

W LIVABLE CITY YEAR

City of Auburn



FULL PLATES, FULL LIVES: FOOD SYSTEMS IN A GROWING AUBURN



Executive Summary

This project developed a food policy plan by assessing the current food system and creating recommendations for the city. Populations with a history of relatively poor community health outcomes, such as obesity and diabetes, can improve health outcomes of the community by decreasing the consumption of high-caloric and low-nutritional value foods and increasing consumption of fresh produce. Our recommendations focused on increasing healthy food accessibility, affordability, and consumption, while mobilizing community resources.

Methods

To assess the community's relationship with healthy food, we talked to community leaders and members. Some community members were interviewed at the Community Center, Les Gove Park, and the Teen Rec Center. Organizations that were interviewed include:

- Auburn Food Bank | Debbie Christian, Executive Director
- Teen Rec Center | Bree Harris, Outreach Specialist
- King County Library System | Carla Hopkins, Regional Manager

Strengths of the Community

Auburn has multiple organizations that provide food to those in need almost every day. The Auburn Food Bank also hosts a handful of other supporting social programs. Debbie Christian has demonstrated the strong social network around the Auburn Food Bank that community members can call upon when needed.

Les Gove Park is located between the Community Center, Teen Rec Center, Senior Center, and Public Library. It offers a space where members can access services and learn about healthier food options.

Photo Credit: Jessica Canet



Barriers to Healthy Food

An unequal distribution of healthy food sources across Auburn's existing urban form limit access to healthy food sources. Incomplete sidewalk connections and impassable rail corridors limit access to healthy food sources for pedestrians and cyclists. Healthy food sources are centrally located in Downtown. In contrast, convenient, low-nutritional value and high-caloric foods are better distributed throughout Auburn.

The Teen Rec Center is an after-school resource for teens that serves a daily snack and occasionally has a cooking demonstration.

Photo Credit: Jessica Canet



Recommendations

Our recommendations for improving community health through healthier food are focused on increasing healthy food access and improving healthy food behavior and knowledge. This includes partnering with local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, grocery stores, and the Auburn Food Bank to pilot a produce and basic delivery system for residents with mobility and access issues; developing a city-wide marketing strategy to promote nutritious dietary options and habits; and creating and

expanding education programs that teach residents how to grow and prepare healthy foods.

Our Food Policy Plan offers an actionable plan to increase healthy food access, distribution, and consumption, especially for lower-income and minority residents who experience more barriers. However, all residents and community members could benefit from the implementation of healthy food initiatives.

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