



CITY OF AUBURN

Community Profiles and Resident Engagement in Neighborhoods

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University of Washington ○ The Department of Health Services
HSERV580: Foundations of Health Behavior and Social Determinants of Health

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Fall 2016

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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We also extend our thanks to Dr. India Ornelas, the instructor for Foundations of Health Behavior and Social Determinants of Health, for her guidance and input throughout this project, and for providing us with the unique opportunity learn through our experiences in Auburn.

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Finally, we would like to recognize Erika Klyce, Neighborhood Programs Coordinator for the City of Auburn. We thank Erika for her enthusiasm and support for this Livable City Year project, and for her dedication to creating a positive impact in Auburn.

We have all learned a great deal from this project and are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the Livable City Year Program and the neighborhoods of Auburn.

COMMUNITY PROFILES AND RESIDENT
ENGAGEMENT IN NEIGHBORHOODS

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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. Community Profiles and Resident Engagement in Neighborhoods. 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.



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

LCY.UW.EDU

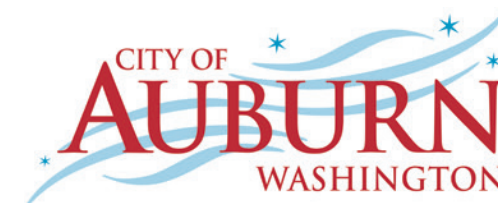
ABOUT THE CITY OF AUBURN

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.



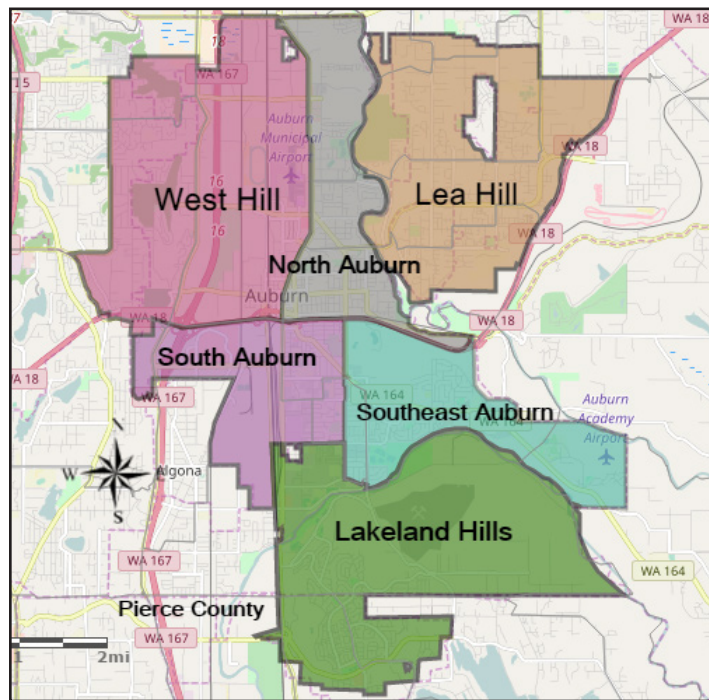
WWW.AUBURNWA.GOV

01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of this project was to help the City of Auburn better understand its residents' perspectives on their communities and their experiences living in the distinct neighborhoods within the city. More specifically, the project is intended to provide a starting point for future Livable City Year (LCY) projects and identify the most effective ways to engage with Auburn residents and utilize small grants for neighborhood improvement. Students in the University of Washington's (UW) Department of Health Services were assigned to six police districts in Auburn. They used a mix of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to create a profile of their assigned neighborhood. Qualitative methods, such as interviews with key leaders or stakeholders in neighborhoods are supported with quantitative, statistical data to demonstrate issues of importance in neighborhoods and offer recommendations for outreach, improvement, and further research. Each Auburn neighborhood had a diverse set of needs, however some common themes emerged throughout the profile. Residents expressed a desire for increased connectivity both physically, through better sidewalks and increased transportation, and socially, with more opportunities to meet and connect. Research revealed that resources exist in each neighborhood, and potential partnerships are available but are not currently realized. Increasing coalition building through improved social and physical environments can help bring groups together to create more targeted, effective, and streamlined efforts at community improvement. Coalition building can assist in transforming small, neighborhood improvement grants into larger, sustained initiatives.

02 INTRODUCTION

Map of Auburn
showing
neighborhoods
designated by police
precinct district.



Credit: Student team member

In the Fall Quarter of 2016, graduate students enrolled in Foundations of Health Behavior and Social Determinants of Health, a course offered through UW's Department of Health Services, were divided into groups and assigned a neighborhood within Auburn. The neighborhoods were delineated by the city and were based on police patrol district boundaries. Students completed a "neighborhood profile," describing their neighborhood and offering suggestions for improvement and strategies to increase resident engagement. Their goal was to help the city better understand the perspectives of Auburn residents and their experiences living within the distinct neighborhoods of Auburn. This report serves as a foundation to inform other LCY projects at UW and provides a summary of the neighborhood profiles and recommendations.

03 METHODS

Information for each neighborhood profile was gathered through data collection, photography, and interviews with stakeholders, including involved residents, employees, and leaders in each Auburn neighborhood. This combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods allowed students to gain a comprehensive perspective on the neighborhoods that they studied. To illustrate, in some neighborhoods, there were distinct quantitative differences between census tracts in terms of statistical data. These differences were confirmed by and elaborated on in qualitative interviews. Stakeholders also added a perspective on cultural differences within and between neighborhoods that could not be captured by quantitative data alone. Both quantitative data collection, and qualitative interview and photography methods are described in detail in this section.

Demographic Data

Neighborhood boundaries and census tracts

Data used to summarize each neighborhood in this report was typically gathered at the census tract level. Each neighborhood is comprised of one to three census tracts. In neighborhoods where there were large differences between tracts (i.e. different age and racial composition or different median income), the data were reported individually for each census tract. In other neighborhoods where

the census tracts were relatively uniform, students reported a total count of the values. Students chose to highlight the differences between census tracts because aggregating them may have masked some of the unique challenges faced by different areas within a neighborhood. For example, in the West Hill neighborhood, the overall poverty rate was over 30% in one census tract and was less than 5% in another. These distinct economic differences have implications for the type of issues a community may face or the types of outreach that may be most effective in that area. Aggregating these data would not accurately depict the neighborhood and the distinct sections within it.

Census tract data were gathered from the following sources:

- Each neighborhood profile used survey data from the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates. The American Community Survey supplements the decennial United States Census and includes demographic and population data at the census tract level (US Census Bureau 2016).
- 1990, 2000, and 2010 US Censuses were used for City of Auburn population estimates (US Census Bureau 2017).

Limitations

Due to sample size limitations for small geographic areas, data are only available aggregated over five-year periods. Further, as a result of constraints on publicly available data at the neighborhood or census tract level, and due to the scope of this project, students have not provided in-depth information on any one demographic group. Instead, this report aims to provide an overview of demographic information within each district, with the expectation that future data collection efforts may build on the foundation presented here.

Stakeholder Interviews

Each student group identified between four and eleven representatives or stakeholders in their neighborhood to interview. Stakeholders included employees at schools, community organizations, housing and real estate establishments, law enforcement agencies, and religious institutions. They also included other informed and engaged residents and community organizers.

The following methods were used to identify stakeholders:

- Some stakeholders were identified using a list of involved residents provided to our class by the City of Auburn. In certain neighborhoods, a snowball sampling method was used, where initial stakeholders provided suggestions for other individuals to contact.

- Some groups contacted representatives from relevant institutions (e.g. schools, businesses, religious communities, events, and organizations) found via internet research, or identified community leaders on social media sites.
- In one case, a student had previously worked for King County health and education programs and used these connections to organize additional interviews in their neighborhood.

Students reached out to stakeholders and conducted interviews both in-person and via phone. Each group asked a series of questions to stakeholders, having them to describe their neighborhood and the issues of importance to them. Specific interview question sets varied, but the information presented in this report focuses on two key questions:

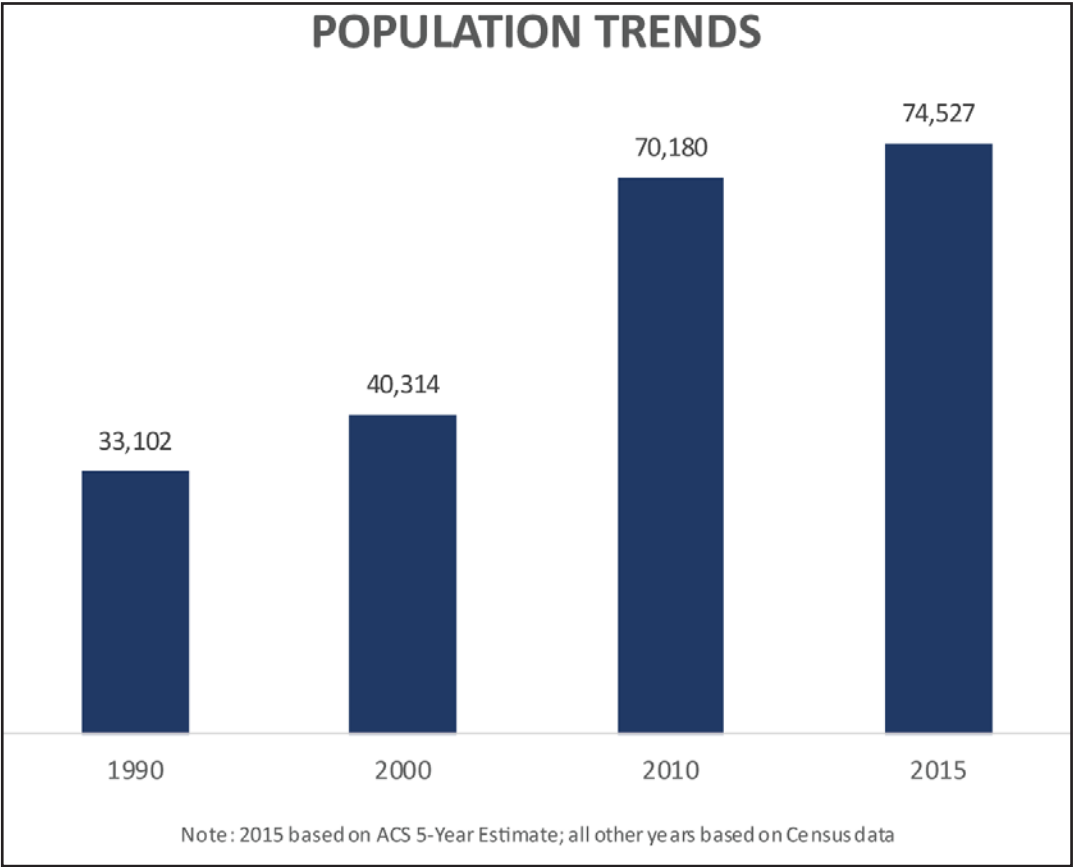
- What are best ways to communicate and engage with neighborhood residents?
- What are some potential projects for small neighborhood improvement grants?

Each group created case summaries of interviews from their notes, recordings, and interview transcripts. The case summaries described interviewer observations and key takeaways from the interview. Students analyzed the case summaries and identified both general themes and unique insights. They then gathered results into a report of common areas where stakeholders identified opportunities for improvement and engagement.

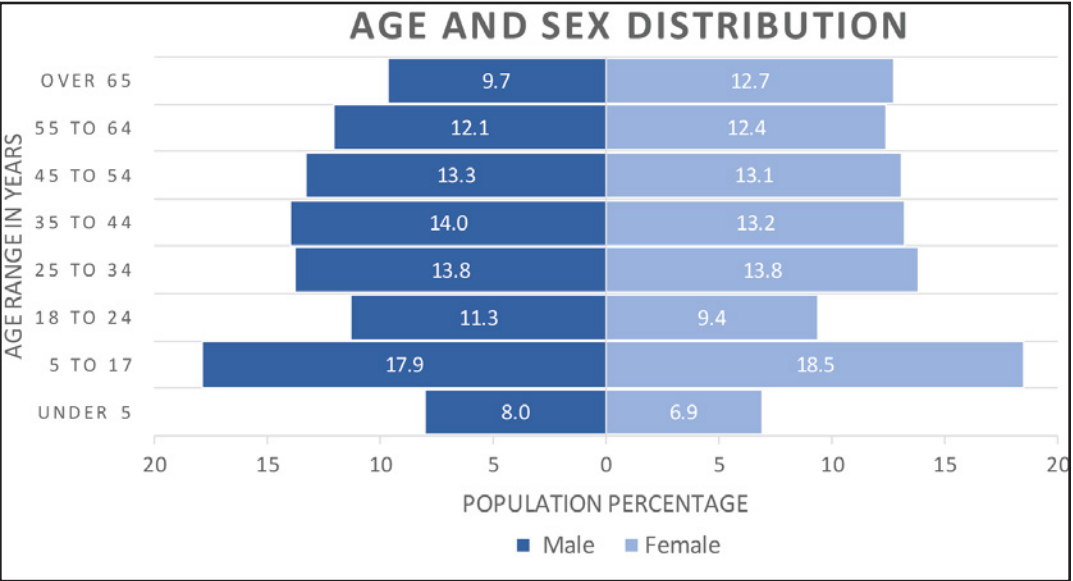
04 OVERVIEW OF AUBURN

The following information provides a demographic profile for the City of Auburn. Comparisons at the county and state levels are made when applicable.

Land Area	19,008 acres (29.7 sq. mi.)
Population	74,527 residents (2,509 per sq. mi.)
Median Age	35.3
Total Households	26,058
Family Household	17,114 (65.7%)
Nonfamily Household	8,944 (34.3%)
Average Household Size	2.67

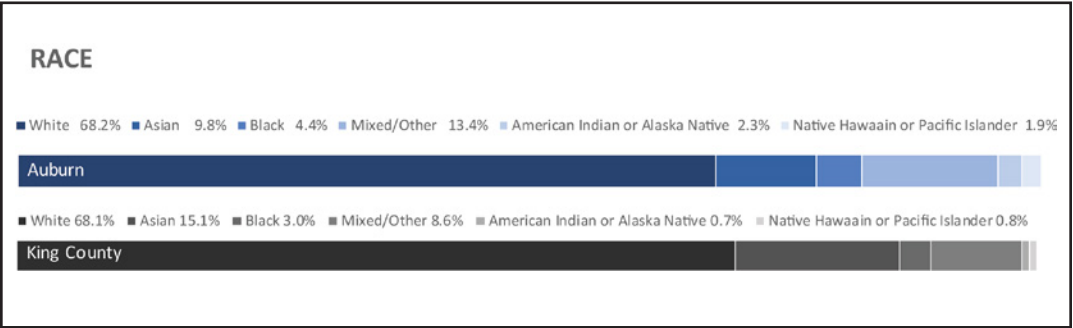


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

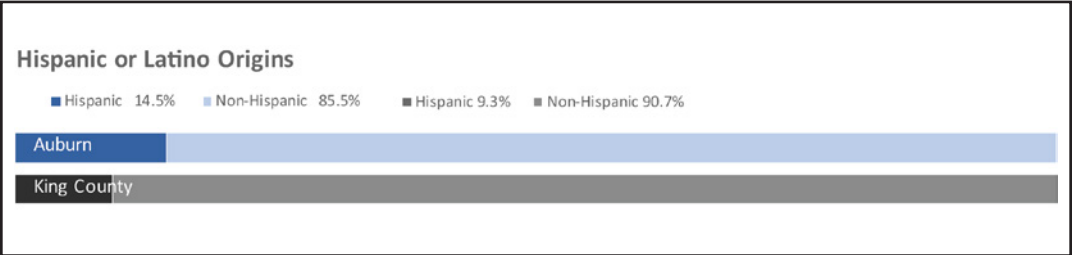


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

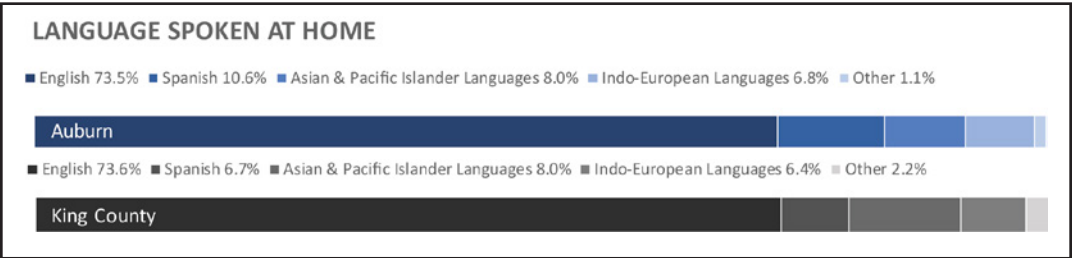
Race, Ethnicity, and Language



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

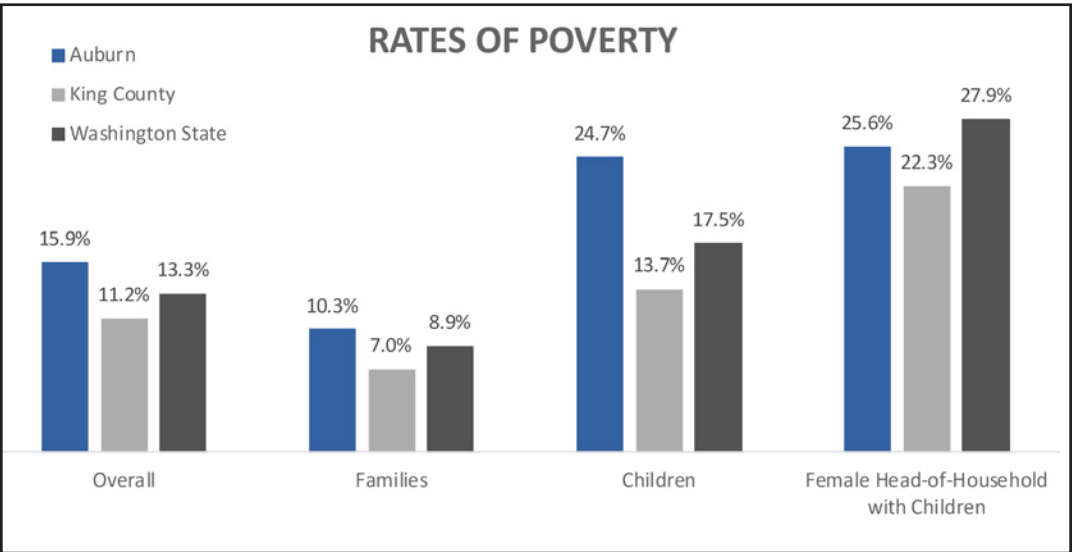


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

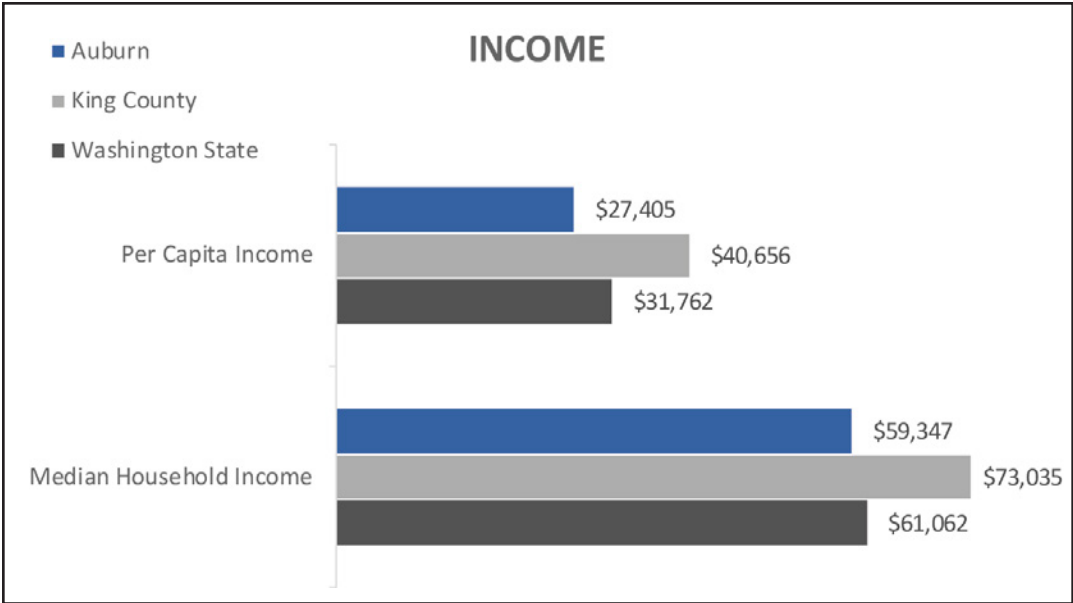


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Economic Opportunity

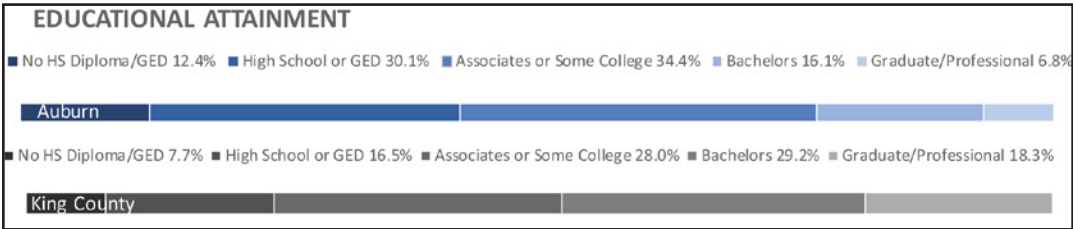


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

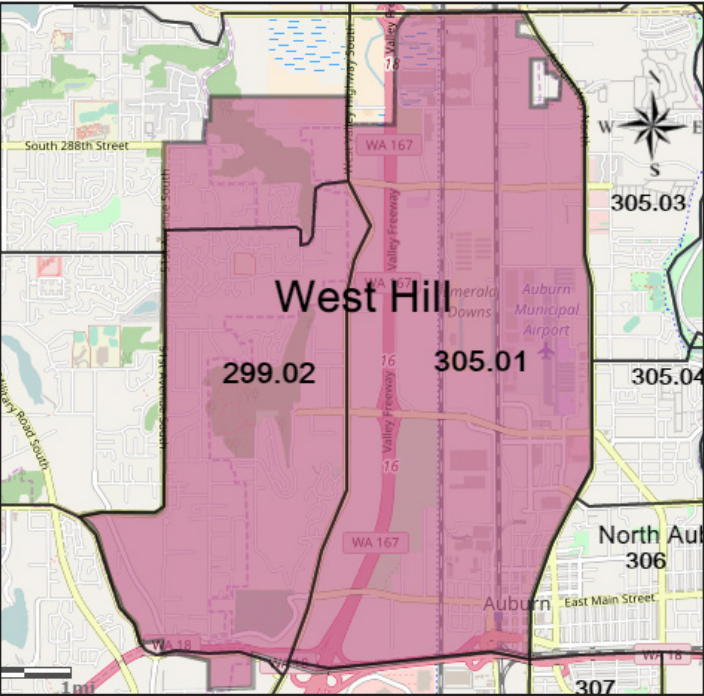
Education



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

05.1 NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES

WEST HILL



Credit: Student team member

Overview of the Neighborhood

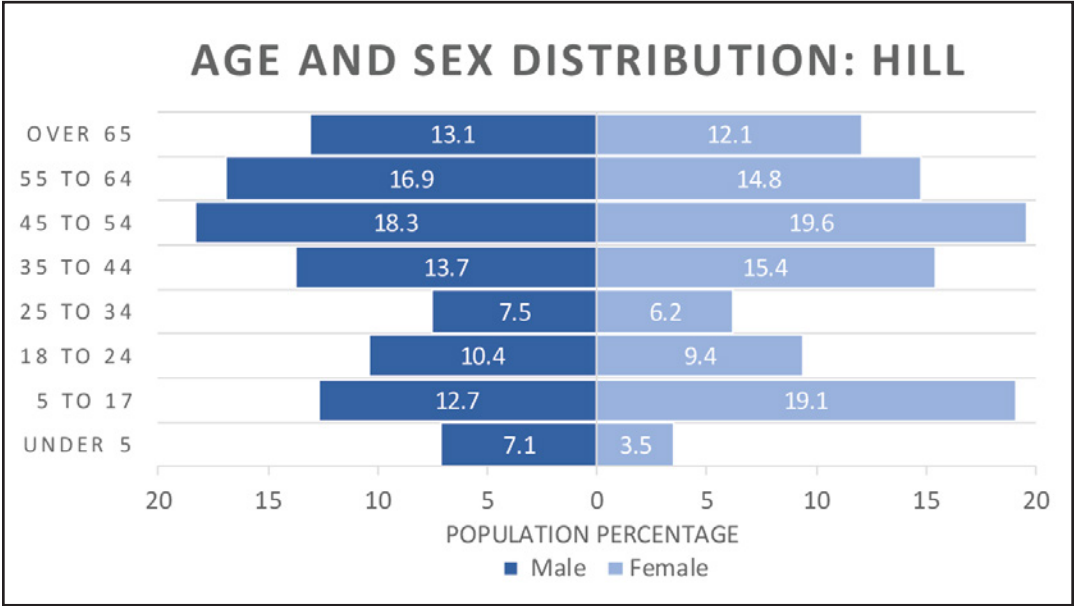
Population and Geography

West Hill is a neighborhood in the northwest corner of Auburn, WA. It was incorporated by the City of Auburn in 2008. Prior to that, it was an unincorporated neighborhood in King County, meaning it did not fall under the political representation of a city. Students noted that West Hill is divided into two distinct areas, the residential area between Highways 167 and 18 (herein referred to as “the hill”, corresponding to census tract 299.02), and the industrial downtown area (referred to as “the valley”, corresponding to census tract 305.01). Many neighborhood residents consider the

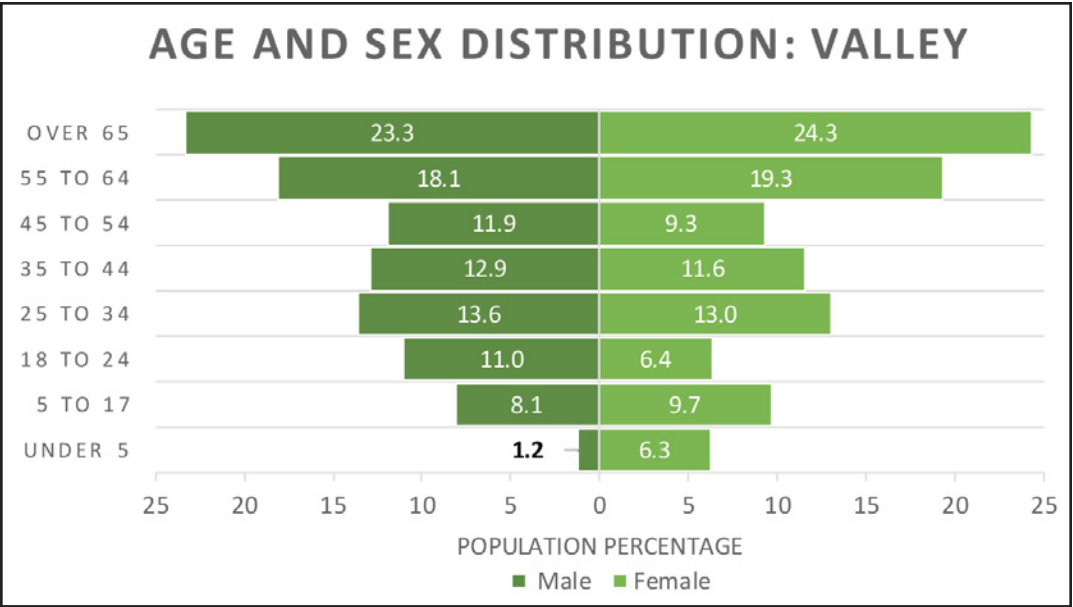
boundaries of West Hill to be limited to the hill, with the valley being more closely identified geographically and culturally with downtown Auburn. According to both recorded socioeconomic data as well as data obtained through interviews, the “hill” and “valley” areas of West Hill are culturally, geographically and socioeconomically divided. Therefore, many of the graphs and conclusions below refer to each region separately in order to highlight these differences. Census tract numbers & naming:

- 299.02: The hill
- 305.01: The valley

Land Area	6.83 sq mi. (23.0%) of Auburn Land Area
Population	5,969 residents (9.2% of Auburn pop.)
Median Age (Years)	
Hill	43.6
Valley	49.0
Total Households	2,397
Family Household	1,541 (65.7% of total)
Nonfamily Households	857 (34.3% of total)
Average Household Size	
Hill	2.88
Valley	1.75



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr



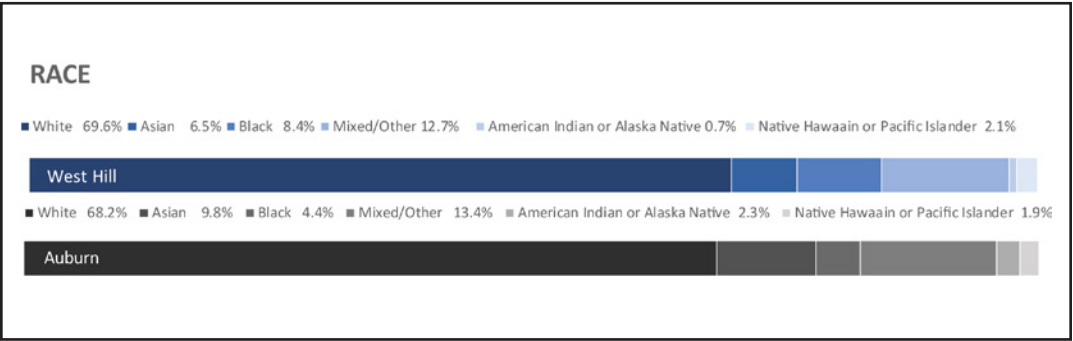
Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Race, Language, and Ethnicity

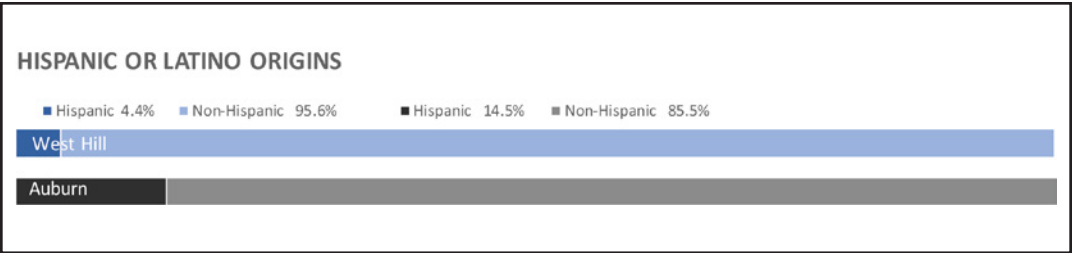
25.3% aged 5 or older speak a language other than English at home.

48.6% of children living in “the hill” and 27.7% living in “the valley” aged 5 to 17 speak a language other than English at home.

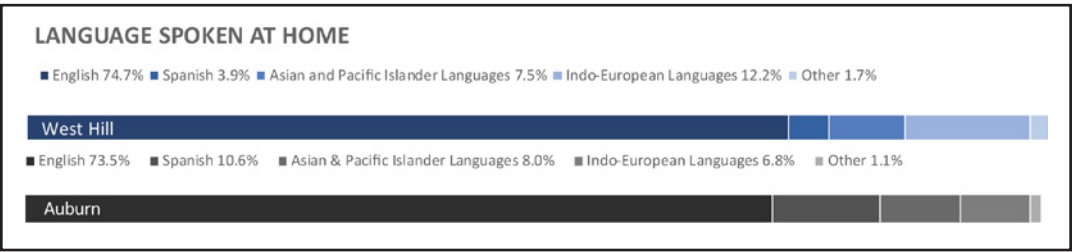
Key languages spoken at home other than English: Slavic languages other than Russian, Polish, or Serbo-Croatian (5.3% of residents), Persian (4.4%), Spanish (3.9%), and Korean (3.1%).



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

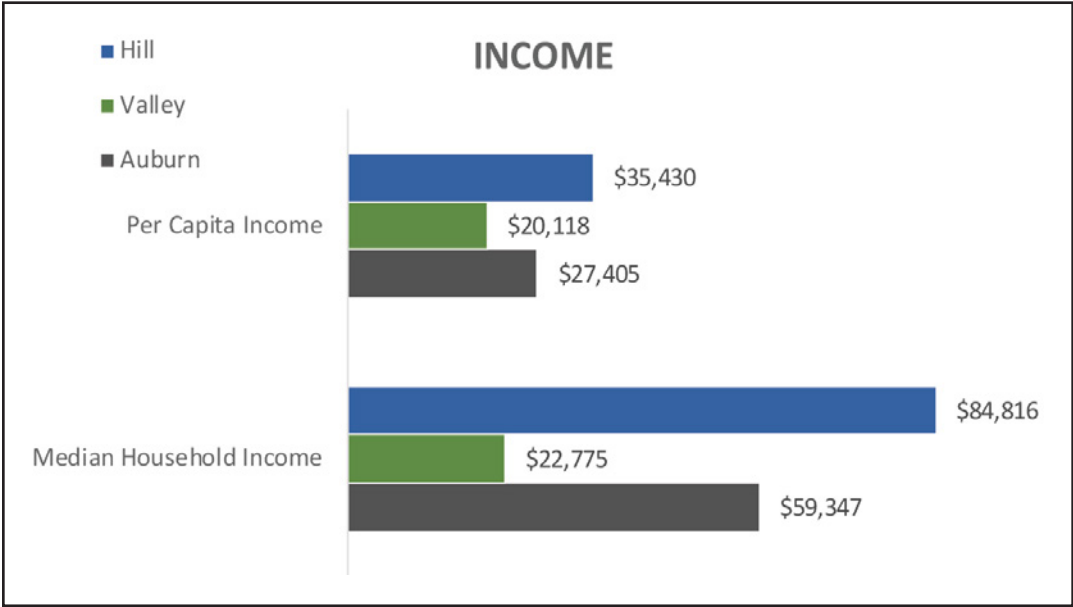


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr



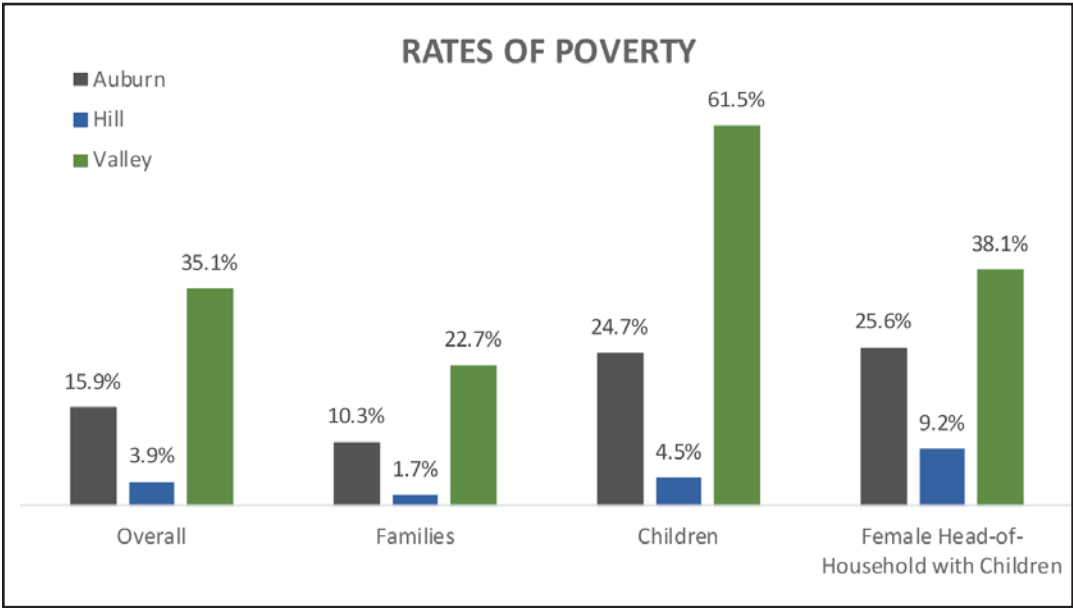
Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Economic Opportunity

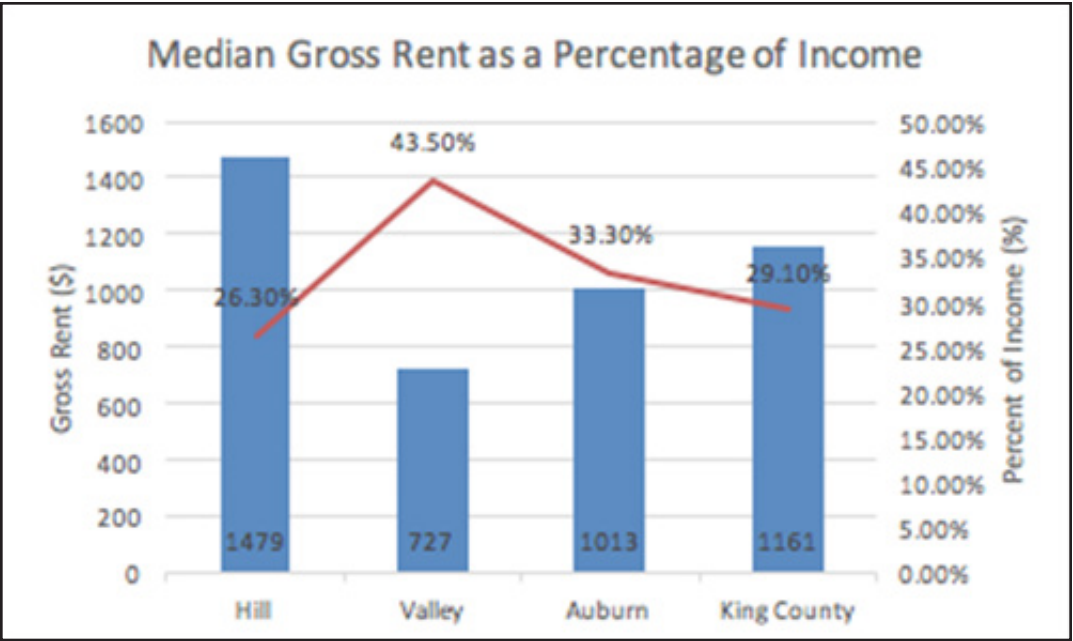


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

68.7% of renters in “the valley” and 32.3% on “the hill” spend 30% or more of household income on rent.

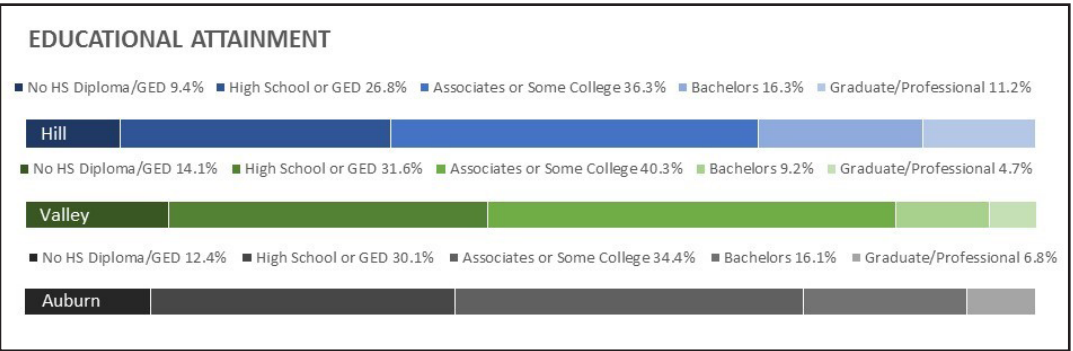


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Education



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Stakeholder Interviews

Overview

Students spoke to eleven stakeholders in total: two business owners, two employees of the Auburn School District, three members of the religious community, and four other residents or individuals involved in West Hill community life. Six stakeholders lived in West Hill, nine worked or attended religious services in West Hill, and two had knowledge of the community through their work in the greater Auburn area.

Three interviews were conducted as short, informal conversations. The remaining six interviews were more formal discussions that lasted between 10 and 40 minutes. Two interviews were conducted in a group setting with more than one stakeholder.

Main Themes

Students identified the following themes in their analysis of interviews: physical and social boundaries, neighborhood strengths, and opportunities for growth.

Physical and Social Boundaries

Stakeholders from both the hill and valley defined West Hill's boundary as only the hill and not the valley. Many stakeholders living on the hill identified more with nearby Federal Way than with Auburn, and some had difficulty identifying with either city. In fact, the majority of stakeholders crossed city boundaries regularly for their work or personal lives. Most West Hill stakeholders chose to do their grocery shopping in Federal Way; many community-based organizations working in partnership with the Auburn School District are based outside of the city; community meal programs, fire districts, and school districts overlap heavily with neighboring cities and unincorporated communities in King County; and a few stakeholders noted that children residing in Kent, Sumner, and Federal Way attend schools in Auburn. Further, local religious congregations consist of individuals from the wider region, with one informal stakeholder coming from Tacoma.

Neighborhood Strengths

All stakeholders had positive things to say when asked about the schools in West Hill. Schools in the neighborhood are characterized by strong support from parents, including a large parent-teacher association, school traditions, and monthly events. Camelot Elementary operates a meals program to send children home with food for the weekend. A stakeholder who worked for the school district confirmed that students from other neighborhoods request to attend schools West Hill schools.

Though concerns about crime differed between stakeholders, West Hill was generally described as safe and stable. One stakeholder mentioned its natural



White River Buddhist Temple in the West Hill neighborhood.

Credit: West Hill group

beauty. Several others explained that West Hill’s proximity to the highways is a strength and either explicitly or implicitly indicated that this made commuting to work easier. Another stakeholder noted the neighborhood’s accessibility by car as a strength, and also appreciated the light rail station in Auburn.

Opportunities for Growth

Despite the benefits of being close to highways, stakeholders mentioned that the neighborhood’s physical separation from the rest of Auburn by two highways and the hill itself made residents feel disconnected from the rest of the city. Stakeholders noted that this feeling is compounded by the overlapping boundaries of school districts, and proximity to neighboring cities and unincorporated King County communities.

MANY STAKEHOLDERS WANTED MORE SIDEWALKS AND ALSO VOICED A DESIRE FOR MORE STREETLIGHTS AND IMPROVED STREETS TO INCREASE FEELINGS OF SAFETY

Several stakeholders mentioned the need to improve connectedness within West Hill itself. Pathways connecting the places where people live, and bike or hiking trails are lacking, as are public transportation options on the weekend and for elderly community members. Many stakeholders wanted more sidewalks and also voiced a desire for more streetlights and improved streets to increase feelings of safety. To illustrate, one resident mentioned that children don’t go trick-or-treating in some areas because it is too dark.

Additional issues of safety were also addressed. Of those who referred to crime in their interviews, stakeholders who have resided in Auburn the longest felt that petty crime like vandalism and break-ins had increased. Two stakeholders also mentioned that people generally don’t seem to trust each other or work together as much. One person mentioned that her neighborhood had “gone downhill.”

Stakeholders also mentioned that the neighborhood had become more crowded as new housing developments are being introduced to West Hill, increasing traffic and noise in the neighborhood.

One stakeholder, a member of a Buddhist Temple considered an epicenter for Japanese-American culture in Auburn, mentioned the long-lasting effects on the Auburn-Kent Japanese-American communities following internment during WWII. As a result of this past trauma and marginalization, temple members are somewhat hesitant to engage in the wider community in order to protect themselves from potential future attacks on their community and culture. It is important to note that although the Buddhist Temple to which this stakeholder belongs is within police patrol district one, the stakeholder considers its location along Auburn Way to be geographically and culturally distinct from West Hill.

Homelessness and hunger were also discussed as challenges. Stakeholders from religious communities were particularly concerned because individuals often came to them for help but they were sometimes unable to provide the assistance that individuals needed. One person mentioned hunger in the context of the meals program at Camelot Elementary, which serves families from multiple neighborhoods, so it is unclear to what extent hunger affects West Hill specifically.

There were also challenges regarding administration, since most stakeholders did not have a clear understanding of administrative processes. Because boundaries overlap considerably, three stakeholders were confused about the responsibilities of local agencies. For example, one stakeholder did not understand why West Hill residents pay taxes to Auburn if they receive fire protection and other services from Federal Way. Another stakeholder mentioned an example where the City of Auburn and King County could not agree on who was to provide services for a particular street. Another stakeholder mentioned she and other long-time West Hill residents who lived in the neighborhood before it was incorporated regret voting for the annexation due to increased taxes. Specifically, the stakeholder feels that paying city taxes and licensing fees increased operating costs for her business.

The final challenge students identified was a lack of local businesses or desirable destinations in Auburn itself. Two stakeholders mentioned that they preferred to go grocery shopping in Federal Way because it had a wider variety of options, and suggested that they would shop in Auburn if similar grocery stores were present.

Overall, while stakeholders commented on the strengths of West Hill as a neighborhood, stakeholders expressed a sense of disconnect from one another, and a lack of a cohesive identity. There are many diverse resources and perspectives in West Hill that could be better connected through effective engagement strategies and used to improve the neighborhood. Strategies for achieving this goal are described in detail below.

Recommendations

Neighborhood Engagement

From interviews with community residents, actionable recommendations emerged for both improving city-community engagement as well improving the health and well-being of the community and its residents. Several suggestions focused on improved communication and coalition-building between city and community groups. Notably, members from Federal Way United Methodist Church expressed a strong interest in the Livable City Year project and in collaborating more with the City of Auburn.

There was a call from one stakeholder to establish a city-led interfaith council, which could be modeled off of the City of Renton REACH program (Renton Ecumenical Association of Churches) (REACH 2017). This interfaith council would help address cross-cutting socioeconomic and cultural issues (such as homelessness, drug

use, and hunger) that are affecting the area. It could also allow religious groups to build long-lasting connections and to promote multicultural exposure and understanding. One religious leader in the West Hill area mentioned that this council would help inspire her congregation to connect with others outside their community, effectively working to break down cultural barriers.

Within the current structure of city government, several stakeholders saw room for improvements aimed at more effectively engaging communities within the City of Auburn, as well as helping to empower existing community groups. Stakeholders stated there should be increased communication of city-wide initiatives and events through both electronic and social media outlets, as well as more traditional mailed flyers and posters. Notices and announcements via paper publication are still important, especially for older residents, many of whom do not participate online or electronically. Some stakeholders indicated that it would be helpful to have more frequent visits and appearances by city officials and police in such places as fairs, cultural events, and schools. This would help give a “face” to the City of Auburn and demonstrate the city’s desire and ability to engage with neighborhoods and neighborhood leaders.

In terms of greater empowerment of neighborhood and community groups, one temple leader mentioned the complexities around city procedures for hosting events. She feels that organizations and religious groups are interested in hosting events, but the administrative process for acquiring the correct permits and following city procedures can seem arduous and confusing. Along similar lines, she believes her temple, White River Buddhist Temple, has sufficient space for hosting specific events or programs – and she hopes that the City of Auburn will take the step in asking them to use the Temple space. A direct ask from the City will signal to the temple members that their help and participation is requested and valued. Generally, more civic-community partnerships could help to promote and support existing efforts to increase community engagement in West Hill.

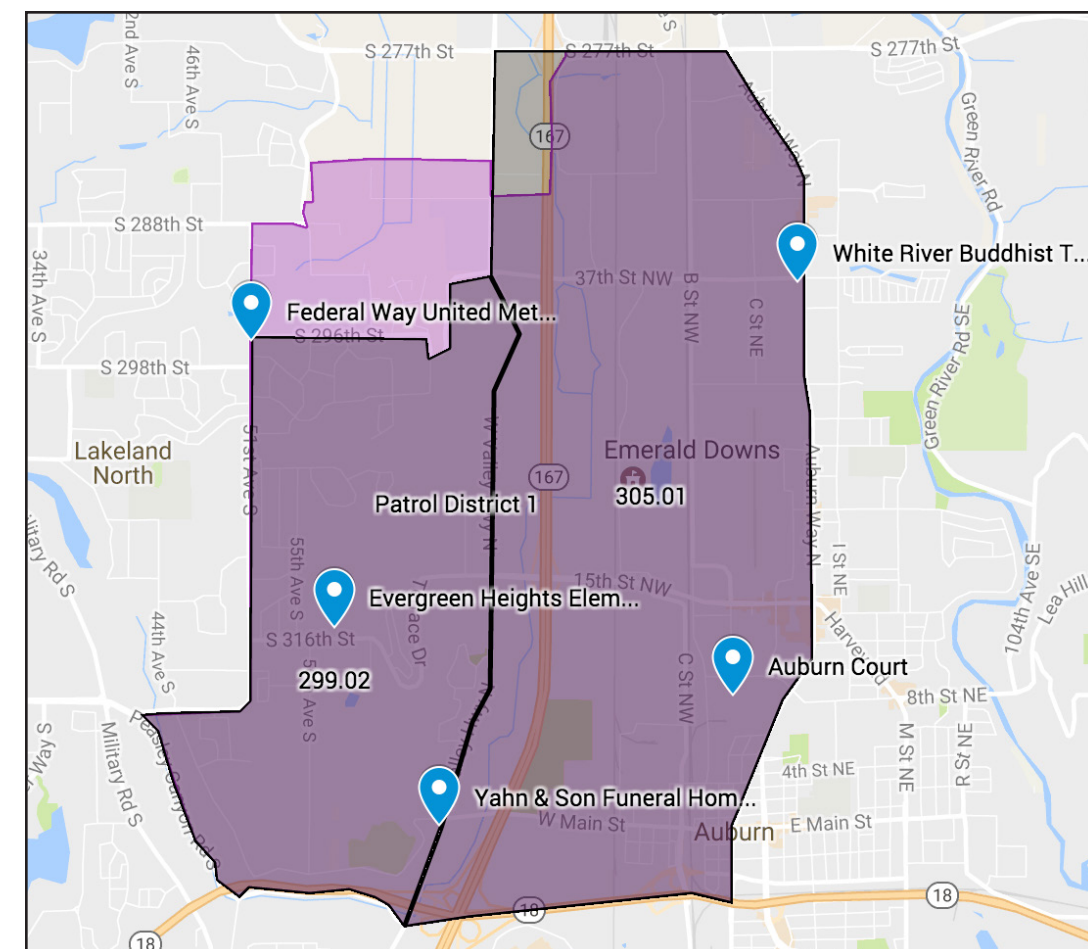
With an increasingly diverse population, including many non-English speaking residents, many expressed a greater need for translation services and ELL (English-language learner) classes. This is an important consideration when looking at avenues for increasing community involvement and empowerment, considering that as many as 20% of school children in West Hill have limited English language proficiency (Washington State Report Card 2017) Decreasing language barriers may effectively increase civic participation from a more diverse and representative mix of populations by embracing inclusive measures to enhance communication across existing and newly arrived social groups.

Stakeholders recommend that the City of Auburn partner with arts, theater, and museum groups to offer sponsored theater or movie nights, museum exhibition events, and tours of historical sites. This would be a way to expand upon the successes of the Auburn community barbeques, annual family-centered events with food, raffles, and activities for adults and children (Auburn Bike Park 2013), by promoting participation from subsets of the Auburn population who may be more interested in other kinds of events

Neighborhood Improvement

In terms of improving the physical infrastructure and transportation systems, stakeholders in West Hill felt that there was not sufficient street lighting in certain parts of the neighborhood (especially at the intersection of 59th Ave and 296th Street). The lack of street lighting discouraged walking at night generally, and specifically for trick-or-treating during Halloween, due to feelings of insecurity and concerns about safety. Stakeholders noted and students verified that continuous sidewalks are lacking in parts of the neighborhood. This discourages walking in certain areas due in part to safety and to lack of accessibility. In terms of transportation, the limitations of the Access bus system created an issue for elderly residents with limited mobility in particular. The Access system provides door-to-door shared van service for people who have limited mobility. However, one stakeholder mentioned that this service does not operate on Sundays, leaving elderly and/or residents with limited mobility with few options for reaching places of worship or stores and shopping areas.

Finally, continued investment in economic growth by encouraging local business in the downtown Auburn area would provide the residents of West Hill with a greater sense of community and connection to the city of Auburn. Two stakeholders mentioned a lack of local businesses, and wanted to see a more thriving downtown to make Auburn more of a “destination.” Many residents in this area identify with Federal Way because they do most of their shopping in that area. Zoning laws can



Map of the West Hill neighborhood with selected assets.

impact small businesses specifically (US Small Business Administration 2017). If the laws are structured to encourage large, commercial industries, it may make it more difficult for small businesses to operate and afford rent. Existing zoning laws would be important to consider in future conversations about the direction of economic and commercial development.

In summary, there exists a clear recommendation to invest in continuous sidewalks, adequate street lighting, and transportation in order to improve accessibility, safety, and security. Increasing both physical connections (through improved sidewalks and transportation) and social connections (such as interfaith or civic-community partnerships) can help unify the organizations and residents working to improve West Hill. Stakeholders expressed a desire to form partnerships, indicating that building connections would be relatively easy once the social and physical infrastructure required for increased connectivity is in place. Bringing leaders with unique perspectives and different resources together is a low-cost strategy that can help to enhance and expand the positive impact that neighborhood stakeholders and organizations are already making.

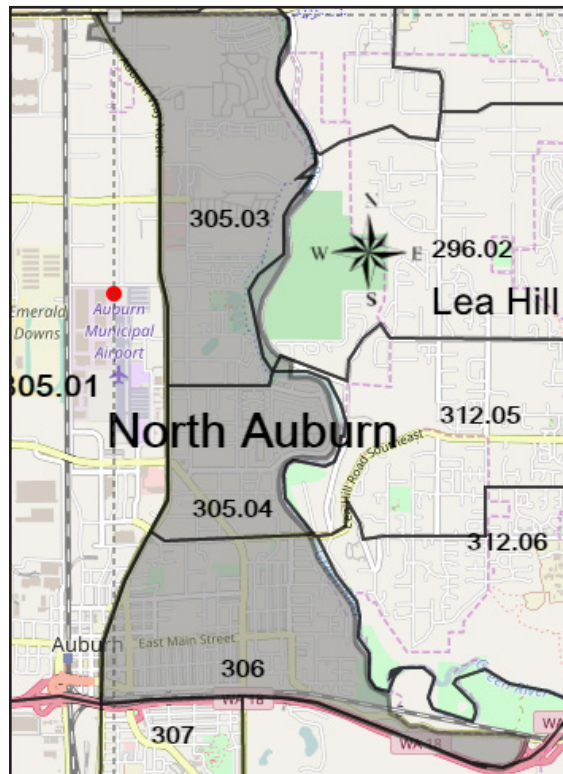
Summary of Recommendations for West Hill

Neighborhood Improvement

- Establish civic-community partnerships.
- Increase communication of city-wide initiatives and events through electronic and social media outlets as well as more traditional mailed flyers and posters.
- More frequent appearances by city officials and police at fairs, cultural events, and schools.
- Translation services and English Language Learner (ELL) classes.
- Partner with arts, theater and museum groups to offer sponsored theater or movie nights, museum exhibition events and tours of historical sites.
- Improve infrastructure, sidewalks, and transportation.
- Continued Investment in local businesses and economic growth.

05.2 NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES

NORTH AUBURN



Credit: Student team member

Overview of the Neighborhood

Population and Geography

The North Auburn neighborhood is located in the north-central area of Auburn, WA. The neighborhood is bounded on its north end by S 277th St, on its south end by Highway 18, on its west edge by Auburn Way N, and on its east edge by the Green River. North Auburn is a mix of businesses and residential areas. In the northernmost census tract (305.03) there are car lots, repair shops, fast-food restaurants, and strip malls. The central census tract (305.04) of North Auburn

contains a family-oriented public housing development and a cluster of nonprofit social and health service providers. The southernmost census tract (306) contains small apartment buildings and older single-family homes, many built in the mid-to-late twentieth century.

Land Area	3.2 sq mi. (10.8% of Auburn Land Area)
-----------	--

Population	15,507 residents (20.8% of Auburn pop.)
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Median Age (Years)	
--------------------	--

305.03	31.7
--------	------

305.04	42.0
--------	------

306	36.5
-----	------

Total Households	6,037
------------------	-------

Family Household	3,701 (61.3% of total)
------------------	------------------------

Nonfamily Households	2,336 (38.7% of total)
----------------------	------------------------

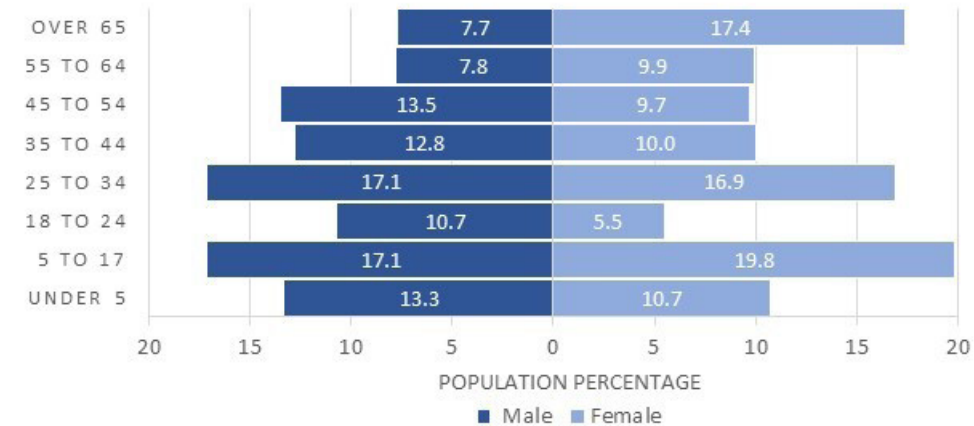
Average Household Size	
------------------------	--

305.03	2.67
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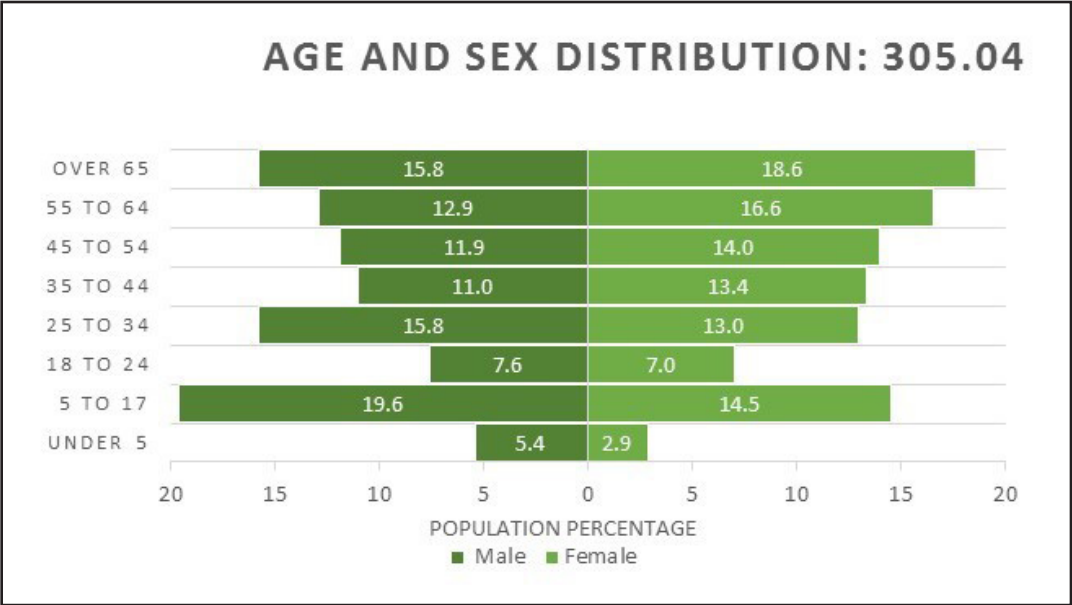
305.04	2.27
--------	------

306	2.70
-----	------

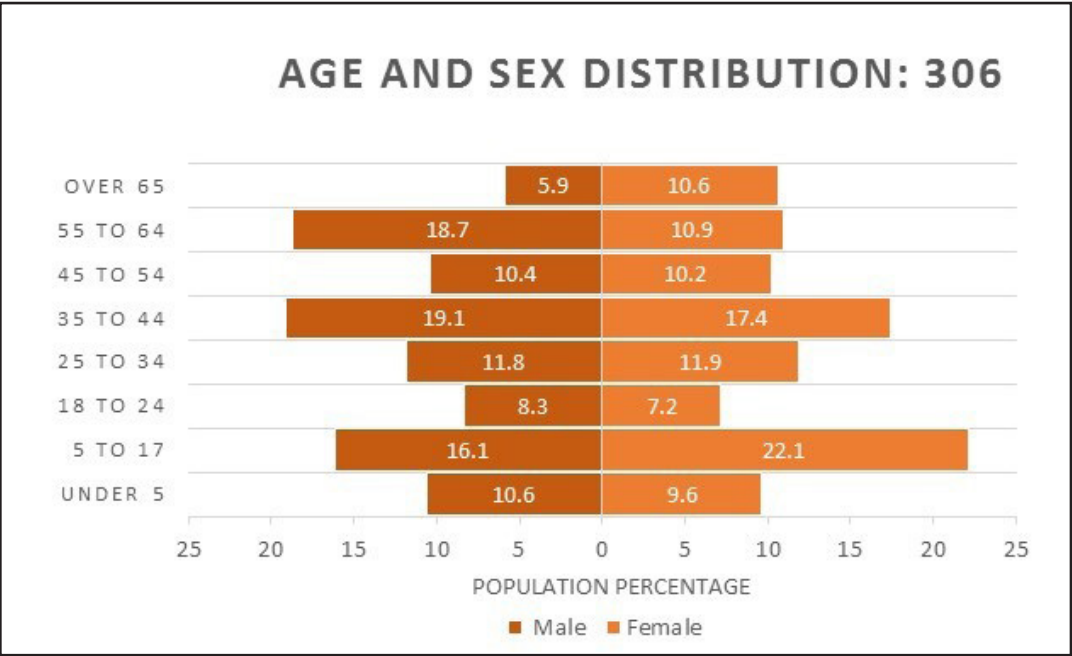
AGE AND SEX DISTRIBUTION: 305.03



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

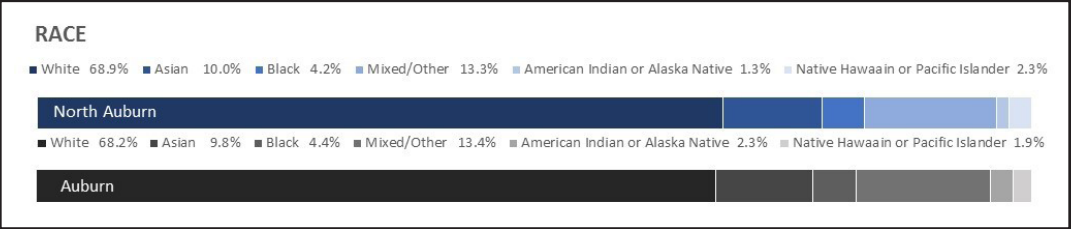


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

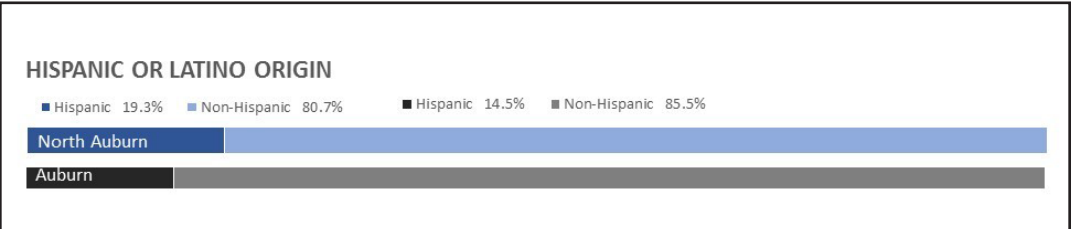


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

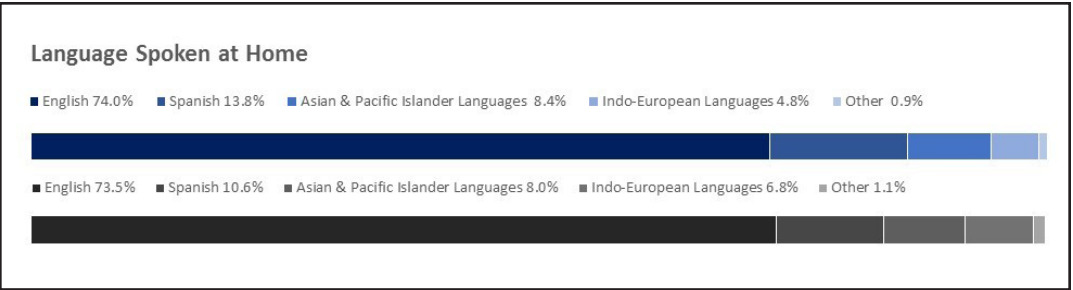
Race, Language and Ethnicity



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

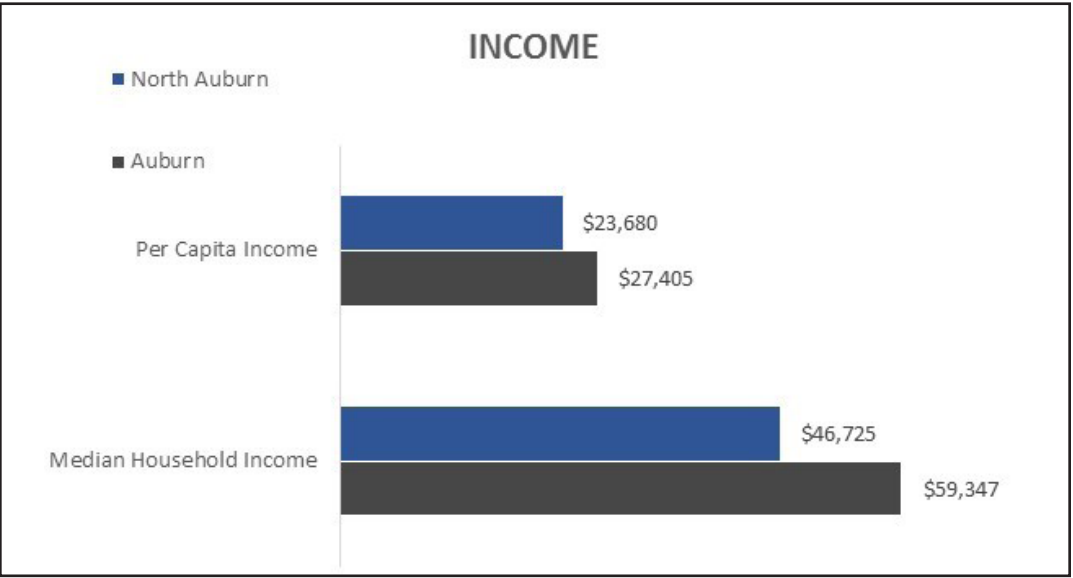


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Economic Opportunity



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

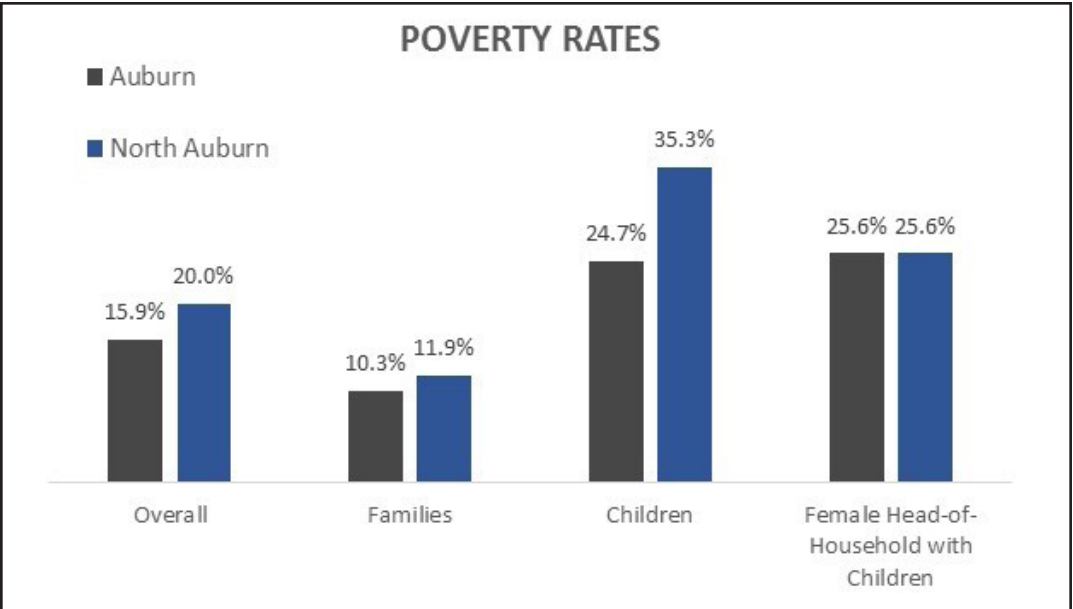
26.0% aged 5 or older speak a language other than English at home.

42.3% of children living in North Auburn aged 5 to 17 speak a language other than English at home. In census tract 305.04 (central), 54.4% of children speak a language other than English at home.

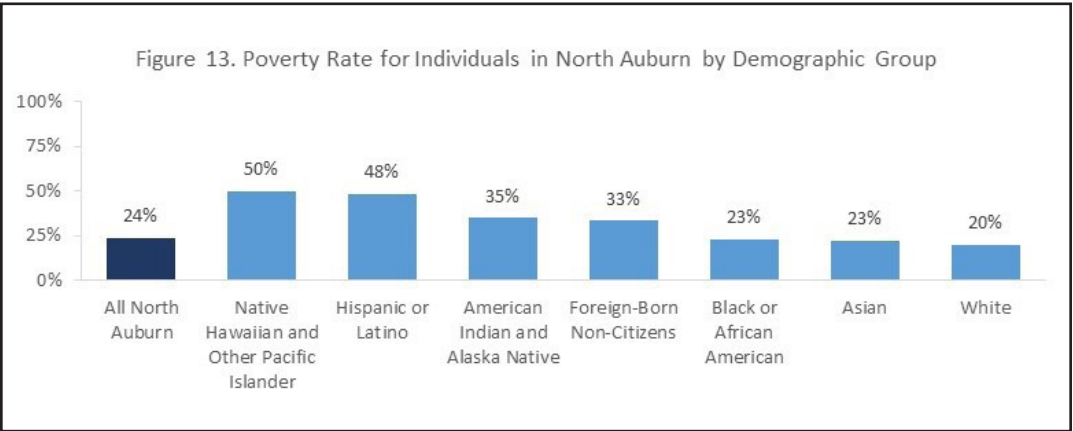
Key languages spoken at home other than English: Spanish (13.8% of residents), Tagalog (3.9%), and Slavic languages other than Russian, Polish, or Serbo-Croatian

53.6% of children in census tract 305.04 (central) live in households with incomes below the federal poverty level.

50.8% of renters in North Auburn spend 30% or more of household income on rent.

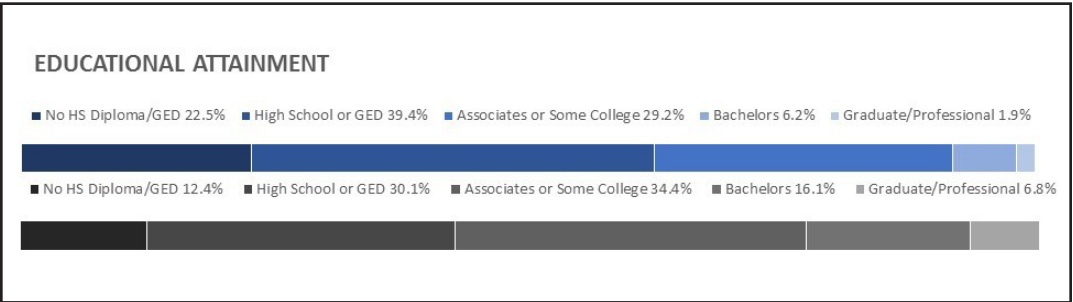


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr



Credit: North Auburn group report.

Education



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

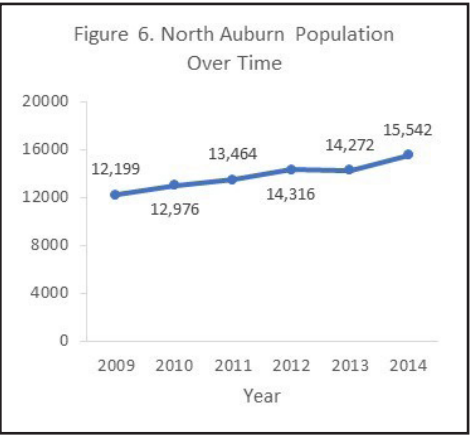
Stakeholder Interviews

Overview

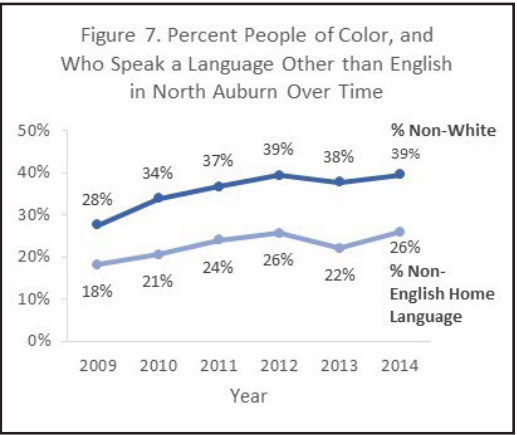
Students conducted six interviews with representatives from various community and social service centers. While all six stakeholders worked in North Auburn, only one was a resident of the neighborhood; this may limit the scope of the results.

Main Themes

When describing its residents, all stakeholders mentioned the changing population of North Auburn. They listed an incredible array of new ethnicities coming to the neighborhood. Along with new ethnic diversity, there has been a perceived change in the area’s socioeconomic makeup. Most stakeholders noticed a rise in poverty and homelessness. While there is little publicly available data on increasing homelessness in North Auburn, demographic data supports the stakeholders’ perception that the racial and ethnic diversity in North Auburn is changing.



Credit: North Auburn group report.

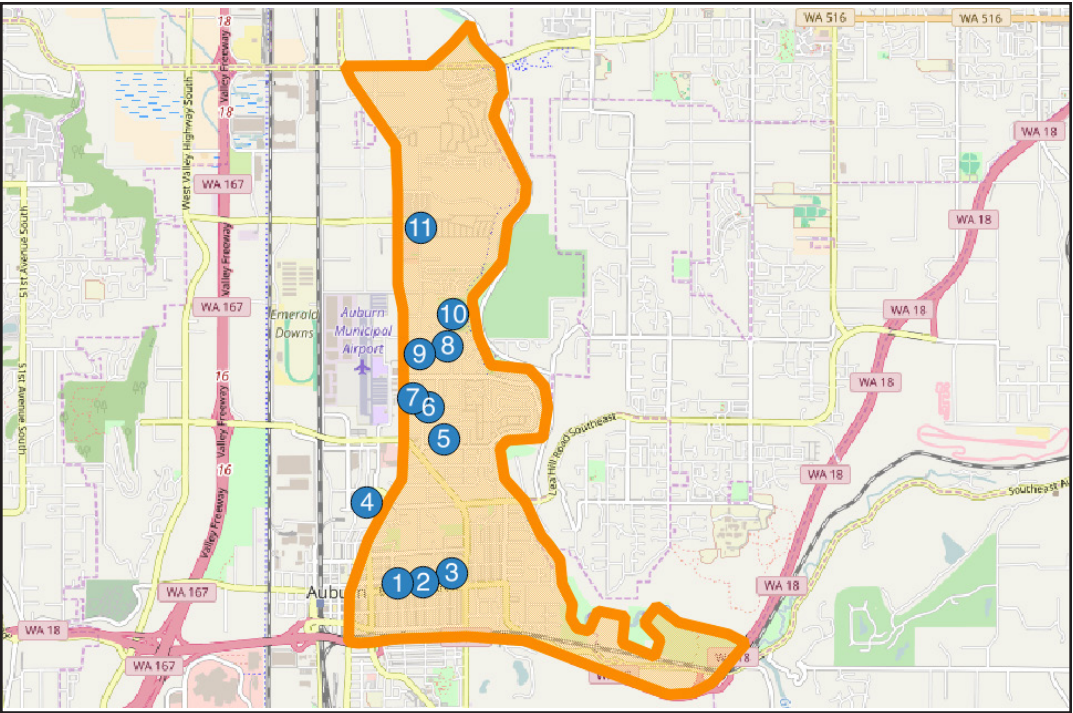


Credit: North Auburn group report.

Several stakeholders praised the city’s current communication efforts, and said that North Auburn’s residents typically feel supported by the city. However, multiple stakeholders noted that the city could improve multilingual communications. Events such as National Night Out, a national crime and drug prevention event with neighborhood-specific functions throughout the City of Auburn, should be advertised at least in English and Spanish, and other common languages spoken, such as Tagalog, if possible (City of Auburn 2017).

During their interviews, many stakeholders emphasized the neighborhood’s close-knit community. Residents are welcoming and supportive, and they are proud to be the “service hub” of Auburn. North Auburn has several social services available including the Auburn Food Bank, YMCA Community Center, Valley Cities Counseling, DHHS Community Services Office, WorkSource, and Neighborhood House Tutoring. The neighborhood also has resources available for housing including Burndale

Homes (Public Housing) and Phoenix Rising (Youth Housing and Services). Brannan Park, an area with a sports complex and walking trail, is also located in the North Auburn neighborhood.



Credit: North Auburn group report.

Community Assets	
1	Washington Elementary School
2	Auburn High School, and Auburn Performing Arts Center
3	St Matthew Episcopal Church
4	Fred Meyer
5	Dick Scobee Elementary School
6	Auburn Food Bank, Burndale Homes (Public Housing), YMCA Community Center, and Neighborhood House Tutoring
7	Saar's Super Saver
8	Cascade Middle School
9	Valley Cities Counseling, Phoenix Rising (Youth Housing and Services), WorkSource, DSHS Community Services Office
10	Brannan Park
11	The River Mobile Estates

Credit: North Auburn group report.

Stakeholders also brought up a variety of issues they perceive as problematic for the neighborhood. Despite a positive attitude about North Auburn’s services, stakeholders felt that the neighborhood was lacking in public meeting spaces, clean and safe public transportation to area services, and access to healthy food. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines access to food based on income (indicating the ability to buy food), proximity to supermarkets, and the availability of vehicles (USDA ERS 2016). Those in North Auburn’s census tract 305.03 are considered both low access and low income. About 7.5% of the total

households in this tract are without vehicles and live more than half a mile from a supermarket. In census tract 305.04, about 4% of households are without vehicles and are more than half a mile from the supermarket (USDA ERS 2016). And while census tract 306 is considered to have adequate access to supermarkets, it is also considered low income (USDA ERS 2016), meaning that individuals living in this area may not have the funds to make healthy food choices. These statistics support stakeholder concerns about lack of access to food in general, and healthy food in particular.

When asked how a small grant could be used to improve the neighborhood, participants had several recommendations. Their recommendations, as well as student suggestions, for neighborhood engagement and improvement based on stakeholder input, are described in more detail below.

Recommendations

Neighborhood Engagement

There are already many valuable resources in North Auburn. However, stakeholders suggested that not all residents in the North Auburn neighborhood are aware of these resources. A comprehensive and up-to-date map of resources that is widely distributed is a valuable way to raise awareness among residents. This map should show the current borders of neighborhoods as perceived by residents, rather than by police precinct or other legal boundaries. City officials should consider including residents in the process of identifying the boundaries of their neighborhoods, listing the most valuable resources, and developing the map in general. By including residents in the creation of the map, the city can acknowledge resident experiences and realities and highlight the valuable contributions they make within their neighborhoods. In contrast to other maps that are often viewed as political documents created by distant organizations, using a collaborative process to develop this map of resources would help to give the finished product personal meaning and importance for residents.

Considering North Auburn’s demographics, it is also important to make the map available at least in English and Spanish. If budget allows, the City might also consider translating the map into other languages that are widely spoken. For example, the map could be translated into one or more of the following languages (spoken by 1-4% of the population in North Auburn): Tagalog, Russian, Slavic languages other than Russian, Polish, or Serbio- Croatian, and Pacific Islander languages other than Tagalog (US Census Bureau 2016).

In order ensure that residents speaking languages other than English are able to read about community events, and be included in community engagement efforts in general, stakeholders also suggested employing a permanent diversity manager, an important position given current and anticipated increases in population diversity, and having Hispanic/Spanish-speaking employees represented in city

BY INCLUDING RESIDENTS IN THE CREATION OF
THE MAP, THE CITY CAN ACKNOWLEDGE RESIDENT
EXPERIENCES AND REALITIES AND HIGHLIGHT THE
VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS THEY MAKE WITHIN THEIR
NEIGHBORHOODS

government. A diversity manager in particular, could address inclusivity not only in language and communication, but also in the structure and timing of community events. For example, the diversity manager could help to ensure that events accommodate different work schedules and could host neighborhood meetings at different locations so that they are accessible to all.

While increasing community engagement was a priority in this neighborhood, lack of funding presents a barrier to achieving community engagement goals. In a student interview with an employee of the Auburn Food Bank, the employee expressed concern that currently, a larger portion of King County's funds for community engagement projects are directed towards the northern part of the county (i.e. Seattle). One approach to advocate for increased funding in Auburn would be to strengthen partnerships with other southern King County cities. For example, Auburn is already a member of the Sound Cities Association. By leveraging and enhancing this partnership, taking a collective approach to funding community engagement initiatives, sharing resources, and advocating cooperatively, the city may be able to build more robust regional relationships that bring additional positive benefits to residents.

Neighborhood Improvement

In terms of neighborhood improvement, we suggest addressing the issue of homelessness through a targeted effort to understand both the issue in North Auburn, and the needs of North Auburn's homeless population. Interviews suggested there has been at least a perceived increase in homelessness in North Auburn in the past 5 years. While students were not able to identify any publicly available data on homelessness at the neighborhood level in North Auburn, data from the American Community Survey confirmed approximately half of households in North Auburn are "cost-burdened," spending 30% or more of income on rent or mortgage (US Census Bureau 2016). Such cost burden may increase risk of future homelessness for those residents. The lack of data and rising concern about homelessness presents an opportunity to collect and analyze information about homelessness in the neighborhood in partnership with residents, including those experiencing homelessness. While involving residents in data analysis and interpretation can take extra time, it has been shown to improve validity of data and the quality of the insights (Cashman et al. 2008).

We recommend that the City convene a panel with homeless individuals in North Auburn, to determine:

- Who they are: the number and variety of backgrounds of the homeless people in North Auburn has been increasing according to the experiences of service providers. Fine grain information on who is being affected and how will allow for more targeted, efficient intervention.
- What they need and how to serve them: North Auburn is currently serving this population through mental health clinics, homeless youth facilities, and social support, but more could be done, especially as the risk of homeless population grows.

We also recommend using the concerns of the homeless community to direct dialogue and shape action steps. Some stakeholders suggested reaching out to members of the homeless population through existing community hubs such as: churches, Phoenix Rising, the Auburn Library, Fred Meyer Market, Saar Market, and community meals at the Food Bank.

Finally, while several of the stakeholders we interviewed felt comfortable walking and spending time in the North Auburn area, some were concerned about safety and wanted investigations into potential gang activity and a reevaluation of how gangs and crime are addressed in the area. They also wanted help to make North Auburn look and feel more welcoming and safe, by improving the appearance of infrastructure, specifically the transit station. They also explained that there are not many places to go in North Auburn for recreation. Based on stakeholder input, we suggest developing more recreational areas such as walking or running paths, children's play areas, skate parks, and trails along Green River, or meeting spaces such as community centers, shopping areas, and coffee shops. Such changes could provide valuable, needed services while also offering critical connections to green space.

BASED ON STAKEHOLDER INPUT, WE SUGGEST
DEVELOPING MORE RECREATIONAL AREAS SUCH AS
WALKING OR RUNNING PATHS, CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS,
SKATE PARKS, AND TRAILS ALONG GREEN RIVER, OR
MEETING SPACES SUCH AS COMMUNITY CENTERS,
SHOPPING AREAS, AND COFFEE SHOPS

Indoor and outdoor community spaces are important strategies for improving neighborhoods, as they can make it easier for residents to interact with one another, and spend time exercising or playing outdoors (Diez Roux and Mair 2010). Improving neighborhood spaces can have a positive impact on safety, neighborhood health, and support for local institutions such as schools (Braveman et al. 2011). The City of Auburn can create more opportunities for residents to engage with each other to build community connectivity and identity by allocating funds and physical space for public space to cultivate positive neighborhood change.

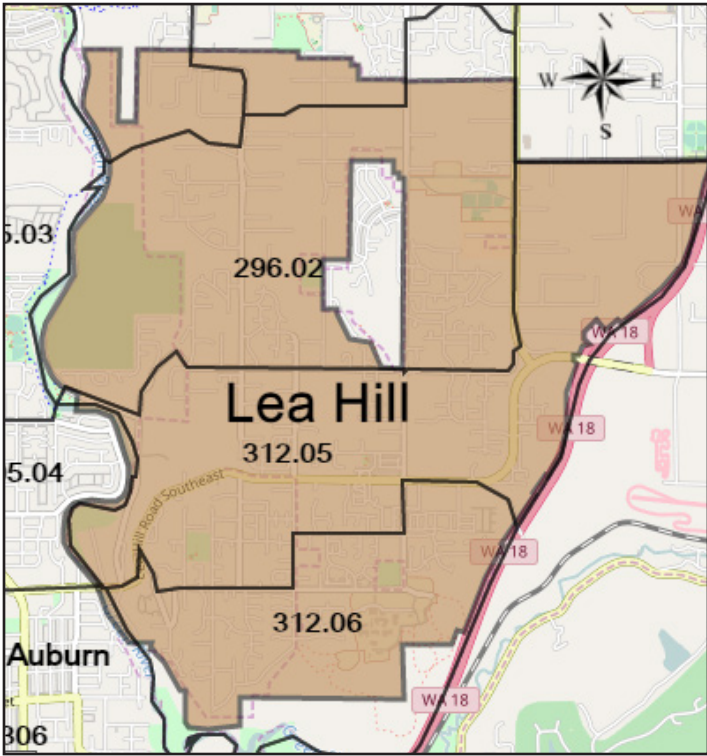
Summary of Recommendations for North Auburn

Neighborhood Improvement

- Add community hubs, such as coffee shops or meeting spaces in parks.
- Re-establish the Community Diversity Manager position, or hire a city official responsible for engaging non-English speaking communities.
- Compile an updated map of social services and resources in multiple languages with community input.
- Develop strategies to bring more of King County’s community engagement funds to Auburn.
- Create more community spaces to bring residents together.
- Targeted data collection regarding homelessness and engagement with the homeless population in ethical and respectful ways.

05.3 NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES

LEA HILL



Credit: Student team member

Overview of the Neighborhood

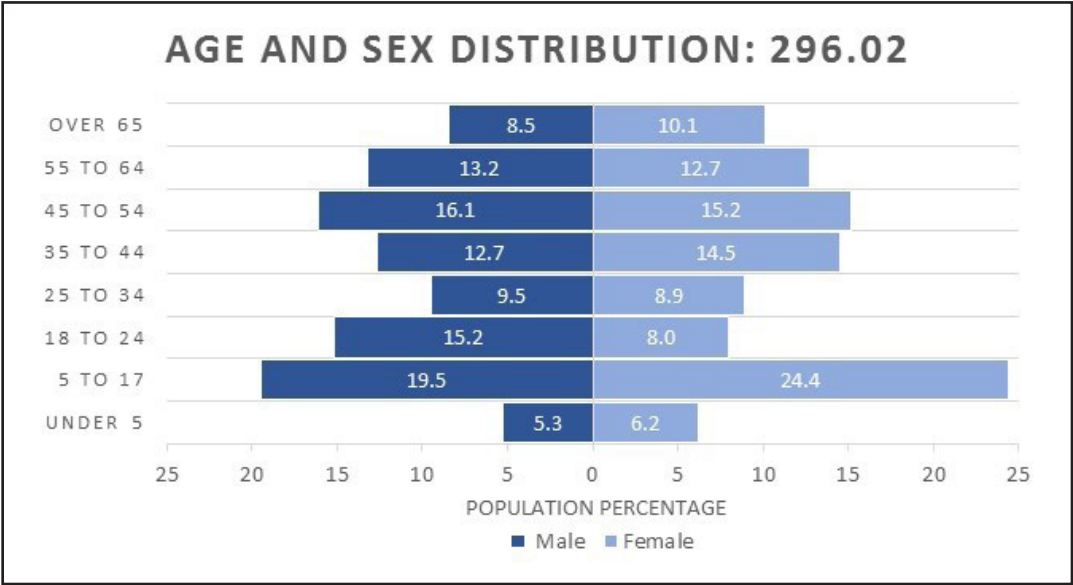
Population and Geography

The Lea Hill neighborhood is composed of approximately six square miles of land that sits on a plateau in the northeastern corner of Auburn, overlooking the central Auburn Valley. Lea Hill is home to one medical care facility, Lea Hill Urgent Care Family Medicine, and one grocery store, Food Market at Lea Hill. Green River College is also located in the neighborhood and has a student body of 18,000 (Green River College Foundation 2015). The Lea Hill neighborhood is comprised of

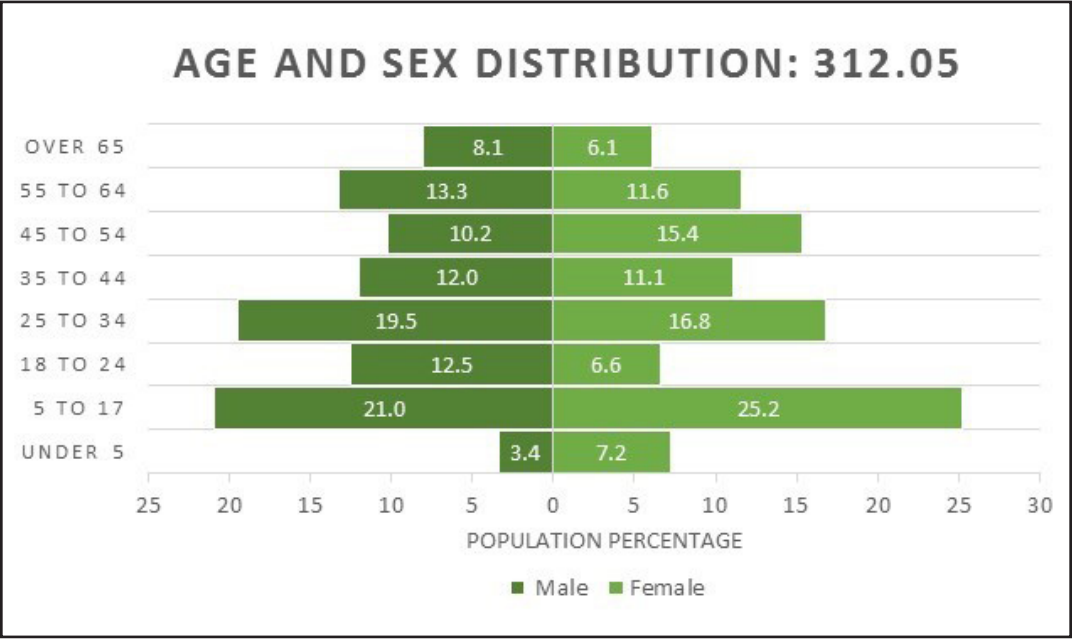
3 census tracts. In the following demographic information, the census tracts are denoted by their geographic orientation in relation to Lea Hill.

Land Area	3.2 sq mi. (10.8% of Auburn Land Area)
Population	15,507 residents (20.8% of Auburn pop.)
.....	
Median Age (Years)	
296.02	32.8
312.05	32.1
312.06	32.4
Total Households	5,600
Family Household	4,249 (75.9% of total)
Nonfamily Households	1,351 (24.1% of total)
Average Household Size	
296.02	3.31
312.05	3.08
312.06	3.00

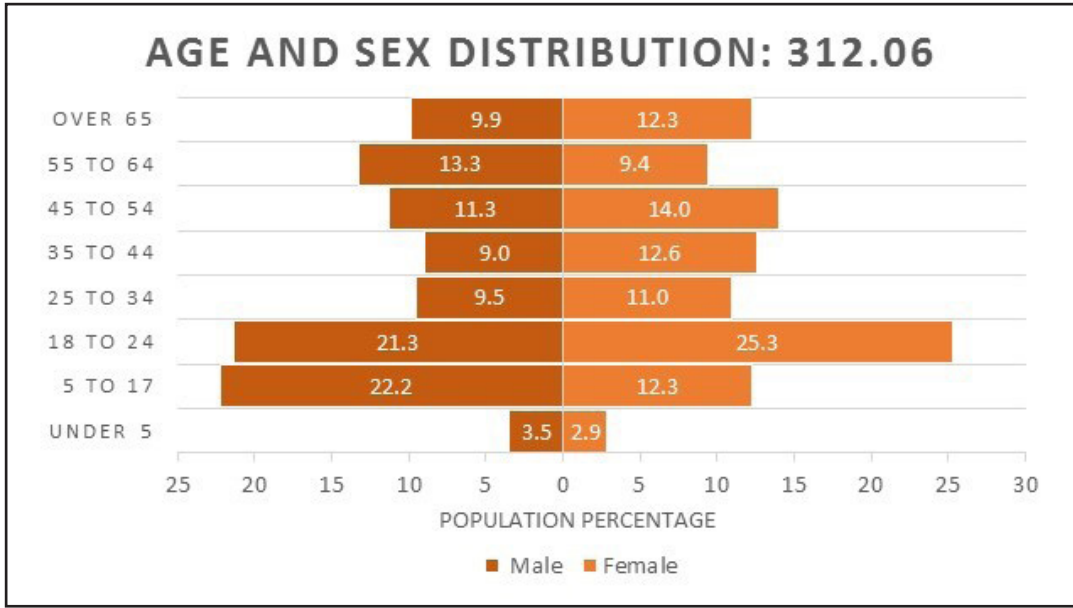
Credit: North Auburn group report.



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

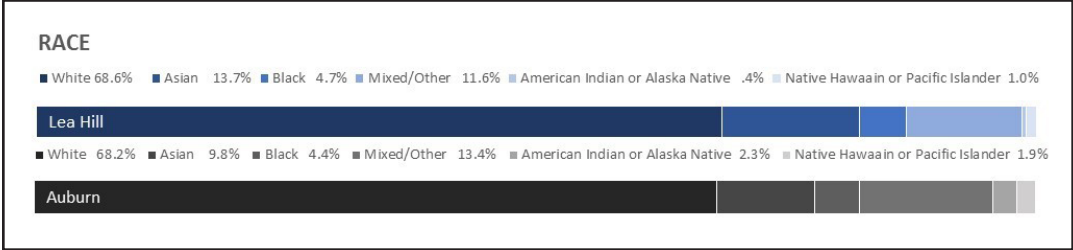


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

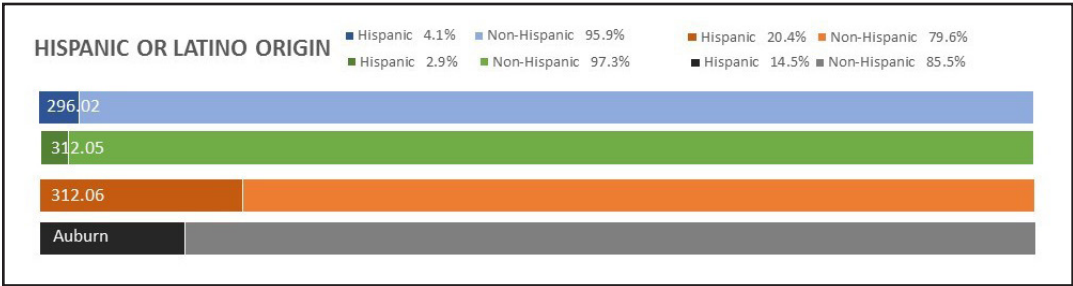


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

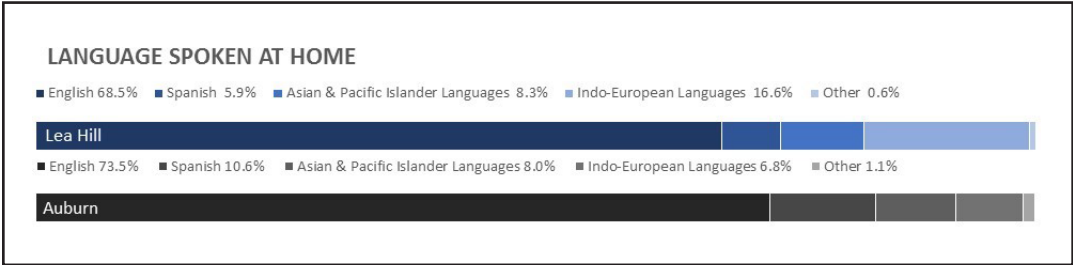
Race, Language and Ethnicity



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

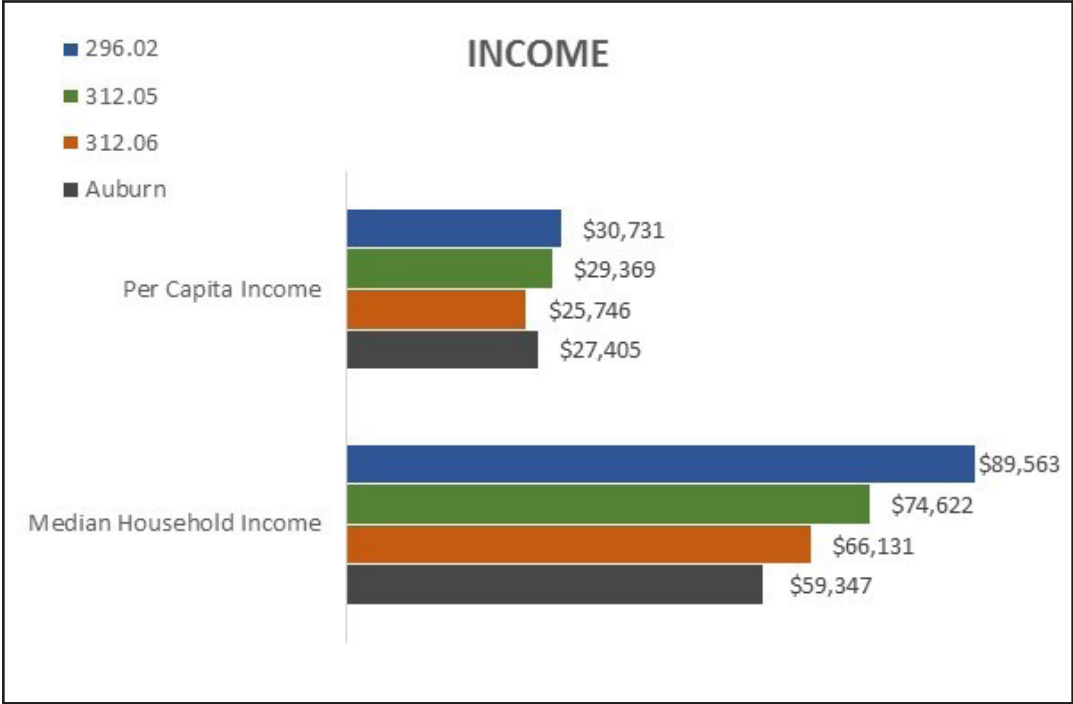


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Economic Opportunity



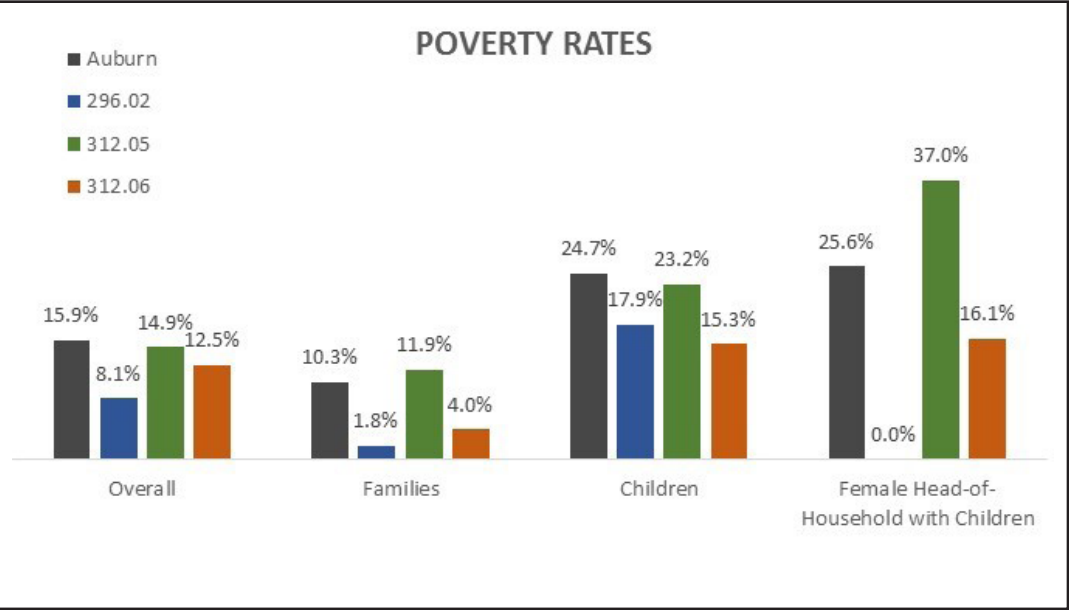
Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

31.5% aged 5 or older speak a language other than English at home.

33.2% of children living in Lea Hill aged 5 to 17 speak a language other than English at home. In census tract 296.02 (north), 52% of children speak a language other than English at home.

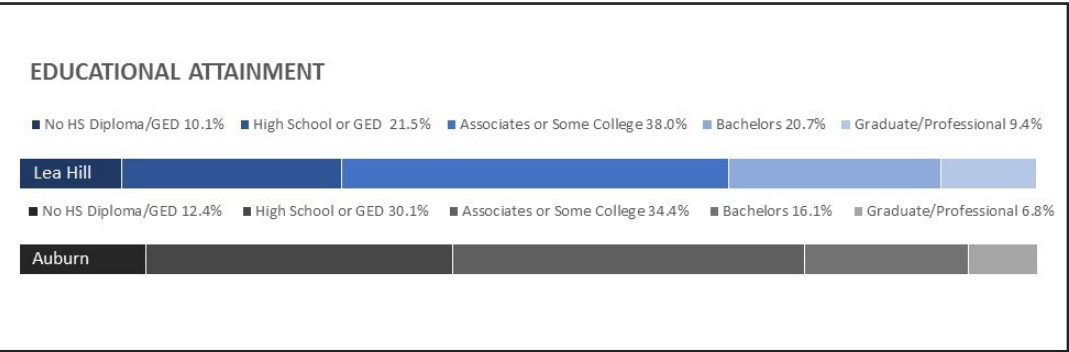
Key languages spoken at home other than English: Slavic languages other than Russian, Polish, or Serbio-Croatian (7.0% of residents), Spanish (5.9%), Russian (4.8%), Indic languages other than Hindi, Urdu, or Gujarati (2.7%), and Chinese (2.5%).

55.4% of renters in Lea Hill spend 30% or more of household income on rent.



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Education



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Stakeholder Interviews

Overview

Interviews were conducted with 5 Lea Hill stakeholders. 4 of the 5 stakeholders were residents of Lea Hill having lived in the neighborhood between 5 and 19 years. Of the 4 resident stakeholders, 3 belong to a HOA in Lea Hill and all 4 are National Night Out coordinators. 2 of the stakeholders, including the non-resident stakeholder, are employees at Green River College.

Findings

Many of the topics Lea Hill stakeholders discussed represented large-scale urban planning issues. Commonly presented issues include alleviating traffic and creating physical infrastructure to support a growing community: encouraging diversification of land-use, supporting commercial growth, and increasing access to health care

within the neighborhood. These issues contribute to a geographic and social isolation from the City of Auburn as well as to a lack of sense of community within Lea Hill.

Ideas for potential small neighborhood grant projects were pragmatic but limited. Stakeholder ideas focused on alternative modes of transportation to increase the walkability and use of public transportation in Lea Hill. Suggestions included improving and increasing the use of sidewalks and trails in the area, placing benches and shelters at bus stops to encourage use of public transportation, and installing speed bumps to improve the safety of neighborhood streets.

One stakeholder noted that one of the best attributes of Lea Hill was the natural beauty of the area. Perched atop a plateau with view of Mount Rainier and the Cascade mountains, the natural beauty of Lea Hill is an underappreciated asset. While stakeholders did not present specific recommendations based on this notion, small neighborhood grant projects increasing the interconnectedness of the neighborhood, residents, and nature are listed below in the community recommendations section.

PERCHED ATOP A PLATEAU WITH VIEW OF MOUNT RAINIER AND THE CASCADE MOUNTAINS, THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF LEA HILL IS AN UNDERAPPRECIATED ASSET

Presently, communication between City of Auburn representatives and Lea Hill residents is easiest through the neighborhood’s established Homeowner Associations (HOAs). Three of the five Lea Hill stakeholders belong to a HOA in Lea Hill, and these stakeholders stated that using the existing HOAs’ message boards or established communication channels would be an effective way to communicate with residents. However, not all Lea Hill residents are members of an HOA. For those community members, other methods of communication will be necessary.

While two stakeholders listed mail and email as additional methods of communication, in-person interaction was highlighted as a desired means of communication and community engagement in Lea Hill. One of our interviewees stated, “We only see them [city officials] at National Night Out. We’d like it if they came to our Lea Hill summer BBQ. We have a better connection with the police than the mayor or city council.” [Use previous sentence as a pull quote] While National Night Out helps reinforce the government-resident connection, other events including community picnics and summer BBQs present additional opportunities to engage with the community. One stakeholder stated that if the Auburn government wants to better connect with residents, leaving city council chambers and going out into the community is imperative. Comments such as, “leave the building and come here,” and, “they are less intimidating when they are not sitting in council chambers,” were issued by residents that were unable to attend city council meetings to meet their representatives and wanted more informal, one-on-one with officials.

Recommendations

Neighborhood Engagement

According to Lea Hill stakeholders, HOAs encourage community engagement and act as a liaison for residents to the city government. Currently, well-organized Lea Hill HOAs use the collective power of their members to communicate community opinions, ideas, and needs with the city government. The City of Auburn could utilize the established, extensive system of HOAs in Lea Hill to aid in communication; creating a reciprocal dialogue with HOAs as the intermediary. Further investigation into the use of HOAs as a means of communication is necessary to determine community receptivity to the proposal. Procedural barriers, such as ownership and access to the online content of HOA message boards, may also serve as a limitation to this proposal. While HOAs may continue to be a positive mode of communication in Lea Hill, they risk limiting involvement of residents not living in HOA communities and/or allowing HOA members to have higher and inequitable levels of influence than non-members. Consequently, other forms of communication would be necessary to ensure inclusive communication.

With over 30% of Lea Hill resident speaking a language other than English at home, providing city communications in other languages would increase community engagement within Lea Hill. In the growing and diversifying area of north Lea Hill where nearly 40% of all residents and a majority (52%) of children speak a language other than English at home this measure may prove especially useful. Providing materials on government activities and community events in other languages would foster a welcoming environment for the diverse population that the city of Auburn serves. Communication in the following languages would be most useful for the Lea Hill population based on demographic data: Ukrainian (particularly in north Lea Hill), Chinese (north Lea Hill), Spanish (south Lea Hill), and Russian (central Lea Hill). Indic languages other than Hindi are another common language group in Lea Hill (US Census Bureau 2016). However, due to limitations in the categorization of American Community Survey data for Indic languages, identifying exact languages commonly spoken in Lea Hill is not possible from currently available demographic information.

A final recommendation for increasing community engagement in Lea Hill is to use Green River College students as a resource for accessing populations that may otherwise prove difficult to reach: minority groups and young adults. With one of the most diverse student bodies in the United States, Green River College students are representative of a diversifying Auburn population (Johnson 2015). These students may be a resource for outreach efforts to minority populations in Lea Hill and Auburn, providing cultural insight and linguistic skills. One stakeholder noted students' desire for more jobs near campus and within Auburn, however, further research into potential partnerships with Green River College and its students would need to be undertaken first to determine interest and availability. Lastly, through an internship program or part-time employment, students could aid city government with the creation and upkeep of social media content while gaining applicable skills for joining the workforce in Auburn. A larger social media

presence could help the government to engage with more Auburn residents, particularly a younger demographic. City collaboration with the young, diverse population of Green River College would also demonstrate respect for the many cultures of Lea Hill and a concerted effort to respectfully engage in outreach with diverse communities.

Neighborhood Improvement

The collection and analysis of demographic information and stakeholder interviews were informative in identifying the needs, strengths and resources of the neighborhood. By focusing small neighborhood grants on the existing, positive features of the neighborhood, the City of Auburn could enhance already available and widely-used resources. Such projects could focus on increasing community connectedness, increasing walkability, decreasing traffic, and fostering economic opportunities for residents. Additional areas of improvement are beyond the scope of a small grant, such as general infrastructure improvements and the expansion of public services, including grocery stores, medical care facilities, and public transportation.

The beautiful wooded campus of Green River College hosts over a mile of walking trails, some of which are paved and wheelchair accessible. Lea Hill Park, which is also an asset in the community with a rentable picnic shelter, skate park, and other facilities currently serves as a community gathering space. Strengthening the relationship between the natural features of Lea Hill and the Lea Hill residents would promote communication between neighbors, HOAs, and the college. Enhanced relationships could strengthen the overall sense of community in Lea Hill.

Organizing community walks would encourage residents to explore their neighborhood and to make bonds with their Lea Hill neighbors outside of individual HOAs. Encouraging community use of the Green River College trails would lead to a greater connection between the college, its students, and the residents of Lea Hill. Increasing access to the outdoors and encouraging healthy habits, such as walking and biking, could lead to improvements in the physical and mental health of Lea Hill residents. The Seattle-based non-profit Feet First is an example of an initiative promoting walkable communities. Feet First "Neighborhood Walking Ambassadors" lead guided walks in their communities fostering relationships between neighbors, promoting walking and walkability issues, and encouraging community-wide participation in healthy behaviors. Feet First also encourages residents to explore their neighborhoods by creating "Walking Maps" and participating in "Walking Audits" which assess barriers to walkability in a neighborhood (Feet First 2013).

The built environment is an important determinant of physical activity levels within a community. In a review of research on the built environment and physical activity, researchers concluded that there is an association between walking for recreation and quality pedestrian infrastructure, aesthetic appeal, land use mix, and safety (Diez Roux and Mair 2010). While Lea Hill benefits from an aesthetically-pleasing location, improved pedestrian infrastructure and safety could encourage walking in the neighborhood. The maps below show Lea Hill's distribution of street lamps and sidewalks in the area. Many sections of Lea Hill lack adequate sidewalks and

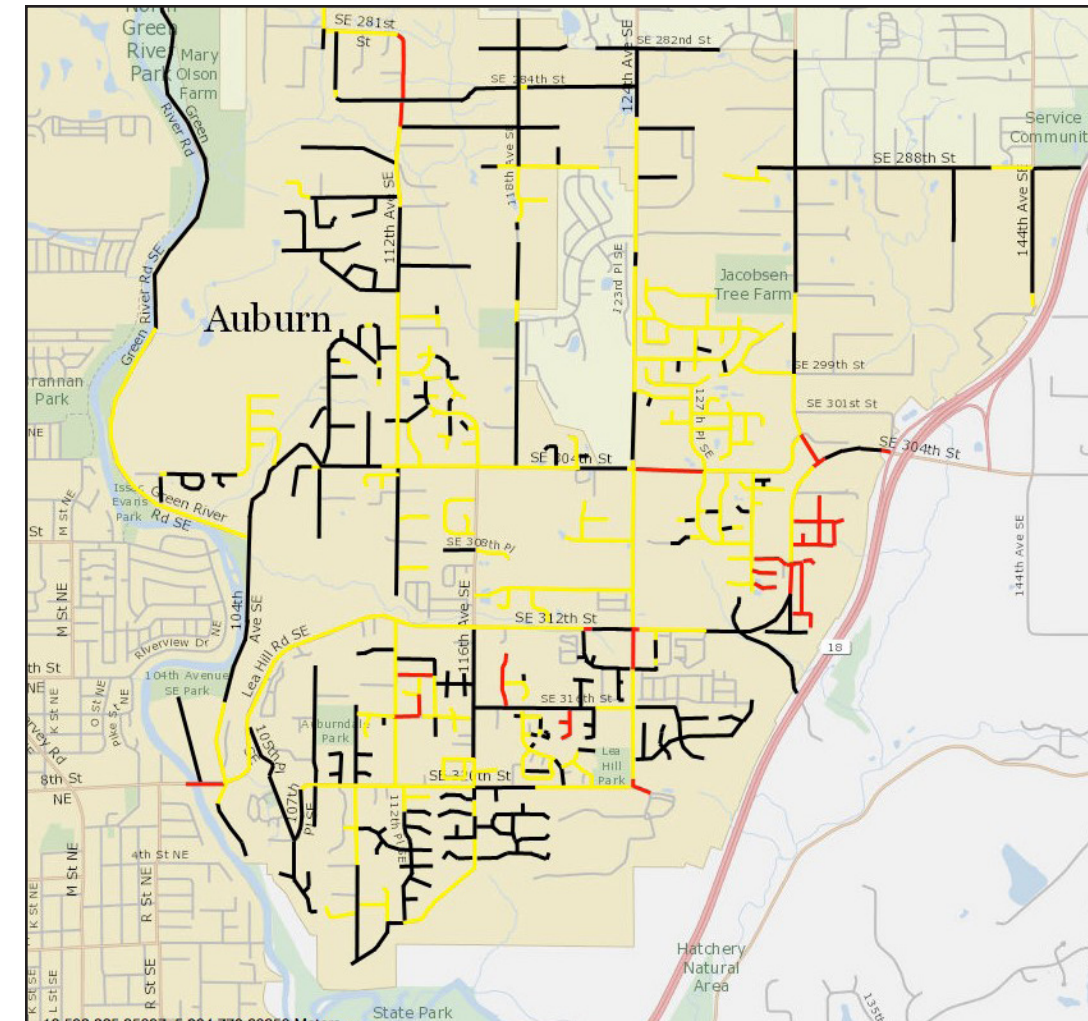
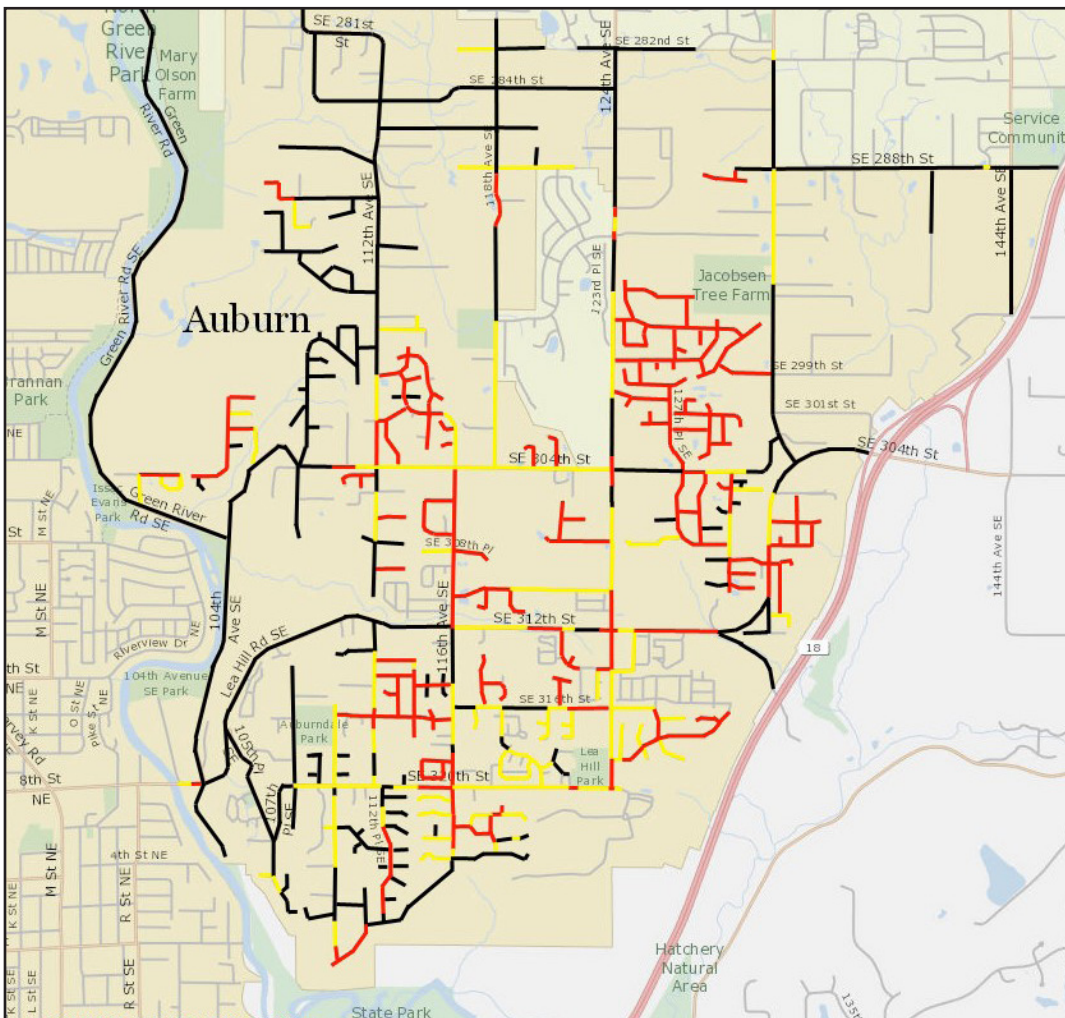


streetlights, creating an unsafe environment for pedestrians and drivers in the neighborhood. Installing additional street lamps and sidewalks would improve safety and walkability, thereby encouraging more residents to walk. An additional stakeholder suggestion was to install speed bumps in residential neighborhoods to reduce speeding.

A broad consensus among Lea Hill stakeholders was the issue of traffic congestion. While major infrastructure improvements are beyond the scope of this project, encouraging increased use of public transportation is possible. A small community

SIDEWALKS IN LEA HILL

Roads in red have sidewalks on both sides of road; roads in yellow have sidewalks on one side; roads in black have no sidewalks; and roads in gray are unknown. Created from Google Maps Street View, December, 2016.



STREETLIGHTS IN LEA HILL

Roads in red have streetlights on both sides of road; roads in yellow have lights on one side; roads in black have no lights; and roads in gray are unknown. Created from Google Maps Street View, December, 2016.

grant project could involve the beautification and/or construction of covered bus stops to encourage the use of public transportation.

Lea Hill stakeholders are proud of the neighborhood they live and work in. Lea Hill Park and the Green River College campus are highlights of the natural beauty of the neighborhood. A strong system of HOAs encourages communication and a sense of community within Lea Hill. And just as the diverse student body of Green River College is an appreciated yet underutilized asset to the community, the Lea Hill neighborhood itself may be viewed as an underutilized asset to the students. By encouraging closer ties between the community and the school, the City of Auburn could foster a mutually beneficial relationship for students and residents. We anticipate that the strengths and resources of Lea Hill are important to a sustainable, livable, and affordable Auburn.

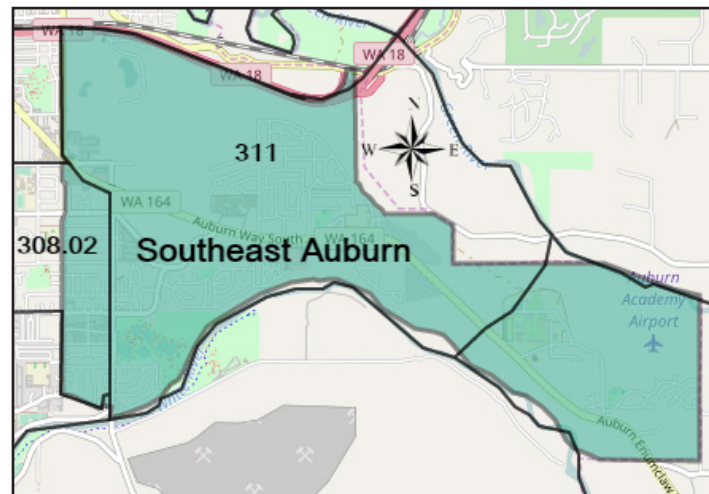
Summary of Recommendations for Lea Hill

Neighborhood Improvement

- Organize community walks to encourage community engagement and physical well-being.
- Increase sidewalks and streetlights to increase pedestrian and vehicular safety.
- Foster relationships and investigate partnerships with Green River College and its students.
- Increase and/or improve bus stop shelters to encourage public transportation use and decrease traffic congestion.
- Promote community events in multiple languages (namely, Ukrainian, Chinese, Spanish, and Russian) to achieve broader, cross-cultural community engagement.

05.4 NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES

SOUTHEAST AUBURN



Credit: Student team member

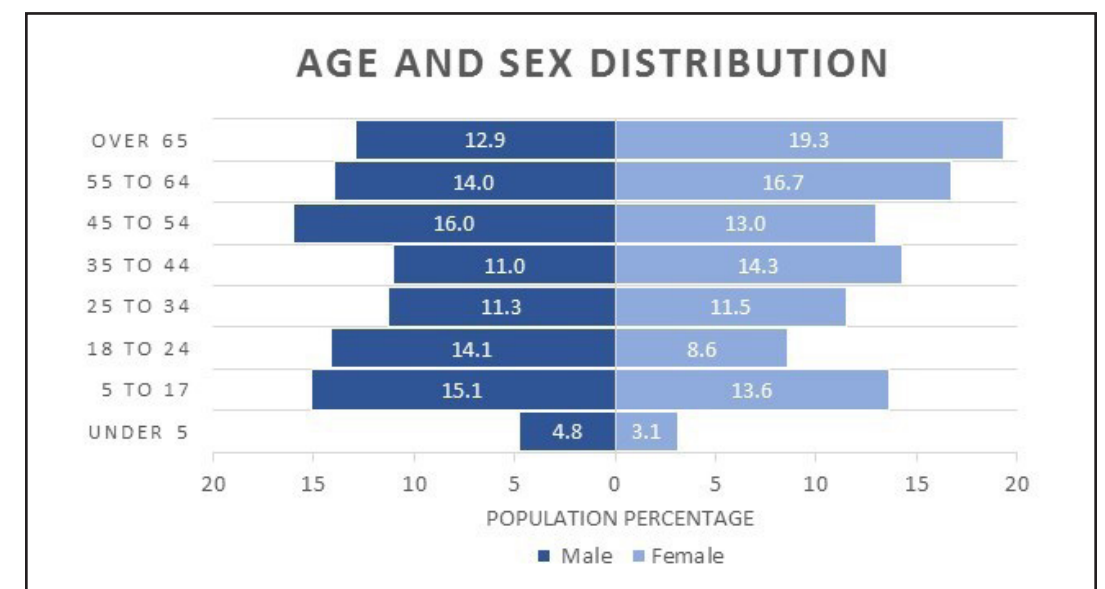
Overview of the Neighborhood

Population and Geography

Southeast Auburn is a diverse, working class neighborhood that shares a complex border with the Muckleshoot Reservation. Pockets of Muckleshoot land are surrounded by city-owned land and vice versa, making it difficult to distinguish between reservation and city land. The majority of the neighborhood is contained within census tract 311.

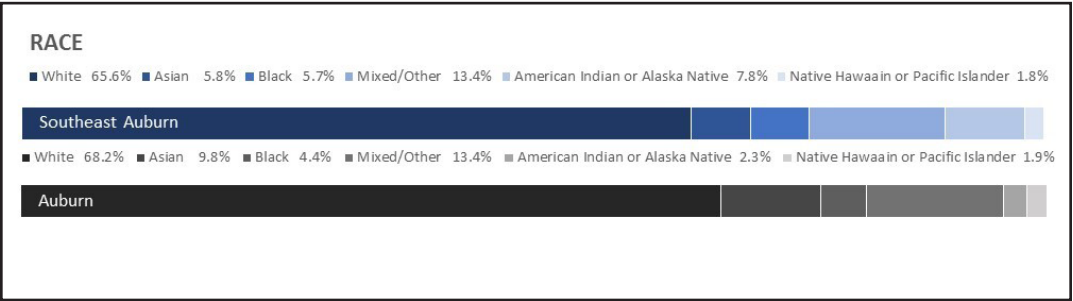
Land Area	2.8 sq mi. (9.4% of Auburn Land area)
Population	6,861 residents (9.2% of Auburn pop.)
Median Age (Years)	42.2
305.03	42.2
305.04	42.0
306	36.5
Total Households	6,037
Family Household	1,509 (58.5% of total)
Nonfamily Households	1,071 (41.5% of total)

Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

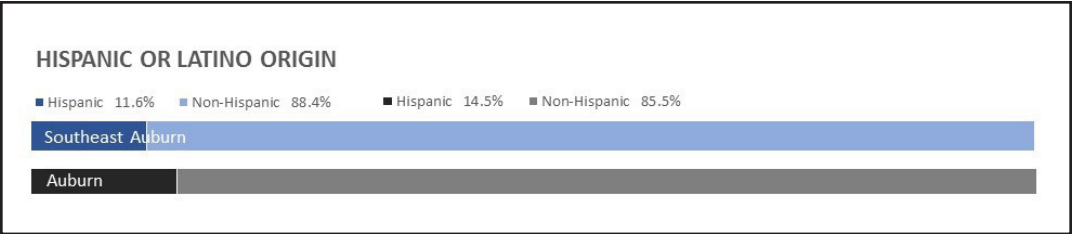


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

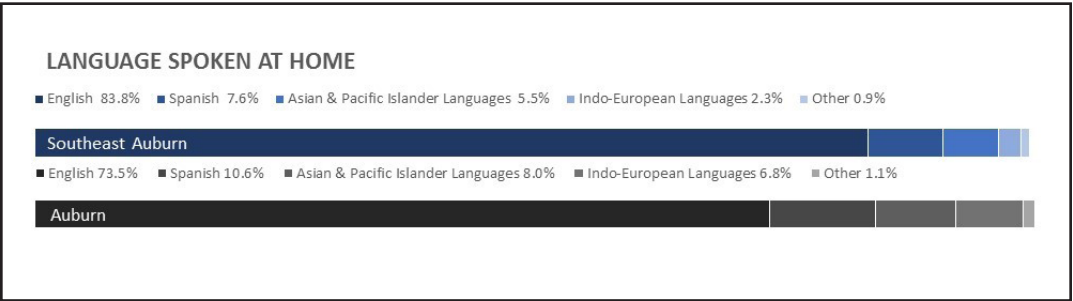
Race and Ethnicity and Language



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

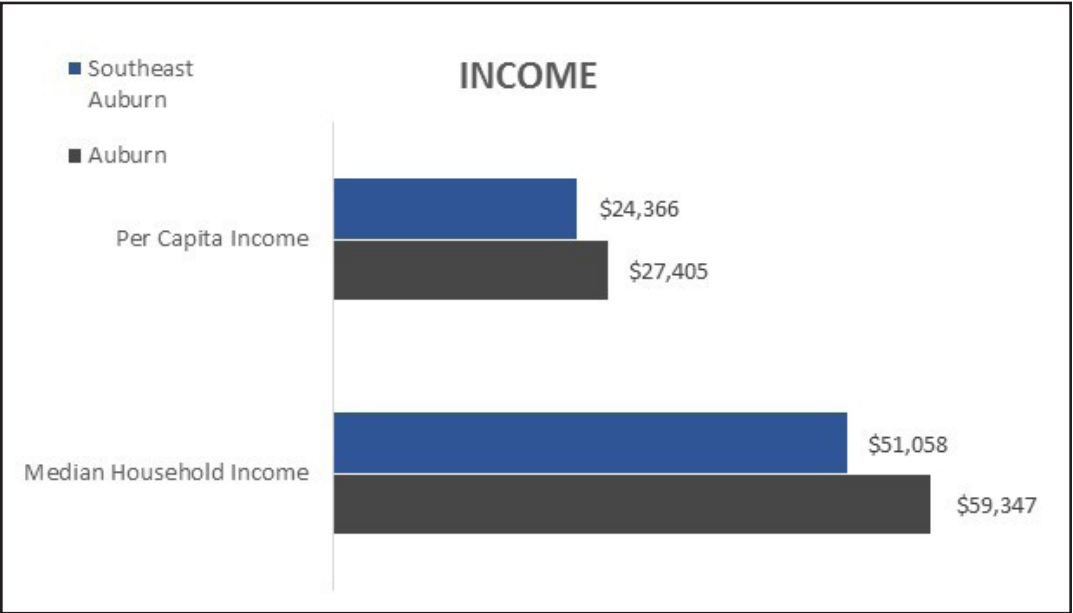


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

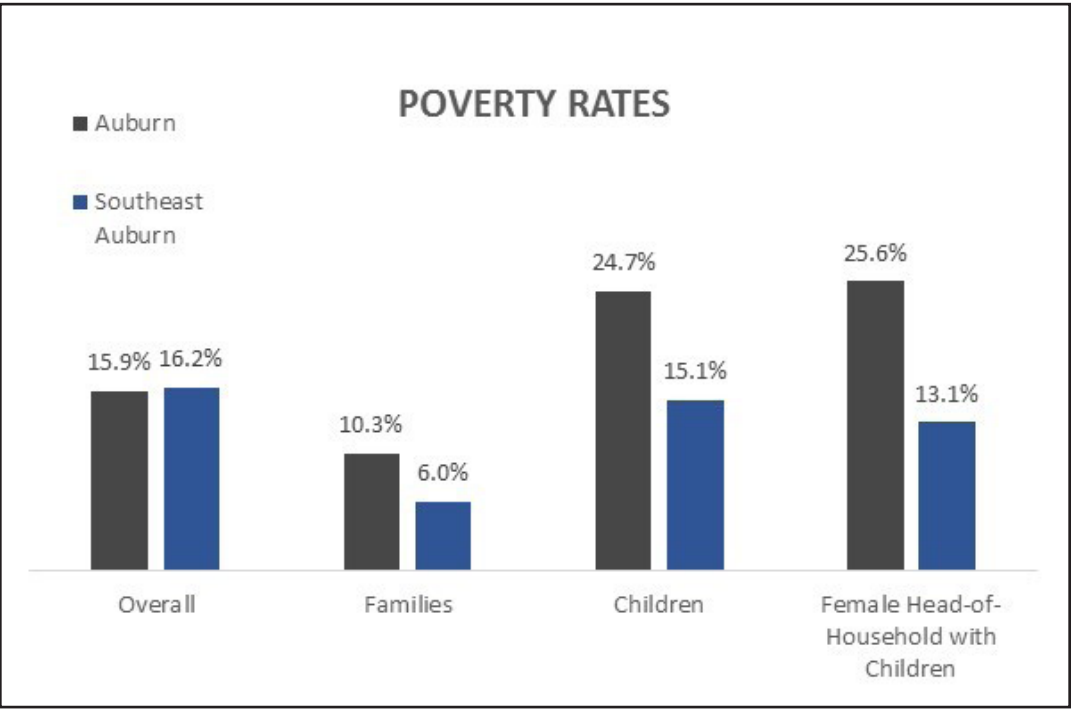


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Economic Opportunity

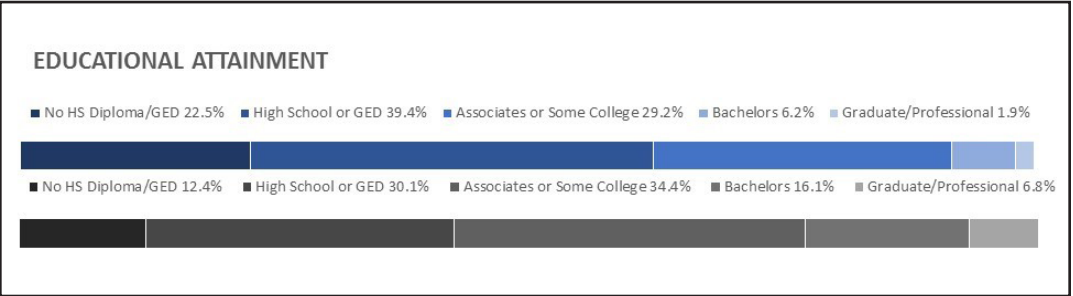


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Education



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Stakeholder Interviews

Overview

Stakeholders included a schoolteacher in the area, representatives from the real-estate and housing market, a resident involved in community and city events, and a representative from the police force in the Southeast Auburn and Muckleshoot Tribal areas.

16.2% aged 5 or older speak a language other than English at home.

17.1% of children living in Southeast Auburn aged 5 to 17 speak a language other than English at home.

Key languages spoken at home other than English: Spanish (7.6% of residents), Korean (2.1%), and Vietnamese (1.5%).

60.9% of renters in Southeast Auburn spend 30% or more of household income on rent.

Findings

Housing

Throughout all interviews, housing was a common topic of discussion. A real estate agent in Auburn describes the Southeast Auburn neighborhood as mixed income with mostly blue collar workers and as an “affordable” neighborhood for those looking to buy their first home. However, many other stakeholders mentioned concerns about a lack of affordable or quality housing. In recent years, the Muckleshoot Tribe has purchased parcels of land in Southeast Auburn and tribal members have moved off of the reservation and onto city land. This has left non-tribal members with fewer housing options as the homes purchased by the tribe are exclusively for tribal members. Another stakeholder, a resident of Southeast Auburn, mentioned that the tribe maintains mostly rental properties on the land they own. According to the stakeholder, the population residing in rental homes is less invested in the maintenance of the neighborhood and in the well-being of the community. Another stakeholder mentioned that safety nets were lacking for people who are evicted from rental homes. With no place to go, they can end up on the streets.

Homelessness

Homelessness was mentioned by all interviewees who all shared negative perception surrounding homeless individuals in public places, such as parks and the library. For example, one stakeholder mentioned she felt uneasy taking her kids to the park because of the large presence of homeless people there. Although public spaces are generally welcoming to the homeless community, some residents do not share this sentiment and therefore avoid these spaces. Communal spaces can be key drivers for fostering a sense of community, and avoiding them perpetuates a lack of community involvement, engagement, and trust.

Food Access

Food access was another issue that arose in many conversations. One stakeholder said there are few quality restaurants in the area, but several fast food chains, and others mentioned that there were only a few small markets and no large grocery stores. Another stakeholder explained that they started to notice food access issues when the local Albertson’s relocated. They explained that if there was one change they could make to the community: it would be to bring back a grocery store. These personal accounts help illustrate the need for a more in-depth assessment of where residents are buying their food, how far they have to travel to get to a store, and whether this restricts them from having sufficient access to nutritious foods.

Transportation

As explained by stakeholders, many Southeast Auburn residents are reliant upon personal cars for transportation, especially since few public transportation options exist in the neighborhood. This lack of public transportation leaves many residents who are unable to afford a car with few options but to walk. As explained by one stakeholder, this is a considerably dangerous task given the low number of sidewalks and the abundance of vehicle crashes. The Washington Tracking Network found that between 2009 and 2013 there were 412 auto crashes in Southeast Auburn, a higher rate than 70% of other neighborhoods in Washington. In the same time period, they considered 45.3% of crashes (per 100,000) to be either fatal or serious in the Southeast Auburn neighborhood (Washington State Department of Health 2016). The City of Auburn reported that, “the section of Auburn Way



Credit: Southeast Auburn group

South between the Muckleshoot Plaza and Dogwood Street SE is a high accident corridor where there have been numerous serious and fatal accidents,” and, “the intersection at Riverwalk Drive SE has the highest accident rate of any intersection within the Auburn City limits.” For this reason, the city is working on a year-long project, beginning in the fall of 2016, to construct several improvements to the Auburn Way South Corridor (City of Auburn, Washington).

Education

While the topic of education was not central in interviews, it was noted occasionally. One stakeholder mentioned that there was a good deal of diversity within the school district, due in part to the city being a “cultural soup,” but also because of the number of tribal students who attended public schools. Another stakeholder mentioned that the schools tended to receive funding from the Muckleshoot Tribe as some tribal members attended the city’s public schools. Students saw this as a positive outcome of mutual benefit between public schools and the tribe. The realtor stakeholder claimed that the neighborhood frequently passes school bonds, indicating they see the value in maintaining and creating new infrastructure for youth.

Tribal Relations

Finally, relations between tribal and non-tribal members was an issue addressed in most interviews. A police officer who works with the tribe explained that the physical border between city-owned and reservation is not clearly marked. In particular, the area next to the Muckleshoot Casino is very heterogeneous due to the tribe selling their property in the past and repurchasing properties in recent years. There are several non-tribal residents that live on tribal land/property and vice versa. Stakeholders frequently mentioned that the tribe has different rules or laws, specifically around the purchase and use of fireworks, and these differences are sometimes frustrating to residents. Stakeholders also discussed the tribe’s support of its members through the provision of food, housing, and healthcare, suggesting that tribal members were less in need of social services from the City of Auburn. Some stakeholders viewed the tribe as prosperous because of the casino’s success and felt that the tribe has strongly influenced the way the community has developed in recent years. Relations between the Muckleshoot Tribe and the City of Auburn seem to be slowly improving, evidenced by efforts such as the introduction of an Auburn police officer who is stationed on tribal land as a liaison. General relationships were also noted to have strengthened gradually over time and it was mentioned that progress is being made between the tribe and the city as they work on developing ordinances together.

Recommendations

Neighborhood Engagement

In Southeast Auburn, there are two main geographic communities: the area near the Muckleshoot Casino, defined informally by interviewees as “up the hill,” and the commercial area known as “down the hill.” There were also different communities based on shared identity, specifically Muckleshoot tribal members and non-tribal residents. Each of these communities within Southeast Auburn has unique perspectives and goals that should be understood and considered in the process of working to improve the neighborhood.

RESIDENTS VOICED A DESIRE TO CONNECT WITH ONE ANOTHER, WITH CITY OFFICIALS, AND WITH TRIBAL LEADERS AND MEMBERS

Interviewees thought that engaging these diverse communities and increasing social connection across groups would be an important way to foster community on a larger scale and work toward collective change making. Specifically, residents voiced a desire to connect with one another, with city officials, and with tribal leaders and members. The Southeast Auburn community is already engaged

online, particularly through NextDoor, a website that provides a space for dialogue, announcements, and communication surrounding neighborhood issues, and is used by both residents and police officers. However, NextDoor is not a universally respected platform, and residents want more opportunities to meet face-to-face through both formal community meetings and informal common meeting spaces.

Increased coalition building through the engagement of both interested and empowered stakeholders would be a helpful step in accomplishing many of the resident suggestions for neighborhood improvement. In establishing neighborhood coalitions, students suggested the importance of creating equity. Some stakeholders expressed that they felt left out of previous conversations and we recommend that future meetings be inclusive and welcoming to all residents. To achieve the goal of inclusivity, steps should be taken to ensure all voices are heard, including taking attendance at meetings and reaching out to those groups not present, alternating who is facilitating meetings, and ensuring that different groups have a chance to direct the conversations.

Examples of goals for collective neighborhood conversations and coalitions include (1) increased partnership with the Muckleshoot Tribe in general, and around issues such as fireworks and transportation in particular, (2) shelters and resources for people experiencing homelessness, and (3) access to grocery stores and fresh foods. Below are student’s preliminary suggestions for addressing these issues, with the overarching suggestion that input and involvement from the community should be sought throughout the implementation of these recommendations.

Neighborhood Improvement

Students first recommend an emphasis on connecting tribal and non-tribal members through community meetings. One stakeholder mentioned that current community meetings are primarily focused on providing education to residents about policing practices and creating neighborhood watches. Based on this individual’s work with the tribe, the stakeholder suggested that connecting with tribal elders is an important way to understand the Muckleshoot community. As another stakeholder mentioned, developing a partnership with the tribe and compromising on issues facing the community is an essential part of building a positive future for Southeast Auburn. Due to time constraints and difficulty reaching the appropriate representatives within the Muckleshoot Tribe, students were unable to speak with a representative of the tribe which created a gap in assessment.

Given that Native Americans populations have a long history of marginalization and historical trauma; it is possible that members of the Muckleshoot tribe may be less interested in engaging with Auburn city officials in conversations or projects focused on Auburn community improvement. This is an important reason for developing relationships that are reciprocal and based on respect for the Muckleshoot culture. City officials should endeavor to practice cultural humility in developing relationships with Muckleshoot tribal members, with the assistance of members who are willing to advise on this process. Generally, cultural humility is defined as an awareness of gaps in one’s knowledge and effort to learn and respect what

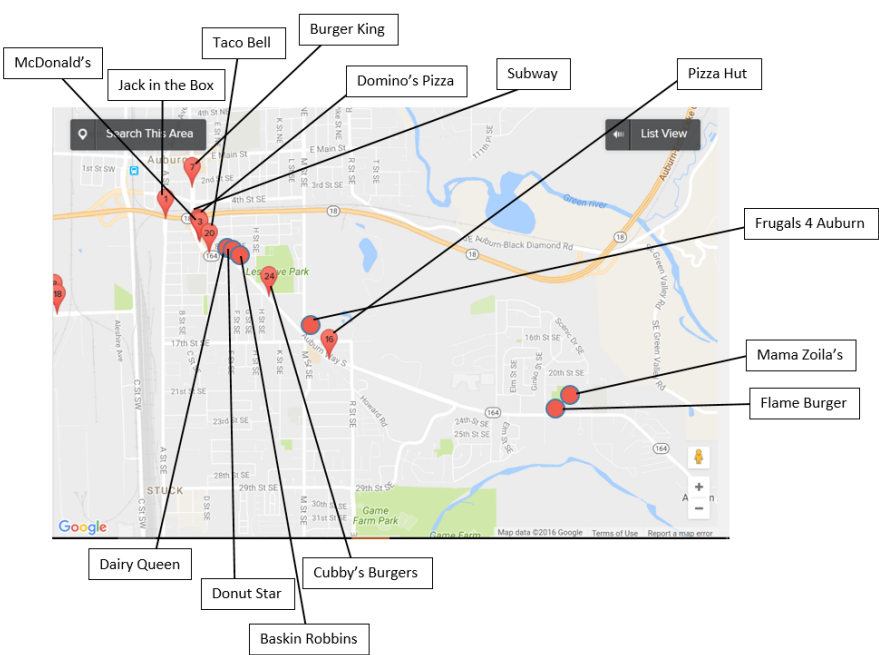
others see as important (Chavez 2012). In conversations about tribal relations, it is also critical to understand, recognize, and address the way racism, historically and presently, shapes institutions and interactions (Jones 2000). Students recommend ensuring that the voices of the first inhabitants of this community are equally represented, heard, supported, and involved.

Students also recommend providing additional services to the homeless population. While there are organizations currently providing services for the homeless community, such as the Auburn Food Bank and the Auburn Library, there is a lack of comprehensive services for the low-income population in Auburn. According to the January 16th, 2016 One Night Count, 110 individuals were found sleeping outside in Auburn (Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness 2016). Additionally, the total count of those sleeping outdoors in King County increased 19% from last year. King County declared a State of Emergency on Homelessness in 2015 (City of Seattle 2015). This information corroborates the anecdotes from

WHILE THERE ARE ORGANIZATIONS CURRENTLY PROVIDING SERVICES FOR THE HOMELESS COMMUNITY, SUCH AS THE AUBURN FOOD BANK AND THE AUBURN LIBRARY, THERE IS A LACK OF COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES FOR THE LOW-INCOME POPULATION IN AUBURN

stakeholder interviews, which suggest that the homeless population is growing rapidly in Southeast Auburn and there are no designated places for homeless residents to go during the day or night. Students recommend expanding services to this population by opening shelters for men, women, young adults and families, case management services, supportive housing, drug treatment, and health care facilities. These programs require sufficient funding to operate. However, the city could consider any unexplored sources of funding from the county, or partnering with some of the many churches in Southeast Auburn to begin collaboratively addressing homelessness. Engaging the Southeast Auburn community in discussions of how to address homelessness within their specific area will yield new ideas that have community support. Collective action around homelessness that includes stakeholders who are experiencing the issue personally, invested community members, and institutions from different sectors, would have the added benefit of enhancing connectivity, building trust, and fostering new collaboration between residents, city government, and community groups. Addressing one issue together might allow the Southeast Auburn neighborhood to forge a strong system for dealing with future issues in an inclusive and collaborative way.

Access to nutritious foods is another issue in Southeast Auburn. The City of Auburn, as a whole, seems to recognize food access issues and is working on plans to address them. Specifically, the Auburn Community Vision Report and Auburn Health Impact Assessment proposed local year-round farmer’s markets and food and nutrition programming (City of Auburn, Washington 2014). Such interventions are essential, but holistic resolutions of food quality and availability will require an



Credit: Southeast Auburn group report.

integrated approach to ensure programs and markets are utilized by the people who need them, such as those in areas like Southeast Auburn, where nutritious foods are limited. Part of a holistic approach includes changing health behaviors surrounding food choices. While students did not have the opportunity to speak with residents about their health behaviors, residents voiced a desire for increased healthful food options. By first giving residents the option to make nutritious selections when dining out or preparing food at home, the city can have a broad impact on residents’ health. As noted by Braveman (2011), the options available in a neighborhood effect the health decisions that community members make. Health behaviors can be further addressed with programs to increase residents’ knowledge about healthy foods and cooking classes to promote healthy food preparation that is feasible and culturally relevant to residents. More immediately, students recommend exploring opportunities to bring a supermarket into Southeast Auburn. Access and proximity to supermarkets with fresh produce has been linked to a lower prevalence of obesity, while closeness to only small delis and convenience stores (like those in Southeast Auburn) is linked to higher rates of obesity (Braveman 2011). Specific choices of appropriate markets should be decided by the residents themselves, perhaps through a questionnaire sent out by the city.

According to the USDA, any area where at least 33% of residents are one mile or more from a grocery store is considered a food desert (American Nutrition Association 2015). In Southeast Auburn, the closest grocery store is a Safeway about 2 miles from the center of the neighborhood, thus qualifying the area as a food desert. In addition, about 9.5% of total households in Southeast Auburn are without a vehicle and more than half a mile from the supermarket (USDA ERS 2016). The lack of major grocery stores with fresh produce is further compounded by few restaurants that market healthy foods and a high prevalence of fast food restaurants. Driving south on Auburn Way and WA-164, one can see the abundance of fast food restaurants in shopping centers and side-roads.

With the amount of fast food restaurants that saturate the main corridor of the Southeast area, there is a significant need for nutritious alternatives. The city should assess the type of sit-down restaurants that residents would prefer and incentivize these restaurants to come to their neighborhoods. The choice of a restaurant should be thoughtfully considered, integrating nutritious options with resident preferences, especially with regard to affordability. If decision makers ignore the reasons why residents are choosing fast food in the first place (often for the modest prices and convenience), then the alternatives they bring in may not make a difference in patrons' choices. Overall, through continuous assessment of programs and their impacts (both intended and unintended), and cognizant collaboration and partnerships with residents, the city can help bring more nutritious food options to Southeast Auburn for the benefit of the neighborhood's health.

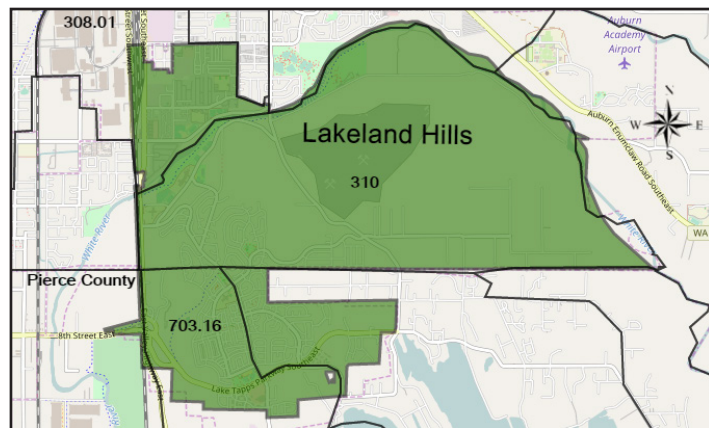
Summary of Recommendations for Southeast Auburn

Neighborhood Improvement

- Develop resources for residents to create and maintain spaces to communicate with one another and with city officials.
- Pursue ongoing opportunities to engage and collaborate with the Muckleshoot Tribe to develop open communication and shared policies around common issues, specifically property maintenance and fireworks.
- Expand services for homeless residents, specifically overnight shelters.
- Improve food access by promoting the establishment of a supermarket and restaurants serving affordable, high-quality food.

05.5 NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES

LAKELAND HILLS



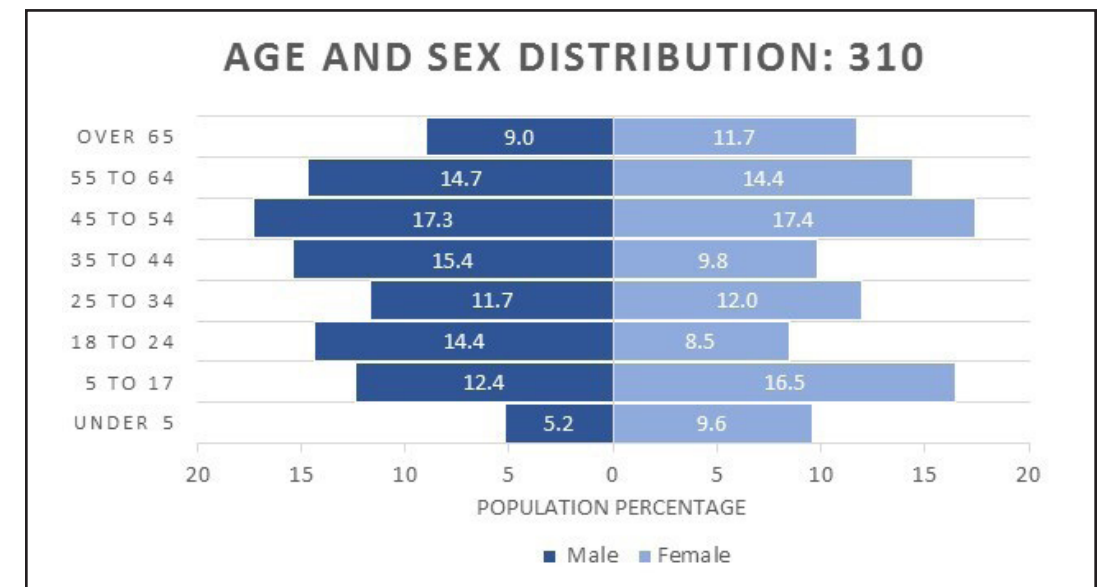
Credit: Student team member

Overview of the Neighborhood

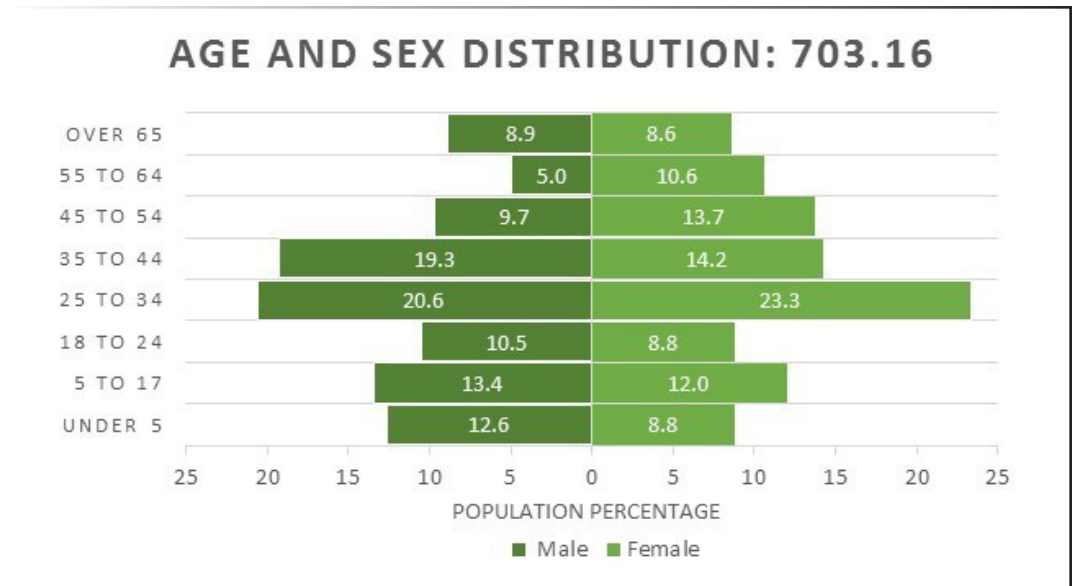
Population and Geography

Lakeland Hills stands in the most Southern part of Auburn, at the highest point of the hill split between King and Pierce County. This neighborhood distinguishes itself from the surrounding areas by its well-developed landscaping, idyllic homes, and clean, well-maintained streets. Lakeland Hills includes 3 census tracts: census tract 310 (King County), census tract 703.16 (Pierce County), and census tract 703.15. Census tract 703.15 includes only a small section of Lakeland Hills along with the Lake Tapps area and was excluded from this summary.

Land Area	3.2 sq mi. (10.8% of Auburn Land Area)
Population	15,507 residents (20.8% of Auburn pop.)
Median Age (Years)	
310	40.5
703.16	32.1
Total Households	4,131
Family Household	2,526 (61.1% of total)
Nonfamily Household	1,605 (38.9% of total)
Average Household Size	
310	2.70
703.16	2.95



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Economic Opportunity



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

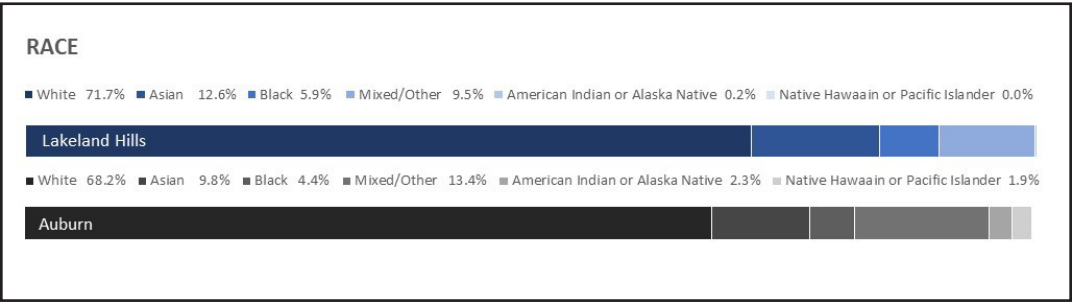
59.5% of renters in census tract 703.16 and 44.5% in census tract 310 spend 30% or more of household income on rent.

Race, Ethnicity, and Language

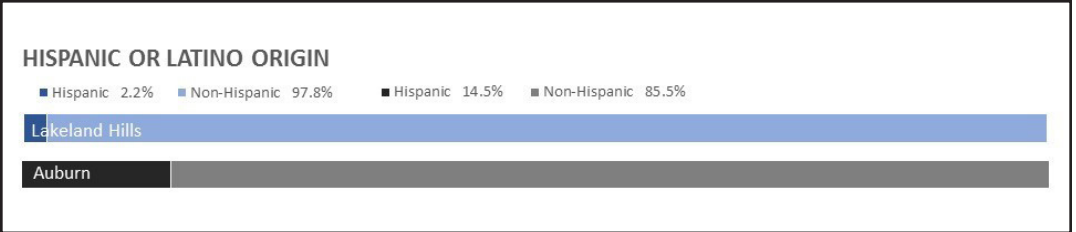
17.1% aged 5 or older speak a language other than English at home.

5.4% of children living in Lakeland Hills aged 5 to 17 speak a language other than English at home.

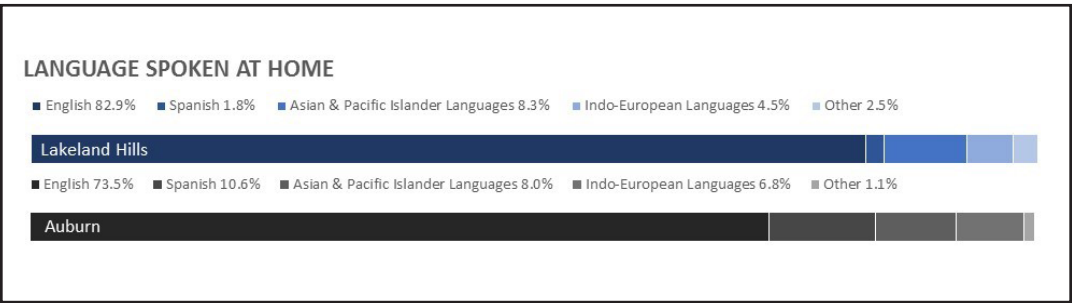
Key languages spoken at home other than English: African languages (2.4% of residents), Tagalog (2.0%), Korean (2.0%), and Spanish (1.8%).



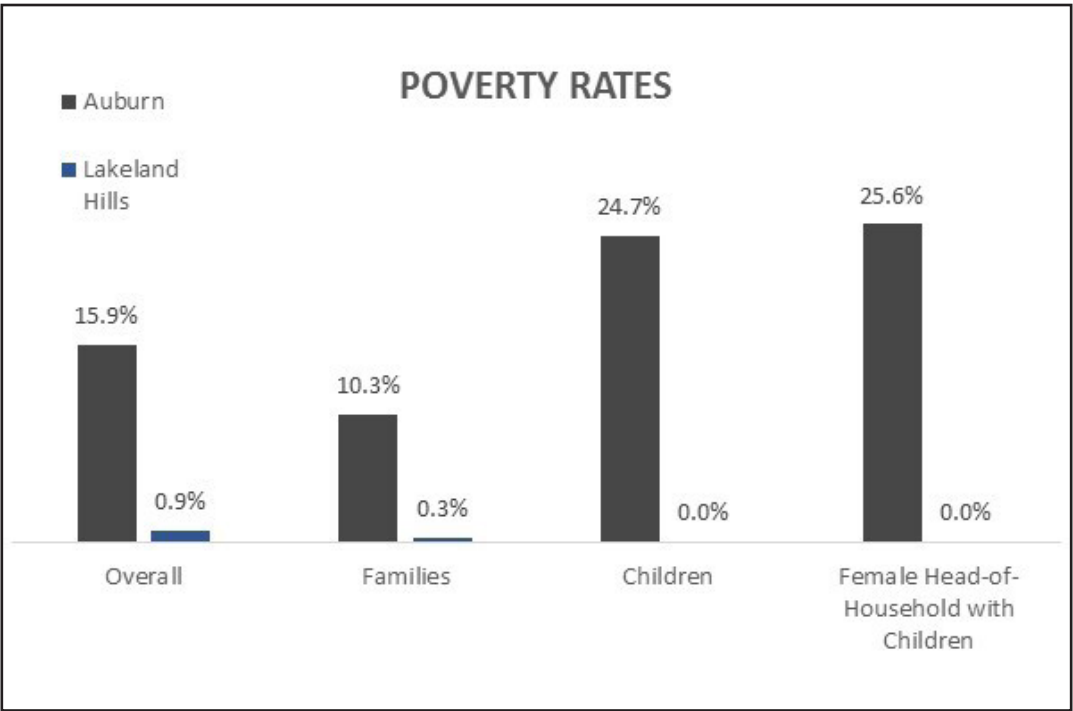
Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

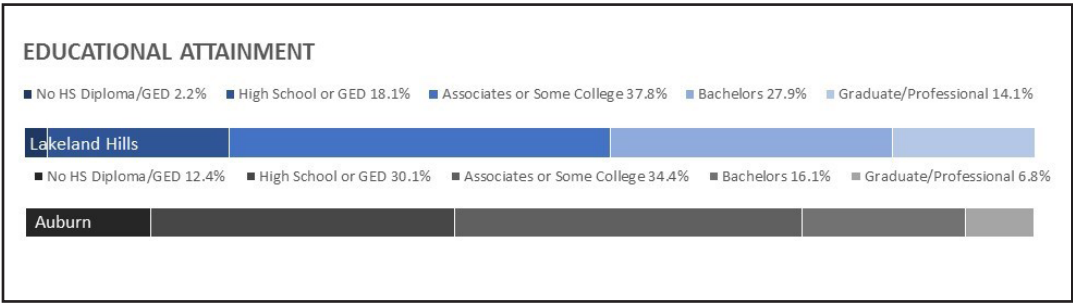


Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Education



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Stakeholder Interviews

Overview

Students connected with a total of four stakeholders who lived within the Lakeland Hills community. One interviewee was intentionally unemployed, two were working professionals (part time and full time), and one was a retiree. One stakeholder identified herself as a mother of a child who attended school in the community. Despite efforts to reach out to stakeholder groups in Lakeland Hills, students were unable to connect to a large number of individuals, and our number of interviews (four) remained small.

Findings

Welcome sign entering the Lakeland Hills neighborhood.



Credit: Lakeland Hills group report.

Communication

Lakeland Hills Homeowner Association (LH-HOA) contains a community center that provides community engagement events and hosts HOA meetings. There are a variety of smaller HOAs representing different areas within Lakeland Hills. Despite this organized structure for community engagement, stakeholders described a lack of communication, leading to mistrust among residents in Lakeland Hills. Most stakeholders explained that the preferred method of communication in Lakeland Hills is social media. One stakeholder felt that neighbors rarely interacted or communicated outside of social media and email. Despite regular communication online, stakeholders who used social media sites, such as Facebook, explained that there are several websites where people voice grievances, and there is no single

Lakeland Hills Facebook page and smaller HOAs generally create their own groups. As a consequence of the small and infrequently monitored pages, concerns and complaints expressed on Facebook often go unaddressed.

In addition to confusion about social media, stakeholders felt confused about where to voice complaints in general, explaining that they were unclear about the boundaries of their HOAs and often voiced complaints to the incorrect organization. Smaller HOAs will refer residents to larger HOAs for community information or to air a grievance, and residents find this system overwhelming and confusing. The confusion about who to contact and the lack of response on social media seems to have created a level of mistrust both for HOAs, including the main LH-HOA, and between residents.

Transportation

Stakeholders shared that most people in the neighborhood drive to and from work, spending large amounts of time in traffic. A serious lack of public transportation remains an issue within Lakeland Hills, with a single bus route running only on weekdays. Because individuals spend large amounts of time in traffic and driving, they are less likely to interact with their peers and the surrounding community.



A playground in the Lakeland Hills neighborhood.

Credit: Lakeland Hills group report.

Neighborhood Engagement and Isolation

All stakeholders expressed a desire to see increased community engagement. They wanted more opportunities for residents to interact outside of social media, particularly through fun, low stakes, recurring events. Two stakeholders identified the National Night Out as one of the best events from the last year. This event had a goal of building relationships between law enforcement and communities, but community members stated that the event helped residents of Lakeland Hills build relationships with one another. Several stakeholders stated that community events in Lakeland Hills are generally family oriented. Two expressed a desire to expand community engagement through adult interaction, especially for those without families. One stakeholder suggested a food festival in downtown Auburn as a way to get residents out of the house and into the neighborhood. Two stakeholders in particular felt that if community members were able to come together around positive and social events, there would be a greater sense of community in the neighborhood.

All stakeholders expressed a feeling of isolation and a separation between the Lakeland Hills neighborhood and the other areas within the City of Auburn. Stakeholders see Lakeland Hills as a resource-rich community, but communication and mistrust remain large barriers to fostering connections between neighborhood residents, let alone with the City of Auburn at large. Some stakeholders felt that, with a lack of small businesses and restaurants in the neighborhood, there is little opportunity for residents to build relationships through connectivity in shared spaces. In addition, transportation via individual cars can contribute to feelings of isolation for residents who spend large amounts of time waiting in traffic. Stakeholders in Lakeland Hills felt that the social and physical environment might make it difficult to engage residents in the area, but were optimistic about strategies for encouraging connections and improving the neighborhood. These strategies are described below.

Recommendations

Neighborhood Engagement

Based on stakeholder input, students recommended a model of involvement for Lakeland Hills where the community holds in-person forums for voicing residents’ concerns. Addressing hot-button issues in a neighborhood forum could provide a space for open communication and understanding. Forums of this type may also provide the City of Auburn with a method of identifying leaders in the neighborhood; individuals who are well liked and respected in Lakeland Hills, and equipped to further engage residents.

One issue that could be discussed using a public forum was brought up by a concerned stakeholder during an interview. This individual expressed concern about fuel-filled rail cars sitting idle at the base of Lakeland Hills, an area that is a drop-spot for rail cars from trains passing through the State of Washington.

One stakeholder was unaware of any City of Auburn disaster-preparedness plan should the fuel in the rail cars explode. If the city devised a plan or addressed preparedness topics through a community forum, residents might feel more at ease about the rail cars, and disaster preparedness on the whole.

STUDENTS RECOMMEND HOSTING INFORMAL, FUN, AND RECURRING EVENTS SUCH AS A SUMMER BLOCK PARTY, POTLUCKS, A 5K RUN OR WALK, GROUP FITNESS CLASSES, OR MONTHLY FARMER’S MARKETS

Another way to increase resident communication is by increasing connection in outdoor spaces. The landscape and community spaces in Lakeland Hills are some of the neighborhood’s strengths. Lakeland Hills possesses seven distinct recreation spaces located within the neighborhood boundaries, covering nearly 50 acres of open space. However, people do not seem to use these public spaces on a regular basis, and they are not reaching their full potential as locations for community interaction. Hosting events at established public spaces may be a way to increase their use and build connections between residents. Specifically, students recommend hosting informal, fun, and recurring events such as a summer block party, potlucks, a 5k run or walk, group fitness classes, or monthly farmer’s markets. These events could provide an enjoyable way for the people of Lakeland Hills to get out and see their neighbors on a more regular basis, building trust and a foundation for collaboration between residents. Furthermore, while the neighborhood tends to come together and turn out for children-oriented events, like the community “Egg Hunt,” stakeholders suggested having more events for specific groups including those without children or teenagers.

In addition to having well-maintained public spaces, the LH-HOA is well organized and has access to many resources. The LH-HOA manages the Lakeland Living website and newsletter, and has many volunteers to help run the association. However, according to stakeholders, HOA social media pages are not moderated, nor are they cohesive; many pages exist for the same community. Since stakeholders indicate that Facebook is a preferred platform for resident engagement, it may be important to invest community time or resources into a social media manager for these accounts, or attempt to consolidate them into a single page for more organized community information.

Specifically, the LH-HOA could hire a volunteer whose main responsibility is to triage requests and stay up-to-date on communications in an effort to foster trust. This person could also be responsible for managing a consolidated Facebook page, other social media pages for the neighborhood, as well as creating electronic and paper media to engage as many people as possible. It may also be a good idea for the HOAs and community members to choose this person together, perhaps with an election.

EVENTS THAT ARE APPEALING TO LAKELAND HILLS
RESIDENTS BASED ON THEIR DEMOGRAPHICS AND
COMMUNITY SETUP WILL BE ESSENTIAL IN HELPING
THE NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS CONNECT WITH
ONE ANOTHER

Neighborhood Improvement

An additional concern brought up in the stakeholder interviews was a perception of Auburn as not providing direct transit service to its residents. Instead, they work with Metro transit, Pierce County Transit, King County Transit and Sound Transit to provide services without jurisdictions. Within Lakeland Hills, there is only public transportation provided through Pierce County Metro. One bus runs throughout the day every 20 minutes, only on weekdays. The first stop runs from Sunset Park (the second largest park in Lakeland Hills) and its last stop is at Auburn Transit Center Bay 4 (Pierce Transit 2016). There are seven stops total within Lakeland Hills. Most of these stops are located within residential areas, but not necessarily located within areas that are accessible to the larger Lakeland Hills community. There have also been concerns about growing traffic issues getting to and from Lakeland Hills. Residents often choose to go to other cities because getting to the Auburn grocery store and other points of interest takes longer.

Due to the fact that the bus route 497 only runs to limited locations on weekdays (Pierce Transit 2016), access to the City of Auburn is limited for residents who do not have personal vehicles. Students were unable to find reliable information on how many residents within Lakeland Hills utilize public transportation. However, one stakeholder mentioned that lack of transportation might be an issue, particularly for elderly individuals. Students recommend that the city look into issues of public transportation further; it is possible that residents may be unable to access public transportation or that public transportation doesn't meet their needs for commuting. Further communication with the residents of Lakeland Hills could help to discover nuances of the transportation issue. If residents would be likely to use public transportation with increased access and convenience, this could alleviate some of the growing traffic issues.

Another shortcoming that stakeholders indicated, is that their neighborhood and city lack a significant presence of local businesses. While the Lakeland Town Center houses an Access Health Care facility, physical therapy services, chiropractic services, dental and vision clinics, banking/investment, insurance agencies, grocery stores, restaurants, and salons; many of the restaurants are chains, and places to shop are department stores or retail chains. Zoning for smaller square footage businesses might make rent more affordable for business owners and could increase incentive for local shops to open in the area (US Small Business Administration 2017). In some cases, aside from funding social events, many of the stakeholders mentioned enticing local businesses to start-up in this community. Therefore, small neighborhood improvement grants could potentially be used

to incentivize more business and places of gathering (i.e. cafes or restaurants) to build in Lakeland Hills by funding loans for these small businesses.

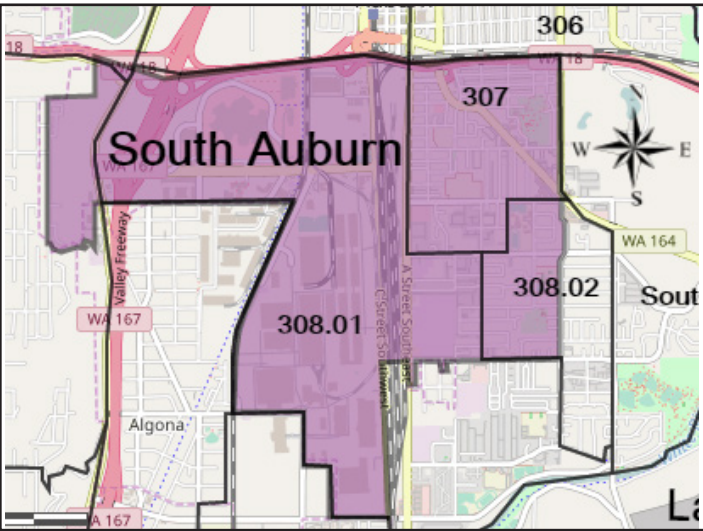
Overall, the stakeholders in Lakeland Hills expressed feelings of isolation, with issues of communication in-person and via social media. Recommendations for the community include providing more streamlined online communication, and more frequent opportunities for in-person communication. From stakeholder interviews, it is clear that residents want to reach out to one another within Lakeland Hills, but don't necessarily know the best way to do it. Events that are appealing to Lakeland Hills residents based on their demographics and community setup will be essential in helping the neighborhood residents connect with one another. Building connections between neighbors in Lakeland Hills could decrease feelings of isolation, and perhaps be a starting point for increased trust, partnership, and connection with the rest of Auburn.

Summary of Recommendations for Lakeland Hills
Neighborhood Improvement

- Improve social media communications with a central and updated Facebook page for the LH-HOA and create a social media management position under the LH-HOA.
- Develop community forums and simplify the process for expressing concerns to neighborhood representatives.
- Create ongoing, positive, social events to increase neighborhood connection. Consider utilizing existing green-space for these events.
- Develop community events targeted towards adults without children, teenagers, and other specific groups in Lakeland Hills.

05.6 NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES

SOUTH AUBURN



Credit: Student team member

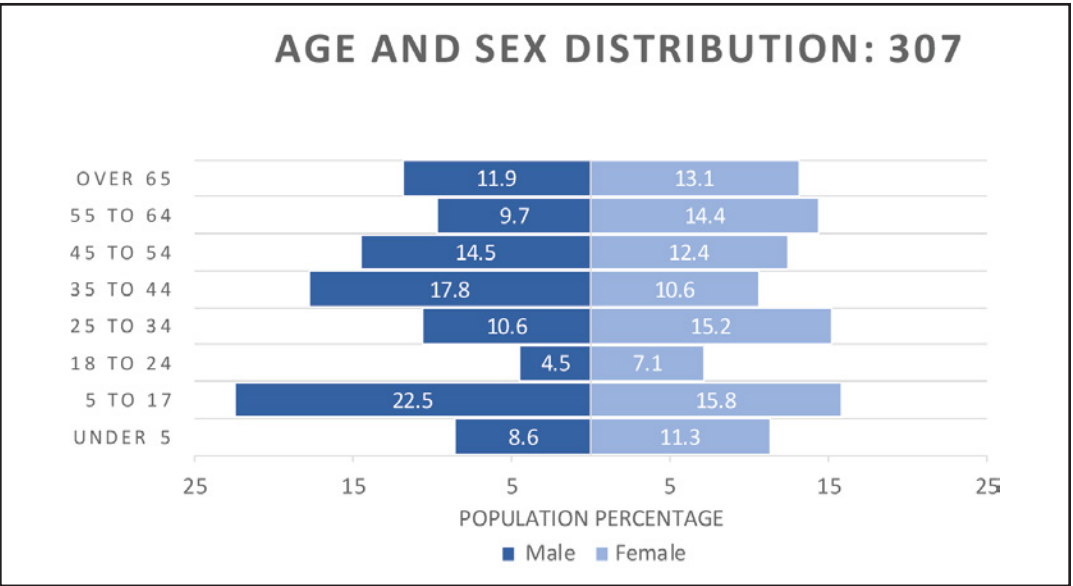
Overview of the Neighborhood

Population and Geography

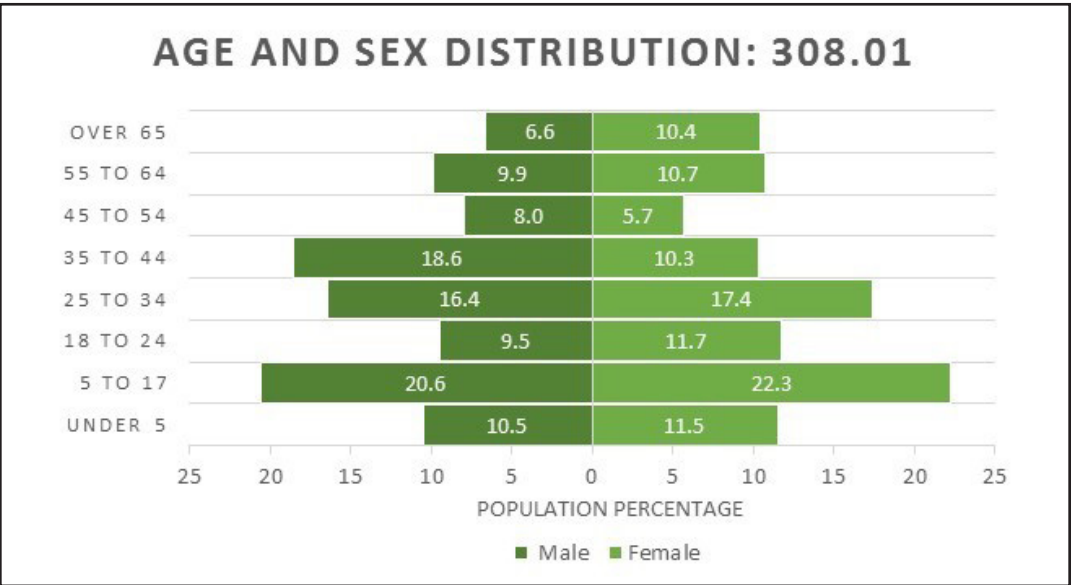
The South Auburn neighborhood is located in the southwestern region of the city. South Auburn is comprised of three census tracts: census tract 307 in the northeast section of the neighborhood, census tract 308.01 in the west, and 308.02 in the southeast. Census tract 308.01 is the largest census tract with 48.9% population and 71% of the land area.

Land Area	2.8 sq mi. (9.4% of Auburn Land Area)
Population	6,861 residents (9.2% of Auburn pop.)
Median Age (Years)	42.2
Total Households	2,581
Family Household	1,509 (58.5% of total)
Nonfamily Household	1,071 (41.5% of total)
Average Household Size	2.65

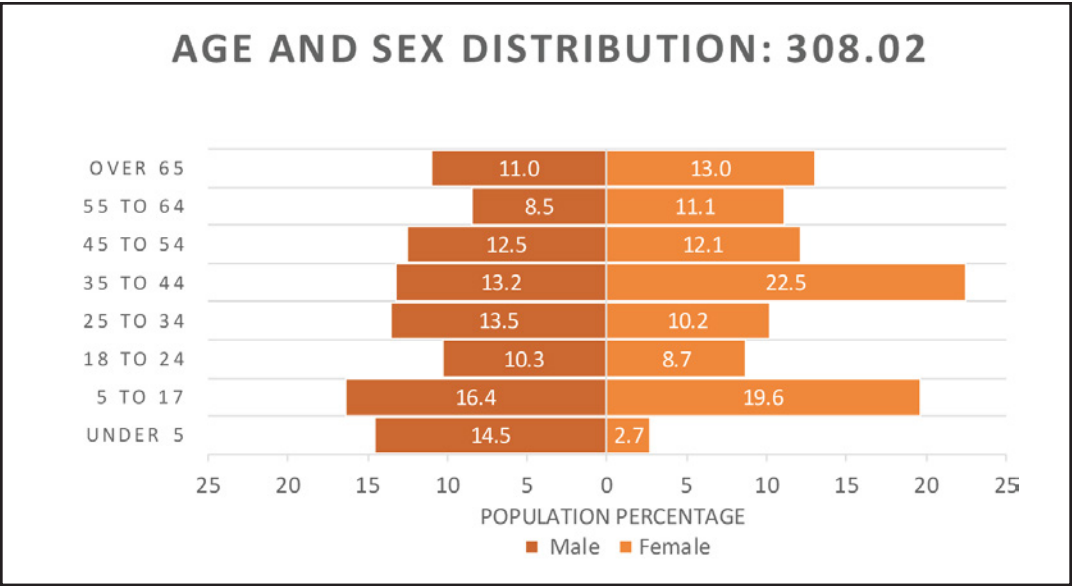
Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr



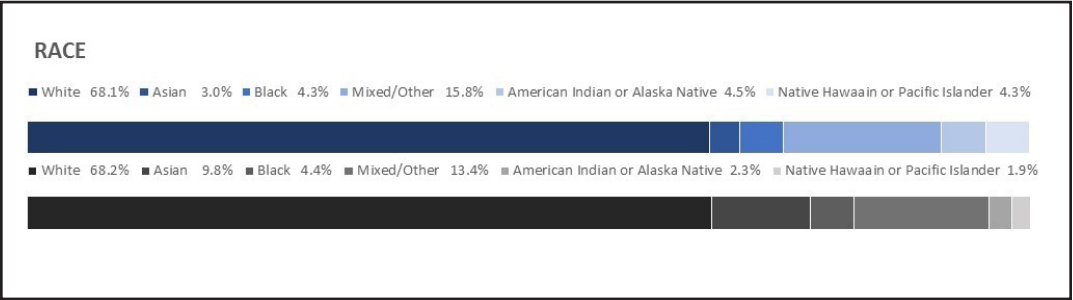
Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

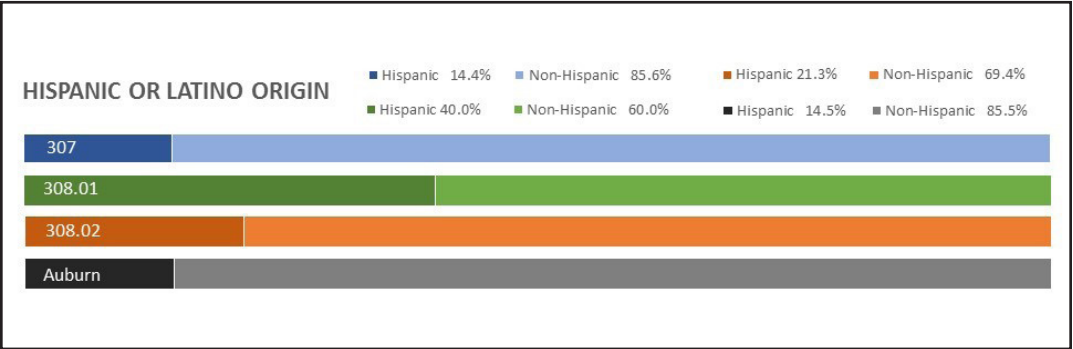
Race, Ethnicity, and Language

35.5% aged 5 or older speak a language other than English at home. 45.1% of residents in census tract 308.01 (west) speak a language other than English at home – primarily Spanish.



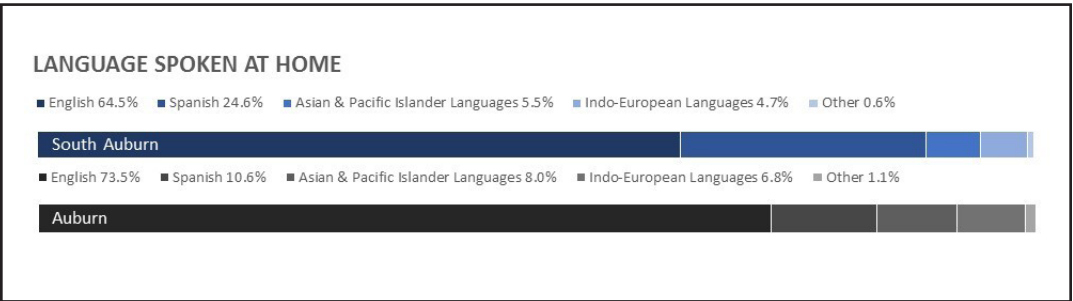
Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

48.5% of children living in South Auburn aged 5 to 17 speak a language other than English at home.



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Key languages spoken at home other than English: Spanish (24.6% of residents), Pacific Island languages other than Tagalog (3.8%), and Russian (2.8%).



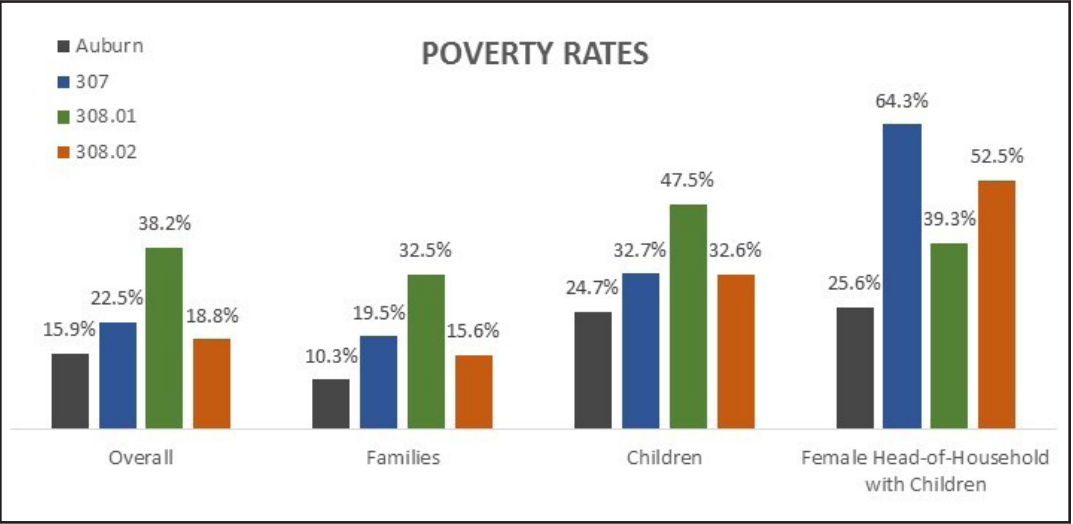
Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Economic Opportunity



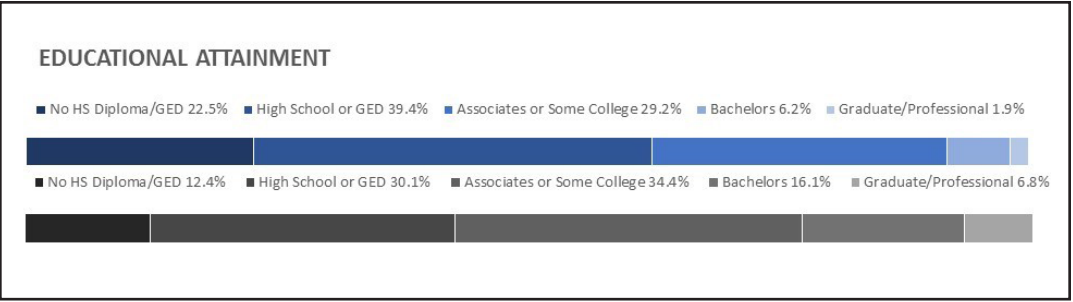
Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

62.6% of renters in census tract 307, 53.0% in census tract 308.01 and 44.0% in census tract 308.02 spend 30% or more of household income on rent.



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Education



Credit: US Census Bureau, Darragh Kerr

Stakeholder Interviews

Overview

Stakeholders in South Auburn included representatives from the South Auburn Clinic, the Auburn Library, the Teen Center, and schools in the neighborhood, and one currently homeless individual living in the neighborhood.

Case Summaries and Findings

The majority of the challenges described by stakeholders involve safety concerns, inadequate transportation, and homelessness.

Safety

All stakeholders living in South Auburn and most of those not living in South Auburn, shared the belief that safety was an issue. Several stakeholders described feeling unsafe in South Auburn, and attributed this feeling to criminal activity. The accounts of criminal activity provided by stakeholders varied, and included gangs, prostitution, drug distribution, drug use, theft, vandalism, shootings, break-ins, trespassing, and aggressive panhandling. Data on crime rates indicate that, particularly in census tract 307 of South Auburn, crime is an issue. The crime index, which compares local crime rates to those nationally, shows that census tract 307's crime rate is over two times that of the national average (the crime index is 235 when compared to a national average of 100). In the other census tracts, crime rates are below the national average (AGS 2000). Constraints on publicly available data made it difficult for students to compare crime trends over time. However, resident perception indicates that crime is still an issue that should be further addressed in the neighborhood.

The school staff focused on drug use and violence in the areas around the elementary school, making it unsafe for children to walk to school, especially when streets are not well lit. Public school representatives expressed concerns about the lack of police presence and interventions to stop drug and criminal activity occurring near and on the elementary school grounds. The school is responsible for monitoring the surrounding environment, removing graffiti and other forms of vandalism, cleaning up drug paraphernalia, and cleaning human waste in child play areas. A visible law enforcement presence and security cameras could combine to deter local criminal activity that negatively impacts the learning environment.

Homelessness

Homelessness was also described as a key issue by library employees in particular. Stakeholders mentioned that mental health issues, personal hygiene issues,

loitering, and frequent public altercations among those experiencing homelessness contribute to residents' negative perception of Auburn's homeless population. Stakeholders also commented on the dangers of panhandlers. The stakeholder currently experiencing homelessness that we had the opportunity to meet with, stated that they had been robbed by other homeless people.

The interviewees described Auburn as providing a minimal degree of legal protection for the homeless population. They also characterized the police response to homelessness as varied in its effectiveness; noting that police have been able to minimize the code of conduct violations at the library, but took an ineffective approach when clearing out a large homeless encampment in Auburn. While clearing out the encampment may have removed those currently homeless individuals from a particular area, it did not solve the underlying issue of providing shelter, and left those individuals to search for another place to inhabit. A stakeholder experiencing chronic homelessness raised concern about constant interactions between the police force and Auburn's homeless population.

Transportation

Stakeholders expressed dissatisfaction with the transportation options available to them. They did not utilize public transportation because there are few direct bus or train routes to nearby towns. Lack of transportation and few sidewalks makes it difficult to access community services and resources, including: health care facilities, the teen center, and the public library. These challenges collectively contribute to residents' reluctance to spend time outside and at public facilities.

Neighborhood Strengths

While stakeholders were quick to enumerate South Auburn's challenges, they were not as vocal about its strengths. However, the neighborhood has several social services that were mentioned including the Auburn Library, the Auburn Valley



Photo from inside the Auburn Library.

Credit: Student in South Auburn Group

YMCA, and the Auburn Community Event Center, which houses The REC Teen Center (a recreational center with programs for teens) and provides space for classes, meetings and events. One stakeholder felt that the new community center is one of South Auburn’s strengths, as it is popular with residents and offers a wide range of activities, such as computer classes for older adults and arts and crafts for children.

Two interviewees offered enthusiastic support for the community engagement activities that the city and other entities have sponsored, including the Veterans Day Parade, the Harvest Festival, safe trick or treating events, Kids Days, the Art Walk, events coordinated by the White River Valley Museum and the YMCA, and community picnics with city council members and other community leaders. Finally, one stakeholder expressed satisfaction with the concerted effort made by social service organizations, the Auburn Library, and the Healthy Auburn Committee to connect low income populations with social support services and tackle South Auburn’s biggest issues, including substance abuse and mental health issues.

Recommendations

Community Engagement

In order to engage neighborhood residents and begin collaboratively addressing South Auburn’s issues, stakeholders suggested that the city utilize digital communication (social media, online forums, or advertisements), flyers, and mailings to request feedback from residents and inform them of community services. Social media, such as an official Facebook group with updates on community services would be a simple and effective method to engage neighborhood youth. In addition, 35% of South Auburn’s population speaks a language other than English at home, and 24.6% of the population speaks Spanish, the highest percentage out of all researched Auburn neighborhoods (US Census Bureau 2016). Facebook has options to translate posts into a variety of languages, but translations should be checked for accuracy and other efforts to translate materials are also important to ensure respectful, accurate communication. In addition to social media outreach, one stakeholder from the elementary staff suggested that hosting city events on school campuses would make South Auburn events more visible.

Community Improvement

In terms of community improvement, one stakeholder recommended that the city establish additional resources to provide assistance to those seeking shelter, applying for health insurance, or looking for help with substance abuse and mental health issues. Locating a shelter was a key issue for the currently homeless individual students spoke with, and addressing housing is an important part of acknowledging the needs of South Auburn’s homeless population. On a smaller scale, the stakeholder in South Auburn also explained a need for basic personal

WE RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR NEW BUSINESSES AND RESTAURANTS TO COME INTO VACANT BUILDINGS IN THE AREA AND ESTABLISH A PRODUCTIVE AND PROFITABLE WORK SPACE THAT COULD BENEFIT COMMUNITY MEMBERS BY PROVIDING JOBS OR RESOURCES

items, such as clean and dry socks. One idea for a project to address this basic need in South Auburn would be to start an initiative similar to Seattle’s “Box of Sox” program. The Seattle-based non-profit organization WeCount.org “Box of Sox” program provides clean and dry socks to anyone in need, especially the homeless population (AllHome 2017). Blue bins are located throughout the city where people can drop-off clean, unused socks, and people in need can take the socks for free. Having access to clean, dry socks can be key in preventing diseases caused by wet and/or unwashed feet. “Box of Sox” also provides an opportunity for community engagement, as people are encouraged to donate socks to those in need, and overcome the perception that members of the homeless population are not members of the community.

A number of our interviewees also recommended revitalizing the old and vacant buildings in the neighborhood and encouraging new businesses and shopping centers in the area. Stakeholders also expressed a desire for healthier food options and a larger variety of restaurants in the neighborhood. We recommend that the city provide incentives for new businesses and restaurants to come into vacant buildings in the area and establish a productive and profitable work space that could benefit community members by providing jobs or resources.

Information derived from interviews with school officials and library staff indicated concerns about safety in and around school areas. Elementary school officials noted concerns regarding drug related activity, vandalism, and theft occurring on school grounds. School officials expressed concern about the lack of police response to incidences when reported. We recommend further communication between the City of Auburn, its police, and the school staff to better identify safety issues of concern to South Auburn’s children and develop a collaborative response to address these issues. Potential strategies might include making school campuses “closed” (i.e. requiring parents and visitors to sign in at the office and be accompanied by a teacher) to deter illegal activity during school hours, or installing security cameras to better survey the neighborhood.

Lastly, a consistent concern of stakeholders is the ability to walk, exercise, and play safely in neighborhood. One stakeholder recommended that the city create additional spaces for physical activity, as the demand for these spaces currently exceeds availability. Creating more designated public spaces, such as parks, basketball courts, or scenic walkways between neighborhoods, could improve the physical and social well-being of the community (Braveman 2011). In order to provide equitable opportunities for physical activity in South Auburn, ensuring a safe environment for children and adults in public spaces should be a priority.

School officials noted that many of the young children walk to school, as children who live within one mile of the school are not eligible to take the bus. While research shows that children who actively commute to school by walking or biking, benefit from higher daily levels of physical activity and better cardiovascular fitness than do children who do not (Davidson et al. 2008), South Auburn school officials are concerned about safety. Some areas do not have sidewalks, and the layout of the neighborhood requires that children take winding routes to school, often exceeding a one-mile journey. Criminal activity and few street lights near the school add to concerns. Therefore, we recommend that the city work to improve existing sidewalks with better lighting and create new sidewalks to better connect areas.

Another recommendation for creating equitable safe routes to school for children in South Auburn would be starting a walking school bus program: a group of children walking with an adult along an established route with meeting points and a timetable. Children could join the walking group from a meeting point near their home, and travel with the group to their school. Parents could volunteer to take on the role as “bus lead”, and could informally watch the neighborhood as children are walking to provide more surveillance and foster feelings of safety. The National Center for Safe Routes to School provides an online guide and training modules to starting a local program (Safe Routes to School Guide 2017).

Summary of Recommendations for South Auburn Neighborhood Improvement

- Increase social media presence to connect to a broader demographic, including young adults and those who speak a language other than English at home.
- Establish a “Box of Sox” program to provide a basic necessity to the homeless population.
- Encourage business growth and land diversification Create safe public spaces for physical activity and social interaction.
- Create a walking school bus program and improve physical infrastructure, sidewalks and streetlights, to provide safer walking routes to school for South Auburn children.

06 CONCLUSION

Within the City of Auburn, each neighborhood has its own unique demographics, culture, and structure. Even within the boundaries of police districts there were stark contrasts in terms of income, culture, and lived experiences. Based on demographic data, it is evident that there are large disparities both within and between police districts and neighborhoods in Auburn. However, while each neighborhood in Auburn is unique, with specific demographics and issues of importance, some common themes emerged throughout the neighborhood profiles.

Specifically, in terms of community engagement, residents were interested in finding ways to bring diverse groups of individuals together, through increased communications in different languages, through strengthened partnership across cultures, and with organizations and institutions that were more inclusive. Strengthening partnerships within neighborhoods, between service organizations and the city, and across the Southern King County region, seems to be an essential part of creating effective community improvement initiatives.

WITH INCREASED PARTNERSHIPS, COMMUNICATION,
AND LEVERAGED RESOURCES, SMALL NEIGHBORHOOD
IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS IN THESE AREAS COULD
EVENTUALLY BE BUILT INTO ONGOING AND SUSTAINABLE
EFFORTS TO AFFECT CHANGE AND IMPROVE WELL-BEING
IN COMMUNITIES

By increasing physical connectivity, through improved sidewalks, parks, and meeting spaces, and by encouraging in-person communication not only with formal structures and meetings but with fun and informal community events, community members would feel more equipped to create the partnerships needed for social and community change.

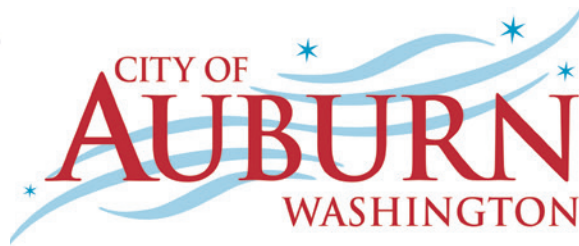
In interviews, many of the ideas for improvement and change brought up by residents were beyond the scope of small neighborhood grant projects, and required large infrastructure changes. For example, several residents wanted more streetlights, better sidewalks, increased transportation, more access to healthy food, and incentives for local businesses. While these are large requests, it is possible that with increased partnerships, communication, and leveraged resources, small neighborhood improvement projects in these areas could eventually be built into ongoing and sustainable efforts to affect change and improve well-being in communities.

While student research revealed some starting points for community improvement in the City of Auburn, there are also limitations to this project's findings. Students were only able to interview a limited number of residents, several of whom were already engaged in the community. A broader perspective on the issues facing Auburn could perhaps be gleaned through a community survey. More in-depth efforts to understand the perspectives of marginalized populations within neighborhoods would be valuable additions to the insights gained here. Finally, resident perspectives on their neighborhoods do not necessarily align with the outlined boundaries of police patrol districts or even census tracts. A better understanding of the community's defined borders would help to better understand the unique issues faced by different groups within Auburn. Future Livable City Year projects could focus on interactive mapping as a strategy for both engaging more residents and better understanding their lived experiences in Auburn.

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