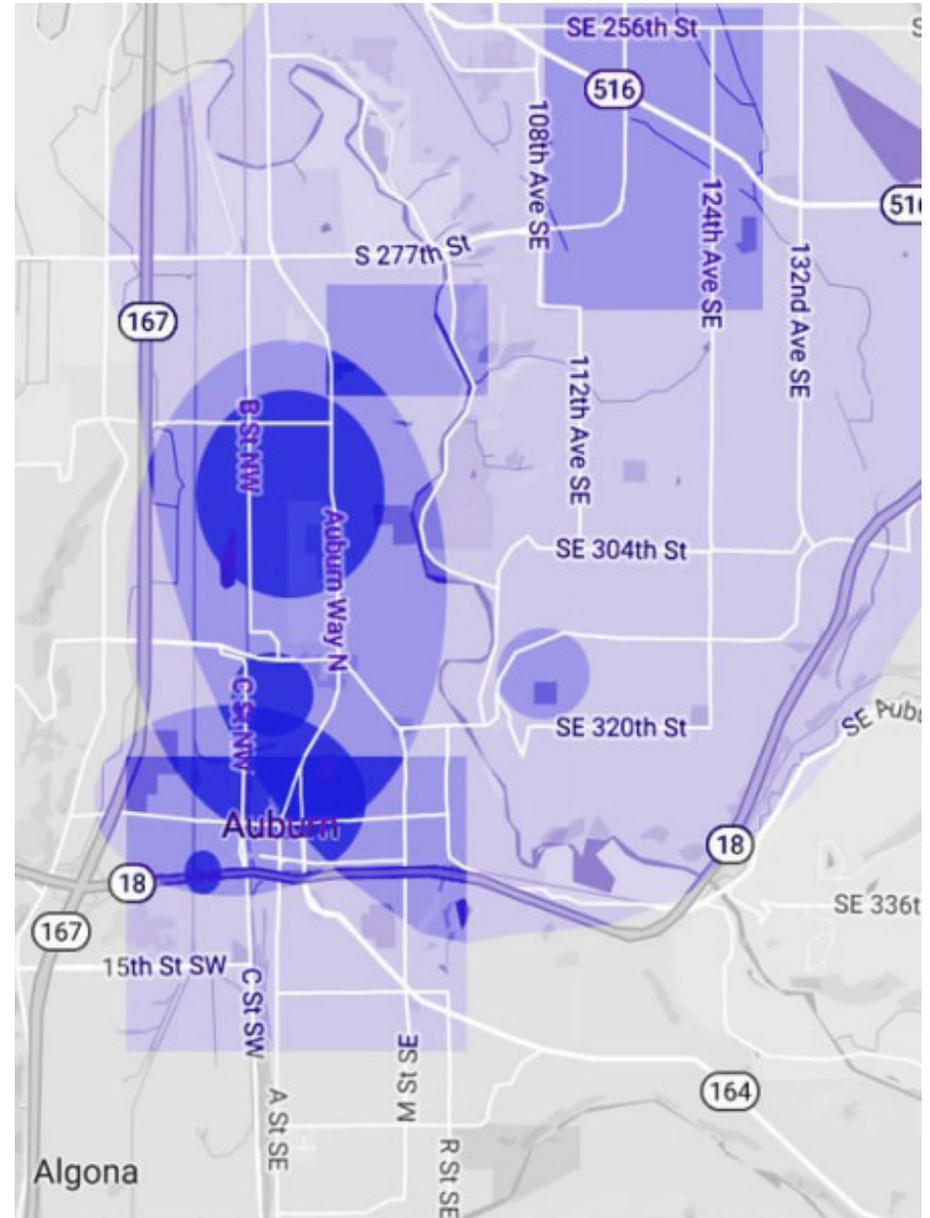
The mapping exercise consisted of several components:

- Outlining their neighborhood on a map of Auburn
- Determining where they run errands
- Identifying frequently traveled routes

Mapping Analysis

After conducting the exercise, the maps were compiled and reviewed. When organizing the data, we found a distinct, varying degree in the spatial conception of the northeastern neighborhoods. The figure to the right is an overlay of the Northeast “quadrant” of the city. The quadrant was determined by using Highway 18 and Highway 167 as geographic edges to delineate each quadrant, in conjunction with the wide and varying degree of the spatial conception of this area in Auburn.

The darker blue areas indicate that multiple participants identified that area as a part of their neighborhood. The most unique overlaps occur in the Auburn-designated Downtown area. One respondent identified their neighborhood beyond the Highway 18 edge, while simultaneously encompassing the Downtown core. In future testing, it would be interesting to take note of the rigidity of the surrounding highways acting as edges.



An overlay composite map of Downtown, North Auburn, and Lea Hill neighborhood responses as identified by respondents.



Summary statistics of the exercise provide telling insights regarding how Auburn residents identify their neighborhoods. 14% of participants could correctly identify a neighborhood in Auburn that was not their own. Furthermore, only 9% could correctly identify their own neighborhood. Overall, 32% of the participants were unable to name or identify a neighborhood within the city. Responses were left unanswered or filled with “N/A” or “Not sure”.

This mapping exercise proved to be a very effective tool for determining how Auburn residents view their neighborhoods. A very small portion of the respondents could define their neighborhoods as defined by the city.

While conducting the exercise, many participants had difficulty identifying their neighborhoods on the map. It was common for the participants to look over the map for a few minutes before identifying their best approximation of where their neighborhood is located. This could potentially result from a lack of connection to the downtown area, residents that do not identify with the downtown area could be lacking a point of reference within the City of Auburn, though we suggest that it speaks to a larger issue of residents not identifying with their assigned neighborhood names or spatial boundaries. This

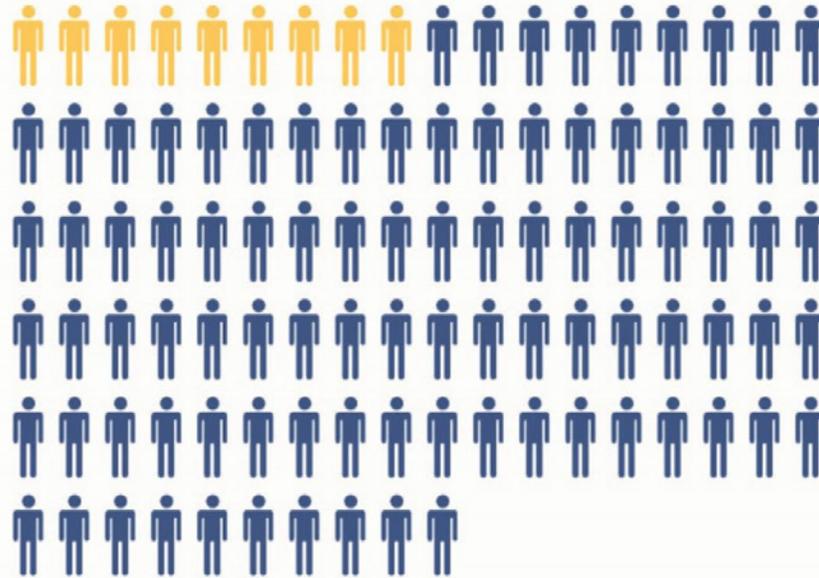
is a very important finding, and perhaps cause for thinking critically through the current governmental boundaries of neighborhood names.

It appears that the residents tend to more often identify with smaller regions within the larger defined neighborhoods. Their perceptions of their neighborhoods often included just several blocks surrounding their homes, or even just the residences themselves. These responses indicate that the residents view their neighborhoods as significantly smaller and more insular, compared to the perceptions of the city.

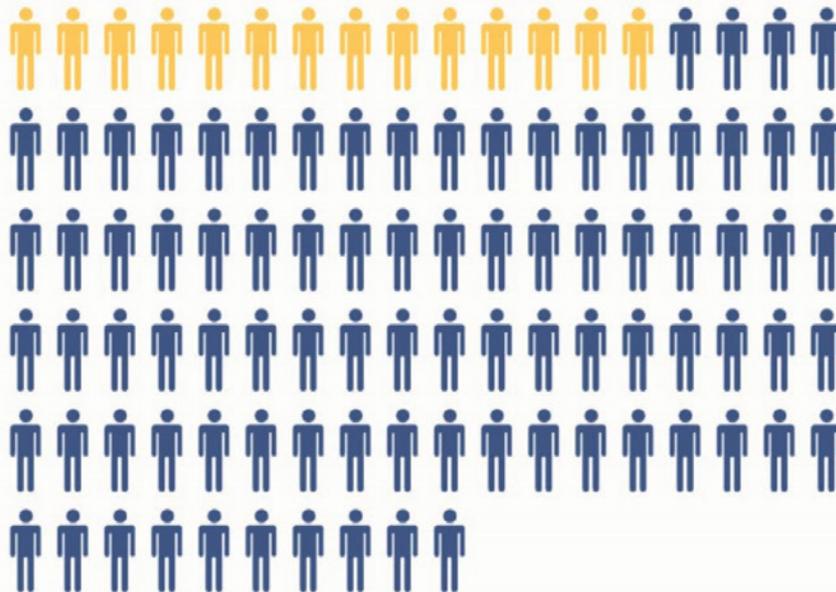
It appears as though the city divides the Auburn neighborhoods based on large topographical features, such as the Green River or Highway 18. However, residents identify spaces on a much smaller scale, based on proximity to their homes. Overall, it appears there is a gap between how the city and the residents define neighborhoods generally and of the existence of finer grain neighborhood names that are well-known by the city, but not necessarily by the community members themselves. This is an area that we recommend further research on.



Capable of matching their neighborhood name and location within the designated City of Auburn boundaries

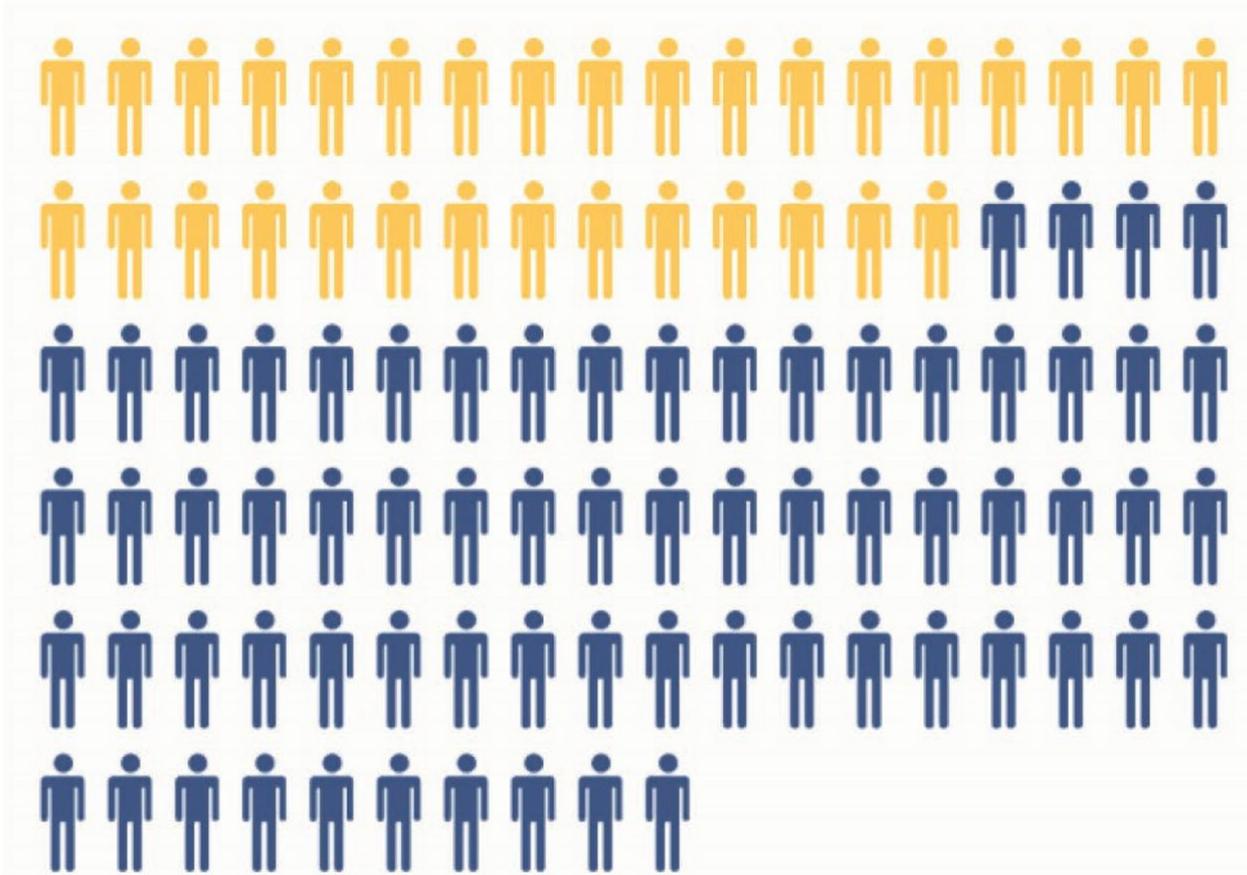


Capable of naming a neighborhood with the same names as given by the City of Auburn





Respondents unable to identify or name a neighborhood in Auburn*



DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Overall awareness of the names or spatial boundaries of official neighborhoods in Auburn is very low amongst its residents. There is a spatial mismatch between residents' neighborhood identity and the neighborhoods outlined by city officials. The varying sizes of each neighborhood as outlined by the respondents reveals an interesting concept: there is no consistent conception of space in terms of neighborhood area relative to city designated areas.

The lack of neighborhood identity is a significant barrier to placemaking. To allow residents to feel a sense of ownership and belonging in their communities, we propose seven suggestions and recommendations to city officials to engage, activate, and connect with the residents of Auburn.

RECOMMENDATION LIST

PHASE 1

Coffee with Your Local City Planner

PHASE 2

Community Benefits Program
Neighborhood Matching Fund
Plaza Redesign

PHASE 3

Vacant Spaces Storefront Program
Signage and Branding

ON-GOING

Muckleshoot Engagement



A professional Rancilio espresso machine is shown in a dimly lit setting. The machine is stainless steel with a black top section. On the top shelf, several white ceramic coffee cups are lined up. The Rancilio logo is visible on the left side of the top section. The machine's group head is in the center, with a portafilter handle. Below the group head, a glass of water and two glasses of coffee are on the drip tray. The text "PHASE ONE" is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the machine. The overall lighting is low, creating a moody atmosphere.

PHASE ONE

COFFEE WITH YOUR

LOCAL CITY PLANNER

SHORT-RANGE | QUICK | EASY

Regular “office hours” hosted by city planners and community engagement officials at coffee shops or community locations throughout each sub-community in Auburn once a month to create a genuine connection between community members and government officials.

Throughout surveying and the mapping exercise, it became clear that Auburn residents have strong opinions about their communities but do not necessarily have the space to share them in an accessible way with city officials. It also became clear that there is a gap between city perception of sub-communities and community members’ perceptions. It seems that community members have ideas and opinions but these thoughts rarely make it to City of Auburn decision makers. It also is clear that there are resources for Auburn residents, but that these resources may not be currently leveraged to make successful and vibrant places. Coffee with Your Local City Planner is a simple way to bridge these gaps.

This program is simple, but it is imperative to the success of creating a connected sense of Auburn and a strong sense of place within communities.

The Coffee with Your Local City Planner program is centered around a City of Auburn official – we are suggesting urban planners, but this could be extended to other city staff – visiting a coffee shop or public gathering place in each sub-community once every, or ever other, month, on the same day of the week. A planner would sit in the coffee shop for two hours, at least, and serve as an open resource to community members. Community members can come with questions, feedback and ideas to share them with their planner. We believe this interface would effectively create a connection between city staff and those most affected by planning decisions while also providing space for city officials to solicit feedback about new ideas in an unstructured, open, and comfortable setting. This program centers around city officials, specifically planners, being in communities regularly, meeting community members where they are, and demonstrating to community members that the city is actively listening to their concerns.

Locations of Coffee with Your City Planner should be posted publicly on the City of Auburn’s Facebook and Twitter feed, but also spread widely throughout neighborhood organizations surrounding the location of each session. Keeping these sessions on the same day, on a monthly or bi-monthly basis creates an expectation and will bring awareness as the program goes on. Following through on each intended date is imperative to ensure trust among community members.

A young boy is laughing joyfully, his face and hair covered in water droplets. He is looking to the right. In the background, an American flag is visible, though out of focus. The entire image has a semi-transparent blue overlay.

PHASE TWO

COMMUNITY BENEFITS PROGRAM

MID-RANGE | ECONOMY BOOSTER

A local card or app that incentivizes shopping at local businesses can stimulate business and business development in downtown Auburn, create ties to the core of the city, and keep money in Auburn.

Based upon survey results and the mapping exercise, it became clear that many residents shop outside of the City of Auburn. People would go to Covington, Kent, or Federal Way to do their shopping. Auburn is not considered a place to shop or buy food. Strengthening the local economy is in the interest of the city and all residents. Some cities have programs to help strengthen local businesses. Strong local economies and businesses can help create more robust and busy hubs in cities. This helps lead to a sense of ownership and pride in one's community.

By creating a rewards system for spending locally, more money will stay in the community. The group Supportland is a nationally recognized network of locally owned and independent businesses based out of Portland, Oregon. Supportland affirms that local businesses can “Recycle much of their revenue (about 3x more than national chains) back into the local economy [...] Help to sustain walkable town centers which reduce sprawl, car use, habitat loss, and pollution [...] Give communities a one-of-a-kind, distinctive character and have a broad range of product choices [...] Create more jobs locally and, in some sectors, provide better wages and benefits than chains do.”

Robust economies and city centers are important parts of strong communities and this idea could help to draw people and their spending back into the city and neighborhoods.

We believe a good method for Auburn to promote engagement with the local economy would be to have a local business rewards card tied to a points and reward system.

The idea comes from a program called Supportland, located in Portland, OR and Vancouver, WA. The card is a physical representation of the program's online mobile app or a person's phone number to associate with a patron account.

The Supportland app does two things. The first thing it provides is a digital punch card service for businesses. The digital app prevents people from losing their punch card and saves paper.

The second function of Supportland utilizes Merit Points when you make purchases at local businesses. You earn 20 points for visiting new businesses and 5 points for ones you have been to before. These points can be redeemed at any other business in the network for a variety of services or items. Rewards could be anything, and it is dependent upon each business to decide what they would offer for points.

Businesses also earn Merit Points when people use Merit Points at their business. These Merit Points are then used like monopoly money to pay for marketing services and more through the Supportland network. Supportland charges businesses around \$45 a month for a yearlong membership or \$60 per month. The city could offer grants to help businesses get onto the network for a year while they boost their sales.

These points are tracked on an online platform making it easy for businesses to integrate it into their workflow. Training takes around 5 minutes so we anticipate onboarding of local businesses would be feasible.

This is an example of a successful program that helps to support local businesses. The framework and thinking behind this program could be easily translated to the specific context of Auburn. Starting small with a punch card, or creating an app that tracks purchases, is a way to incentivize shopping locally. We recommend that the City of Auburn consider the app's functionality as well, with specific regards to data collection to create a well-founded sense of transparency and accountability.

PLAZA REDESIGN

DOWNTOWN ACTIVATION



This suggestion centers around the activation of public space to create more engaging and memorable experiences. The following analysis will focus specifically on the plaza outside of City Hall, but the concepts could be extended to any open space or park in the city.

Surveying Auburn residents about their perception of the downtown area revealed two key issues that could be solved by strategic public space design. The first common response from residents was that they felt there was a lack of fun and entertaining activities to do in downtown Auburn. We also found that most participants could not identify a central location or image that was representative of downtown Auburn. The open plaza space outside of City Hall presents an opportunity to create a memorable and engaging space that can serve as a central gathering point and key representation of possibilities for downtown Auburn.

The Project for Public Spaces, an online resource on placemaking, emphasizes the importance of well-designed public plazas and parks. They argue that, “a great urban park is a safety valve for the city, in which people living in dense urban areas can find breathing room. While a poorly planned or maintained park can be a place of fear and danger, thus repelling people, business, and investment. A great square, on the other hand, can be a source of civic pride, and it can help residents feel better connected to their cultural and political institutions.” Maximizing the potential of Auburn’s open spaces will be a critical step in creating a sense of connection to the City of Auburn among residents spread throughout the sub-communities and creating a sense of excitement about downtown Auburn as a central hub for all communities.

The Power of 10 Theory

POWER OF 10+

HOW CITIES TRANSFORM THROUGH PLACEMAKING



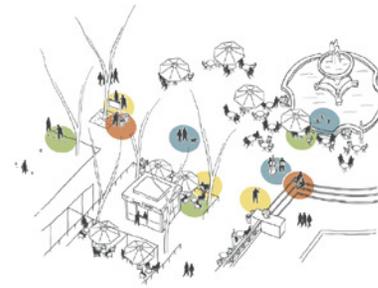
City/Region

10+ MAJOR DESTINATIONS



Destination

10+ PLACES IN EACH



Place

10+ THINGS TO DO,
LAYERED TO CREATE SYNERGY



(Project for Public Spaces, 2009)

The Power of 10 is a placemaking theory developed by PPS aimed at cultivating excitement about public spaces, theorizes that a successfully designed city will have 10 general locations for people to spend time in, 10 specific places in each location for them to go, and 10 activities in each place for them to engage in. These spaces should be engaging, dynamic, and well-designed. Applying “The Power of 10” to the context of the City of Auburn provides a way to think through how to best

stimulate a dynamic and active downtown core, and create connection to sub-communities throughout the city. Within the context of this specific recommendation, the general location would be Downtown Auburn, the specific place would be the plaza directly outside of city hall, and the plaza would therefore need to be filled with at least 10 engaging activities.

Recommendations

In order to successfully activate this plaza in line with “The Power of 10” we suggest adding these activities as first steps:

- Dynamic Seating
 - Visuals
- Interactive Activities + Entertainment



These activities can range from extravagant to simple, and do not necessarily need to entail large budgets or massive redesigns. They can be something to do, something to look at, or somewhere to sit – there is possibility for simple changes that fit into the framework of The Power of 10. The general design of the plaza is already quite successful. The large entrance is inviting and points towards the City Hall. The concrete ground is clean, flat, and bright. The grass terraces provide texture,

color, and a place to sit and play. Some possible additions to the plaza that we suggest are a life-size game, brightly-colored and moveable seating, a small stage, and food trucks. While basic, such interventions serve as critical, simple first steps to creating excitement about coming to Downtown Auburn, spending time in downtown Auburn, and even spending money in Downtown Auburn.



DYNAMIC SEATING

Within this plaza, there are a few black metal benches and tables at the edge of the space. The existing seating options offer insufficient motivation for people to truly engage in the space and create a dynamic, inviting atmosphere. Within placemaking research, there is a strong emphasis across scholars and practitioners that movable and brightly colored seating brings activity to public spaces. The moveable chairs allow users to customize their environment and the bright colors would attract them to the plaza and create a memorable

impression. The Project for Public Spaces builds on this in their own studies, and found that seats are the best design choice when compared to benches because they are comfortable, inexpensive, and arrangeable. Adding much more seating that is colorful, comfortable, and movable is key to activating this plaza.

VISUALS + LIGHTING

Installing attractive light and heating fixtures would allow the plaza to be used at night and during colder times of the year. Activating the space at all times helps to create a central gathering spot, becoming a stronger placemaking fixture for the city. The nighttime hangout space could also encourage people to spend more of their evenings downtown which would increase local restaurant and store traffic. The lighting could create a stronger sense of safety as many residents voiced concerns about lack of lighting in our surveys. The picture to the



right is an example from Plaza de Cesar Chavez in San Jose which used large heated cubes and string lights to create a welcoming environment at night.



GAMES

A life-size game would be an entertaining and unique way for people to engage with their community. A game like this would appeal to guests of all ages and create activity in and excitement about downtown Auburn. The type of game could rotate every few months to provide variety and encourage people to come back often. In conjunction with a life-size game, smaller games can be put in as well.



STAGE

The installation of a stage would provide another source of entertainment downtown as well as present an opportunity for local artists, speakers, and cultural groups to perform for their community. Throughout the day, local artists could play music which would create a lively atmosphere throughout the downtown area. Larger events or shows could also be planned to draw more people to the plaza and downtown area.



FOOD VENDORS

Food trucks are rapidly gaining popularity and an entire culture of fans has arisen in which people can follow their favorite trucks from place to place. In our surveys, there was an overwhelming amount of responses voicing concern about a lack of food options in Auburn. Food trucks in the plaza would combat this problem while also encouraging people to spend time walking around downtown.

NEIGHBORHOOD MATCHING FUND

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP | ENGAGEMENT | PARTICIPATION

Expanding the Neighborhood Matching Grant to a Neighborhood Matching Fund, and making a few small changes to increase accessibility, serves to create sub-community identity and connection to Auburn, by supporting ground-up placemaking projects.

Through our surveying we found that about half the population feels attached to Auburn while the other half does not. An even smaller percentage felt that the City of Auburn was meeting their community needs. Many of them felt like they had to either look elsewhere or just opted out of participation in the city all together. This leads to the issue of neighborhood identity; in our mapping exercise 32% of the individuals surveyed could identify a neighborhood in Auburn. Only about 9% of those same individuals could identify their own neighborhood in conjunction with the city's assigned boundaries. This absence of neighborhood identity can be a major reason why so many people in Auburn feel disconnected from the larger community.

Though this does not mean that there is not excitement around creating a stronger and more exciting City of Auburn among residents. While speaking with residents of Auburn through our surveying and mapping, we found that residents have ideas about where they want to see Auburn move in the future, projects they would like to see happen, and projects that they would like to complete on their own, but perhaps do not have the resources to do so. By providing support for these individual and community projects, the City of Auburn can successfully center community voices in

creating a strong sense of neighborhood identity and Auburn identity, thus ensuring the success of these projects. Auburn does currently have a Neighborhood Matching Grant (NMG), but we suggest further expanding this to a Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) to better spread awareness of the grant itself, and create better accessibility for applicants. Auburn's Neighborhood Matching Grant (NMG) is very similar to a NMF, but this expansion would bridge the gap between residents who want to complete these projects and the City, who has the resources to make them a reality. This would also create a better connection between the City of Auburn and residents, creating a stronger sense of connection within communities, and to the larger Auburn.

A NMF would present an opportunity for community members to fund their own projects within their designated neighborhoods of Auburn. The size of NMF projects can range from small community events like street clean-ups to larger, heavier projects like community gardens. NMF projects can create a deep sense of community in a way that city's themselves often cannot. This is because a NMF places the power of urban design and community building directly into the hands of community members themselves. Nobody knows a neighborhood better than the people that inhabit it. Prioritizing ground-up community led projects in neighborhoods that currently do not feel as strong of a connection to their community and to Auburn effectively creates place while also creating a connection between government and residents.

THERE ARE SIX WAYS

that we would like to suggest that the NMG be expanded:

1

ACCEPT QUARTERLY APPLICATIONS

Accept applications quarterly. The current model for Auburn's NMG claims that the applications are only accepted once a year until the grant runs out. The most recent application due date was either May 23rd, 2016 or June 10th, 2016 (two different dates posted on different documents) with no 2017 date posted. If the application period had quarterly deadlines instead of a single annual deadline, the city would provide more opportunity for people to apply. As events are often spontaneous the limited annual application deadline discourages participation. The summer deadline also excludes any events happening in the first half of the year. It may be in the best interest of the grant to reserve more funds for the spring and summer quarters where there would likely be more requests.

2

PUBLIC OUTREACH + HOST INFORMATION SESSIONS

Reach out to organizations/Host informative sessions. It is possible that many people in Auburn are unaware that this grant exists and is available to them. Two ways that the city could improve that awareness is to reach out to neighboring organizations that may be able to actively participate in the grant. It would also be constructive to host informative sessions in person and online, through webinars – seminars conducted online, about the NMG to help people understand that this grant exists, what kind of projects it could fund, and how they can apply for it. These informational sessions should be held throughout the city in each sub-community at various times throughout the day so that residents with different schedules can find one that best meets their timeframe, and should provide childcare.

3

CREATE STRONGER WEB PRESENCE

The current NMG in Auburn is not very accessible – it is hard to find online, and the PDF that describes the grant is dense. Creating a separate web page on the City of Auburn that is easy to find from the home page, with a frequently asked questions that clearly outlines steps for applying is imperative to ensuring a strong number of applicants. The City of Redmond has a strong example of a FAQ section that could be applied to the context of Auburn.

THERE ARE SIX WAYS

that we would like to suggest that the NMG be expanded:

4

MAKE THE PURCHASE OF FOOD ELIGIBLE

Many neighborhood activities and events are successful because of the work of the volunteers that make them possible. An effective way to recruit volunteers and to keep them going all day is to provide food for them. An example would be hosting a neighborhood cleanup event where volunteers usually take a few hours out of their weekend morning to meet up and help beautify an area by removing any garbage or detritus. There is no better way to motivate volunteers, keep spirits up, and maintain energy levels than to offer some complimentary snacks and coffee. It can be encouraged that the food is purchased from local vendors and has connection with the event itself.

5

ALLOW FOR INDIVIDUALS TO PARTICIPATE

Currently the NMG is only available to recognized groups and organizations. If the eligibility was expanded to individuals it may invite a more diverse and underserved demographic of Auburn. It is not unusual for NMFs to be open to only groups and organizations because of financial and insurance reasons. Auburn may be able to change that by developing a list of organizations that may be willing to take on NMG projects proposed by individuals. This could allow a resident of Auburn to pitch their project to participating organizations that may be interested in supporting them in a NMG.

6

REQUIRE APPLICANTS TO LIST THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD AFFILIATION

Including a check-box question that requires applicants to choose their neighborhood as assigned by the city of Auburn reinforces connection with those sub-communities. This may be the first or only time the residents may have looked at their position in their neighborhood as defined by the City of Auburn. By providing the options for the applicants, it is possible that a greater neighborhood identity could be fostered.

A woman in a brown coat and green scarf is blowing bubbles in a crowd. The background is a blurred crowd of people, and the foreground is filled with many bubbles of various sizes. The overall scene is bright and festive.

PHASE THREE

VACANT SPACES STOREFRONT PROGRAM

REVITALIZATION | CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

Activate vacant spaces through art and pop-up businesses to create a lively and active downtown Auburn and facilitate small business creation and growth in vacant spaces.

In describing the foundation of this project, the City of Auburn expressed a need for an “Auburn-wide community identity”. Creating a strong sense of a unique downtown core is imperative for creating an Auburn-wide identity. To effectively draw residents to downtown and to create a connection to Auburn, the City of Auburn needs to provide an experience that is unique compared to existing retail cores in surrounding areas. This recommendation provides an innovative and dynamic way to create a unique sense of place in downtown Auburn.

This recommendation builds on the current public art lining East Main Street, and the storefront art space in front of the City of Auburn building on East Main Street. Downtown Auburn is already partially activated through art, this program provides a way to build on that to create a thriving downtown core that is inclusive, community-driven, and dynamic.

There are currently many vacant spaces in downtown Auburn, especially lining the main downtown core on East Main Street. This program provides a way to make use of these spaces, and facilitate small, locally-owned and operated business development in downtown Auburn. This is important for two reasons. First, it begins to draw in current spending that is lost to neighboring areas. This has been highlighted as a key concern for Auburn officials, and, in speaking with residents, is something that residents of Auburn are also concerned about. A project of this sort also provides a way to activate empty strips of ground floor retail space in new developments along East Main and throughout downtown Auburn.

This program also provides another opportunity for the City of Auburn to support residents. Calls for artists for this program, and proposals for pop-ups should be sourced exclusively, if not primarily, from residents from Auburn, with special attention made to engage neighborhoods outside of the central core that are not currently connected to Auburn.

FOUR CORE SUGGESTIONS TO ACTIVATE VACANT SPACES



A **STOREFRONT ART PROGRAM** that uses vacant storefronts, or under- or un-utilized storefronts, cleans them, and uses them as a venue to showcase local artists and their work.

A **POP-UP PROGRAM** that helps facilitate business development in downtown Auburn by providing support to businesses currently attempting to get off the ground. The storefronts program can serve as a precipice to this – artists that first begin in a storefront can then take over the space completely as a studio, gallery, or store.

FOUR CORE SUGGESTIONS TO ACTIVATE VACANT SPACES

COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACE These spaces, once cleaned up, should be used as a site for community gatherings. This brings city government to the community, though only in the downtown core, and to a more flexible and engaging space. These storefronts can also be used to supply space to community groups and organizations to meet. This is something that should be built into contracting with artists, storefronts, and businesses.

FURTHER EXPANSION This project fits into a larger potential scheme for arts to be at the core of downtown Auburn's identity. Programs throughout the United States, explained in more depth below in the outlined case studies, demonstrate that art within downtown settings brings residents to downtown spaces to engage with the place they call home. This builds on a trend we already see happening in Auburn – East Main Street is lined with public art, and there is already a storefront show in front of the City of Auburn office building. There is space for continuing this program with an artist survey of needs. The survey could get at core concerns among the arts community in Auburn, and serve to contextualize this recommendation to specific needs within the city. This program has potential to be expanded to encompass live/work arts space in downtown Auburn as well. Space is also available for a larger mural within downtown Auburn that signals that this is an arts community and ties in to the storefronts program.



NEXT STEPS FOR VACANT SPACES

These suggestions involve multiple steps. They will involve, as a preliminary assessment:

- An inventory of current spaces
- Working with space owners to create contracts and agreements to use the space, and cultivating a mutually beneficial working relationship
- Cleaning empty storefronts
- Calls for artists and marketing about the program

- Organizing an honorarium for artists and contract period and logistics
- Ensuring that the space has insurance, the city has liability insurance, the business owner has liability ensure, and the artist has liability insurance
- Developing a structure for next steps



PROJECT STOREFRONTS | NEW HAVEN, CT

New Haven, Connecticut is home to 125,000 residents, 11,000 of which are students. The historic city center of New Haven underwent redevelopment in the 1980s, bringing with it 311 apartments and ground floor retail. The residential components of this downtown development were successful, but retail components did not succeed as much. Specifically, in the context of New Haven, the national recession in the late 2000s exacerbated what was already a “sluggish local economy” and left an increased number of empty storefronts throughout the city (National Endowment for the Arts). New Haven identified that the first step at revitalizing the area was increasing foot traffic and making the city more active. The problem of empty storefronts is one that we see in Auburn. The steps taken by New Haven to activate the area should be used as a framework for creating Auburn’s own storefront program.

In response to these concerns, New Haven’s Department of Arts, Culture, and Tourism (DACT) created Project Storefronts, a program that fills empty retail spaces with galleries, studios and arts-related offices, “creating low-budget ways for entrepreneurs to test business plans in real condition”. This project was developed in collaboration with the Office of Economic Development, and an organization that provided small business counseling and fiscal support, something that, in the future, would be a good recommendation for partnership

within Auburn. They negotiated with key stakeholders and property owners to use retail spaces for an initial 90 days as part of the program.

Within the report to the NEA they describe this process: “They undertook outreach to property owners and negotiated with them for existing and new retail spaces, and for reduced or in-kind services. Once they selected entrepreneurs from a pool of applicants, DACT provided administrative and logistical support to develop their retail spaces, helping them to procure insurance and navigate legal issues. To promote the program throughout the community and city, DACT organized several events, including a citywide open studios program, an arts festival, and an exhibition.”

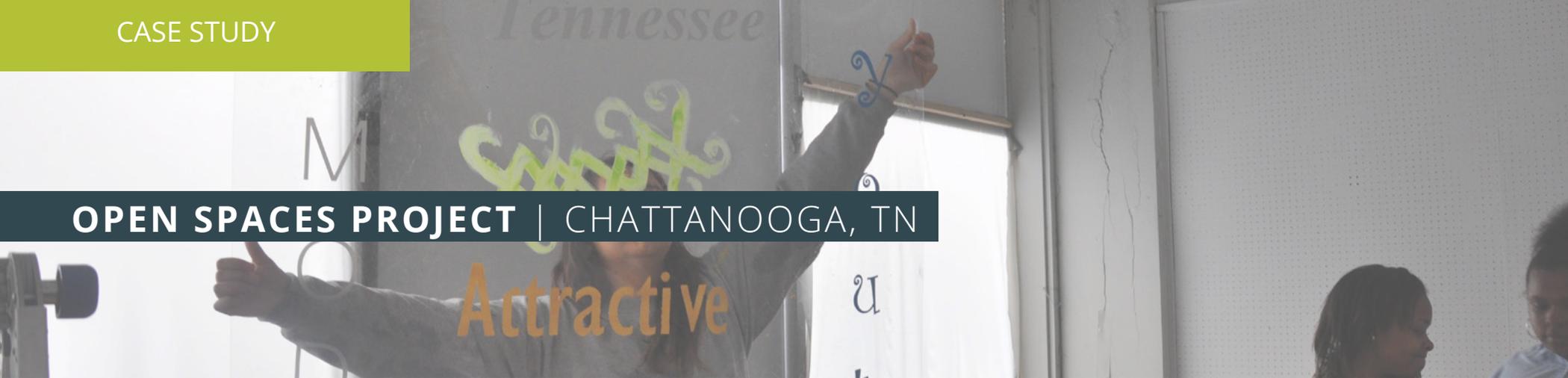
Project Storefronts has great success. Margaret Bodell, Art Consultant for DACT, highlights the community engagement element of this program. She said, “one of the wonderful ‘side effects’ of our program was the sense of community we created in the spaces we inhabited” (NEA). Combining the Storefronts program with an art walk program called “First Friday on the 9,” “not only provided artists and other relative entrepreneurs with critical business and retail experience, but our locations became a ‘hang out’ space in the best sense of the phrase” (NEA).

Takeaways for Auburn:

Work with key stakeholders and property owners early in the process to create a collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship.

Pair the storefronts program with a regular, potentially monthly, art walk.

Consider taking on a non-profit partner that can assist with business support and fiscal sponsorship.



OPEN SPACES PROJECT | CHATTANOOGA, TN

The Open Spaces in Chattanooga was run by The River City Company, an organization that focuses on activating downtown Chattanooga in partnership with the City Center, the Tennessee Arts Commission, and the Lyndhurst Foundation. As part of this project they created a strong online presence and an interactive map on their website that highlights current works – this is key in spreading the word about a program of this sort.

Chattanooga is home to 176,588 residents and both the University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University. Chattanooga faced a similar concern we see now in the city of Auburn, around how to create a sense of identity within the City Center. The goal of this program was to cultivate an identity for city center and continually engage community members throughout the process.

The Open Spaces Project allows more space for more permanent or more involved installations within storefronts. They split their application cycles into three levels – High Level Interactive, Moderate Level Interactive, and Display Art – each with different levels of budgets, High Level being the largest. Display Art, and Moderate Level Interactive are most adaptable to the context of Auburn. They describe these levels as follows:

“Level 2- Moderate Level Interactive and Light Animation: 17 storefronts

1. Budget: \$1,000-\$2,000 (includes materials & compensation)
2. Interactive for each passerby- e.g. pedal-powered animation, projection, linkable social media, musical interaction
3. All media forms welcome
4. Provide examples for changeability if applicable
5. Preexisting works allowed

Level 3- Display Art: 17 storefronts

1. Budget: \$400 (stipend)
2. Original still art, lighting, modeled repurposed material, sculpture, lighting, 3-D printed material, digital
3. Non-traditional materials are encouraged
4. Preexisting works allowed”

Takeaways for Auburn:

Paying artists for their time is essential.

Partnerships with outside non-profits, and foundations, through grant support the feasibility and longevity of this project.

Creating an online presence and interactive map online for these projects is key to the success of this project and cultivating excitement that then will bring people to the area.

ART IN STOREFRONTS | SAN FRANCISCO ARTS COMMISSION



The San Francisco Arts Commission put together a FAQ report to better aid organizations and government looking to implement their own storefronts program. Their report highlights that it is often difficult to get property owners to participate, the importance of creating a mutually beneficial relationship with property owners, and the necessity of insurance.

Takeaways for Auburn:

Cleaning up storefronts for owners is key in creating a mutually beneficial relationship.

Storefronts programs often lead to rentals for property owners and declines in vandalism.

Property owners should carry general liability insurance, though cities can use their own self insurance policy to cover the art. Artist should be advised to get their own insurance.

Honorariums for artists are essential to ensure that artists are getting paid for their work.

Priority should be given to artists who live and work in the community.

SIGNAGE & BRANDING

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING | OWNERSHIP

Strengthening neighborhood identity can be achieved through the implementation of a strategic signage program.

This recommendation is based on the use of sub-community branding as a method of neighborhood identification and small-scale placemaking. Residents living in Auburn can potentially experience a variety of conflicting neighborhood identities. The City of Auburn is primarily a mixture of suburban and rural areas, with an urbanized downtown core. The suburban areas on the outskirts of the city have ample housing developments, advertising small sub-communities such as Hazel View, Vintage Hills, Mountain View, and Viewridge. Residents driving through or past these neighborhoods are immediately welcomed with a large sign indicating the name of the sub-community created by developers. However, there is little indication of the city's official neighborhood boundaries. The potential discrepancies in spatial neighborhood identity due to the various messages relayed by the built environment infrastructure (i.e. with housing development signage or with the lack of neighborhood identification as outlined by the City of Auburn) provided the framework our mapping exercise operated within.

The mapping exercise was created to understand the residents' perspective on the spatial conception of their neighborhoods and how it compares to the neighborhood boundaries as identified by the City of Auburn. Furthermore, the exercise

tasked the participants with identifying their neighborhood by name. An analysis of the mapping exercise revealed that there is not a cohesive spatial neighborhood identity in any of the surveyed areas, specifically those who lived in the North Auburn, Downtown, and Lea Hill neighborhoods. Though there is not enough evidence to suggest that residents more closely identify with housing development sub-communities, there is a wide breadth of literature suggesting that intentional, cohesive neighborhood branding has positive effects in community placemaking.

Our recommendation for an intentional, cohesive neighborhood branding and signage program will help reinforce topographic edges between neighborhoods through a community-based and neighborhood-specific development framework. This will aid in the creation of environmental legibility. Environmental legibility, as described by Kevin Lynch, is the extent which residents can recognize parts of a city (1960). Signage as wayfinding tools has the capacity to aid residents in their spatial orientation and environmental legibility by creating landmarks and geographic frames of reference (Arthur & Passini, 1992).

Each of the signage suggestions below follow the core concept of a cohesive signage program rooted in the core tenants of placemaking: community-driven, inclusive, dynamic, and context-specific.



COLLABORATIVE BRANDING

Collaborative branding utilizes both creative placemaking and community engagement as tools. Creative placemaking through signage is not limited to physical signs; in terms of the arts sector, signage can be interpreted to include local, community-specific art pieces as landmarks. Landmarks play a key role in placemaking and fostering neighborhood identity (Arthur & Passini, 1992). Signage as a channel for creative placemaking allows for a break in the spatial and cognitive dissonance in terms of place; creative signs allow for better

community ownership and involvement, creating a stronger neighborhood identity.

Collaborative art can easily be integrated into signage and landmarks. By building connections between artists and community members and the city, the perceived involvement of city officials in the wellbeing of its residents is further established.

FHWA GUIDELINES

A potential barrier to implementing a creative neighborhood signage program is the possibility of the signs not being following the City of Auburn or Federal Highway Administration (FHA) design guidelines. The FHA states that all signs on public roads must be written in Standard Alphabet typeface (Garvey 2007). Only two exceptions have been made as of 2007; these were granted for contrast highway signs and National Park Service signs after completing an evaluation of their level of visibility. However, “[t]he criterion for alternative typefaces on wayfinding signs is less stringent than for highway signs, being merely to provide

equivalent visibility when using the same uppercase letter height”(p.10).

A case study completed by the Florida Department of Transportation for the implementation of the Futura typeface in Miami Beach, Florida was mainly focused on testing visibility from a driver’s perspective. This testing could prove to be beneficial if the City of Auburn had intended to change the typeface to a more aesthetically unique signage implementation for each neighborhood. With Highway 18 proving to be a frequently traveled route, the size and type of signage could vary drastically

surrounding the highway as opposed to a slower, arterial road. Visibility testing would need to be completed to address the differences in speed and visibility.

The general guidelines provided by the FHA can also be applied to signs downtown. The City of Auburn currently has design guidelines for the downtown core; those guidelines could be used in conjunction with creative and collaborative placemaking strategies, while also emphasizing local landmarks and pedestrian-ization.



SIGN HIERARCHY | SAN FRANCISCO, CA

“The purpose of streetscape signage, including gateway markers and directional (wayfinding) signage, is to provide an overall image of a neighborhood or district, mark edges or entry points, and give information about directions, destinations, or the neighborhood in general” (San Francisco Better Streets, n.d.).

The City of San Francisco uses a streetscape signage hierarchy to help aid placemaking efforts. The hierarchy, from most prominent and central to least prominent and more common, is as follows:

- Gateway Markers (neighborhood or district entry elements)
- Interpretive Signs
- Directional/Wayfinding Signs
- Standard Street and Transit Signs

Site context plays an essential role in the development and design of streetscape signage. Gateways, or neighborhood entry elements, play a distinct role in placemaking due to their prominent nature. To ensure effective placemaking strategies, the gateway must foster a community image, not create it. Through creative placemaking and completing outreach with local artists and community members – through a call

for artists or community meetings– it is ensured that the city is not imposing a false image on the neighborhood. To be effective, it is suggested that gateway signs “be located at defined entry points to a district or a neighborhood, or transitions from one neighborhood or district to another. They may also be appropriate at areas where a freeway becomes a surface road, or where there are other significant changes to the roadway, land use, or building form (e.g., where a major roadway becomes a quiet residential street)” (n.d.).

Neighborhood orientation signs operate as placemaking markers and wayfinding signs. By clearly stating the name of the neighborhood, providing geographic context of the neighborhood, and indicating a list of destinations, the neighborhood orientation signs help anchor the spatial conception of each neighborhood, while also promoting walkability and in turn, promoting the local economy.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY | PORT ANGELES, WA

“As a matter of priority, the city wanted to incorporate cultural elements important to the Klallam people,” West told ICTMN. “Phase 2 of the project established a new downtown park, the goal of which was to embrace the local Klallam community by celebrating their longstanding heritage on the waterfront” (2016).

Through conversations with city officials, we have heard that there are opportunities for the city to engage the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe in its planning policies and general governance. With this information, we believe that inclusive signage is a great first step towards cultural competency. There are many cases of bilingual signage programs having been implemented in Washington state. In districts with distinct cultural character, bilingual signs have been implemented to help establish the “place” of the district/neighborhood. In August 2016, the City of Seattle had completed its third round of signage updates in the International District by introducing Vietnamese signs in the sub-community identified as Little Saigon. The International District is comprised of several distinct sub-communities; those sub-communities are highlighted through street signs. Other signage types have included street signs in Mandarin and Japanese, which help delineate Chinatown and Japantown respectively. These signs were made possible through the collaboration between local neighborhood organizations and the city.

In terms of indigenous communities, it is argued that there is a “sometimes subtle but pervasive idea that a strong aboriginal identity and an urban lifestyle are mutually exclusive” (Baloy, 2009). Engagement of contemporary aboriginal, indigenous, or native peoples in urban settings can start with language revitalization programs. One case of a language revitalization program in Washington is The Klallam Language Program. The Klallam Language Program is a program designed to create a community-based effort to revitalize the Klallam language, the language of the Salishan family in the North Olympic Peninsula. The project began in 1991 and has continued to grow. The program has eventually expanded into urban planning governance in Port Angeles by influencing the implementation of Klallam signage near Waterfront Park (Hopper, 2016).

The City of Auburn has the opportunity to connect with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and include them in their placemaking endeavors. Again, the core tenants of placemaking are rooted in being community-driven, inclusive, dynamic, and context-specific. By engaging one of the most unique neighborhoods in the city – and even the region – the City of Auburn has the potential to utilize one of its greatest placemaking opportunities and help cultivate deeper connections with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe community with the rest of the city.



MOVING FORWARD

MUCKLESHOOT ENGAGEMENT

BRIDGING COMMUNITIES | FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS

Including the Muckleshoot Tribe in placemaking efforts in a respectful way creates a more inclusive framework for placemaking in Auburn, and is essential to successful placemaking efforts.

Including the Muckleshoot Tribe in placemaking efforts in a respectful way creates a more inclusive framework for placemaking in Auburn, and is essential to successful placemaking efforts.

In early discussions, city officials mentioned that the city was looking for opportunities to create a connection with their neighbors, the Muckleshoot Tribe. We agree that this is an important part of fostering a stronger community with a sense of place and identity. A set of placemaking recommendations would be incomplete without focusing on cultivating better relationships with the Muckleshoot Tribe. To achieve this, we recommend four actions that coincide with our other recommendations:



PLAZA REDESIGN

The first idea follows with our suggestion for the plaza redesign. Within the plaza, we suggest the inclusion of a central landmark to honor the history of Auburn. We suggest a call to Muckleshoot artists to design a central landmark to be placed in the square. A Native American art piece pays respect to the history of the peoples who have inhabited these lands for thousands of years and helps bridge the current gap between the City of Auburn and the Muckleshoot Tribe by showing the city's recognition of their neighborhoods and simultaneously create a space for honoring native culture. This bond with our indigenous peoples is vital to creating the conditions for a resilient and respectful community and sense of place.

SIGNAGE & BRANDING

Putting native names for streets and neighborhoods along with their current names would recognize the rich history of Auburn and work to include Muckleshoot residents in placemaking efforts. Port Angeles, Washington successfully implemented a project of this sort – recognizing the Klallam people who have lived there for over 10,000 years. This is fantastic way to cultivate a stronger recognition of Native Americans as important members of the community.

EVENT PROTOCOL

We recommend that the City of Auburn open a dialogue with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe to create a plan wherein an acknowledgement of the land's traditional owners is recognized in city spaces. The City of Auburn should work with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe to determine appropriate spaces. Events that could follow such a protocol could include formal events, forums like government meetings, conferences, school assemblies, and concerts.

By following the event protocol wherein acknowledgements of the area's indigenous history are made, the City of Auburn pays homage to those whose ancestors lived here before them. In terms of placemaking, it is a vital step towards making Auburn a space of inclusion. By acknowledging the land's traditional occupants, the City of Auburn is publicly recognizing and reaffirming that while the indigenous history of the area is complex, it is not something to be left out. The complex indigenous history and relationship to the land is something to be proud of.

COLLABORATION

Our last idea would be to constantly seek collaboration with the Muckleshoot in everything. It is vital to future to work together with all neighbors in Auburn.

CONCLUSION

STREET SCENE - AUBURN, WASH.

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3807

FINAL WORDS

These placemaking recommendations reflect a process that seeks to balance the City of Auburn's residents and government officials' concerns and desires. Through our survey and mapping exercise, we confirmed that there is a disconnect between residents of Auburn and the City of Auburn generally, in part because residents do not connect to or spend time in Downtown Auburn, and in part because they do not connect to their officially designated neighborhood spatially or by name.

Though varied, these recommendations are founded in a collaborative process, that centers on inclusivity and weaves together both innovative and straightforward patterns of use. As these recommendations are community-driven and context-specific we know that when put into dialogue, engagement, and action these recommendations will facilitate the ongoing evolution of Auburn. By continuing to center community in the placemaking process, Auburn can create a sense of unification throughout the city, while also being mindful and honoring context-specific sub-community identities. We believe these recommendations are key first steps in the process of becoming "More than You Can Imagine."

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IMAGES

Unless noted, images have been provided by the University of Washington Department of Urban Planning and Design, the class of CEP 460, or obtained from the CCO domain at Unsplash.com.

COVER

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08 Google, Map data (2017) [Screenshot of Auburn Aerial View]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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22 City of Auburn (n.d.) Official City of Auburn Neighborhood

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

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PHASE ONE

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PHASE TWO

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: Survey

CEP 460 Survey Questions for Auburn

1. What neighborhood do you live in?
2. What are some of the first things that come to your mind when you think of Auburn--Can you give me five words or phrases that capture your thoughts?
3. Do you consider yourself part of Auburn? Why or why not?
4. Do you feel that Auburn has a unified identity? Can you say more about that?
5. When you are not at work, school, or home, how and where do you spend your time?
6. Do you shop, run errands, or eat out in Auburn? If yes, what neighborhood(s) do you go to?
7. What types of transportation do you use? Why?
8. Is it easy to get from one neighborhood to another?
9. Is it easy to get from your neighborhood to downtown Auburn?
10. How often do you participate in city sponsored Auburn-wide events?
11. How do you get information about those events?

APPENDIX A (continued)

12. How would you like to get information about those events?
13. What are 3 things you would like to see in Auburn that you don't currently see?
14. Are there neighborhoods that you like to spend time in? Which, and why?
15. Are there neighborhoods that you don't like to spend time in? Which, and why?

Demographic Questions

1. What is your age range: 10-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61-70, above 70
2. How would you define your race and ethnic identity?
3. How long have you lived in Auburn?
4. What is your household size? Are there children in your house

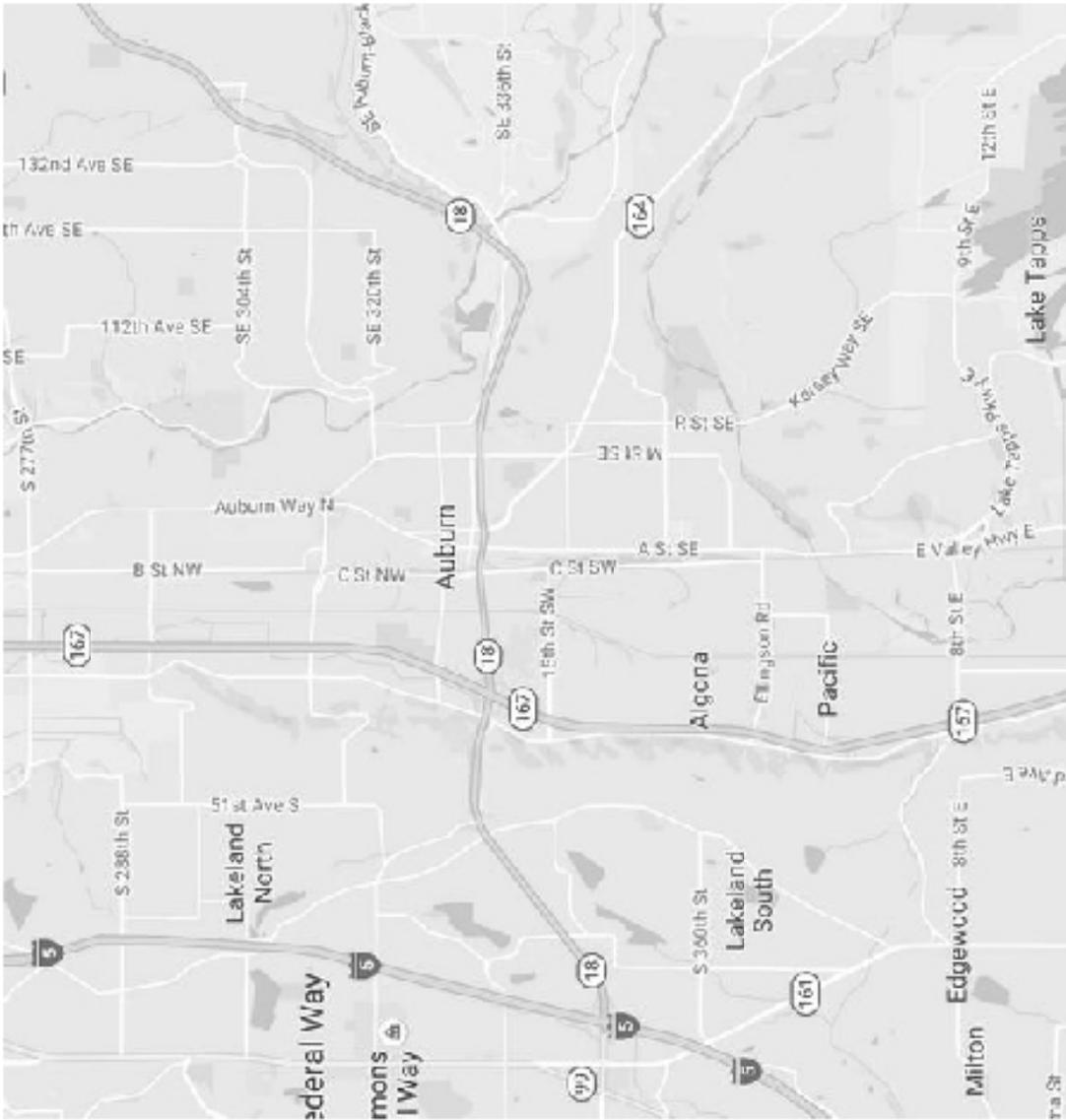
APPENDIX B: Mapping Exercise

Mapping Exercise

If you are willing, please answer these Demographic Questions:

1. Age:
 2. Race and ethnic identity:
 3. Years lived in Auburn: Children:
 4. Household size:
-
1. Please outline the boundaries of your neighborhood
 2. Identify the routes you take most frequently to travel to and from your home?
 3. How do you get there?

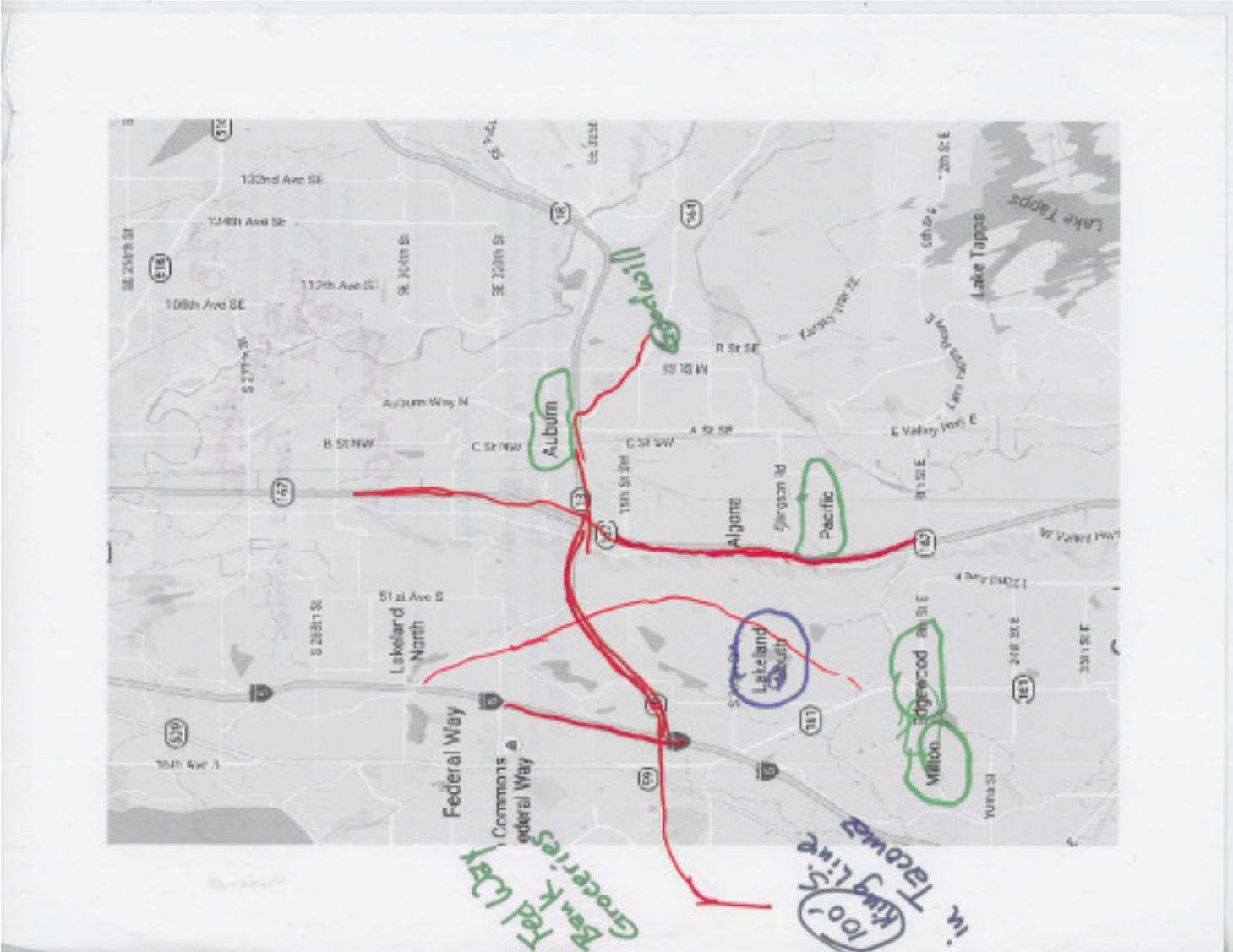
APPENDIX B: Mapping Exercise



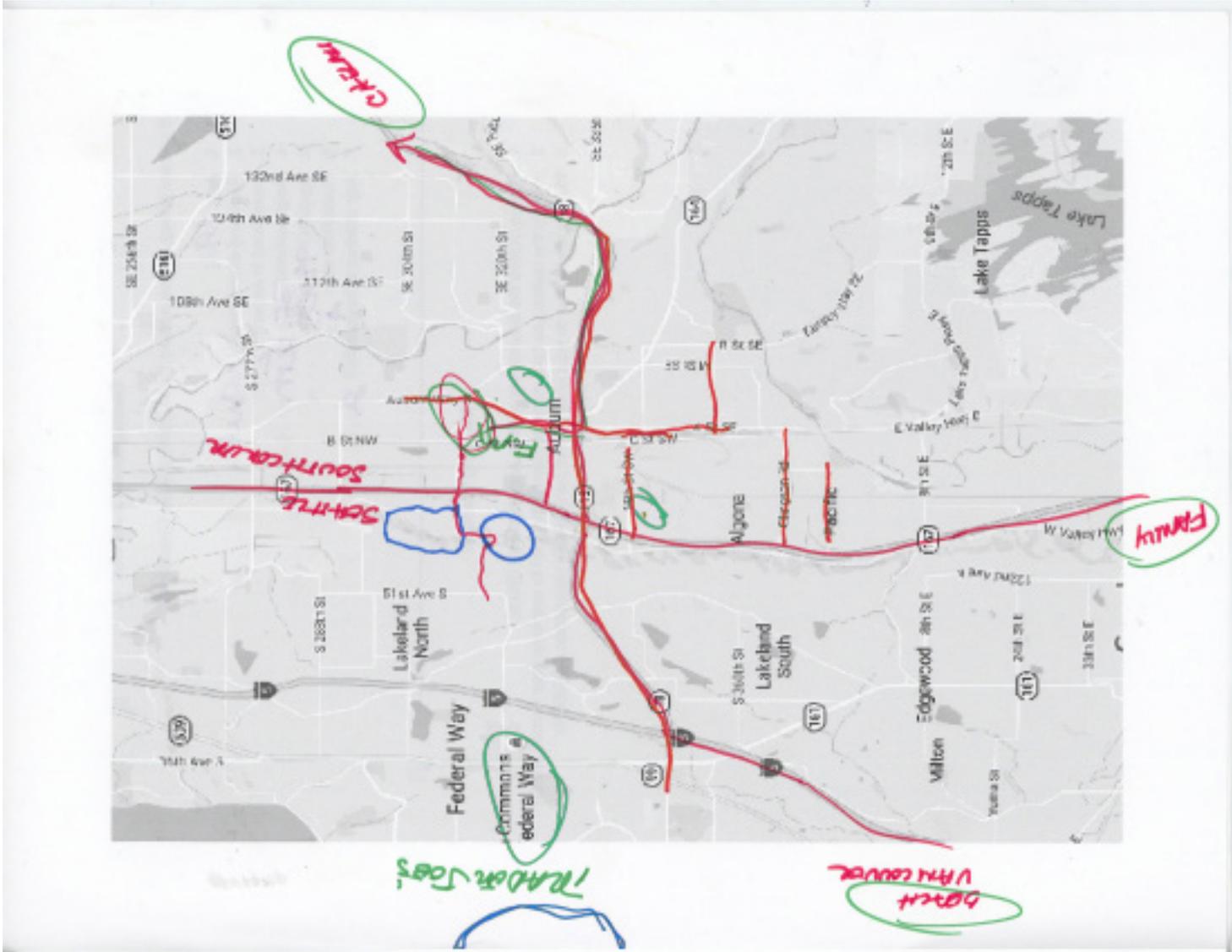
If you are willing, please answer these Demographic Questions:

- 5. Age:
 - 6. Race and ethnic identity:
 - 7. Years lived in Auburn:
 - 8. Household size:
- Children:

APPENDIX C3: Composite Mapping Data



APPENDIX C4: Composite Mapping Data



APPENDIX D: Mapping Data

	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Years lived in Auburn	Neighborhood	Zipcode	Household Size	Children in household?	Quadrant	Actual Neighborhood
1	42	white	10	Lake Trapp		3	Yes	SE	Lake Trapp
2	47	Korean	2	Muckleshoot	98062	4	0	SE	Plateau
3	39	Hispanic	2	n/a	98002	4	0	SE	South Auburn
4	52	Latino	16	n/a	98002	2	0	SE	South Auburn
5	35	White	20	Auburn	98002	5	2	SE	South Auburn
6	73	white	20	SE Auburn	98002	2	0	SE	Plateau
7	74	Western European	23	Muckleshoot	98062	2	0	SE	Plateau
8	21	n/a	21	Heather Highlands	98062	3	0	SE	n/a
9	51	Asian	3	Lee Grove	98002	1	0	SE	South Auburn
10	n/a	white	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	SE	South Auburn
11	50	Samoan	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	3	SE	South Auburn
12	19	Hispanic	10	n/a	98002	6	1	SE	South Auburn
13	54	white	0	Tecoma	n/a	2	0	SE	Tecoma
14	28	white	15	Lakeland South	98062	6	1	SW	n/a
15	35	white	35	Lake Geneva Estates	98001	4	2	SW	n/a
16	29	white	2	SE 12th	98023	4	2	NW	n/a
17	26	white	9	n/a	n/a	5	0	NE	Downtown
18	"Elder"	multi racial	10	Downtown	98002	2	0	NE	Downtown
19	75	white	18	Lee Hill	98002	1	0	NE	Lee Hill
20	32	white	5	Green River	98053	7	5	NE	Lee Hill
21	25	black	5	NE Auburn	98002	3	0	NE	North Auburn
22	30	white	30	College Place	98062	4	2	NE	Lee Hill
23	~60	white	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	NE	Downtown
24	13	white	5	Game Farm	98002	2	1	NE	North Auburn
25	22	Hispanic	1	n/a	98002	2	0	NE	North Auburn
26	43	white	1	North Auburn	n/a	4	0	NE	North Auburn
27	53	other	3	Bramson Park	98002	3	1	NE	North Auburn
28	91	white	34	n/a	98002	1	0	NE	North Auburn

APPENDIX E: SWOT Analysis

Problem: Finding a balance between unifying “One Auburn” and recognizing and reinforcing individual neighborhood identity.

Strengths (What are our major internal strengths?)

- Current existing infrastructure for events that bring residents together
- Existing downtown/town center layout
- Seems to be an increase in small local businesses in Auburn downtown that are gaining popularity
- Existing Sounder train infrastructure located in downtown Auburn
- Progressive team of city of Auburn employees who are excited about this work, and open to feedback

Weaknesses (What are our major internal weaknesses?)

- Lack of interface between city officials and residents throughout all Auburn neighborhoods, especially those that the city believes to be less connected
- Lack of awareness of existing community connections on the part of the city
- Topography and geography – landscape is compartmentalized and does not necessarily connect to existing infrastructure
- Lack of existing businesses in Auburn that bring in business
- Lack of existing transportation infrastructure for getting around the city of Auburn and moving through neighborhoods to downtown (bike lanes, pedestrian paths, etc.)
- Lack of relationship with Muckleshoot tribe
- Lack of a plan for addressing homelessness in the city of Auburn

- Perhaps there is a disconnect between city of Auburn branding and community vision
- City of Auburn website is not necessarily transparent or accountable
- City of Auburn planning and engagement meetings are not happening on residents turf and are not currently working to eliminate barriers to attendance
- Lack of community member inclusion in discussions to solutionize problems (e.g. South Auburn)

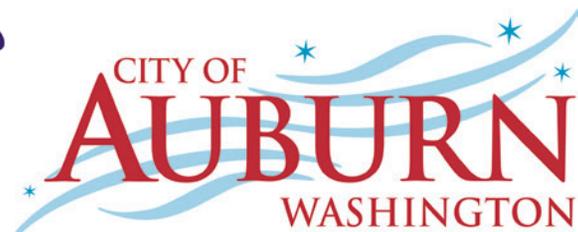
Opportunities (What external opportunities do we have?)

- Millennial populations general trend to live in high density environments
- Space for more businesses
- Population is young
- Existing Sounder train infrastructure located in downtown Auburn
- Potential for relationship with Muckleshoot tribe to build on social capital
- Current community structure that could be bridged together to strengthen “One Auburn” (while still honoring and keeping individual community identity strong!)
- Opportunity to foster relationship between people who are experiencing homelessness and other community-members
- Potential to leverage social media to build community connections with the City of Auburn and to combine this effort with physical promotion of events and meetings
- Potential to engage community members in conversations about addressing problems facing Auburn

APPENDIX E (continued)

Threats (What major external threats do we have?)

- New wave of outside development and whether the City of Auburn has much of a say in this
- Auburn residents are spending money in other communities outside of Auburn – businesses outside of Auburn (economy of Federal Way and Kent)
- Millennial populations general trend to live in high density environments
- High unemployment rate (twice the national average)
- (King County Metro) Lack of existing transportation infrastructure for getting around the city of Auburn and moving through neighborhoods to downtown
- City of Auburn is operating externally from Muckleshoot tribe
- Facing growing homelessness in Auburn
- Dependence on cars as primary form of transportation



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