



## **CITY OF AUBURN**

### Comprehensive Plan Connectivity Element

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University of Washington ○ Department of Community, Environment, & Planning  
Community, Environment, Planning 460: Planning in Context

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## **SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

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Special thanks to Jeff Tate, Alex Teague, Stephanie Seibel and all Auburn City Staff. Special thanks to Branden Born and Rachel Berney, the professors of CEP 460. Special thanks to all survey participants.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONNECTIVITY ELEMENT

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*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. Comprehensive Plan Connectivity Element. University of Washington, Seattle, WA. Prepared for City of Auburn.*

## 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](mailto: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](http://LCY.UW.EDU)

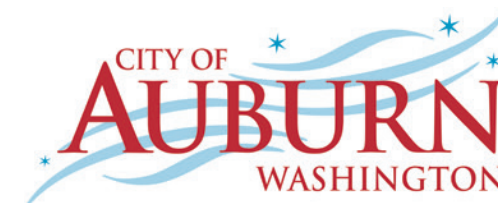
## ABOUT THE CITY OF AUBURN

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](http://WWW.AUBURNWA.GOV)

# 01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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From September to December 2016, a team of twenty students studying Community, Environment, and Planning at the University of Washington worked in collaboration with the City of Auburn and the Livable City Year Program to complete two projects. One was a draft connectivity element for the City of Auburn Comprehensive Plan and the other was a community placemaking program.

The student LCY Connectivity Team focused on the creation of a draft Connectivity Element for the Auburn Comprehensive Plan with recommendations for how to better incorporate the sub-communities of Auburn with one another. The team performed a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis and created Geographic Information System (GIS) Maps and mock road diagrams to inform and enhance the end work. The students researched connectivity and implementation strategies and used community feedback to create draft recommendations for Auburn to use in the future planning efforts.

## 02 INTRODUCTION

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Throughout its one hundred and twenty-five-year history, the City of Auburn, Washington has grown from a rural farming community into a sprawling mix of residential and industrial territories. Spread across both King and Pierce Counties and located in the Green River Valley, Auburn is nearly equidistant from the urban centers of both Seattle and Tacoma. It is a geographically rich region that is home to a diverse collection of cultures and communities. The neighborhoods within Auburn vary substantially from one another in both physical setting and socioeconomic standing, which creates barriers both culturally and economically for the city as a whole.

A group of students from the Community, Environment, and Planning (CEP) 460 Planning in Context course worked to address an action item from Auburn's 2015 Comprehensive Plan that calls for the creation of a "Connectivity Element" to aid the physical, social, cultural and economic growth happening in Auburn. The purpose was to cultivate strategic efforts to connect social, cultural and economic assets to the residents of Auburn. This would make Auburn more of a destination rather than a place to pass through.

With the help of CEP 460's two professors, Branden Born and Rachel Berney, the students identified the areas where a lack for formalized strategy hindered neighborhoods from physically connecting, causing an influx of underutilized assets such as local businesses, bountiful greenspace and community support programs. Students then created a set of recommendations, which then became a draft "Connectivity Element" aimed at fostering connectivity in the future and informing future planning decisions.

## 03 CONNECTIVITY IN CONTEXT

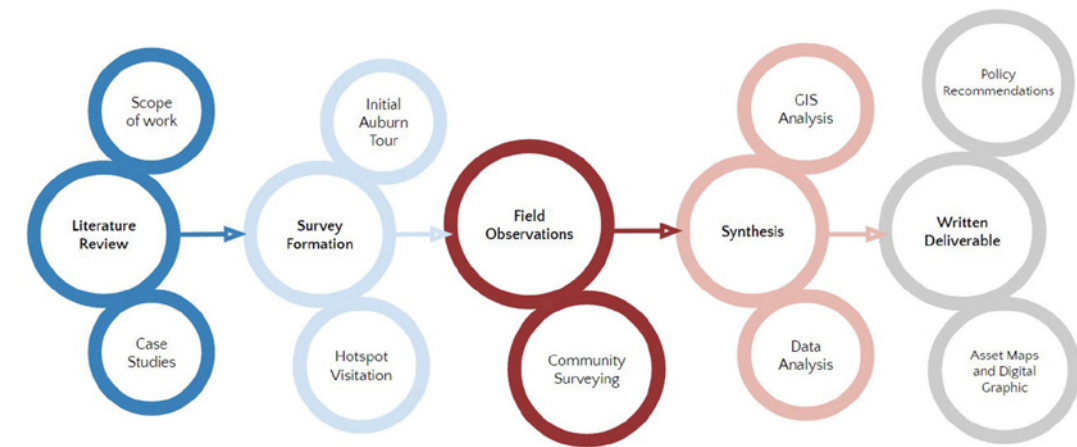
### METHODS

#### Initial Research

In order to create a Connectivity Element for the Auburn Comprehensive Plan, the students working on this project required significant community engagement to accurately identify the area(s) of need and hypothesize related recommendations. To do this, the project emerged in five stages: a literature review, survey formation, field observations, synthesis, and a written deliverable.

The first stage of this project took place during the first weeks of autumn quarter. To engage the LCY Connectivity Team with the history of Auburn and connectivity as a planning concept, the students synthesized case studies, historical research, and the original scope of work into an additional scope of work. This new document directly related to the team's problem assessment, goals, timeline, and initial set of questions.

In addition to the research done, the Auburn City staff arranged an initial city tour and informational meeting for the two LCY teams working in Auburn from CEP 460. Separately, the Connectivity team also viewed 24 community hotspots, identified by city staff, and made observations. From all the information collected in the initial weeks of the project, the two LCY teams drafted one community survey.



Credit: LCY Connectivity Team

This graphic was created by the LCY Connectivity Team to function as a visual representation of their methods for this project.

#### Survey

The survey was comprised of three sections: 15 short answer survey questions, 4 demographic questions and a mapping exercise. Together, the LCY Placemaking Team and the Connectivity Team surveyed over the course of two weeks and collected 49 surveys and 28 maps from individuals in the Auburn community.

#### Synthesis

After the surveying was completed, the two LCY teams collaborated to synthesize all the data collected and create a usable document which each team could utilize to produce informed policy/action recommendations. The LCY Connectivity team also used ArcGIS to create informational maps of the restaurant index in Auburn, the health and social assets within the community, and the routes of public transportation. The analysis and maps informed the final written report. (View Appendix A to see all maps)

The culmination of the connectivity research and work that took place in the City of Auburn from September of 2016 to December 2016 was a final draft element for the Auburn Comprehensive Plan. Our asset maps, synthesis and informed policy/action recommendations aim to help Auburn initiate a formal Connectivity Element for their Comprehensive Plan.



# 04 CONNECTIVITY IN CONTEXT

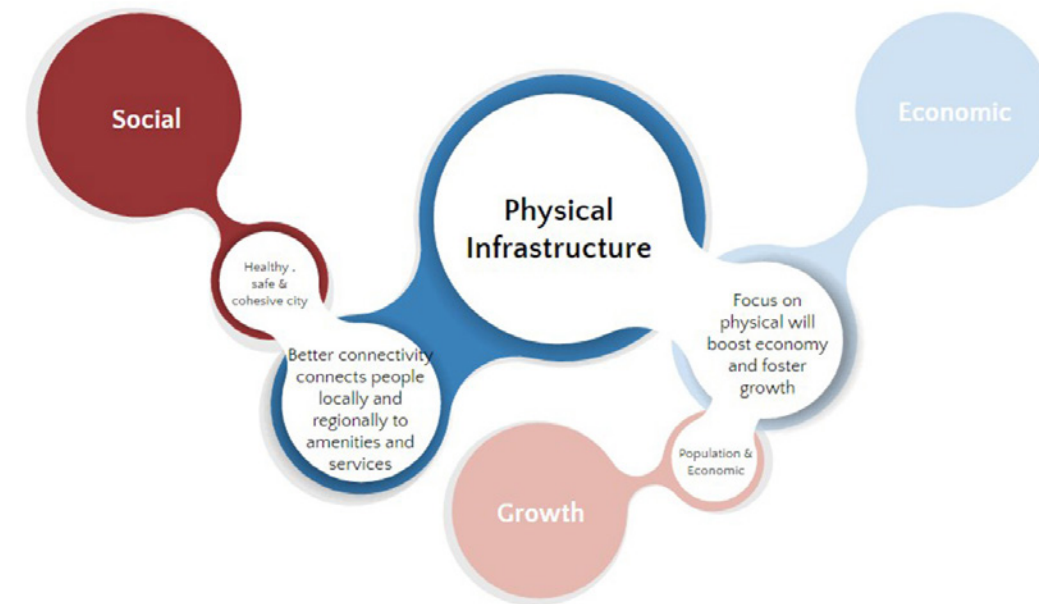
## DEFINITIONS

While the concept of connectivity has no single definition, the Connectivity Team analyzed a series of connectivity elements and supporting documents to create a foundation for this report. Through those studies, we defined connectivity as:

A cohesive physical plan that enhances social and economic growth.  
An ideal connectivity element seams together a patchwork of diverse community identities and experiences to create an economically thriving and socially interwoven population.

Transportation infrastructure is often highlighted as the element of connectivity with the greatest potential to unite social and economic facets of communities. Improved pedestrian, bicyclist, and non-motorized mobility allows community members access to amenities and services, while also promoting economic development within city limits. It also provides an opportunity for connecting recreational hotspots to foster a healthy and happy populace.

AUBURN AIMS TO ENSURE SAFE, WELL CONNECTED  
AND ACCESSIBLE NEIGHBORHOODS WITH HEALTHY  
FOOD, PARKS AND LOCAL SERVICES IN CLOSE  
PROXIMITY (COMMUNITY VISIONS REPORT, SECTION 1.5)



Credit: LCY Connectivity Team

In the current Auburn Transportation Element, physical connectivity is a desired outcome of an increase in non-motorized travel, as well as emphasis on an efficient and welcoming multimodal transit system. Auburn's Community Visioning Document recognizes the opportunity to revitalize Downtown as the "Heart of Auburn," as well as preserve the city's existing assets as a form of social connectivity. Finally, Auburn's Economic Development Plan addresses economic connectivity through the value of long-term economic growth in the form of increased industrial and commercial development, and robust employment opportunities.

Clearly, many of the elements already present in Auburn's Comprehensive Plan address the connectivity goals identified in the case studies reviewed by the LCY Connectivity Team. Nevertheless, the Auburn Comprehensive Plan would benefit from a formal strategic element that synthesizes the desired outcomes. Thus, a Connectivity Element blends the desire for walkable neighborhoods, uncongested streets, improved public transit service, and better-connected neighborhoods with an emphasis on inclusion of the diverse multicultural and multi-generational population.

## SUMMARY OF KEY TAKE-AWAYS FROM THE SIX CASE STUDIES

Renton, WA  
Comprehensive Plan

Redmond, WA  
Comprehensive Plan,

Communitas: UN  
Integrated Urban  
Design and Planning  
for Inclusive Public  
Space and Regional  
Connectivity and  
Efficiency

Beaverton, OR  
Transportation  
Element

Mt. Lebanon, PA  
Comprehensive Plan  
Update

West Melbourne,FL  
Transportation  
Element.

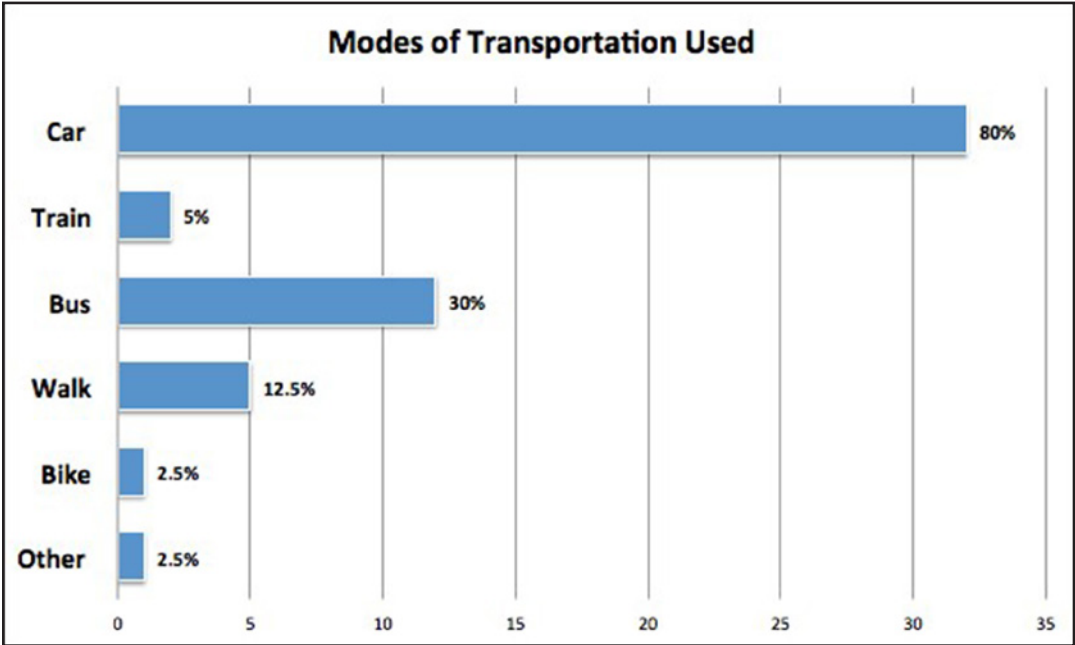


# 05 SURVEY RESULTS & ANALYSIS

## Physical Survey Results

Survey Question:  
What types of transportation do you use and why?

Survey responses recorded by the LCY Connectivity Team regarding transportation modes used by people living in Auburn.



Credit: LCY Connectivity Team

Response:  
Cars are the primary mode of transportation in Auburn with 80% of respondents saying they travel by car. The bus followed with a report of 30% of respondent usage, walking with 12.5%, Sounder train with 5%, and only 2.5% of respondents identified biking. Respondents were allowed to give multiple answers, which is why the percentages equal more than 100%. People often mentioned the infrequency of bus service and the hills as reasons for not busing or biking respectively.

Survey Question:  
Is it easy to get from one neighborhood to another?

Response:  
61% of respondents answered yes to this question, adding that driving is the most viable option to get between neighborhoods. Alternatively, 24% felt it was difficult to get between neighborhoods, expressing that the wide spread of the neighborhoods, traffic congestion, frequency of traffic lights, and the hills influencing respondent's decisions. The last 15% reported that the connectivity between neighborhoods was "okay," not having a strong opinion for either.

Survey Question:  
Is it easy to get from your neighborhood to downtown Auburn?

Response:  
In addition to getting an idea about how residents felt about connectivity between neighborhoods, ease of getting downtown was another important question: 68% of participants said that it was easy to get downtown from their neighborhood. 18% of participants said it was not easy to get downtown. 14% of participants did not feel strongly one way or another. Many respondents go downtown to make transportation connections, which is one reason that there may be a perception of the city center being better connected. A few respondents said they go downtown about once a week to shop. Parking was not cited as being an issue/barrier to traveling downtown.

## Social Survey Results

This is a visual representation of the words most commonly used when responding to social related survey questions.



Credit: LCY Connectivity Team

Survey Question:

What are some of the first things that come to your mind when you think of Auburn?

Response:

People mentioned traffic and the “nice and quiet,” atmosphere of Auburn most when responding to this question. Both of those were mentioned by 10% of respondents. Diverse, boring, good, and Green River College were all mentioned 8% of the time. While conducting the survey several people blamed problems in Auburn on the increase in minority groups in the community in ways that were deemed inappropriate for publication, therefore “demographic issues” was developed by the LCY Connectivity as a shorthand for cataloging such responses. This happened in 8% of responses as well. Physical changes such as more housing availability and better green spaces mentioned by 5% of respondents.

Survey Question:

How often do you participate in city sponsored Auburn-wide events?

Response: The majority of respondents reported that they did not participate in Auburn-wide events mostly because they had no knowledge of them, of those, many expressed interest in attending events had they known about them. Of the few respondents who said they have attended city events, there was mention that they felt most of the events geared towards kids, or that they only attend events for their kids. The Art Center or Auburn Ave Theatre and Les Gove Park were the most common event locations that people remembered.

Survey Question:

Do you feel that Auburn has a unified identity?

Response:

Respondents' answers were split as 49% of people said yes, 9% kind of, while 42% of respondents said no. Many people who said "no" acknowledged divisions between neighborhoods and different class levels. Racial divisions were another common theme for people who said "no." People tended to identify more with their cultural groups rather than the city as a whole and people mentioned social stigmas such as racism and classism as a barrier to a unified identity.

Survey Question:

What do you want to see in your community?

Response:

Data analysis shows evidence that this question was rather dependent upon age. Below is a breakdown of three different age groups and their distinct response.

20s - Almost every respondent wanted more dining and shopping options.

30s - Along with restaurants and a desire for occupied retail space, they also have a desire for more community events both family oriented and ones that are more all-encompassing of the population.

40 and up - Want to see less crime, and more opportunities for community clean ups.

## Economic Survey Results



Credit: LCY Connectivity Team

Survey Question:

Do you shop, run errands, or eat out in Auburn? If yes, what neighborhood(s) do you go to?

Response:

Only 13% of respondents stated that they do not shop in Auburn. The remaining

This is a visual representation of the words most commonly used when responding to economic related survey questions.

87% do at least part of their shopping in Auburn. Downtown, Safeway, and Fred Meyer were the most frequently mentioned locations. Outside of Auburn, Kent and Covington were the surrounding cities to which participants go shopping most, stressing that there is a larger variety of restaurants and retail shops compared to those of Auburn.

Survey Question:

What are three things you would like to see in the community of Auburn that you do not currently see?

Response:

A wide variety of responses for this particular question touched on all three aspects of connectivity. Within the physical category, respondents were interested in seeing an improvement in the quality of roads and sidewalks, more street/walkway lighting, and a reduction in automobile traffic. More business growth and less Section 8 housing was mentioned relating to economic connectivity. There were several suggestions having to do with the social aspect, including more activities and after school programs for children. Improving emergency services, policing, and dealing with drug issues was one important issue that was raised a number of times, including better outreach to the homeless population.

Survey Question:

When you are not at work, school, or home, how and where do you spend most of your time?

Response:

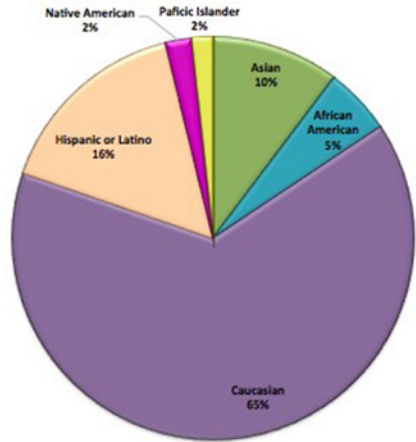
The most popular responses in decreasing order were: parks (17%), library (14%), and sports (11%); Kent, Outlet/Super Mall, and Seattle individually received 8%. People who said they spent their time in Seattle or Kent tended to be younger with most respondents in their 20s and one in their 30s. The library was mentioned exclusively by respondents that identified as Native Americans, African Americans, and Latinos, whereas parks did not correlate with any age or racial demographic.

Demographic Results

Figure 1 shows the most prominent ethnicities and races in the City of Auburn based on the 2010-2014 Census data. The table shows 65% of the community being Caucasian, with other represented races being African American (5%), Asian (10%), Pacific Islander (2%), Native American (2%), and Hispanic or Latino (16%).

Figure 2 displays respondents self-identification within categories of race and ethnicity, both for the survey and the mapping exercise. The six prominent groups that are shown in Figure 1 are well represented within the participants of the surveying exercises. Information on age for both activities was also collected from respondents and is shown in Figure 3. The majority of participants fell within the 10-20 age group, but overall there was an even spread of ages. The tables showing ages and races of the respondents comparatively with the Census Bureau Data to show that the research, survey results, and recommendations include both majority and minority groups and ultimately encompass a holistic understanding of Auburn in planning efforts.

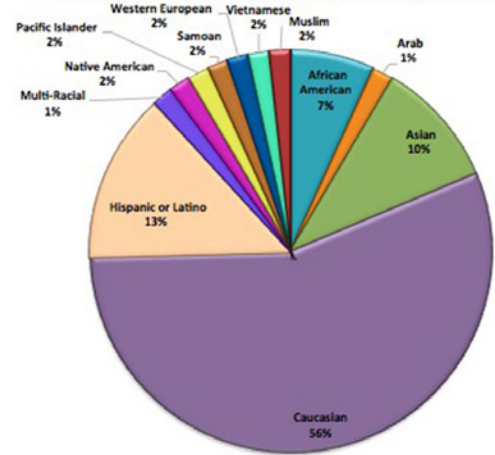
Prominent Races in Auburn based on 2010-2014 Census Data



Credit: LCY Connectivity Team

FIGURE 1

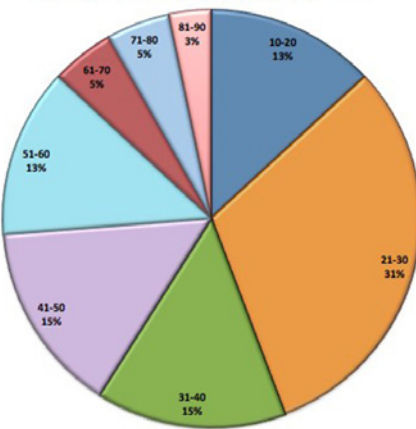
Demographic Cross Section of Survey Respondents



Credit: LCY Connectivity Team

FIGURE 2

Age Representation for Survey Respondents



Credit: LCY Connectivity Team

FIGURE 3

## 06 S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

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The Connectivity Team performed a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis to gain a clear and comprehensive vision of Auburn before and after the surveying process. Following are the results and conclusions from that analysis. The statements are based on observations, meetings with City of Auburn staff, and asset mapping exercises. The strengths and weaknesses are based on our assessment of the current state of Auburn. The strengths were identified as central assets to the city and were used to inform the final recommendations. The threats were future-based and often beyond the control of Auburn's City officials. Opportunities were also hypothesized and predicated on the speculation that their actualization would be a beneficial addition to the city.

### Strengths

1. Proximity and commuter connection to Seattle via Interstate 5 and the Sounder Train.
2. City sponsored events that are well attended by local families.
3. High levels of community interest and opportunities to capitalize on that interest through city funding programs.
4. Auburn enjoys ample parks and greenspaces.

### Weaknesses

1. Potential decrease in inclusive city events that celebrate the racial and cultural diversity of the population in Auburn.
2. Lack of variety in dining and entertainment sector.
3. Perception of Auburn as a “bedroom community” by residents and surrounding communities.
4. Need for further development of the public transit system.
5. Underdeveloped and underutilized paths, sidewalks and bike lanes.
6. Occurrence of ‘social othering’ where residents perceive exclusion of people from one social group from another, and between cultural groups and neighborhoods.

### Opportunities

1. Projected population growth (100,000 people by 2035).
2. The Auburn community is receptive to increased local government involvement in terms of services, infrastructure development, and events.
3. Expansion of the Sounder Train system will make non-motorized transportation to Seattle and Tacoma more accessible.
4. Available retail space to capitalize on.
5. Availability of subsidized and low-income housing for Auburn residents.

### Threats

1. Lack of services for low income and homeless populations resulting in the perception of a rising crime rate.
2. Perceived racial and community tensions with local law enforcement, as reported by some survey respondents.
3. Perceived spatial and social divisions between neighborhoods that indicate latent divides between residents of differing socio-economic stature and race.

# 07

## RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

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Successful connectivity interventions require changes to both civic and social infrastructures. Opportunities for the community to better inhabit the city can create more positive interactions and a more vibrant community. Improving sidewalks, bus, and path networks can make people feel safer and provide more robust choice and efficiency in transportation. Developing and showcasing local businesses does more than boost the local economy – it can foster more social connections. Additionally, expanding civic outreach and service provision can help develop a more inclusive city. A complimentary set of changes to the city's transportation network and enhanced social engagement can combine to create a better connected Auburn. Below is the complete list of recommendations drafted by the LCY Connectivity team. They will be discussed in depth in the following sections.

### Physical Recommendations

1. Sidewalk expansion and revitalization
2. Trail network
3. Bus system expansion
4. Bike transportation system and corresponding road diets

### Economic Recommendations

1. Enhanced signage and wayfinding
2. Expansion of the farmers market
3. Business strategy refocus
4. Implement shop local campaign

### Social Recommendations

1. Increase social services
2. City events that engage people of all ages and celebrate Auburn's growing cultural diversity
3. Better engage existing local businesses and organizations in city events



# 08 PHYSICAL CONNECTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS

## Physical Recommendation #1: Sidewalk expansion and revitalization

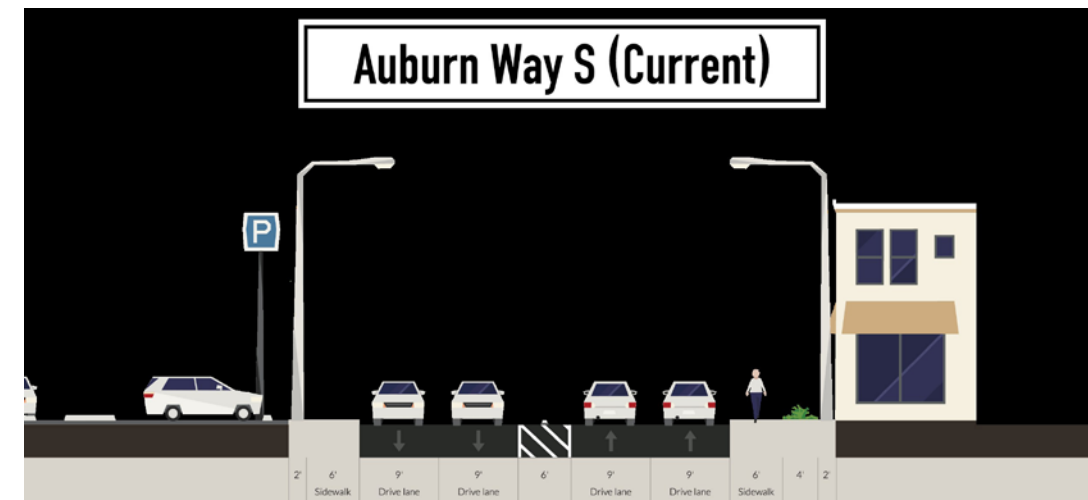
Sidewalks are a key way to encourage more walking throughout the city. Many of the residents in Auburn prefer to drive because it is the most convenient form of transportation. If pedestrian transportation is made more appealing and possible, this may deter some economic leakage into other cities for shopping or entertainment.

- Expand sidewalks on Auburn Way South. This expansion would help pedestrians access Les Gove Park, the library, community center, and downtown.
- Focus on areas in Auburn where sidewalks are deteriorating or all together non-existent.

View Appendix A for proposed Trail Expansion Map

## Physical Recommendation #2: Trail network

The City of Auburn previously created a map outlining a plan for trail expansion. The LCY Connectivity team suggests that the city continue this expansion and



Credit: LCY Connectivity Team

CURRENT STATE AND SUGGESTED SIDEWALK EXPANSION OF AUBURN WAY

Illustration of expansions explained in Physical Recommendation #1

incorporate additional expansion. Trails and pathways would allow for more connection to parks and different neighborhoods.

- Continue expansion of the Lakeland trail network to connect the Lakeland neighborhood to neighboring parts of Auburn and additionally serve as a complete example of the expanded trail network.
- Develop a wheelchair accessible and bike friendly trail along the West side of the Green River
- Work on making connections to regional trail networks for recreation and commuting.

## Physical Recommendation #3: Bus expansion system

For those who use the bus service in Auburn, the primary challenge is the infrequency of service. Some residents mentioned crowded buses as a problem with the system. Respondents who primarily drove indicated that inconvenience of

the transit system was their primary reason for not using it. Improvements to the local bus service in Auburn are a crucial part of physically connecting the city.

- Work with King County Metro and Pierce Transit to make sure the buses have adequate carrying capacity.
- Work to increase the frequency between Lea Hill and Downtown Auburn as well as within the valley.
- Increase the service on DART Route 910, and consider working to make it a regular fixed bus route service.
- Add stops to the Pierce transit Route 497 in the South Auburn neighborhood.

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THE CITY OF AUBURN “MUST TAKE STEPS TO  
PROVIDE A MORE FUNCTIONAL AND ATTRACTIVE  
NETWORK FOR COMMUTER CYCLISTS, IN ADDITION TO  
RECREATIONAL CYCLISTS”

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#### Physical Recommendation #4: Bike transportation system and corresponding road diets

The city of Auburn “must take steps to provide a more functional and attractive network for commuter cyclists, in addition to recreational cyclists” (Auburn Comprehensive Plan). The LCY Connectivity team worked on the beginning of a bike transportation concept for the Lea Hill neighborhood. The concept we originally came up with is a slightly augmented version of the already established plan in the Auburn Transportation Comprehensive Plan.

- Formulate a bike lane system which begins at Auburn Station and parallels Auburn Ave, 8th St NE, and Lea Hill Rd SE.
- Decrease the lanes or space used by motorized transportation vehicles dependent upon the width of the bridge and explore two alternative designs: one narrower and one wider.



## 09 ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Economic Recommendation #1: Enhanced signage and wayfinding

Through the survey, it became clear that many Auburn residents, particularly younger residents or newcomers, were simply unaware of many of Auburn's assets. This could be a potential major cause of economic activity leaking to nearby Kent and Covington. Improved signage as well as other wayfinding tactics could encourage residents to better utilize the current options that are central to Auburn.

- Implementation of signage that reads the distances to nearby community assets thus increasing resident's spatial awareness of what Auburn has to offer.
- Integrating sidewalk design with interactive art to get pedestrians moving.
- Allocation of public art installations that are representative of each place.

### Economic Recommendation #2: Expansion of the current Farmer's Market

Survey respondents repeatedly signaled both a lack of diversity in food options as well as a loss of food commerce to nearby cities. The Connectivity team recommends an all-season market to help fill gaps in food variety, support local farmers and vendors, and guarantee cross-neighborhood interaction.

- Expand existing or create an independent farmer's market website to help inform customers about what events/local vendors will be at each occurrence of the yearlong market.
- Create a farmer's market newsletter to inform community members about what is fresh and in season now, and showcase recipes that contain those ingredients.
- Create programs for local organizations, other than vendors to get involved through fundraising, discounts or volunteer work.

### Economic Recommendation #3: Business strategy refocus

To better provide for the needs of the consumer in the greater Auburn area, the LCY Connectivity team recommends increasing the variety of entertainment, food options, and design guidelines to emphasize the downtown urban center. Many survey respondents reported that they shop outside of Auburn and tend to shop in Covington and seek entertainment in Kent. To increase Auburn's economic connectivity, the Connectivity team suggests:

- Extending the Downtown Façade Improvement Program to incorporate principles such as walkability, mixed use, and human scale.
- Increase entertainment selection for residents ages 18 to 35 years old. Potential options could include more active leisure time activities such as bowling, nightlife, or spectator sport arenas.

### Economic Recommendation #4: Implement shop local campaigns

The City of Auburn loses a considerable amount of commercial funds to neighboring cities. Auburn could profit and benefit from promoting local businesses and

encouraging residents to shop local within city limits. Using phrases like “Think Local First” could encourage local economic growth and continue to connect residents of the neighborhoods to Auburn.

- Promote transparency about the benefits of local purchasing.
- Promote community services that would directly benefit from shop local campaigns.
- Work with as many local business owners in the area for possible events, sponsorship or other opportunities.

# 10 SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS

A key part of maximizing the connectivity of neighborhoods in Auburn is working to join residents socially to strengthen community networks and support local ties during a time of population growth.

## Social Recommendation #1: Increase social services

Homelessness and lack of social services were often concerns of survey respondents. Several people when asked what they wanted to see in their communities brought the request for more social services to the attention of the surveying teams.

- Increase services such as soup kitchens, donation areas and health resources to help the homeless population be incorporated in the community instead of seen as the “others”.
- Expand existing services at the local library that benefit youth, elderly, and homeless populations.
- Activate public space to be more inclusive of individuals experiencing homelessness while also creating educational opportunities for other residents.
- Host events that promote organizations that provide amenities and services to lower income and currently homeless individuals.

## Social Recommendation #2: City events that engage people of all ages and celebrate Auburn’s growing cultural diversity

Survey respondents, particularly in their 30’s, identified a need for more inclusive events that are not only aimed to benefit families. They also recognized strong ties within cultural groups. These cultural ties could be a foundation to build a more diverse range of events to bridge the cultural gaps that divide some Auburn neighborhoods.

- Collaborate with the Muckleshoot Tribe to create events that connect with the native heritage within Auburn.
- Communicate with Green River College student groups (e.g. Asian Student Union or Black Student Union) to identify a liaison and potential event opportunities.
- Make a focused effort to program events that are aimed at people who are in their 20’s and 30’s and do not have a family yet.

## Social Recommendation #3: Better engage existing local businesses and organizations in city events

For this section, the Connectivity team identified a pre-existing event in Auburn that has potential for expansion and engagement within the community. The Clean Sweep Event that occurs on Earth Day each year. This event is advertised on City of Auburn’s website as the largest community volunteer effort in Auburn. According to the connectivity survey responses, common themes from the 40-plus age group were desires for less crime and more opportunities for community clean ups. Expanding the Clean Sweep event into a yearlong program could touch on both of these needs while actively engaging local businesses, Home Owner Associations (HOAs) and other organizations. Proposed expansion would include:

- Making the Clean Sweep event a reoccurring event every other month.
- Rotating the focus of the event to a specific area instead of focusing on entire citywide cleanups.
- Include local organizations like school groups, HOAs, and businesses to volunteer and staff the program.
- Provide incentives with food, tee shirts, or some sort of business exchange program that could foster media and marketing as well as economic traffic for participating businesses.

# 11

## RECOMMENDATION IMPLEMENTATION

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The LCY Connectivity Team suggests consideration of prioritizing implementation of the physical recommendations over the social and economic recommendations. We understand that funding could potentially be more challenging when approaching physical recommendations because there is not the same amount of flexibility with funds as there may be for social and economic changes. Based upon our survey responses and group observations, the safety of pedestrians on roadside walkways and the physical connectivity between places will help boost other forms of connectivity.

that focuses less on personal automotive transportation, economic agendas that focus on local businesses instead of big box retailers, and social programs that are more inclusive of the increasingly diverse population in Auburn. Implementing these changes into a Connectivity Element in the Auburn Comprehensive plan can help aid population growth and overall community.

# 12 CONCLUSION

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The survey responses collected by the LCY Connectivity team allowed us to determine that Auburn residents identify more strongly with their neighborhoods than initially hypothesized. In the original Scope of Work drafted by the City of Auburn and LCY staff it was stated that, “The sub-communities of Auburn lack well defined connections between each other”. Part of the presumed lack of connection is the a result of fragmented neighborhood identity. However, when we recorded survey responses, community members tended to strongly identify with the neighborhoods within which they resided or with Auburn as a whole.

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WHAT HINDERS THE CONNECTIVITY OF AUBURN FROM  
OPERATING AT ITS FULL POTENTIAL IS A LACK OF PHYSICAL  
INFRASTRUCTURE, SOCIAL SUPPORT, AND DIVERSE  
ECONOMIC INITIATIVES

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Survey participants’ notion of neighborhood identity was often more specific or more broad than those defined by the City of Auburn government. Furthermore, this sense of identity spread to the feeling of somewhat significant connection between neighborhoods. What hinders the connectivity of Auburn from operating at its full potential is a lack of physical infrastructure, social support, and diverse economic initiatives. Ways to remedy these issues include strong emphasis on infrastructure

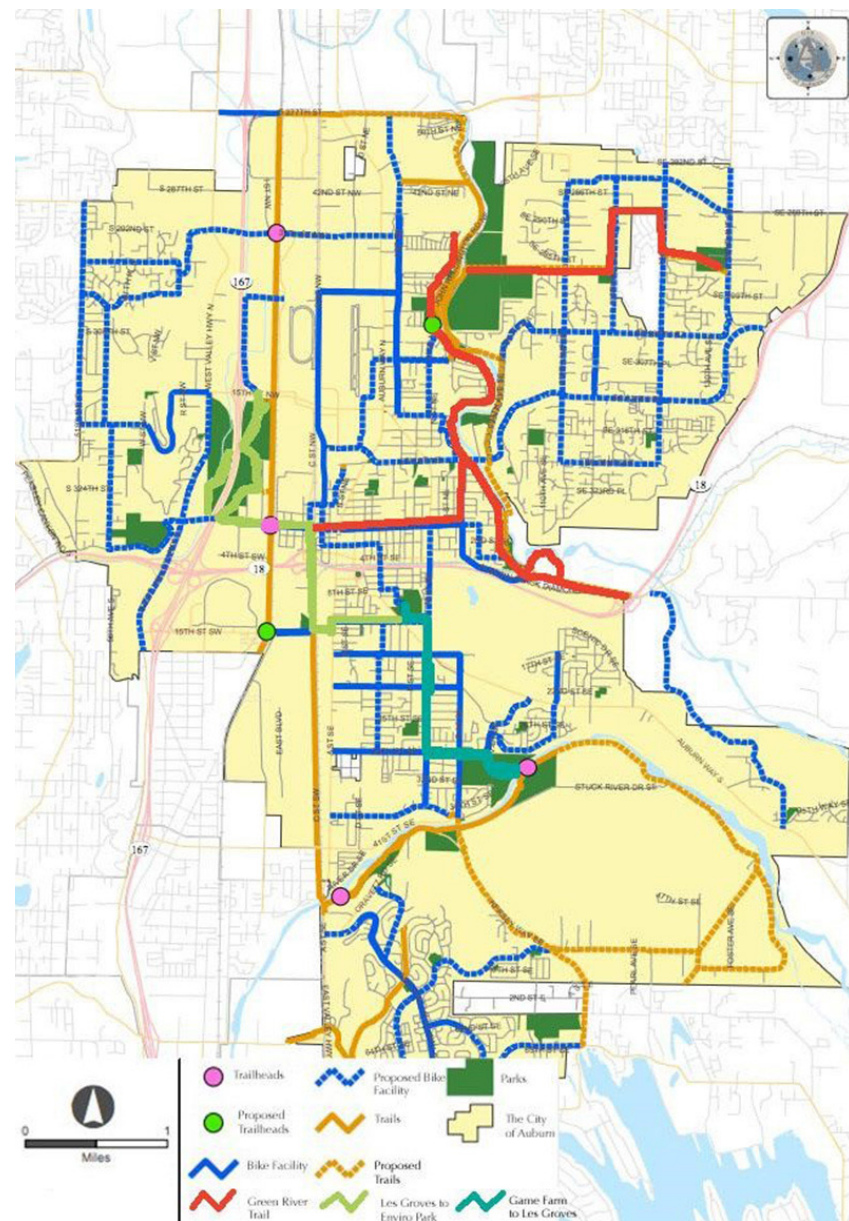


# A APPENDIX

## Maps

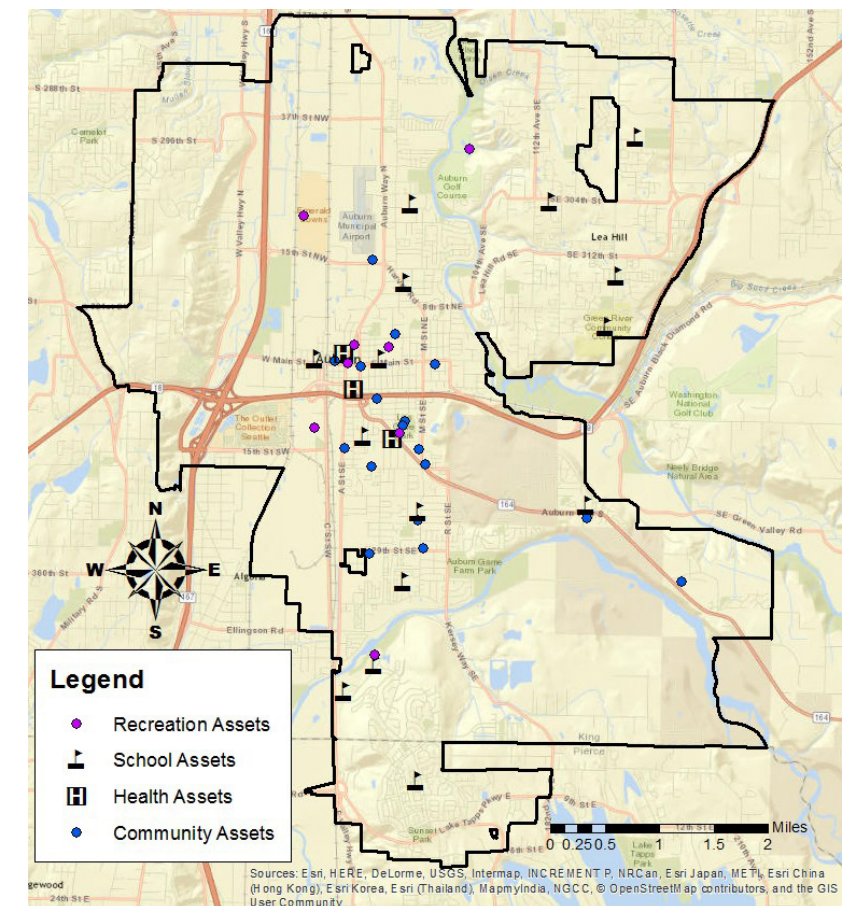
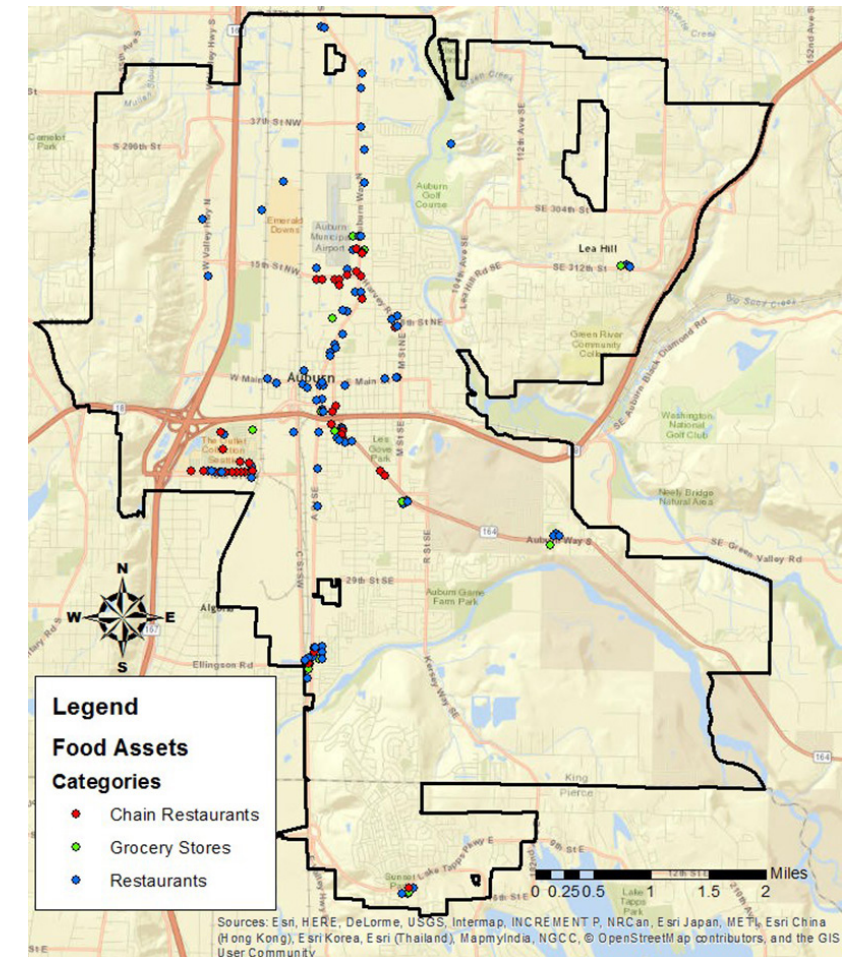
### PROPOSED TRAIL EXPANSIONS

This map demonstrates additional trail expansion suggestions that the LCY Connectivity team hopes could help further the already in place development ideas of Auburn.



Credit: City of Auburn

### FOOD ASSETS MAP

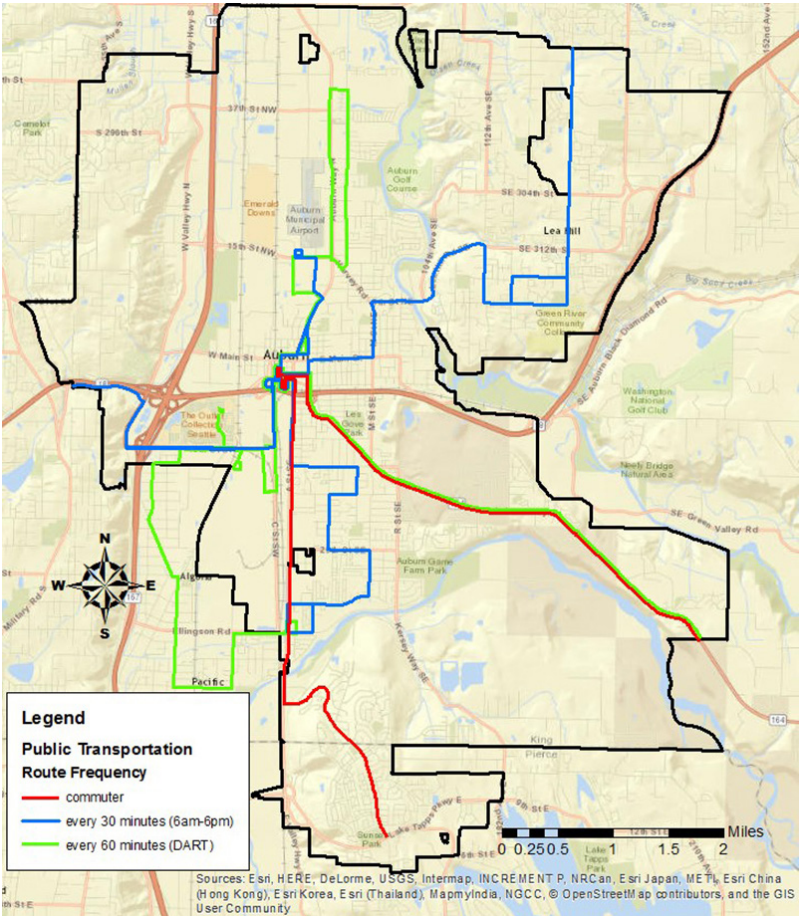


Credit: City of Auburn

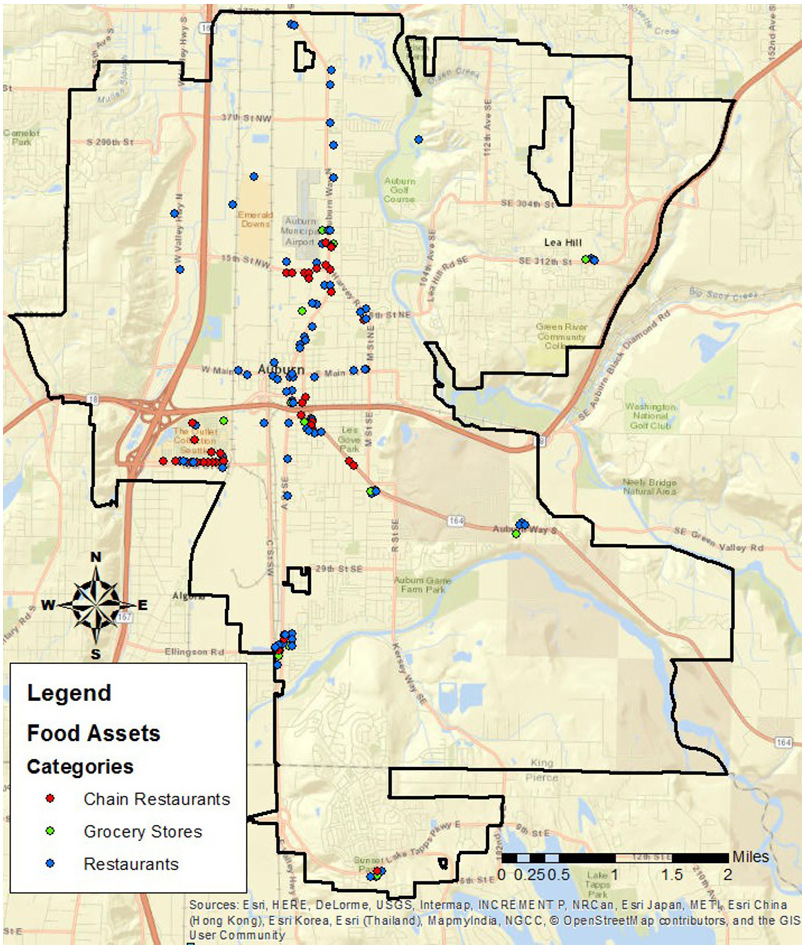
### COMMUNITY, EDUCATION, HEALTH AND RECREATION ASSET MAP



BUS ROUTE  
MAP



BUS ROUTE  
AND FOOD  
ASSET MAP  
OVERLAY



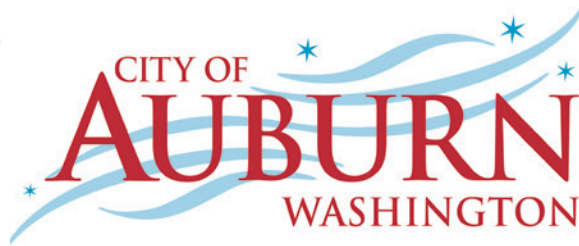
Credit: City of Auburn



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**2016 – 2017 LIVABLE CITY YEAR**

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