CITY OF AUBURN
Affordable Housing and Housing Conditions

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University of Washington   o   Department of Sociology
Sociology 415-13: The City and Neighborhood Dynamics

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○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND HOUSING CONDITIONS

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.
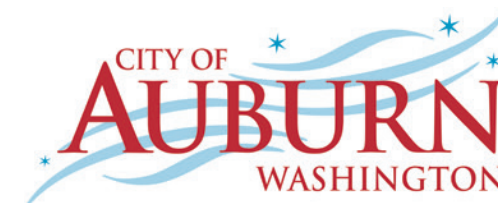
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01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During Fall 2016, University of Washington sociology students were tasked with developing analysis and recommendations for consideration by the City of Auburn for future legislation and policy regarding current and projected housing needs, particularly in regards to affordable housing and neighborhood vitality. In order to inform the development of potential legislation, students gathered preliminary information on current housing conditions in Auburn. Through this research, students investigated disparate housing conditions between hill and valley regions as the most prominent issue faced by Auburn. Other issues and opportunities include abandoned industrial buildings, maintaining the current status of affordable housing during population growth, and strategies for improving housing conditions across the city.

Students recommend two major strategies: the formation of a Community Development Organization, and a subsidy that will help create opportunities to improve housing quality.

The Community Development Organization would serve as a city-resident accountability and oversight organization that would oversee the quality of homes and report concerns to city personnel. The supervision of the Community Development Organization and any powers it may be granted can also influence and assist residents to move forward with home improvement.

A subsidy system created and implemented by the city and a Community Development Organization could be a viable incentive for the city to help offset costs of home improvements. This subsidy could be combined with a penalty system when identified renovations are not carried out. A reward and penalty system may help expedite the process of producing a vibrant and pleasant community to live in. However, the implementation of such a subsidy carries risks of gentrification and/or the perception of using a subsidy program to force improvements on a community.

Further, the City of Auburn has a high number of unused industrial buildings that could be repurposed into commercial and residential buildings. This would not only improve the community environment but also increase the number of living spaces in order to accommodate Auburn's projected growth. Some of the new residential spaces could be designated as affordable housing to help avoid an affordability crisis. It is important for Auburn to use its resources efficiently in order to obtain high levels of livability and equitability in order to protect the city's natural and social resources.

02 INTRODUCTION

Substantial population growth over a short period of time often results in significant pressure on existing residential infrastructure and on local government's ability to create and plan for new residences. The development of a plan to effectively sustain housing during anticipated population growth requires the assessment of the city's current housing stock. This assessment requires a holistic approach involving affordability, quantity, and geographic distribution of homes.

The acquisition of such information is one of the three primary goals outlined within this document and is essential in developing effective policy measures regarding the development and maintenance of residential infrastructure in the City of Auburn. Creating effective housing policy levers represents goal number two, and can be seen as the centerpiece of this document. A policy lever is legislation intended to motivate beneficial behaviors. Potential policy levers are also involved in the last goal to identify and overcome potential barriers to a policy success post-implementation. We hope our findings may assist in the development of effective policy measures to help improve housing stock conditions and meet community values. These community values include character, wellness, service, economy, celebration, environment, and sustainability (City of Auburn 2015).

WITHIN THE NEXT TWO DECADES, THE CITY OF AUBURN'S POPULATION IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE BY APPROXIMATELY 25,000 RESIDENTS

Evidence-based recommendations, where investment and prioritization can productively occur, depend upon objective assessment of Auburn's existing housing stock and levels of affordable housing. Within the next two decades, the City of Auburn's population is expected to increase by approximately 25,000 residents. Information on existing housing conditions was used to provide a plan of action, which aims to improve current housing conditions while simultaneously preparing the city for future growth. Unfortunately, very little information is known about the city's current affordable housing stock. This document reaffirms the importance of affordable housing data and how this pertains to developing plans for sustaining levels of affordable housing during periods of rapid population growth. The suggested policy changes within this document also address the repercussions of urban sprawl within the region and offer ways to equitably improve density in order to enhance the City of Auburn's vitality.

The information used within this document is primarily from Auburn's 2015 Core Competency Plan. Current housing conditions throughout the city, crime rates, traffic flow, and city zoning were all obtained from this document. Other resources include U.S. Census Bureau data, which provided demographic and household income information. Along with these primary sources, our team conducted three interviews with area landlords to obtain additional insights on affordable housing within the city. Information obtained from landlords provided a platform for understanding the existing stock, pricing, and conditions of affordable housing within the city.
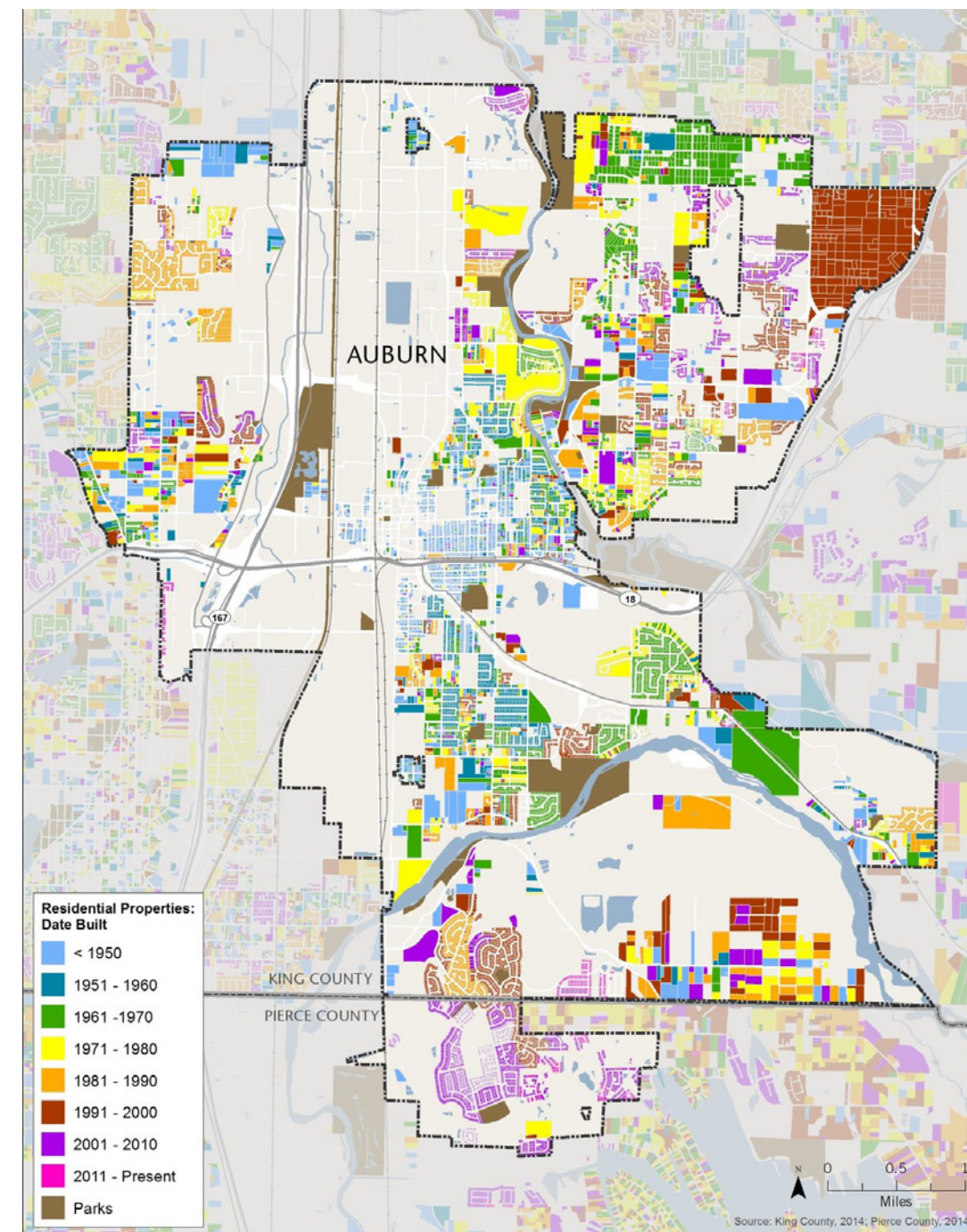
of outward expansion is extremely expensive, as the city must spend more money on infrastructure including sewer lines and roadways. Outward expansion can be assumed to have had a significant impact on the city's environment, particularly in regards to hydrological alterations to the White River and reductions in available farmland and forests.

03 SUMMARY OF HOUSING STOCK CONDITIONS

In the 124 years since Auburn's establishment, three primary growth periods have resulted in housing stock with a high degree of variance in age and quality. Many of the oldest buildings are located near the center of the city. This creates regions of older, poorer quality homes near the center and relatively newer, higher quality homes along the hillsides. Altogether, the city rated its overall condition of infrastructure quality as being in fair or poor condition (City of Auburn 2015).

Affordable housing is not considered a prominent issue within the City of Auburn currently. However, projected population growth could potentially result in negative effects on current affordable housing stock levels within the future. Defining affordable housing, as well as identifying current housing trends are essential in understanding what the city can do to prevent the negative impacts of population growth.

Auburn's previous periods of major growth have created benefits and challenges to creating a stable, equitable housing network. Many issues impacting housing including segregation of housing conditions, home values, and crime rates are all consequences tied to urban sprawl during previous growth periods. Sprawl can be defined as the extension of an urban area in a disordered, non-dense fashion. This concept helps to explain the current mosaic of housing conditions where relatively poorer conditions are typically concentrated in the city center, while newer, better condition homes and communities can be found within the hills region. The tendency to focus on outward development in response to economic and population growth often leaves a city center with neglected stewardship. This sort

PROPERTY AGE IN AUBURN

Assessing the age of homes is an effective way to estimate housing conditions.

Residential Properties: Date Built
- < 1950
- 1951 - 1960
- 1961 - 1970
- 1971 - 1980
- 1981 - 1990
- 1991 - 2000
- 2001 - 2010
- 2011 - Present
- Parks

Source: King County, 2014; Pierce County, 2014

Credit: King County and Pierce County Assessors Office 2014; Courtesy of the City of Auburn

04 POLICY PROPOSALS

Refurbishment of Abandoned Buildings

A first step to develop a healthy community capable of sustaining future growth is to improve the quality of the city's existing residential infrastructure. This is cost effective and helps creates a better living environment for current and future residents.

The problems commonly found within older homes in the Pacific Northwest are frequently related to the effects of water damage such as mold and mildew. Such issues can be effectively remedied through improved insulation, windows, and roofing. Encouraging landowners to update their windows, insulation, and roofing through policy is the most effective way of improving living conditions and aesthetics of current housing stock.

The diverse condition of homes throughout the city has had the unintended consequence of segmenting the value of land and homes within Auburn. Newer homes that were built on the hillsides, which are often in significantly better condition, have the highest value, while older homes in poorer condition near the center are worth substantially less. In addition, concentrations of homes in relatively poorer condition within a specific area may lead to regions of systemic poverty or patterns of disinvestment risk, creating social environments that reinforce negative behavior. The highest levels of crime can be found near the center of the city, where the lowest valued, poorest condition homes can be found (City of Auburn 2015).

Another quality of the city center that may contribute to the current high crime rate, is the significant number of abandoned industrial buildings within the region. These abandoned buildings may mitigate the creation of a healthy and cohesive community. Bolstering investment in converting neglected spaces such as these abandoned industrial buildings and transforming them into new residential and commercial spaces is a potential policy lever to enhance downtown livability. Renovating these abandoned spaces can begin to desegregate the current housing stock and improve the community living environment.

The best location for building and expanding housing in Auburn is within the valley area. The location of the valley region is close to the city center, transit routes, and downtown businesses. The conversion of abandoned structures offers an opportunity to expand housing, create small business opportunities, and reinvigorate downtown. Benefits of redeveloping abandoned industrial and commercial buildings, specifically within the valley area, may include the following:

- It can be cost effective and time efficient compared to creating new infrastructure.

- Increasing the number of housing options in the valley area would help mitigate housing segregation within Auburn.

- It will raise housing stock volume and value. Abandoned buildings tend to bring down the value of the surrounding area. Repurposing these buildings may help collectively raise land and housing values in downtown and may even impact land value in the hills if a vibrant downtown area could be fully realized.

- If the city repurposed vacant buildings, crime rates could drop as areas with abandoned buildings tend to have higher crime rates.

- A reduction in vandalism, also a frequent crime around vacant buildings, will add more visual pleasure for Auburn residents.

- Auburn would be prepared for increases in housing demand. This would mitigate potential shortages in available housing and decreases in affordability in the future.

Conversely, some of the concerns surrounding the repurposing of these buildings include the following:

- The level of damage and deterioration that has occurred throughout a building's period of abandonment is unknown. Some damages may be irreparable and new construction may cost more money and use more time than anticipated.

- Asbestos is a concern within abandoned buildings. Asbestos can be extremely harmful to the health of individuals, and needs to be addressed carefully when repurposing old buildings.

- Property owners may not have the proper incentives or resources to renovate or maintain structures after remodeling is completed.

In order for Auburn to fully benefit from repurposing, it may consider following these steps:

- Determine a budget for investment in abandoned buildings. City officials would need to decide whether there will be a cap on total spending or whether the budget will be determined individually for each industrial building refurbishment.

- City officials would need to decide whether to work with an existing government decision-maker or an external contractor in determining the feasibility of the refurbishment of a building. One potential concern of hiring an external contractor would be that their monetary interests may not align with the best interests of the city.

- The city would need to decide whether a building should be refurbished for residential or commercial use. This would require the city to obtain an extensive amount of information in regards to the neighborhood of each industrial building refurbishment site. We believe it would be in the city's best interest to hire a city employee for such data acquisition.

- Hire an external contractor for the refurbishment of the building.

- Determine whether the refurbished building should remain under the ownership of the city or be sold to an investor.

Vacant Property Registration Ordinance

A policy that could be put in place to discourage abandonment and sustain community vitality is a Vacant Property Registration Ordinance. An owner of a lot would be identified through property tax information and then be charged an additional tax. The tax would increase with the amount of time the lot is abandoned. Auburn could greatly benefit from this policy; not only does this policy encourage landowners to maintain their lots, but it also allows for the city to gain some money from abandoned lots which would allow for the city to use that money in repurposing and renovating properties that may not have a current owner. This policy could also encourage more businesses or startups to buy newly repurposed properties as they could be relatively certain that surrounding properties will not return to a dilapidated state. Increased business presence would then lead to job growth and, in turn, improve revitalization efforts. Many of the Vacant Property Registration Ordinances effects can be very beneficial to cities, through more diverse populations, more jobs, a better integrated social and residential life, and more housing options of variable affordability. In order to receive the maximum benefits from this proposal, the city would first need to come up with a plan for

accomplishing all previously mentioned ideas. Some steps to be taken include the following:

- Define what is considered an abandoned building by the city. This definition would need to be made available to landowners prior to implementation of the ordinance.

- Locate abandoned buildings and determine their owner(s). Prior to penalization, the owner could be given 30 days to submit a plan of action to the city resolving the abandoned state of the building. A plan of action could include an estimate provided by a contractor or a plan to sell the building.

- Determine the level of involvement the city would have with the owner in assisting the renovation of the building.

- Determine the rate owners would be taxed initially and establish the frequency, that the tax may be raised to discourage prolonged inaction.

- Determine a contingency plan if the owner defaults on an abandoned building which may include repossession.

ENHANCEMENT AND/OR PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES BY MITIGATING FURTHER SPRAWL COULD BE EFFECTED THROUGH AN INCENTIVES PROGRAM

Maintaining Affordable Housing

The city would benefit from utilizing various data, such as U.S. Census Bureau information, as a way to gain insights into average household income fluctuations and similar pertinent factors contributing to residents' ability to afford and maintain homes. Knowing the average household income at the neighborhood level would provide the city with a more discrete housing cost amount that would be considered affordable within the city. As Auburn continues to develop, the city would benefit from a continued monitoring of housing availability, affordability and geographic distribution so that negative impacts on the integrity of the natural environment or the equitability of the urban environment are mitigated. For example, the city could create legislation that allocates a certain number of residential units to be set aside for affordable housing from new construction. Enhancement and/or protection of natural resources by mitigating further sprawl could be effected through an incentives program that rewards central, mixed use housing and issues higher taxes on breaking new ground on the city's periphery. The City of Auburn has a unique opportunity of being able to focus on sustaining current levels as opposed to increasing them.

Formation of Community Development Organization

Housing quality disparities within the City of Auburn are a prominent issue impacting housing. Closing these gaps between the overall quality and condition of homes across Auburn through public initiatives that improve community well-being is important for positive civic development. The formation of a Community Development Organization that specifically monitors housing conditions, establishes meaningful relationships with homeowners, and assists homeowners in elevating their home's condition could be a promising benefit for the city.

Auburn may benefit most by having a Community Development Organization focus strictly on the valley region and, as conditions improve, incorporate outlying regions. The idea behind this concept is to get the valley region to a commensurate level of quality with the hill region of the city. By working to mitigate current disparate housing conditions, the city could potentially create a platform for better social integration in the future through community involvement in facilitating development and fostering collaboration. The goal of this organization is not to exclude any regions, but rather to elevate the most disadvantaged regions first as a means of equitably reintegrating the city's various regions in order to combat the negative effects of urban sprawl.

Establishing a housing policy that places emphasis on integration would assist in combating segregation of housing stock within the city. In order for the City of Auburn to move forward in a positive direction, the city could address the existing housing segregation between these regions. Creating a Community Development Organization whose initial focus is the city's urban core may upset some residents of wealthier regions. The importance of not forming two separate Community Development Organizations for the two regions is significant. If the city intends for this organization to have a positive change on segregation and quality of housing within Auburn, the city would want to dedicate resources for the valley region to elevate it to a level commensurate with more affluent regions.

REDUCING CRIME RATES AND INCREASING HOUSING STOCK FOR THE COMMUNITY CAN BE SEEN AS A POINT OF MUTUAL BENEFIT THAT ARISES FROM A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION FOCUSED ON IMPROVING POORER REGIONS

Once this goal is met, the organization could then holistically examine housing stock issues. We imagine that gaining support from residents of the hills for this organization may pose the greatest challenge to the realization of this proposal. Residents from this region may view the allocation of resources towards the poorer regions as unfair, which may prove to be a source of contention. It should be stressed that a targeted approach to the most affected regions is the

most beneficial for the community as a whole. As discussed previously in the Refurbishment of Abandoned Buildings section, enhancing property values of the central valley region may not only create a safer, more dynamic downtown region but also has the capacity to elevate the housing values well beyond the valley. To further the argument, reducing crime rates and increasing housing stock for the community can be seen as a point of mutual benefit that arises from a Community Development Organization focused on improving poorer regions. If the residents of the prosperous regions of Auburn cannot be convinced, this would become a funding issue for the Community Development Organization. We believe it is imperative that the community supports the Community Development Organization for it to be financially stable. A list of recommended actions for the city to successfully form the Community Development Organization are as follows:

- Auburn holds a preliminary meeting to address what the goals and functions of this Community Development Organization should be. The organization would be responsible for monitoring home conditions within Auburn and providing valuable data for further analysis. If the city decides to create housing legislation that encourages homeowners to improve the conditions of their homes, then this organization will be a good liaison between residents and city officials for that legislation.

- Establish the amount of funding necessary for implementation of the Community Development Organization. If the group is later used as a liaison for government legislation, the Community Development Organization would need additional funding to get information out to and from residents.

- Designate or elect a city employee who will oversee the operations of the Community Development Organization.

- Upon official implementation of the Community Development Organization, this individual would periodically check in with members to ensure they are moving in a direction that will meet goals set by the city. Establishing this relationship with the Community Development Organization would result in an improved knowledge of current housing stock conditions.

- Determine the size of the Community Development Organization and which individuals should be included. For instance, would the city prefer to have the organization be predominantly residents, government officials, or a mixture? If Auburn decides to have residents within the Community Development Organization, should these residents be from the hills region, the valley region, or both?

- Prior to official implementation, a community meeting would need to be held to inform residents of the intentions the Community Development Organization. This would not only provide a means of addressing residents' concerns, some of which may not have been anticipated by city officials, but also serve to mitigate potential conflict.

- The city official would need to evaluate the overall performance of the Community Development Organization annually to see if any adjustments need to be made. These adjustments could include, but are certainly not limited to: the inclusion of the hills region (if desegregation of housing conditions within the city have occurred), a change in the organization's objectives, or a change in the organization's scope of work. Another potential measure for the success of the organization is through improvements in housing conditions throughout the city.

RESIDENTIAL HOUSING CONDITIONS

Large pockets of poor conditions, such as those illustrated here can result in increased criminal activity. The significant number of average condition homes suggests that housing conditions will become a prominent issues for the city within the upcoming years.
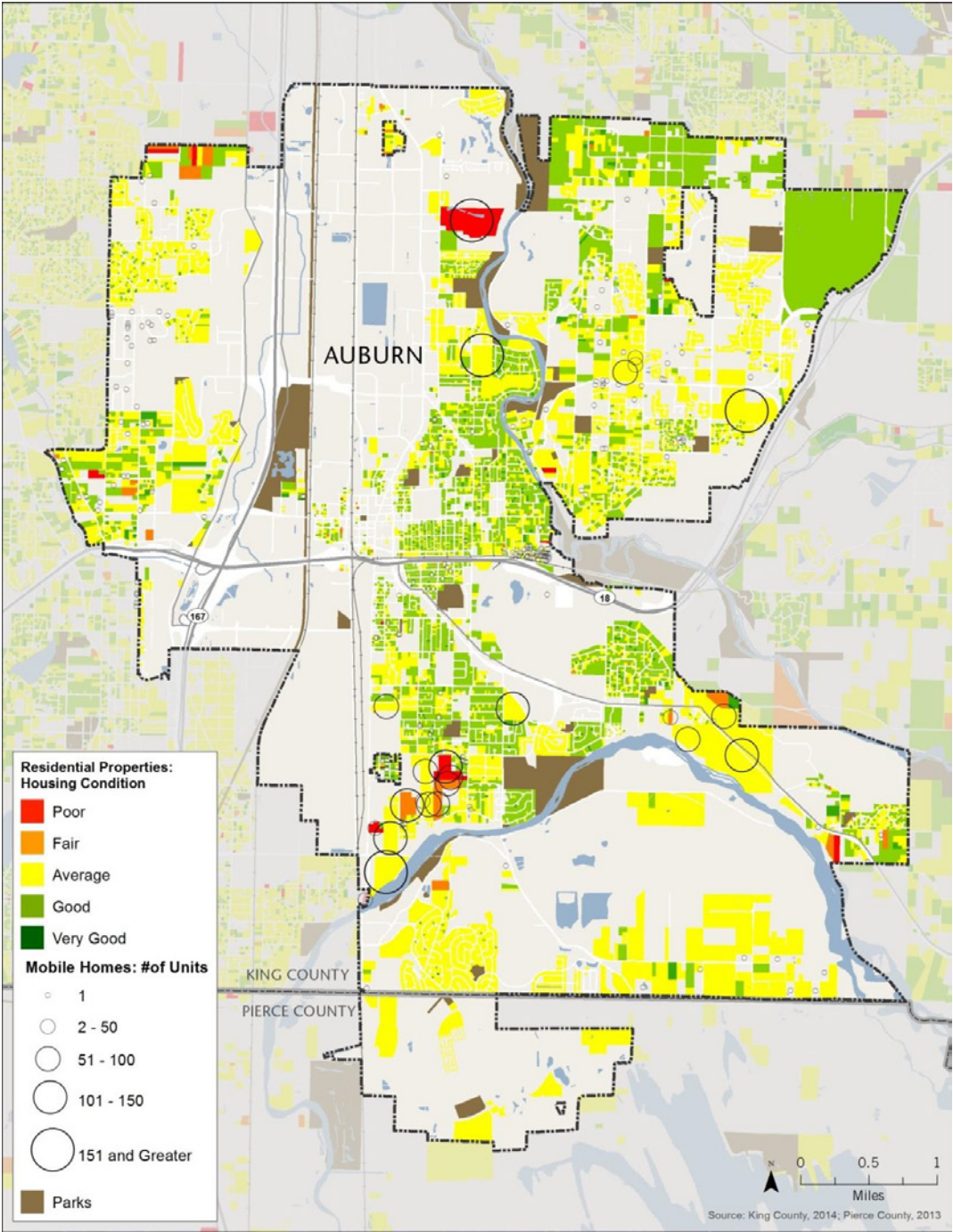
Credit: King County and Pierce County Assessors Office 2014; Courtesy of the City of Auburn

City Subsidy

Across all housing units, structure age is the most important physical attribute in predicting the degree of structure quality. There tends to be a negative correlation between the age of a unit and its condition. Generally speaking, a residential unit will have a functional life of around forty years, at which point additional investments will be needed to maintain structural adequacy. Housing quality has many dimensions including structural integrity, energy efficiency, wear and tear, housing design, and relationships to amenities and services. This recommendation examines multiple dimensions of housing quality to ascertain the specific housing quality challenges experienced in Auburn. Houses can be rated from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Very Good):

1 = Poor

Repair and overhaul needed on painted surfaces, roofing, plumbing, and heating. Numerous functional inadequacies present.

2 = Fair

Badly worn. Much repair needed. Many items need refinishing or overhauling, deferred maintenance obvious, inadequate building utility systems. Increased effective age.

3 = Average

Some evidence of deferred maintenance and normal obsolescence with age in that a few minor repairs are needed, along with some refinishing. All major components still functional and contributing toward an extended life expectancy. Some maintenance may be recommended.

4 = Satisfactory

Building is decently maintained and no immediate work is required. Preventative maintenance may be recommended.

5= Excellent

All items well maintained or have been renovated or repaired recently. Increased life expectancy. Little deterioration or obsolescence evident with a high degree of utility. No maintenance required.

Labeling homes based on their condition would allow the city to appropriately allocate funds to neighborhoods in need of the most repair. This labeling system improves the efficiency and speed in which the city can improve the condition of homes. Overall, the subsidy may then have the desired effect of increasing the value of properties within Auburn. Additionally, the subsidy would likely help create

a healthier environment for residents to enjoy as neglected properties decrease in number. There are a few problems which need to be addressed, however. This includes finding funding for the subsidy, determining an evaluation staff, and hiring a reliable contractor to carry out repairs. Furthermore, renovated housing may decrease the amount of affordable housing as rent and property taxes may rise with the quality of the housing. Therefore, in order to implement the subsidy, the City of Auburn will need to consider the following:

- Determine a budget for the amount of money that would be given to homeowners through the subsidy.

- Determine who will be responsible for establishment and disbursement of the subsidy. One recommendation would be to give these responsibilities to the Community Development Organization as they have already established relationships with homeowners and have extensive knowledge of housing conditions within the city.

- Establish a method through which residents could apply for the subsidy.

- Decide whether all residents qualify for the subsidy or whether only residents with certain financial disparities qualify.

- Determine who would be responsible for the initial examination of the homes. External contractors may manufacture evaluations that are more favorable towards increased renovations. For this reason, it would be beneficial for city officials to be involved with, or independently conduct the initial evaluation.

- Hire an external contractor for all subsidized work. The city may be able to receive this work at a discounted cost due to the volume of work provided to the contractor by the city. For Example, the city has already contracted out sanitary services through Waste Management. This subsidy could employ the same tactic.

- Create an agreement between residents and city officials concerning how to assess property tax and rent.

- Consider an incentive under this subsidy for renovations, which incorporate renewable energy. Assist in the obtaining of federal subsidies for residents with renewable energy sources.

Concerns that may arise from the renovation of homes within Auburn include the possibility of rising property taxes, and an inability for poorer individuals to comply with guidelines. Both of these consequences could lead to gentrification of the community. In order to minimize gentrification, city officials would need to closely monitor the number of affordable homes and the cost of living within Auburn. Any interventions in the city tax, subsidy, or penalty system would also need to be carefully monitored and evaluated. Currently, the affordability of homes within Auburn is not a pressing issue, but rates of anticipated growth may change affordability.

Efficient Building

The City of Auburn could benefit by examining the approach currently being taken by Vancouver, British Columbia in reducing the effects of urban sprawl. Rather than growing outward, the city has decided to grow upward. In doing so, Vancouver has encouraged the use of public transportation by residents, limiting traffic within the city center. Some of the most prominent barriers in Vancouver's attempts to reverse the effects of urban sprawl have been in changing residents' perceptions of density, as well as the construction of new and innovative ways in accommodating residents. Auburn has an opportunity to decide how the projected population growth will define and change the city. Taking a proactive stance against future sprawl could provide the City of Auburn with a future of limited segregation within the housing stock. The City of Auburn could benefit greatly from housing policy that places significant value on integration rather than development.

Implementing efficient design takes up minimal land while providing the same, if not more, amenities. Converting unused industrial buildings into living space, and to a lesser degree shopping space is a popular option, and could help enhance Auburn's identity.

IMPLEMENTING EFFICIENT DESIGN TAKES UP MINIMAL LAND WHILE PROVIDING THE SAME, IF NOT MORE, AMENITIES

There are, however, certain considerations that need to be made when renovating in this manner. Some buildings may have historical significance. It is important to maintain a sense of Auburn's history, as this has cultural meaning to residents. Though Auburn does not currently have affordable housing concerns, providing housing for a growing population in an equitable way that enhances livability should not involve reactive planning practices. Finally, there may be location or logistical concerns which may not be foreseen or surmountable, some buildings may not be affordably or effectively converted. Additional considerations include the following:

- If the city views this as a viable option, there would need to be personnel assigned to overviewing potential sites for suitability. Older industrial buildings may suffer from issues that include lead paint, asbestos, or unstable foundations. If money is going to be invested into converting these buildings into housing, there need to be strict rules to maximize return on investment. Health and safety issues of unsuitable buildings could trigger a decision that funds not be devoted toward development.

- Personnel assessing these buildings would also need to consider the proportion of buildings to be commercial, residential, or multi-purpose. Buildings that have both commercial and residential portions are one

way of maximizing space within the community. A balance between these three types of buildings needs to be struck in order to maximize the number of living spaces without reducing the quality of those living spaces.

- If a building has historical significance, it can be outfitted so that it is both an attractive living space and a snapshot of Auburn's past. An example that may be referred to when constructing historical Auburn buildings is the City of Snoqualmie. The City of Snoqualmie has taken advantage of their old railway system and have made it a historical attraction. These renovations have brought increased commercial revenue for local stores and have improved home values (City Development).

POPULATION FLOWS

Auburn's population fluctuation as of 2015.

INFLOW
31,121
NON-RESIDENTS WORKING IN AUBURN

RESIDENTS LIVING & WORKING IN AUBURN
4,535

OUTFLOW
23,613
RESIDENTS WORKING OUTSIDE OF AUBURN

Credit: City of Auburn

Reducing Roadway Congestion

During the 1940's, the City of Auburn experienced an economic transition from a primarily agricultural to an industrially dominant economy. While the agriculture community has remained a prominent feature of Auburn, the influences of large corporations on the area's urban fabric, such as Boeing, should not go unnoticed. Boeing is the largest employer within Auburn, representing 17% of all jobs within the city (City of Auburn 2015). Educational jobs, including employers such as the Auburn School District and Green River College represent the second most prominent form of jobs within the city. According to Auburn's Core Comprehensive Plan, there is an expected shift in the job market within Auburn. Based on the city's estimates, the service sector is expected to increase the most with a projected 70.5% growth increase. It is important to note that this growth is expected on top of existing jobs. Since 1995, Auburn has experienced a steady increase in jobs, despite the Great Recession that began in 2008 (City of Auburn 2015). The economic growth experienced in recent decades should provide additional funding for investment in the community.

As a potential result of the increased number of jobs available within the city, there may be more non-residents traveling into Auburn for work, which may increase traffic congestion. It would be beneficial for the city to take a proactive approach when building for future growth. Encouraging individuals who work within the city to live there can be a simpler process as well as one that has positive effects on congestion. Those who already work within the city will need less incentive to make the move to Auburn as the promise of a reduced commute time can be a fair attraction.
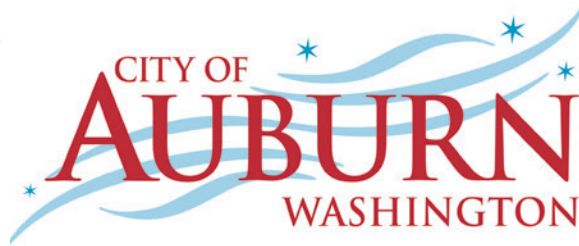
The Community Development Organization could also influence the people of Auburn to make necessary changes to improve the status of the community. The associated subsidy would allow for residents to afford the changes the city wants them to make. As residents improve their community they may cultivate great civic pride and a sense of stewardship. This alone can improve the Auburn community as well as the way citizens interact with each other.

Further, we believe that enacting these changes will prepare Auburn for anticipated future growth. What the city does today will affect the structure and strength of the city tomorrow. If the city does not invest in itself, it may become less efficient and more segregated. Investing now may be a great benefit to the city's future both in the short term and further down the line.

05 CONCLUSION

The above proposed recommendations may have numerous positive consequences, including preparing Auburn for future growth, reducing crime, and the reintegration of Auburn's hill and valley districts. By focusing on rebuilding and renovating the valley region Auburn may obtain a revitalized feeling of community, as the valley region will no longer have the look and feel of neglect. As a consequence of a closer and higher quality community and living space it can be predicted that crime rates will drop. This will only further strengthen the ties between individuals and families within the community.

WHAT THE CITY DOES TODAY WILL AFFECT THE STRUCTURE AND STRENGTH OF THE CITY TOMORROW

A Community Development Organization would likely have a positive impact on the way in which the inner portions of Auburn grow. Assigning the renovation of the inner city to such a group may also assure a greater focus and action, as city officials currently do not have the time to devote to evaluating and improving these areas. Additionally, the Community Development Organization would have the benefit of communicating directly with residents. They would be able to field the concerns of individuals so that the city can take appropriate action.

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