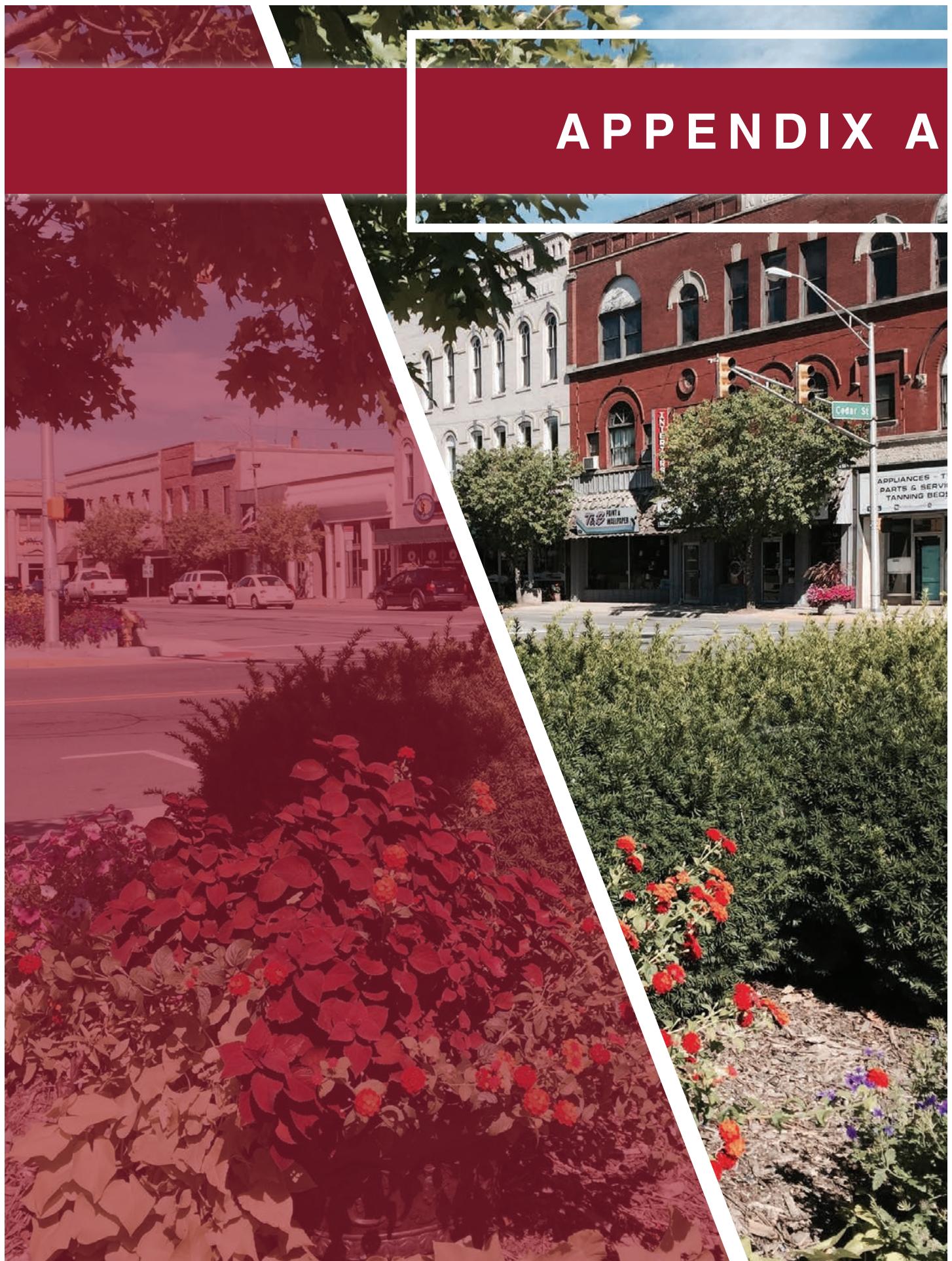


APPENDIX A





EXISTING CONDITIONS

The following includes a snapshot of community statistics for Auburn, the region, and the nation. Findings have been broken down into five categories:

- Demographics
- Economy
- Land Use
- Housing
- Livability

Planning trends for each sector have been included to provide context for the local findings at the regional and national scale. This report laid a foundation of understanding for the Auburn 2040 planning process. The findings of this report guided components of Auburn 2040, including community engagement and steering committee activities.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Auburn, Indiana



FIGURE 1

Population Growth

| YEAR / METRIC | DEKALB COUNTY | NORTHEAST INDIANA | INDIANA |
|----------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------|
| 2010 CENSUS | 42,223 | 759,086 | 6,483,802 |
| 2019 ESTIMATE | 43,475 | 789,735 | 6,732,219 |
| 2030 PROJECTION | 44,032 | 819,706 | 7,014,880 |
| 2050 PROJECTION | 42,446 | 840,941 | 7,272,579 |
| 2010 - 2050 % CHANGE | 0.53% | 10.78% | 12.95% |

FIGURE 2

DEKALB COUNTY IS LAGGING FAR BEHIND THE STATE OF INDIANA IN POPULATION GROWTH.

Households by Families & Relationship

| | AUBURN | | DEKALB COUNTY | | INDIANA | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|-------|---------------|--------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2010 | 2018 | 2010 | 2018 | 2010 | 2018 |
| TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS | 5,126 | 5,705 | 15,930 | 16,789 | 2,465,402 | 2,553,818 |
| % FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS | 65.5% | 59.1% | 70.9% | 68.1% | 67.2% | 65.3% |
| % HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN | 35.1% | 30.8% | 36.3% | 31.8% | 33.8% | 31.4% |
| % HOUSEHOLDS WITH SENIORS | 25.0% | 29.7% | 22.9% | 28.3% | 23.1% | 27.3% |
| % HOUSEHOLDS WITH SENIOR LIVING ALONE | 12.0% | 14.5% | 9.7% | 10.6% | 9.5% | 10.8% |
| AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE | 2.37 | 2.27 | 2.60 | 2.52 | 2.53 | 2.53 |

FIGURE 3

Educational Attainment

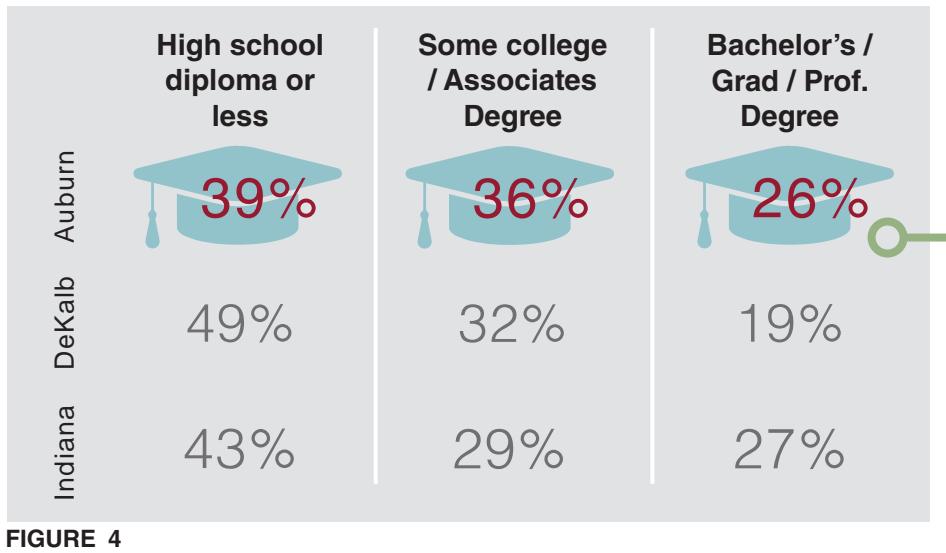


FIGURE 4

AUBURN'S RESIDENTS HAVE ACHIEVED A HIGHER LEVEL OF EDUCATION WHEN COMPARED TO THE COUNTY AND STATE.

Median Age Over Time

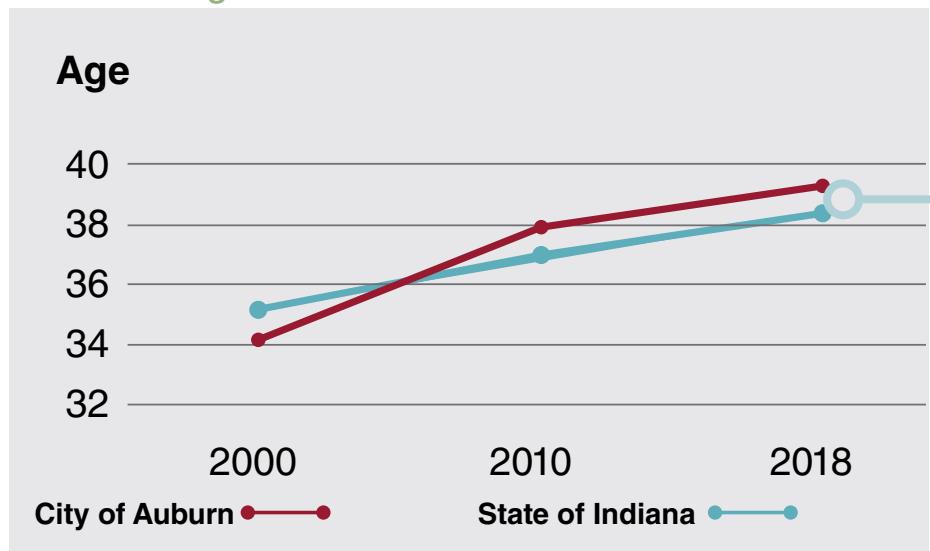


FIGURE 5

INCREASED MEDIAN AGE ARE TRENDING UP.

Demographics Sources

U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census (2000)(2010); U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Esri (2019); Source: STATS Indiana, Population Projections (2020)

PLANNING TRENDS

The United States is seeing some overall trends that are relevant to Auburn and the future, such as those contributing to the increase in median age.

A portion of this trend may be attributed to aging Baby Boomers and fewer Millennials having children or waiting until later in life to do so. For example, the percent of households having children has decreased in Auburn, the County, and the State.

Additionally, urban areas are growing more dense across the country while rural and suburban communities have struggled to attract and retain younger residents. Many communities throughout the Midwest are suffering from "brain drain" - the phenomenon where college graduates do not return to their home communities following graduation, but choose to remain in urban centers with better access to jobs and amenities.

This trend may change as more and more employers are offering work from home options.

ECONOMY

DeKalb County Economic Snapshot



FIGURE 6

Job Growth: 2005 to 2018



FIGURE 7

MORE THAN **50%** OF DEKALB COUNTY WORKERS AND **20%** OF AUBURN WORKERS ARE EMPLOYED IN MANUFACTURING.

THE INDUSTRY WITH THE MOST BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYEES IN THE CITY OF AUBURN IS THE **RETAIL INDUSTRY**.

AUBURN HAS A LONG HISTORY OF MANUFACTURING AND STILL CELEBRATES ITS AUTOMOTIVE ROOTS TODAY WITH FOUR AUTO MUSEUMS AND THE ANNUAL AUBURN CORD DUESENBERG FESTIVAL.

Auburn Workforce by Place of Residence

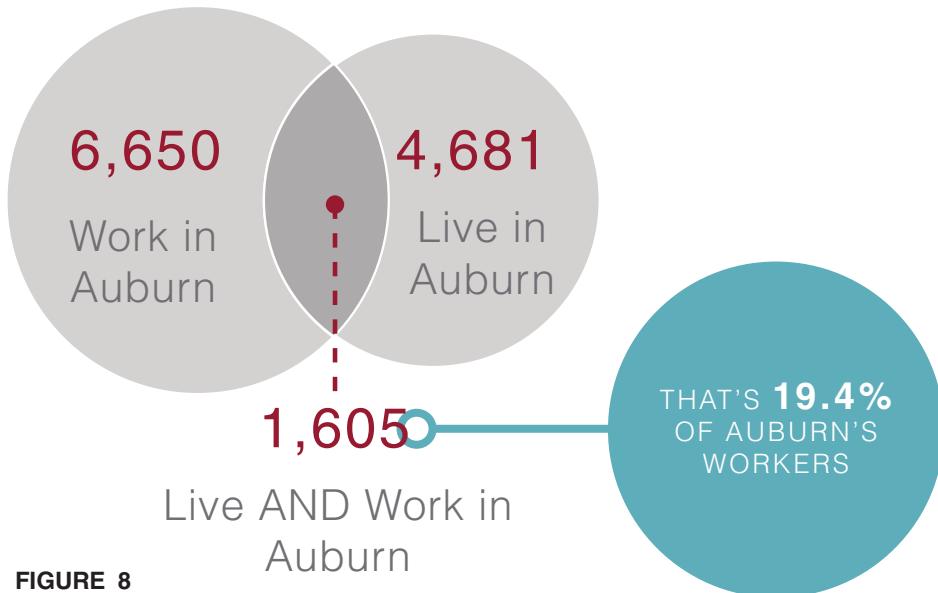


FIGURE 8

Auburn Total of Businesses & Employees

| | BUSINESSES | EMPLOYEES |
|---|------------|-----------|
| RETAIL TRADE | 13.7% | 21.1% |
| OTHER SERVICES (EXCEPT PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION) | 11.8% | 3.8% |
| HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE | 10.0% | 14.5% |
| ACCOMMODATION & FOOD SERVICES | 9.4% | 14.0% |
| PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC & TECH SERVICES | 9.0% | 3.4% |

FIGURE 9

Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation Growth: 2005 to 2018

By Jobs:

20% DeKalb County
36% United States

By GDP:

35% DeKalb County
86% United States

FIGURE 10

Economy Sources
Bureau of Economic Analysis (2018); Esri / Infogroup (2019)

PLANNING TRENDS

Some national economic trends impacting Northeast Indiana, as well as other areas of the United States, include:

- Decline of big box retail
- Rise of e-commerce
- Increase in experience-based spending
- Frequent and multi-channel delivery
- Increase in automation
- Stagnant wages

Several of these trends are tied to new and recent technology which has streamlined tasks previously performed through manual labor or created entirely new markets for services and growth. In strong economies, arts, entertainment, and recreation thrive with the influx of superfluous spending, bringing with them a younger population.

It is unclear how the 2020 COVID-19 public health crisis will affect the national and regional economy in the long term. A decrease in international trade could be a boom for U.S. manufacturing sectors, while accommodation and food services are already claiming significant losses.

LAND USE

ABOUT **13%** OF LAND IN AUBURN IS USED FOR COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY.

DEKALB COUNTY LAND IS **80.5%** AGRICULTURAL

65% OF THE COUNTY'S COMMERCIAL LAND (NON-INDUSTRIAL) IS IN AUBURN.

NEARLY **5 ACRES** IN AUBURN ARE DEDICATED TO STRUCTURED PARKING.

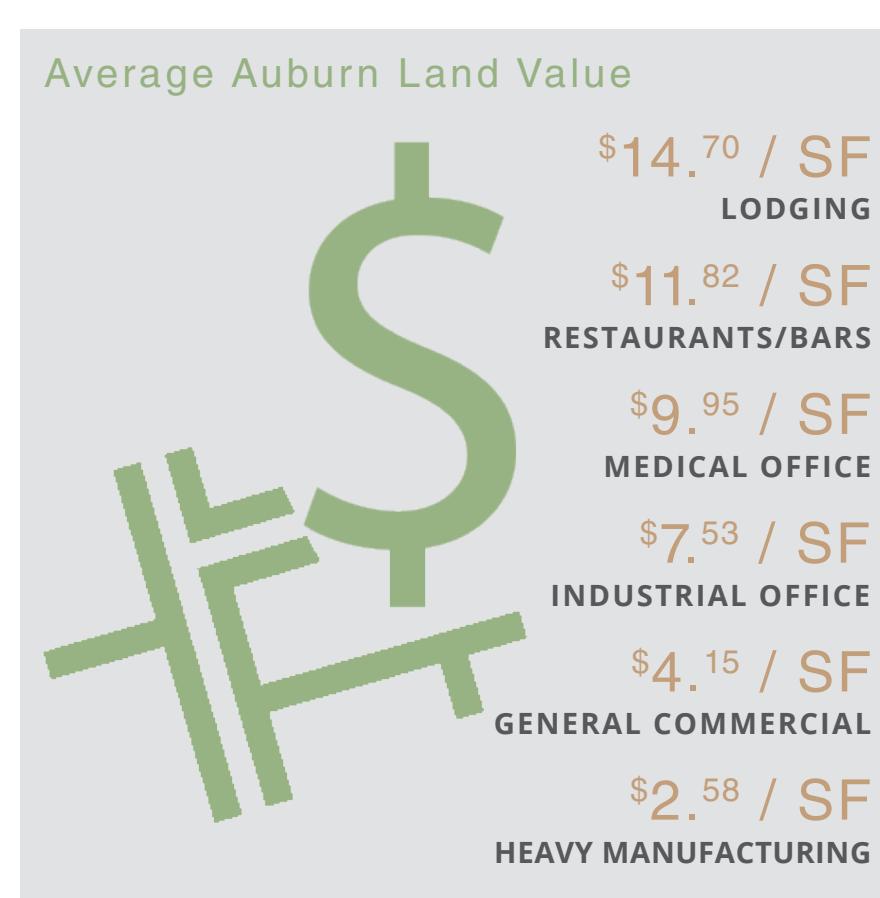
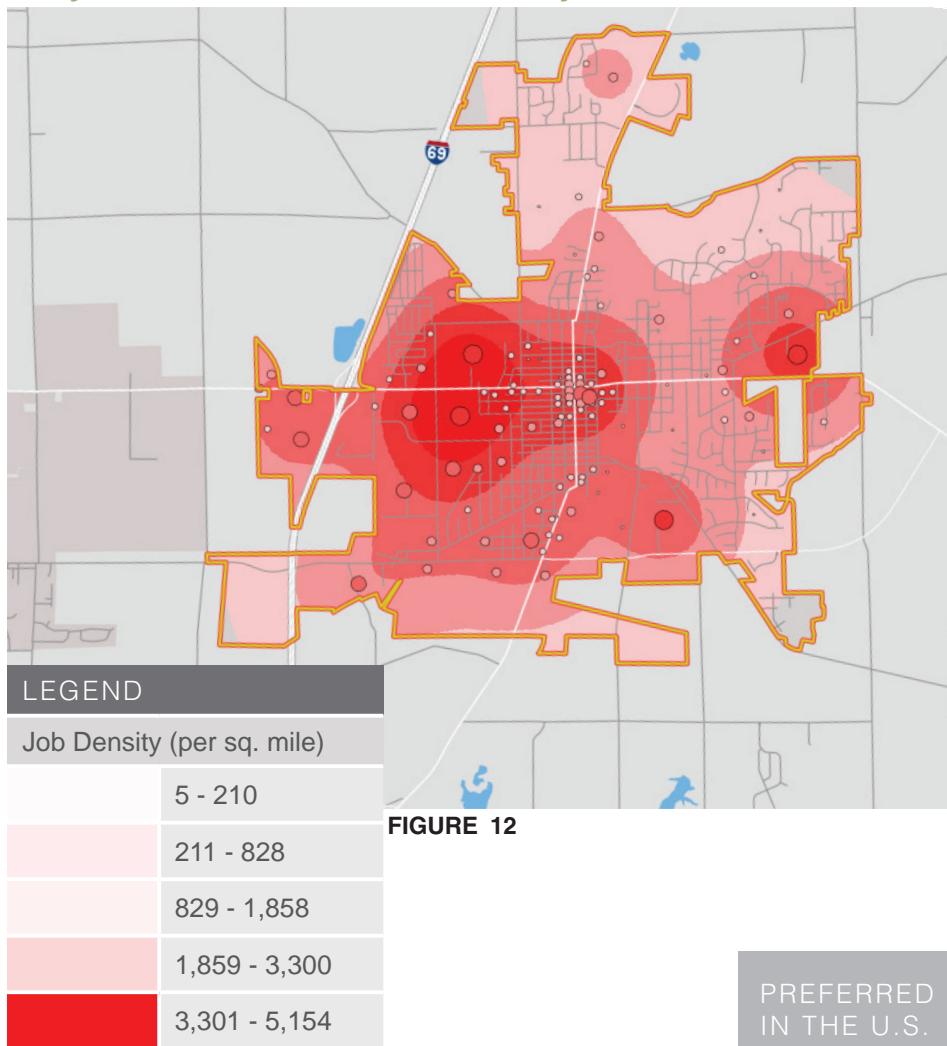


FIGURE 11



RECENT CONSTRUCTION IN AUBURN INCLUDES THE STRAW BUILDING LOCATED DOWNTOWN. THIS MIXED-USE BUILDING SERVES AS OFFICE HEADQUARTERS FOR TEAM QUALITY SERVICES AND FEATURES OTHER COMMERCIAL SPACE FOR LEASE.

City of Auburn Job Density



Land Use Sources

US Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (2017); City of Auburn GIS data (2020); National Association of Realtors Community and Transportation Preferences Survey (2017)

PLANNING TRENDS

Walkability has become the new trend opposing the sprawling subdivisions that defined U.S. home construction for the second half of the 20th century. Now home-buyers and renters alike are looking for communities where they can live, work, and play - and its best if they can walk.

Many communities have accomplished this goal by allowing and encouraging mixed-use development and denser residential options. As shown below, people across the generation spectrum would prefer to live in a house with a small yard but in close proximity to amenities than to live in a house with a large yard that requires them to drive.

PREFERRED COMMUNITY BY GENERATION IN THE U.S.



HOUSING

Auburn Housing Snapshot



FIGURE 14

MEDIAN MONTHLY
RENT **\$687**

City of Auburn Housing Age

| MEDIAN YEAR BUILT | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1978 | 1974 | 1973 |
| Auburn | DeKalb County | Indiana |
| PERCENT BUILT PRIOR TO 1960 | | |
| 30% | 39% | 34% |
| Auburn | DeKalb County | Indiana |

FIGURE 15

Housing by Tenure

| | OWNER- OCCUPIED | RENTER- OCCUPIED | VACANT |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------|
| AUBURN | 62.9% | 29.2% | 7.9% |
| DEKALB COUNTY | 67.8% | 23.2% | 9.0% |
| INDIANA | 61.2% | 28.1% | 10.7% |
| UNITED STATES | 56.4% | 32.4% | 11.2% |

FIGURE 16

Housing by Units in Structure

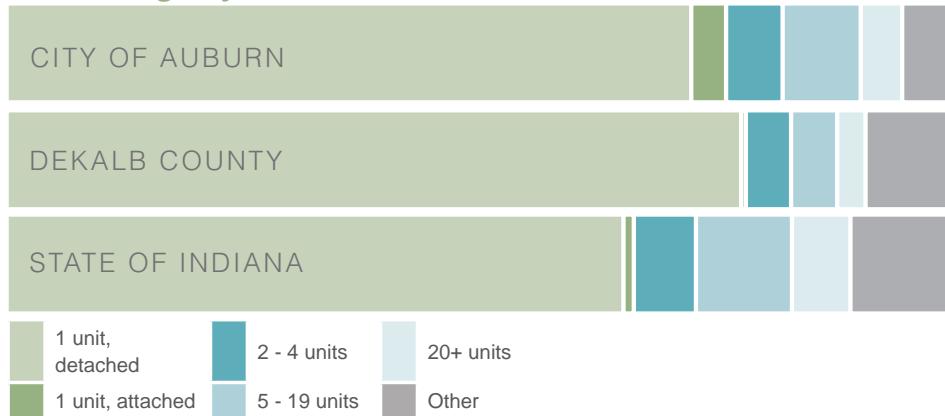


FIGURE 17

Residential Land Use by Type

| DESCRIPTION | TOTAL LAND (SQ FT) | % OF RESIDENTIAL LAND |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| CONDO | 55,583 | 0.1% |
| DUPLEX - 3 FAMILY | 847,027 | 1.1% |
| MOBILE - MANUFACTURED HOME | 5,635,360 | 7.4% |
| MULTIFAMILY (20+) | 2,082,870 | 2.8% |
| MULTIFAMILY (4-19) | 1,560,472 | 2.1% |
| OTHER | 1,391,177 | 1.8% |
| SINGLE FAMILY | 52,551,407 | 69.5% |
| VACANT | 11,536,272 | 15.2% |
| TOTAL | 75,660,172 | 100.0% |

FIGURE 18

70% OF HOUSING IN AUBURN IS SINGLE FAMILY HOMES

PLANNING TRENDS

A recent residential market analysis* concluded that by 2025, the Northeast Indiana region, independent of Allen County, could absorb up to nearly 16,000 new housing units. The market could support the following housing types:

- 8,775 to 10,975 new mixed-income rental units,
- 765 to 955 new townhouses, and
- 2,645 to 3,965 new detached houses

The analysis further examined potential demand by types of households. More than half (55%) of the total residential market potential is projected to come from non-family households (i.e. single young professionals, empty-nesters, childless couples, etc.).

Non-family households are generally smaller and thus require smaller dwelling units. There are several options to meet these needs including multifamily buildings, duplexes, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), clustered or conservation development and more.

*Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc., Analysis of Residential Market Potential (2019)

Housing Sources

U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2014-2018); City of Auburn GIS data (2020); Esri (2019);

AARP: LIVEABILITY

AUBURN RATES THE HIGHEST IN OPPORTUNITY. THE NUMBER OF JOBS AND THE AGE-GROUP DIVERSITY OF THE LOCAL POPULATION ARE HIGHER THAN THE NATION.

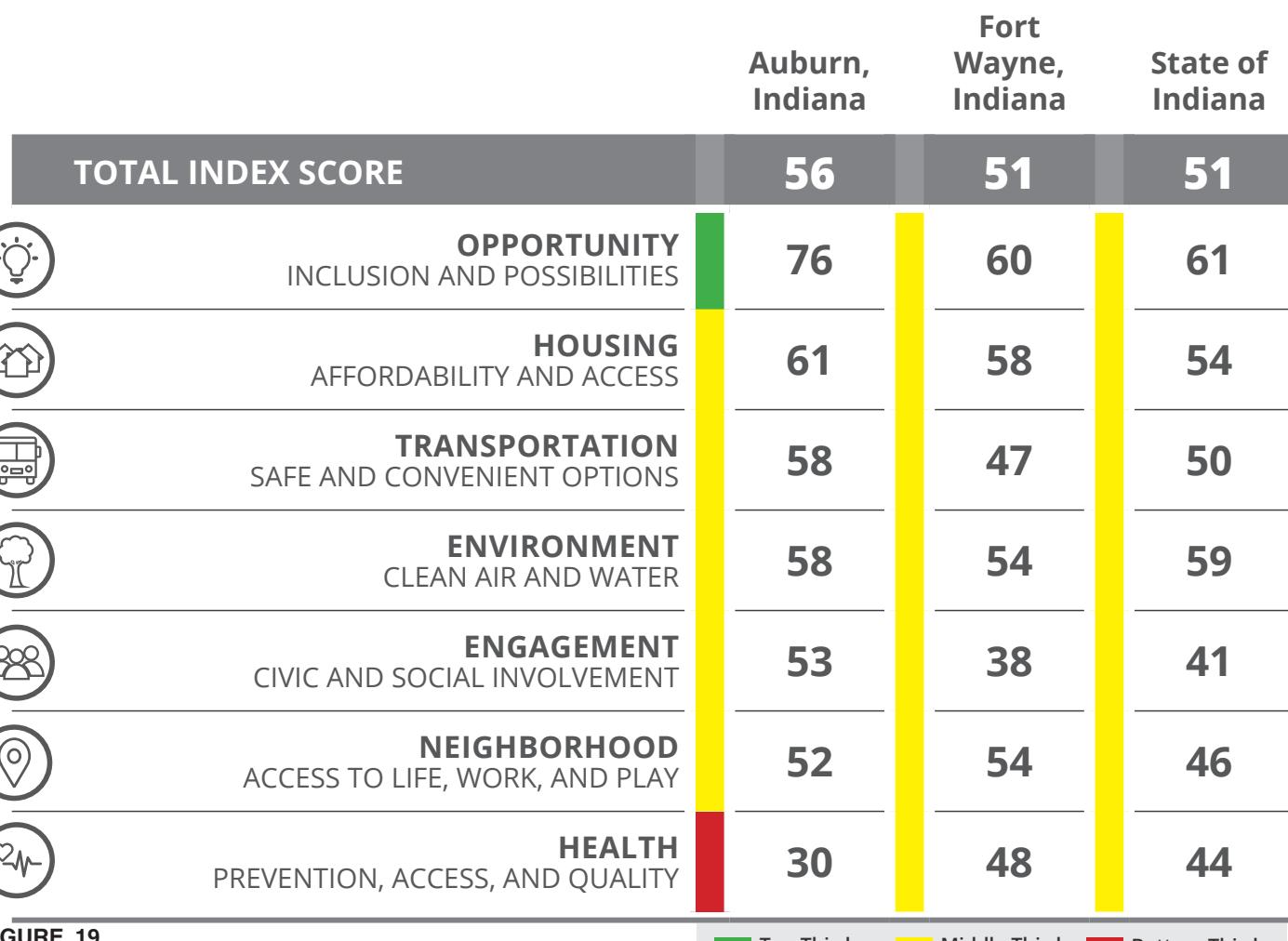


FIGURE 19

THE AARP LIVABILITY INDEX SPECIFICALLY ACCOUNTS FOR THE NEEDS OF THE NATION'S GROWING SENIOR POPULATION.

A HIGHLY LIVABLE PLACE PROVIDES FOR THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING OF ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

AUBURN'S LOWEST SCORE IS HEALTH. THE PREVENTABLE HOSPITALIZATION RATE IS 76.8, COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL MEDIAN OF 48.5.

AUBURN'S ENVIRONMENT SCORE LOSES POINTS FOR THE NUMBER OF DAYS PER YEAR WHEN REGIONAL AIR QUALITY FOR DEKALB COUNTY IS UNHEALTHY AND FOR THE TOXICITY OF AIRBORNE CHEMICALS RELEASED FROM NEARBY INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES.

PLANNING TRENDS

A market analysis provides insight to the economic measures of a community to guide decisions around development, investment, workforce, and land use. A livability analysis encompasses a broader range of study to look holistically at how a community functions and to what level its residents are able to thrive, particularly through the lens of a more narrowed demographic cohort: the aging population.

Nationally, the population is growing older. The national median age rose from 35.3 in 2000 to 37.2 in 2010 with 2017 estimates at 37.8. The City of Auburn and State of Indiana follow similar trends. As the baby boomer generation ages and life expectancies increase, the U.S. Census Bureau predicts that 2035 will mark the first time in our country's history that seniors (65+) will outnumber children.

The AARP Public Policy Institute developed the Livability Index as a tool to measure community livability and educate decision makers on building places where residents of all ages can comfortably live.

APPENDIX B





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Inclusive and comprehensive community engagement ensures the plan reflects an authentic community-wide vision that is implementable. This is achieved through ongoing community dialogue, collaboration, and targeted engagement activities.

The following includes a summary of the public involvement conducted to date for the Auburn 2040 planning process. Results include feedback from:

- The General Public;
- Steering Committee made of Community Leaders & Officials;
- Stakeholder Interest Groups; and
- Auburn Students

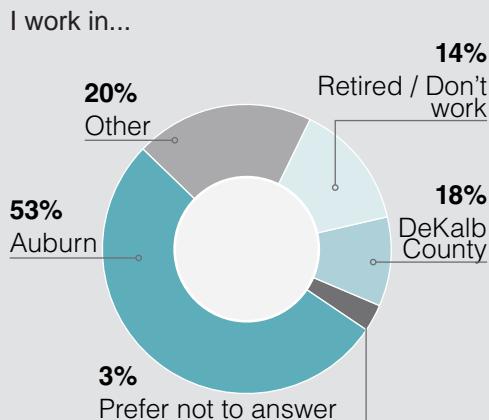
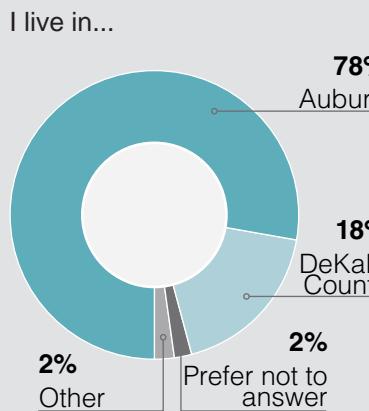
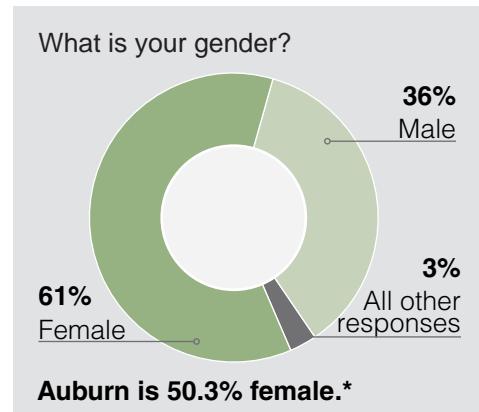
The results displayed in this report are utilized to inform and strengthen Auburn 2040 Goals and Policies outlined in Chapter 03.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

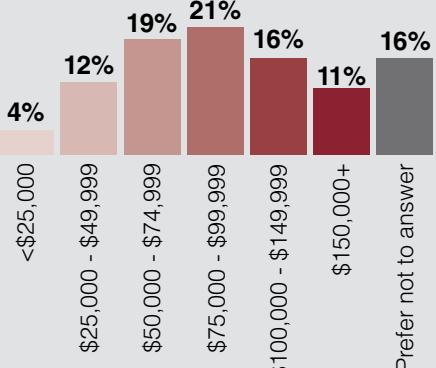
Participants

The Community Survey was created to gather diverse feedback and to reach as many community members as possible. The content of the survey centered around Auburn's desire for growth and development, as well as the overall livability. The survey was available throughout the summer of 2020 on the project website, which was promoted by the City of Auburn via social media, and as a hard copy around the community.

More than 35,000 responses were gathered from 642 participants. The survey included optional questions on demographics and background to provide context. The demographic breakdown of survey participants is shown on this page.

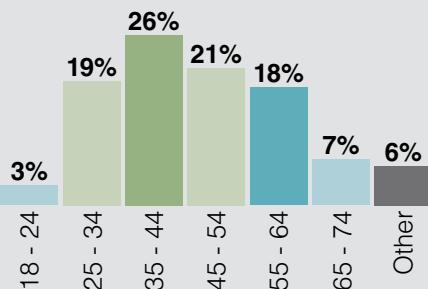


What is your annual household income?



Auburn's median household income is \$48,684*

How old are you?



Auburn's median age is 38.6.*

How would you describe your household?
(select all that apply)

| | % SURVEY RESPONDENTS | % CITY OF AUBURN* |
|--|----------------------|-------------------|
| MORE THAN ONE ADULT RELATED BY BLOOD OR MARRIAGE | 73% | 59% |
| INCLUDES CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18 | 42% | 31% |
| SINGLE ADULT LIVING ALONE | 13% | 37% |
| INCLUDES AN ADULT OVER THE AGE OF 65 | 7% | 30% |
| MORE THAN ONE ADULT WHO ARE NOT RELATED BY BLOOD OR MARRIAGE | 5% | 4% |
| PREFER NOT TO ANSWER | 3% | N/A |

*Source of City of Auburn benchmarks: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2014-2018)

FIGURE 20

Land Use / Infrastructure / Services

Survey Question:

Check the box for each category which you believe to be available, affordable, and/or of acceptable quality. If you do not believe that a land use type or opportunity is available, affordable, and/or of acceptable quality in Auburn, leave the box blank.

Results:

Roughly 95% of survey responders gave the following feedback regarding Land Use & Opportunities. Groceries seems to lead the way on being available, affordable and acceptable quality. (The lowest ratings were Healthcare Services affordability, Employment Opportunities acceptable quality, and Recreational Options affordability and quality.)

Respondents were most dissatisfied with the availability of Recreational Options, the affordability of Healthcare Services and Recreational Options, and the quality of Employment Opportunities and Recreational Options. Generally, respondents did not highly rank the quality of the land uses and opportunities identified, concluding that residents are looking to improve the existing land uses verse expanding.

Land Use Types:

| | AVAILABLE | AFFORDABLE | ACCEPTABLE QUALITY |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|
| ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT | 53% | 44% | 35% |
| DINING | 58% | 49% | 36% |
| EDUCATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES | 57% | 38% | 33% |
| EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES | 57% | N/A | 28% |
| GROCERIES | 63% | 51% | 41% |
| HEALTHCARE SERVICES | 64% | 28% | 36% |
| HOUSING OPTIONS | 52% | 37% | 41% |
| RECREATIONAL OPTIONS | 38% | 26% | 23% |
| RETAIL | 64% | 41% | 37% |

FIGURE 21

Survey Question:

Identify the top 3 development priorities for Auburn to focus on over the next 20 years.

Results:

Survey respondents, as shown in Figure 22, identify Downtown improvements and increased food options as top development priorities. In addition, students who were engaged in a similar survey (Figure 50, p. B-36) identified the same top development priorities. Expanding recreation opportunities was a close second, which reflects the results on the previous page - Recreational Options were the lowest ranked land use (Figure 21).

KEY THEMES



There is a demand for access and improved options for food.

Development Priorities:



FIGURE 22

Note: Participants could select up to 3 choices.
Percentages show what % of respondents selected that option.

Survey Question:

Please rate the existing quality of each of the following elements of Auburn's city services / infrastructure.

Results:

As shown in Figure 23, almost all City services were considered average quality or better by survey respondents. The exception however is sidewalks, which approximately half consider to be below average quality in Auburn. The dissatisfaction with pedestrian infrastructure was a common theme throughout the survey and community engagement in general. Other top areas for potential improvement include communications and media presence, park programming, and streets. Alternatively, 55% and 45% of survey respondents think that the quality of AES and police/fire/public safety, respectively, are above average.

KEY THEMES

The quality of sidewalks is a significant concern and an opportunity for improvement.

KEY THEMES



AES is an asset that should be leveraged.

Quality of Services & Infrastructure:

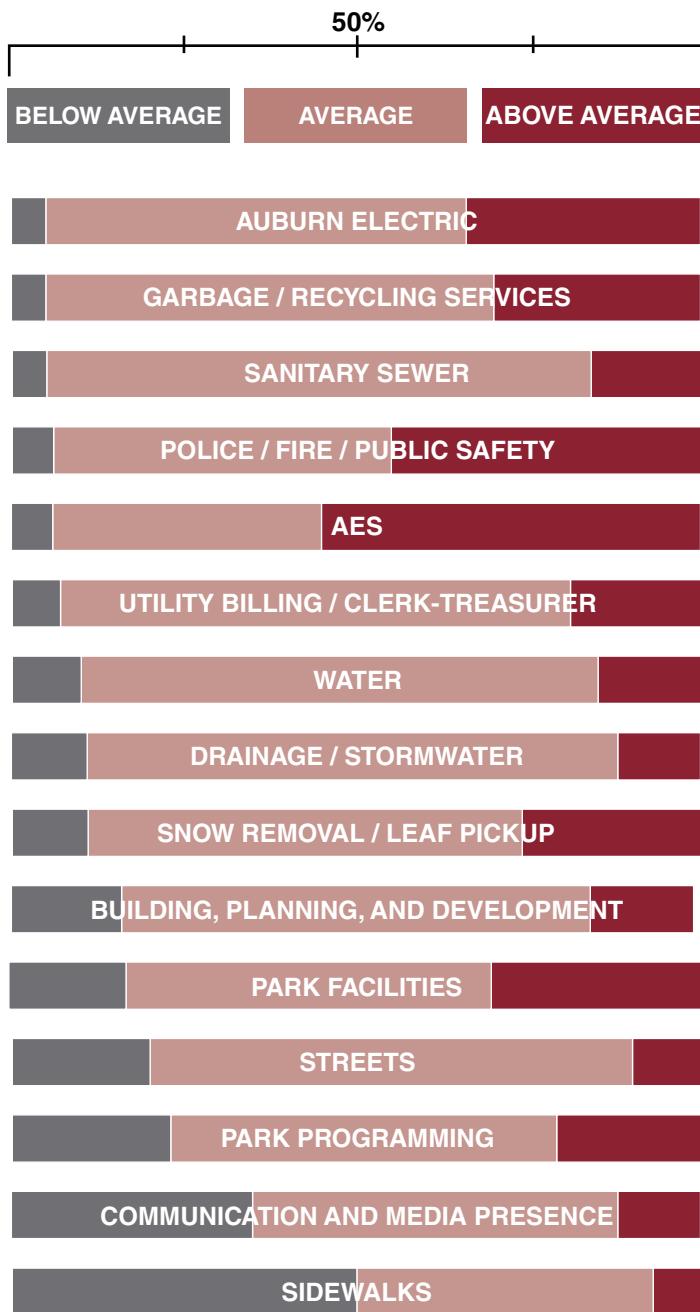


FIGURE 23

Transportation

Survey Question:

My primary mode of transportation is:

Results:

Almost all of survey respondents said that a personal vehicle is their primary mode of transportation (Figure 24). Only 2% chose other options spread across walking, biking, and public transit.

Survey Question:

My preferred mode of transportation is:

Results:

Even though nearly all of survey respondents primarily use personal vehicles, 15% would prefer to use a different mode of transportation (Figure 24). This group of 15% includes community members of different ages, genders, incomes, and household types. Walkability is clearly a preference and an important consideration given the previously noted dissatisfaction with the quality of Auburn's sidewalks.



FIGURE 24

Survey Question:

How accessible are the following destinations by walking, biking, or other non-vehicular travel?

Results:

As shown in Figure 25 below, respondents defined the majority of their destinations as “somewhat accessible,” defined by a 10 to 20 minutes travel time and few barriers. Consistent with the identified Development Priorities (Figure 22, p. B-05) of increasing and enhancing food options, groceries are considered the least accessible destination according to survey respondents. Referring back to Figure 21 (p. B-04) 63% of respondents acknowledged groceries were available. However, results in Figure 25 indicate that respondents do not consider groceries as accessible as they are available. Later in the public input process, many respondents commented on the need for grocery stores on the east or southeast side of town, further illustrating this disparity.

In addition, survey respondents who indicated that their household income is less than \$50,000 were more likely to identify a destination as not accessible or somewhat accessible. Nearly half of all Auburn households have incomes less than \$50,000 a year which means that many residents may be experiencing accessibility barriers as indicated by this survey’s results. Exploration of alternative transportation options should consider the needs and resources of all Auburn citizens, especially those earning below the average median income (\$48,684).

KEY THEMES



Walkability is desired for all and critical for lower incomes.

Accessibility of Destinations:

| | NOT ACCESSIBLE (>20-min travel time; many barriers, etc.) | SOMEWHAT ACCESSIBLE (10-20 min travel time; few barriers, etc.) | VERY ACCESSIBLE (< than 10-min travel; no barriers, etc.) |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT | 21% | 52% | 27% |
| DINING | 14% | 55% | 31% |
| EDUCATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES | 19% | 59% | 22% |
| EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES | 22% | 60% | 18% |
| GROCERIES | 30% | 42% | 28% |
| HEALTHCARE SERVICES | 19% | 49% | 32% |
| HOUSING OPTIONS | 13% | 52% | 35% |
| RECREATIONAL OPTIONS | 22% | 60% | 18% |
| RETAIL | 19% | 52% | 29% |

FIGURE 25

Survey Question:

Identify the top 3 transportation priorities for the City of Auburn to focus on over the next 20 years.

Results:

The top transportation priority, expand and improve sidewalks, was selected by more than half of survey respondents (Figure 26). Improving the quality and quantity of pedestrian connections was a common theme throughout the engagement process. Walkability has major implications on the accessibility of destinations and ultimately, quality of life.

In the student engagement survey, students selected the same top two responses - expand and improve sidewalks and repair / maintain existing local streets. Interestingly, the students' third priority was expanding on new mobility platforms, such as ride share programs, public transportation, rentals, etc.

New mobility platforms was second to last, while Downtown parking was the third priority. When considered together, these results convey a key consideration: supporting multiple modes of transportation will serve various demographics of Auburn citizens in various ways.

KEY THEMES



Supporting multiple modes of transportation will serve various demographics of Auburn citizens in various ways.

Transportation Priorities:



FIGURE 26

Note: Participants could select up to 3 choices.
Percentages show what % of respondents selected that option.

Placemaking and Identity

The word clouds found below use scale to reflect popularity. For example, when asked for three words that come to mind when “thinking of Auburn”, the most popular response was safe which is why it is the largest word shown in that word cloud (Figure 27). Survey respondents also think of Auburn as home, friendly, and small. These identifying words correspond to “favorite things about Auburn”, in addition to the people, community, events, family, and history (Figure 29). The words associated with Auburn’s automotive legacy (i.e. classics, cars, etc.) were also common.

Survey Question:

What are the first three words that come to mind when you think of Auburn?

Results:



FIGURE 27

Looking at how survey respondents would like to describe “Auburn in the future”, responses included innovative, diverse, welcoming, inclusive, and progressive (Figure 28). These results relate directly to some of the “least favorite things” about Auburn which is lack of options (Figure 30). The most common “least favorite thing” responses are options for (or lack thereof) dining, retail, sidewalks, and Seventh Street.

Survey Question:

What one word do you wish would describe Auburn in the future?

Results:



FIGURE 28

KEY THEMES



New development and redevelopment should be complimentary to the scale and character of Auburn.

Survey Question:

My favorite thing about Auburn is...

Results:

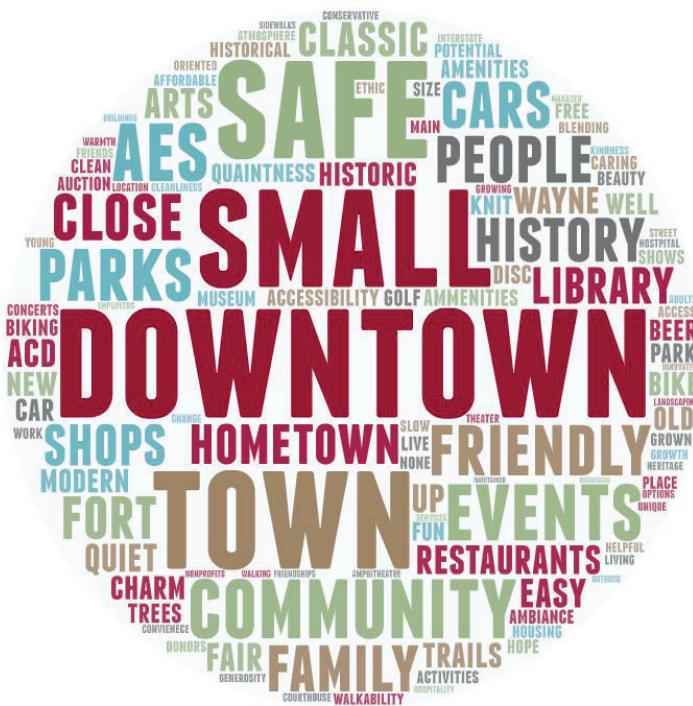


FIGURE 29

Survey Question:

My least favorite thing about auburn is...

Results:



FIGURE 30

Survey Question:

Identify the top 3 quality of place initiatives Auburn should pursue over the next 20 years.

Results:

As shown in Figure 31, the most important priority for survey respondents relative to 'placemaking and identity' is the farmer's market. Similarly, the second and third priorities were community events and Downtown redevelopment. Downtown and gathering spaces are important aspects of Auburn's identity; as noted in the 'favorite things' word cloud (Figure 29, p. B-11).

Quality of Place Initiatives:



FIGURE 31

Housing

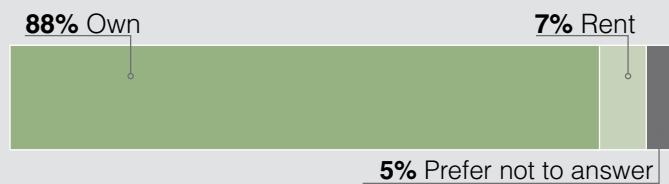
The majority of survey participants, 88%, are homeowners and an even larger number, 94%, would prefer to own their home (Figures 32 & 33). However, roughly 16% of survey participants can not find the housing they need in Auburn, and 23% believe that they will not be able to find the housing needed in the future, concluding that the types of housing available in Auburn may be an important factor as to why some survey respondents are not currently homeowners.

Notably, the survey respondents who said that they do not believe Auburn's housing stock fits their current needs and/or future needs are varied across household types, incomes, and ages. Common reasons found further in the survey for not being able to find future housing that will meet their needs, include lack of affordable options, limited senior housing, and little variety in sizes/style.

Survey Question:

Do you currently own or rent your place of residence?

Results:



Survey Question:

Do you believe the City of Auburn's housing stock fits your needs?

Results:

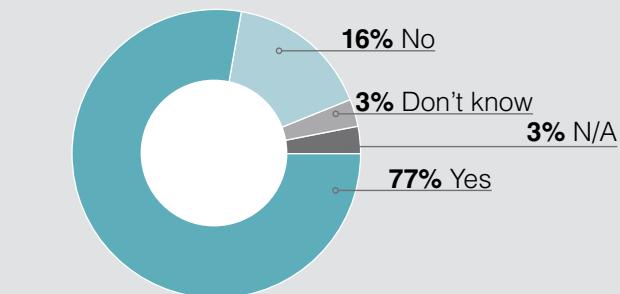
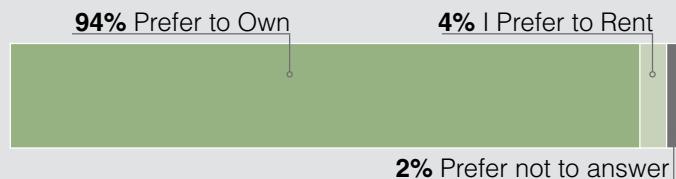


FIGURE 32

Survey Question:

Would you prefer to own or rent your place of residence?

Results:



Survey Question:

Do you believe the City of Auburn's housing stock will meet your future needs?

Results:

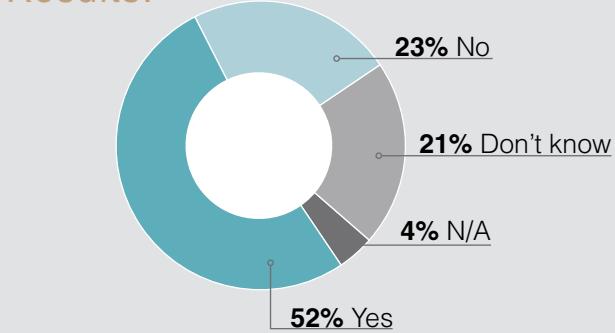


FIGURE 33

KEY THEMES



Major housing issues in Auburn include affordability and a lack of diverse options.

Survey Question:

The following list describes housing types in Auburn. Check the corresponding box for each category which you believe to be available, affordable, and/or of acceptable quality. If you do not believe that a housing type is available, affordable, and/or of acceptable quality in Auburn, leave the box blank.

Results:

As demonstrated in Figure 34, only 19% of respondents believe Downtown apartments are available. This lack of Downtown housing is significant because previous results show Downtown is vital to Auburn, which highlights the appreciation of and the desire to continue improving the Downtown. Also, further on in the survey, results show respondents desire to live in areas with high-quality walkable design.

Also shown in Figure 34, less than half of survey respondents believe any housing options are affordable in Auburn. In many cases, the response rate is significantly less than half. About one-quarter of respondents believe apartments; attached single-family dwellings in the form of duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes; and manufactured homes are affordable. Only 10% of respondents believe Downtown apartments are affordable, and 16% believe dependent care housing is affordable.

Again, less than half of survey respondents believe any housing option in Auburn is acceptable quality with single-family housing rating the highest quality at 49%.

Housing Types:

| | AVAILABLE | AFFORDABLE | ACCEPTABLE QUALITY |
|--|-----------|------------|--------------------|
| SINGLE- FAMILY HOMES | 69% | 46% | 49% |
| DUPLEXES, TRI-PLEX, QUAD-PLEX, TOWNHOMES | 39% | 23% | 16% |
| APARTMENTS | 51% | 26% | 18% |
| DOWNTOWN APARTMENTS | 19% | 10% | 12% |
| SENIOR HOUSING (INDEPENDENT LIVING) | 61% | 21% | 33% |
| DEPENDENT-CARE HOUSING (ASSISTED LIVING) | 54% | 16% | 25% |
| MANUFACTURED HOMES | 54% | 27% | 17% |

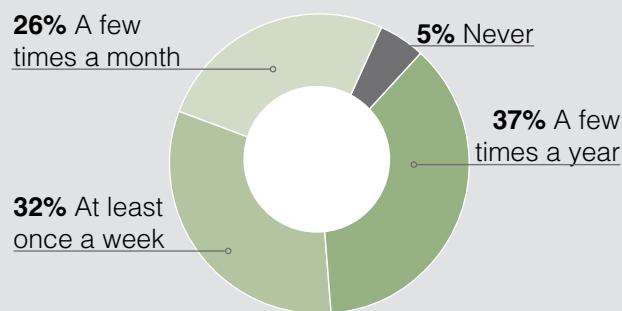
FIGURE 34

Parks and Recreation

Survey Question:

How often do you visit Auburn Parks and Recreation facilities, including trails?

Results:



Survey Question:

Which choice below best represents you and/or your family's use of the parks? (select all that apply)

Results:

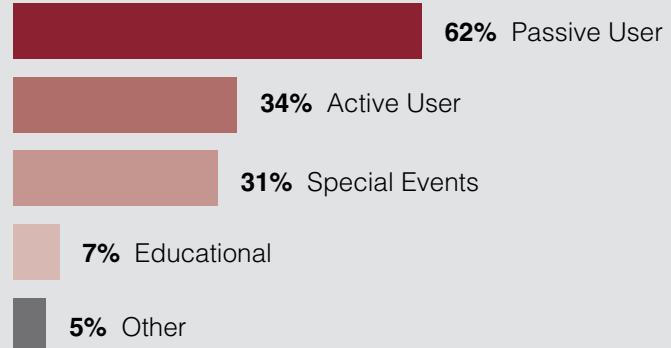


FIGURE 35

Over one-half of survey respondents visit Auburn park and recreation facilities at least a few times a month and mostly for passive recreation (Figure 35), such as walking, socializing, spectating, etc.

Some park and recreation facilities in Auburn are not considered available, safe, or of acceptable quality by the majority of survey respondents (Figure 36). Water trails were ranked extremely low, with under 15% of respondents voting the feature available, safe, or acceptable quality. Several respondents provided comments at the end of survey regarding the development of Cedar Creek and the opportunity for water trails. As park and recreation improvements are considered in the future, special attention should be given to further explore perceptions around safety, access, and quality of all park and recreation facilities as shown lacking in Figure 36, p. B-16.

KEY THEMES



The community is passionate about improving quality of parks and diversity of recreational amenities, especially trails.

Survey Question:

The following list describes park and recreation elements in Auburn. Check the corresponding box for each category which you believe to be available, safe, and/or of acceptable quality. If you do not believe that a park and recreation element is available, safe, and/or of acceptable quality in Auburn, leave the box blank.

Results:

| Park & Recreation Facilities: | AVAILABLE | SAFE | ACCEPTABLE QUALITY |
|--|-----------|------|--------------------|
| COMMUNITY EVENTS | 68% | 67% | 47% |
| DOG PARKS | 57% | 40% | 32% |
| FISHING | 45% | 32% | 21% |
| PAVILIONS, LODGES, PICNIC AREAS | 70% | 56% | 43% |
| PLAYGROUNDS | 79% | 62% | 45% |
| PRESERVATION / CONSERVATION AREAS | 33% | 28% | 22% |
| PROGRAMMING / CLASSES | 42% | 33% | 22% |
| SKATEBOARDING FACILITIES | 30% | 17% | 19% |
| SLEDDING HILLS | 29% | 21% | 14% |
| SPORTS FIELDS, COURTS, DISC GOLF, ETC. | 61% | 43% | 37% |
| BIKING TRAILS | 56% | 43% | 33% |
| WALKING TRAILS | 64% | 50% | 41% |
| WATER TRAILS | 15% | 14% | 8% |

FIGURE 36

General Comments

Survey respondents were able to conclude the survey by providing general thoughts on the future of Auburn. The feedback is generalized in Figure 37. Many of the comments related to top priorities identified earlier in the survey included improved walkability, Downtown enhancements, more diverse housing options, and park and recreation improvements. The common themes from the community survey include:

- Expand and improve sidewalks
- Continue downtown improvements / investment
- Support community events (especially farmers market)
- Preserve and increase recreational amenities and trails
- Expand housing options
- Re-imagine commercial gateways / corridors
- Enhance dining, arts, & entertainment options
- Growth

Survey Question:

Are there any general comments you would like to provide for the future of Auburn?

Results:

General Comments:

Transportation

- Increase / improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure (i.e. sidewalks, trails)
- Efficient traffic flow

Recreation & Environment

- Park Facility improvements
- Water activities (i.e.. swimming pool, splashpad, Cedar Creek kayaking, etc.)
- Environmental protection (ex: trees)

Community Programming

- More community events
- Farmers Market expansion

Downtown

- Revitalization and redevelopment
- Historic preservation

Housing

- More diverse options (ex: apartments)
- Affordability

Diversity and Inclusion

- Diversify the community with an increase in local restaurants, local businesses, and ADA accessible buildings
- Welcoming to all
- Atmosphere of progress and innovation

Economic Development

- Job creation and business attraction
- Development of Auburn south interstate interchange
- Increased retail, dining, and grocery stores

FIGURE 37

VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY

A visual preference survey asks respondents to express their preferences for the built environment using photo examples of various types of developments and design. Three visual preference categories were distributed, including a commercial corridors, housing, and a land uses. The results shown depict the percent of respondents who voted for each picture.

Commercial Corridors

The Commercial Corridor Streetscapes visual survey involved the future of downtown and highway corridors.

Survey Question: Results:

Which of the following streetscape improvements are appropriate for the future of the Downtown Commercial Corridor? (select your top 3)

Sidewalks



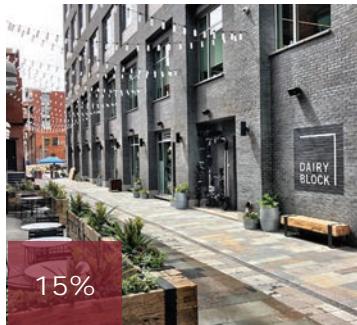
18%

Trees & Plantings



16%

Pedestrian Alley



15%

Multi-Use Path



10%

Enhanced Crosswalks



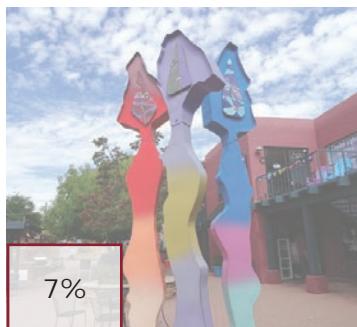
9%

Rear / Side parking



8%

Public Art



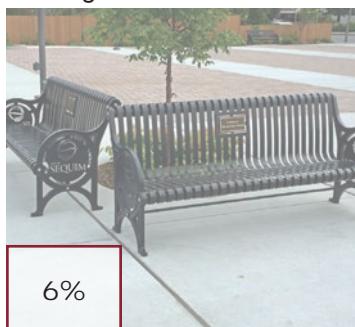
7%

Bike Amenities



7%

Seating



6%

Landscaped Medians



4%

KEY THEMES



Appropriately scaled landscaping and sidewalks are highly desired streetscape improvements along all commercial corridors.

Survey Question: **Results:**

Which of the following streetscape improvements are appropriate for the future of the Highway Commercial Corridors? (select your top 3)

Sidewalks



21%

Trees & Plantings



20%

Multi-Use Path



16%

Landscaped Medians



10%

Enhanced Crosswalks



10%

Bike Amenities



8%

Rear / Side Parking



7%

Public Art



7%

Seating



2%

KEY THEMES



There is a preference for pocket neighborhoods for senior housing where individual homes face a common area.

Housing

The Housing visual survey explored the future of single-family, senior housing, and multi-family housing options in the community.

Survey Question:

Which of the following types of **Single-family Housing** would you consider living in? (Check all that apply)

Results:

Historic: Detached Garage, Denser Neighborhood



23%

Large House, Large Rural Lot



22%

Large House, Suburban Neighborhood, Large Garage



21%

Small House, Attached Garage, Suburban Neighborhood



16%

Newer Larger House, Attached Garage, Denser Neighborhood



13%

Smaller House, No Garage, Denser Neighborhood



5%

Survey Question:

Which of the following **senior housing options** would you or a relative consider living in? (Check all that apply)

Results:

Clustered Housing with Internal Front Yards and Amenities



44%

Granny Flat or Secondary Dwelling On Neighborhood Lot



23%

Apartment Building, with Elevator, in Walkable Area



20%

Large Senior Housing Facility, Driving Distance from Downtown



13%

Survey Question:

The following **multi-family options** could be mixed into existing neighborhoods or built as part of a new development. Which of the following would you consider living in? (Check all that apply)

Results:

Larger Townhomes, First Floor Garage with Alley Access



20%

Apartments with Limited Amenities, Close to Downtown



18%

Apartments Over Retail, No Amenities, In Downtown



15%

Small Apartment Building, Shared Parking Lot



14%

Smaller Townhomes, Shared Parking Lot



12%

Duplex or Triplex, Parking in Driveway or Detached Garage



10%

Large Suburban Apartment Complex, Shared Amenities



9%

Apartments with No Amenities, In Neighborhood



2%

KEY THEMES



There is a preference for development which emphasizes pedestrian-oriented design, quality landscaping, and limited or rear/side parking.

Land Uses / Districts

The Land Uses / Districts visual survey was about the future of different areas of the communities.

Survey Question:

Which of the following images best represents how you envision the future of each district and/or land use in Auburn?
(Check one)

Results: OFFICE / BUSINESS PARKS

Building with High-Quality Materials; Parking in Rear; Some Landscaping



48%

Modern Building with High-Quality Materials; Parking in Rear; Extensive Landscaping and Outdoor Amenities



33%

Building with Some Character and Landscaping; Parking in Front



17%

Boxy Building; Parking in Front and Minimal Landscaping



2%

Results: MUSEUMS

Historic Character Retained; Integrated Multi-Modal Trails; Extensive Landscaping



60%

Historic Character; Small Scale Pedestrian Focus



29%

Modern Character; Extensive Outdoor Experiences and Amenities



11%

Results: DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPES

Emphasis on beautification (landscaping, branding)



32%

Emphasis on commercial uses (i.e. outdoor seating)



31%

Pedestrian-oriented



23%

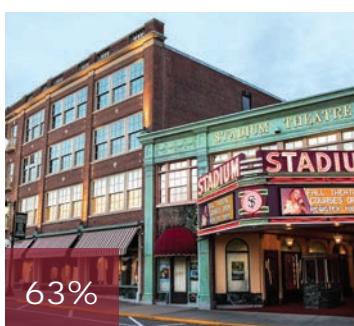
Improved infrastructure (i.e. sidewalks, bump-outs, etc.)



13%

Results: DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS

Historic Style Low-Rise, Mixed Use



63%

Mid-Rise, Mixed Use, Zero Setback



18%

Modern Style Mid-Rise, Mixed Use, Stepped Back from Street



14%

Singe-Story, Single Use



5%

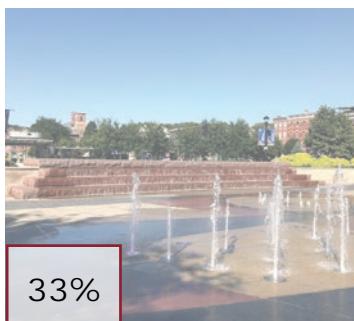
Results: DOWNTOWN PUBLIC / GATHERING SPACES

Pedestrian Plaza



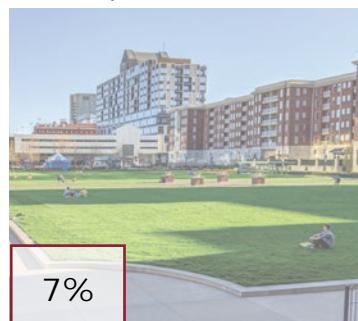
54%

Family-Friendly Recreation Area



33%

Green Space for Recreation



7%

Historic Public Art



5%

Results: INDUSTRIAL / MANUFACTURING PARKS

Buildings with character; parking visible from street; moderate landscaping



41%

Building with high-quality materials; parking not visible from street; extensive landscaping and outdoor amenities



30%

Buildings with some character; parking not visible from street; landscaping and sidewalks



26%

Boxy buildings; large parking lots visible from street; no landscaping



4%

Results: HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

High-quality building design; moderate landscaping; parking not visible from street



68%

Building with some character; minimal landscaping; parking visible from street



28%

No building design standards; no landscaping standards; entirely auto-oriented



4%

MAPPING

Retain & Re-Imagine

Those who participated in the steering committee, stakeholders, and as part of the online survey were asked to identify areas on a map to be 'retained' or 're-imagined'. The responses from three different groups are compiled in the following maps starting with Figure 38: Results from this exercise will steer location-based objectives for the future.

KEY THEMES



Effort should be focused at improving West Seventh Street with regard to safety, function, and beautification.

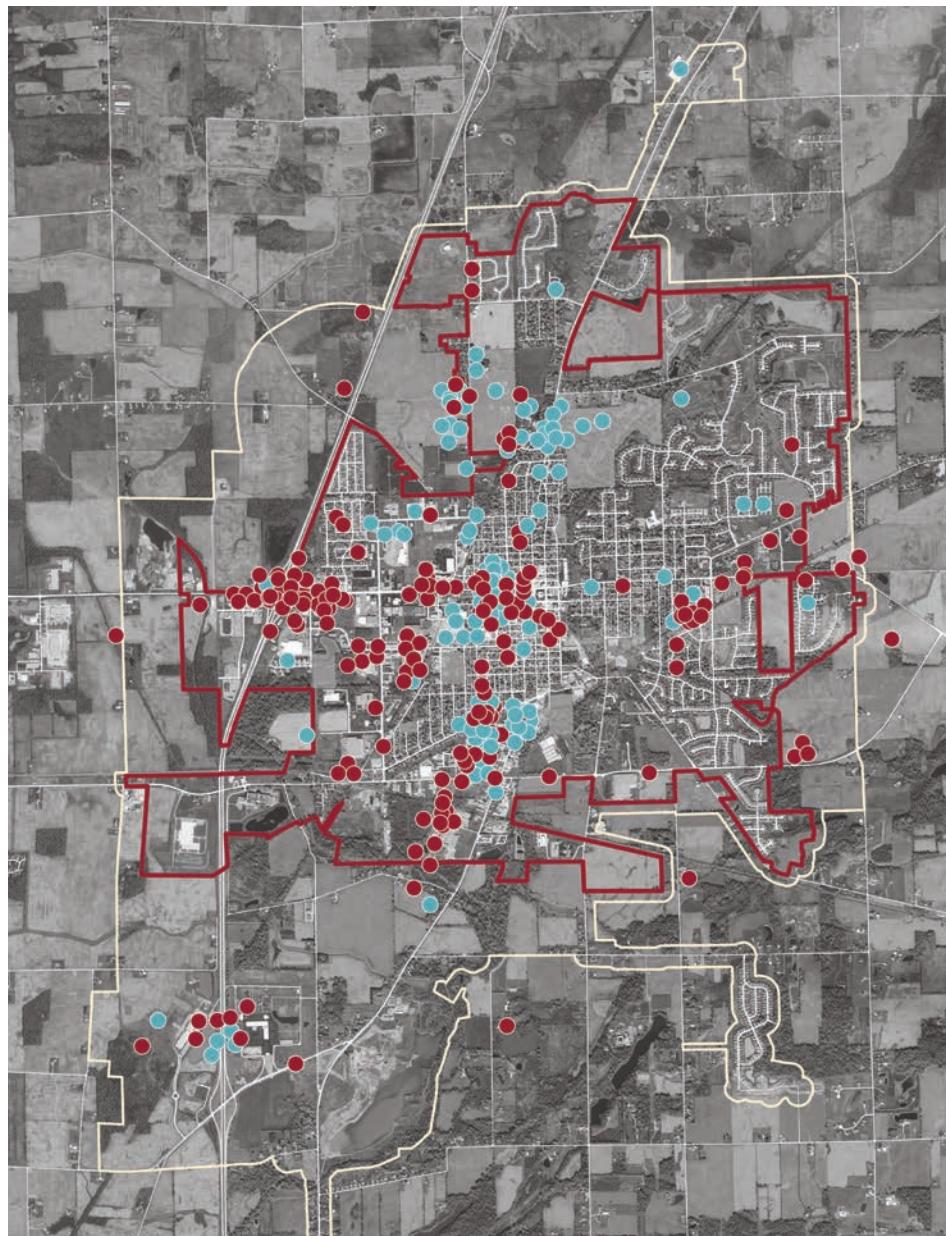
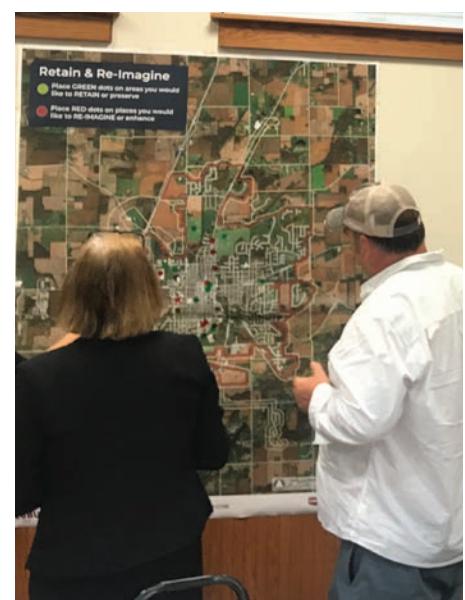
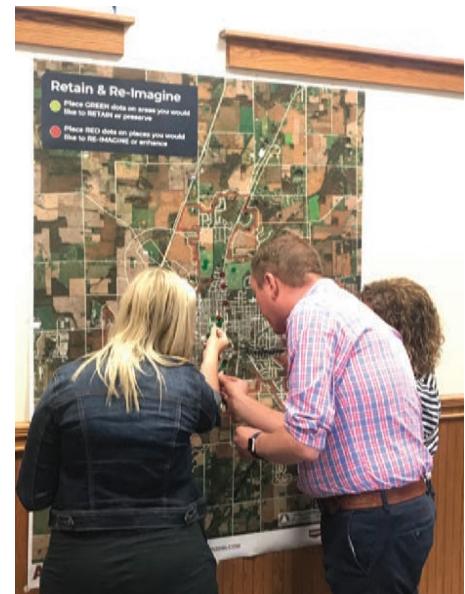


FIGURE 38



Retain

Areas identified as needing to be 'retained' are considered by respondents to be assets that should be preserved and maintained. Themes which emerged include Downtown, parks, recreation, and greenspace; museums, and high

quality design. Many votes were clustered in the core of Auburn indicating some community attachment to the older parts of town.

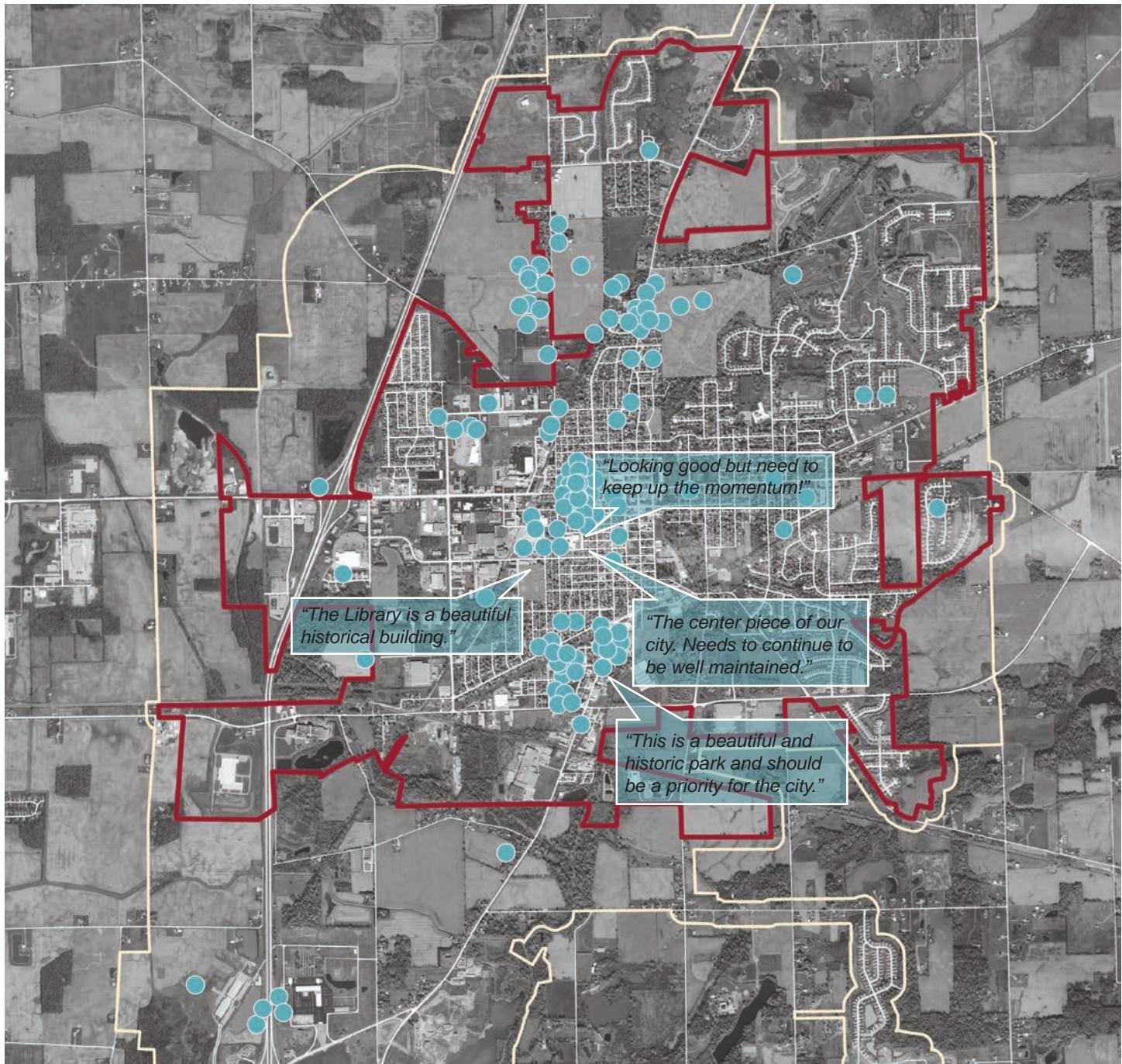


FIGURE 39

All votes submitted in-person for areas to be "retained" or preserved from the steering committee and stakeholders, as well as votes submitted online from the public via the project website.

Re-Imagine

Areas identified to be 're-imagined' were identified by respondents for their potential and opportunities for new amenities, development, or change. Themes which emerged include the West Seventh Street corridor, relieving traffic congestion issues, supporting a more complete network of streets and sidewalks, building revitalization, and property maintenance. Many votes for change seem to be clustered along major corridors or at primary intersections.

KEY THEMES



The community believes Downtown and the Museum District have components worth retaining, maintaining, and preserving. However, there are opportunities for improvements (re-imagining) in both areas.

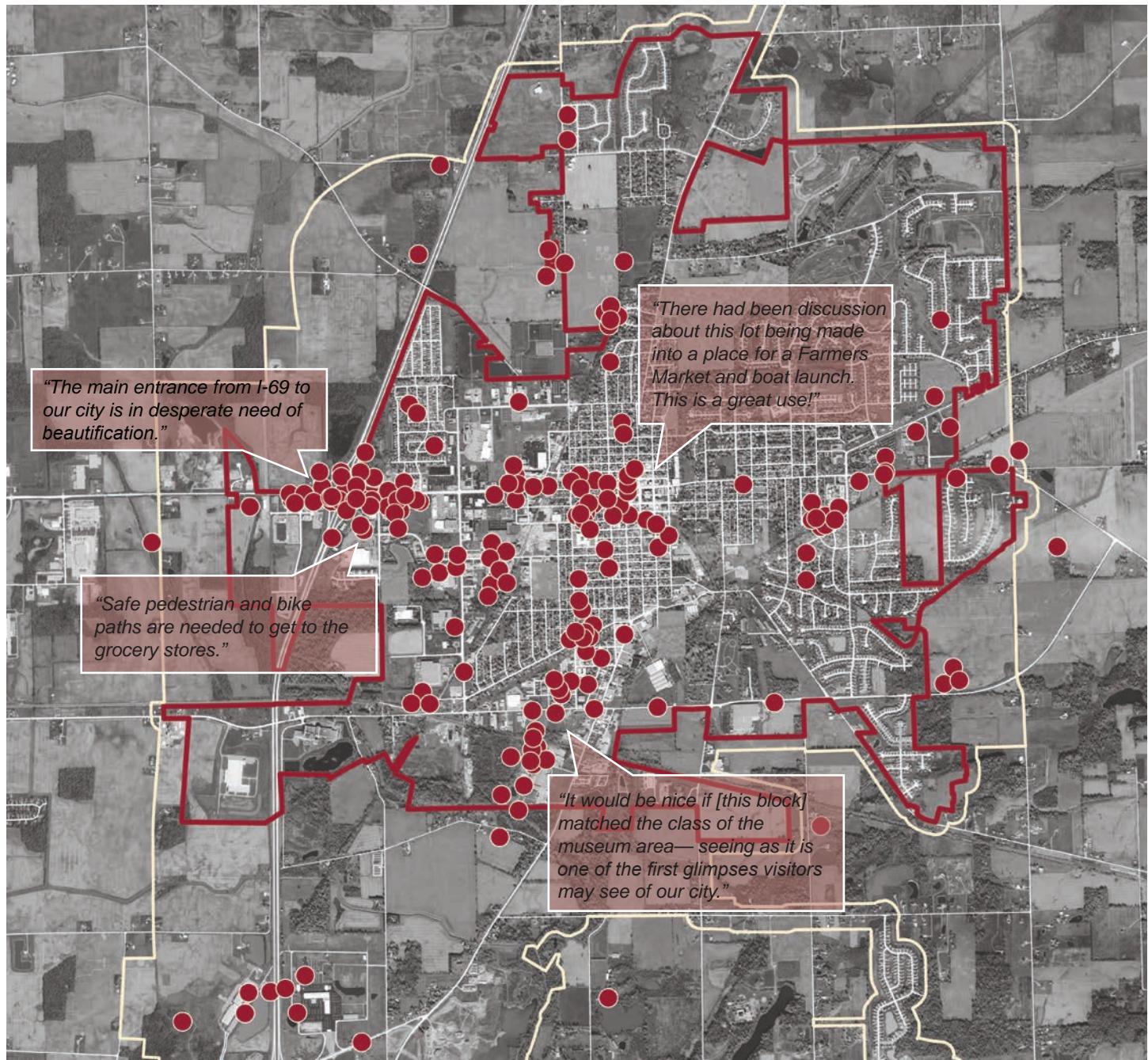


FIGURE 40

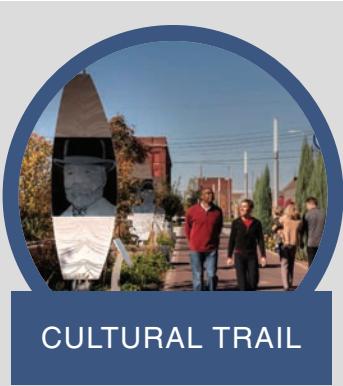
All votes submitted in-person for areas to be "re-imagined" or changed from the steering committee and stakeholders, as well as votes submitted online from the public via the project website.

Proposed Projects & Improvements

The Auburn 2040 steering committee and attendees of the community workshop on October 8, 2020 were invited to participate in a project mapping activity. Similar to the Retain & Re-Imagine map, the mapping exercise asked respondents to identify places in and around Auburn that they felt were the most appropriate location(s) for projects or improvements including: Housing, Gateway Treatments, Cultural Trail, and Commercial (Re)Development. All results have been layered into one visual (Figure 41).

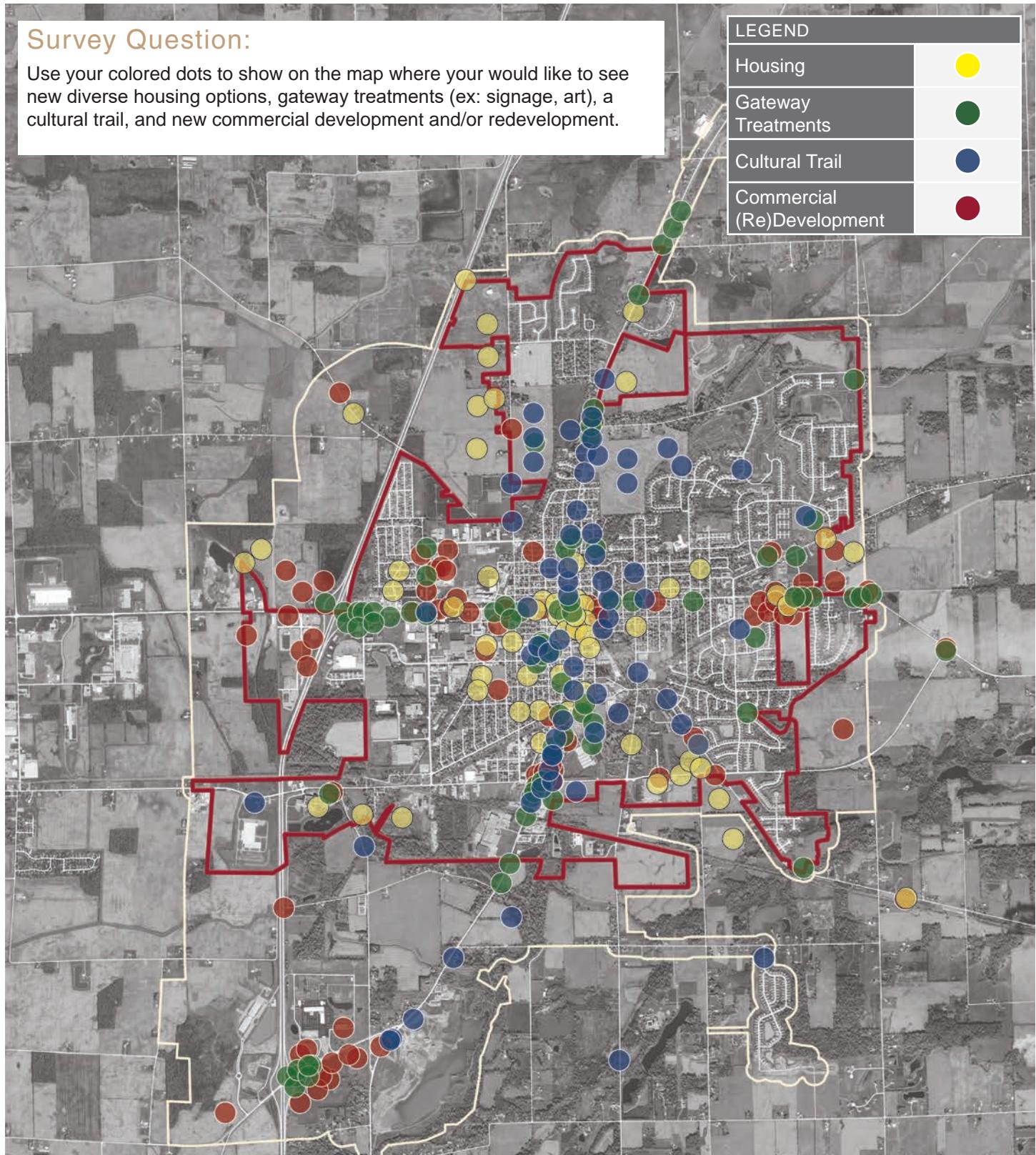


New diverse housing options for the City of Auburn may include those referenced in the visual preference and community survey (i.e. townhomes, condominiums, downtown apartments, etc.). Respondents concluded that new housing is appropriate throughout the community with emphasis in Downtown, in the northern quadrant along North Indiana Avenue and in the southeast quadrant near Old Brick Road and Auburn Drive (Figure 42, p. B-42).

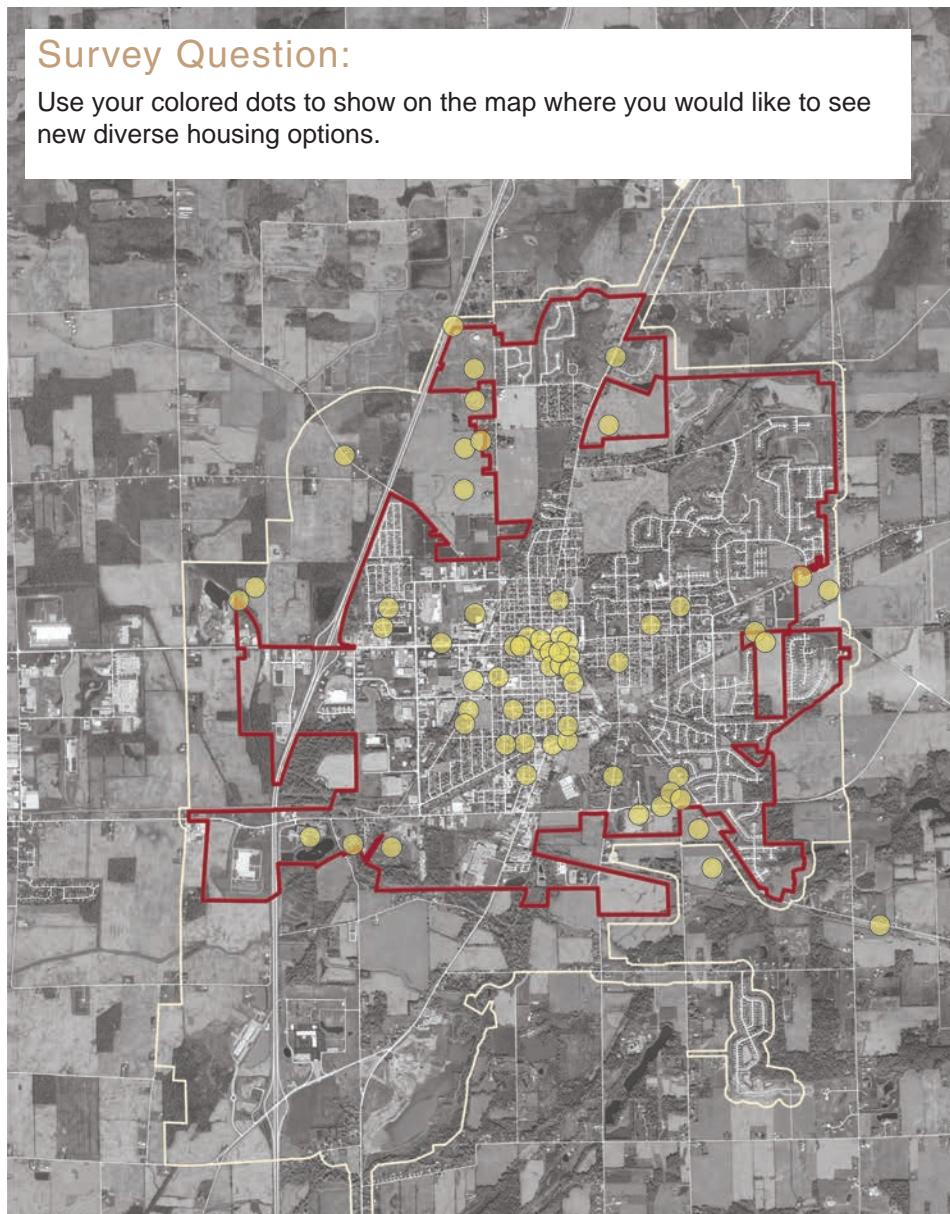


A cultural trail is a pedestrian or multi-use path that also serves as a placemaking and/or wayfinding tool. The trail may combine public art, historical and cultural significance with connectivity to make an area more attractive and accessible for visitors. Respondents identified Wayne Street / Main Street, within existing parks, and along Cedar Creek as appropriate locations for cultural trails (Figure 44, p. B-44).



**FIGURE 41**

*Note: Boundary shown in map reflects jurisdiction at the time of public engagement and may not portray most current boundary lines.

**FIGURE 42**

All votes submitted in-person for areas to be considered for new diverse housing options from the steering committee, as well as votes submitted from the public at the community workshop.

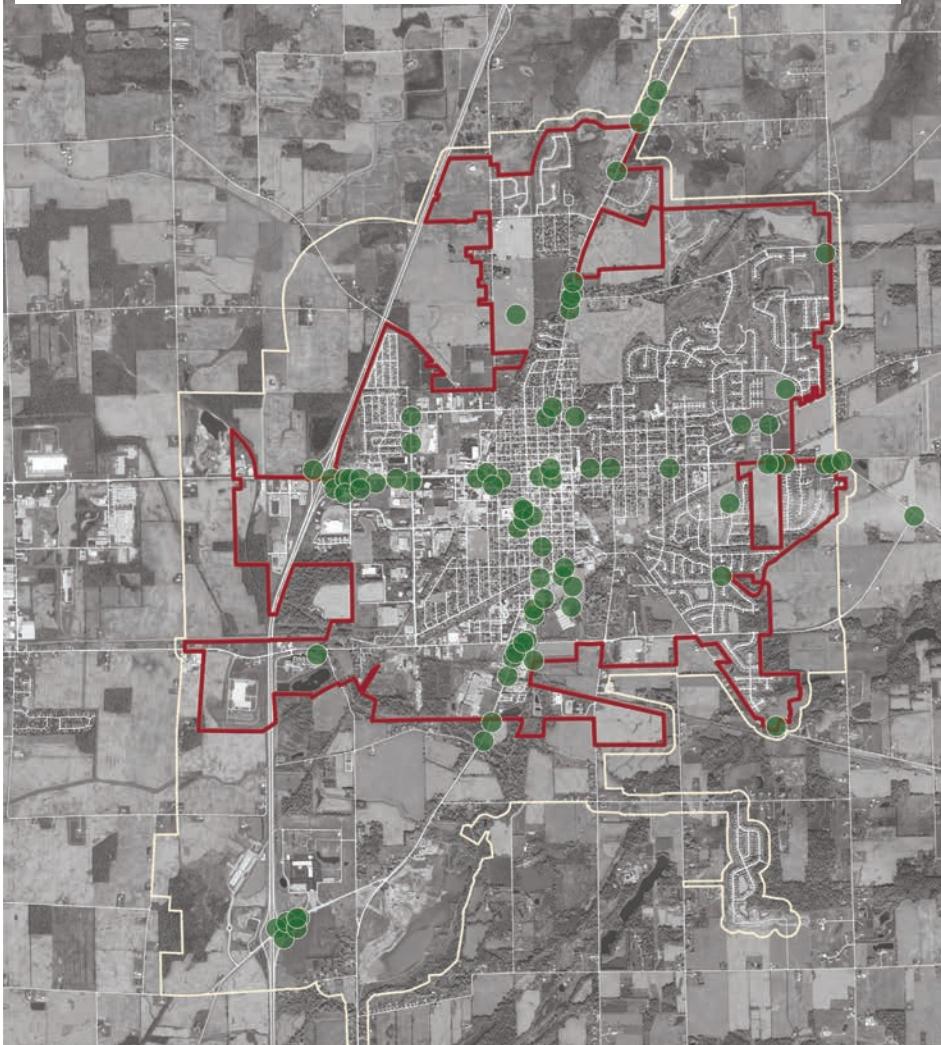
KEY THEMES



Downtown already has a strong presence of commercial, and now there is a desire for residential. Additionally, there is demand for additional commercial development in nodes (at key intersections) around the City nearer residential areas.

Survey Question:

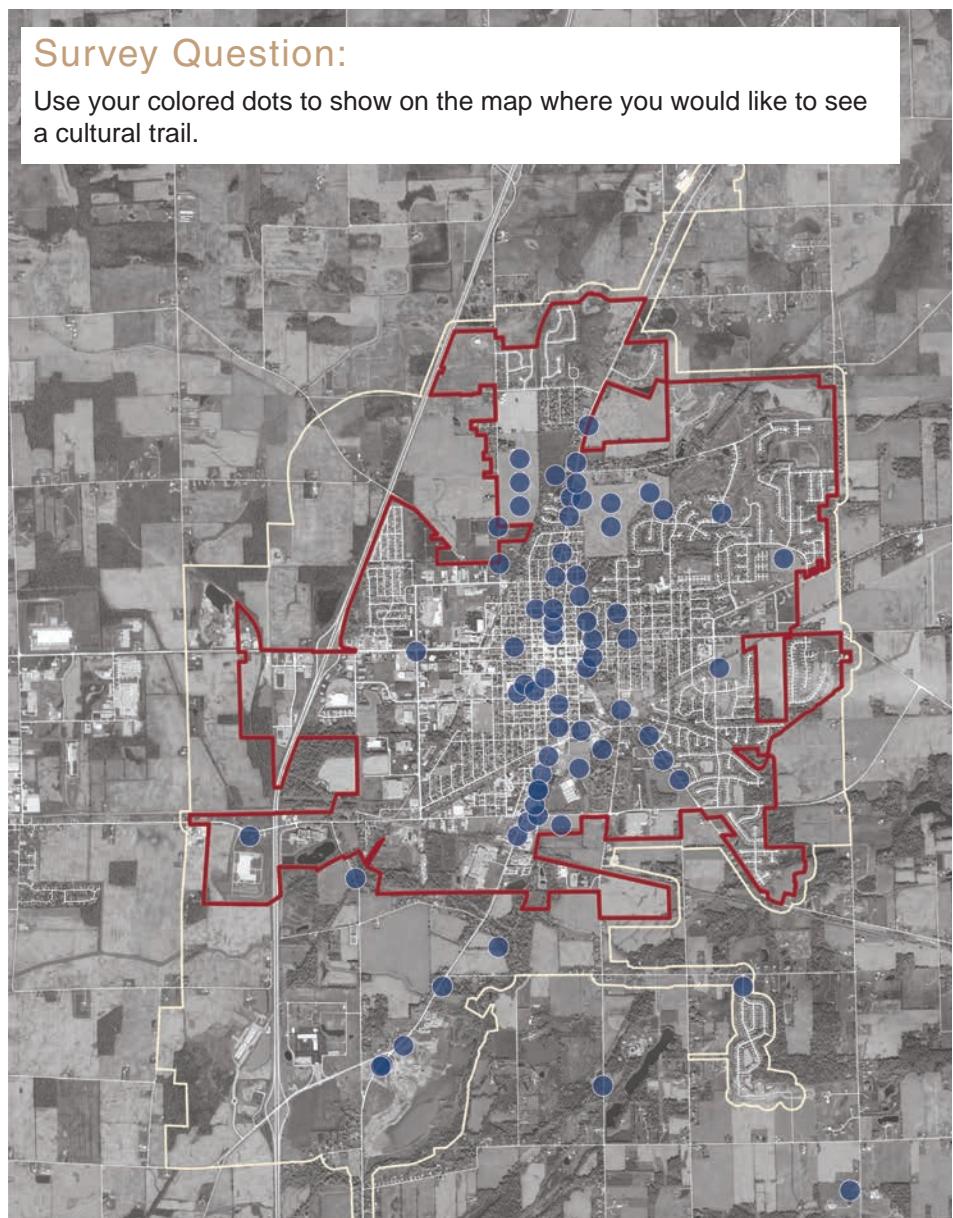
Use your colored dots to show on the map where you would like to see gateway treatments (ex: signage, art).

**FIGURE 43**

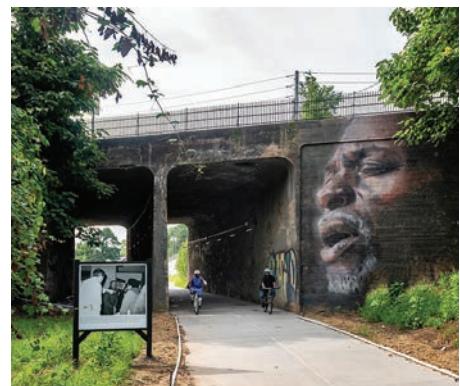
All votes submitted in-person for areas to be considered for gateway treatments from the steering committee, as well as votes submitted from the public at the community workshop.

KEY THEMES

Gateways and important thoroughfares should be improved and beautified such that they create an identity for the community and/or a specific part of town. Pedestrian and bicycle access along these corridors is a critical component of this improvement and provides additional access.

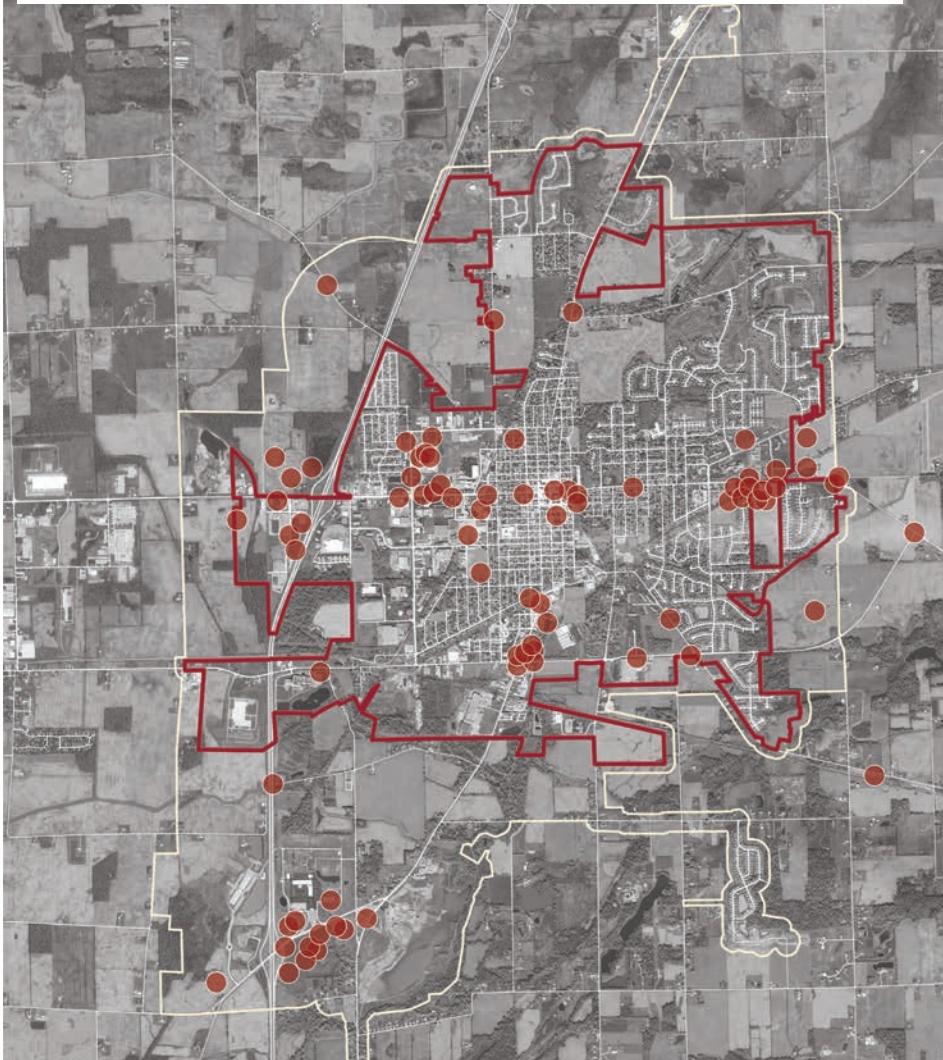
**FIGURE 44**

All votes submitted in-person for areas to be considered for a cultural trail from the steering committee, as well as votes submitted from the public at the community workshop.



Survey Question:

Use your colored dots to show on the map where you would like to see new commercial development and/or redevelopment.

**FIGURE 45**

All votes submitted in-person for areas to be considered for new commercial (re)development from the steering committee, as well as votes submitted from the public at the community workshop.



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Part of the Auburn 2040 outreach initiatives was to include students in the process. A partnership with the DeKalb Central New Tech program permitted students to respond on their thought of Auburn's future. A page of the project website was designed to compare student results with that of the survey respondents and solicit specific feedback

on how youth view the future of Auburn. The majority of student participants (60%) live inside the City of Auburn, while the rest live in outlying areas. Their concerns were similar to that of the general public, but with an emphasis on entertainment, housing, and job opportunities.

Survey Question:

What are the first three words that come to mind when you think of Auburn?

Results:



FIGURE 46

Survey Question:

What one word do you wish would describe Auburn in the future?

Results:



FIGURE 47

Placemaking & Identity

In describing Auburn, students commented commonly on car culture, the fair and entertainment, dining, and the small town community atmosphere (Figure 46). Interestingly, student's favorite things included several similar features, such as food, the fair, car culture, Downtown, and amenities like parks and shopping. Students desire to see Auburn's future include fun,

entertainment, technology and modernity, diversity, and growth (Figure 48). An overall interest in more entertainment and things to do is a theme repeated throughout the survey results, as is evident in Figures 48 and 49, which illustrate students top development priorities.

Survey Question:

My favorite thing about Auburn is...

Results:



FIGURE 48

Survey Question:

My least favorite thing about auburn is...

Results:



FIGURE 49

Development Priorities:

**FIGURE 50**

Note: Participants could select up to 3 choices. Percentages show what % of respondents selected that option.

Transportation Priorities:

**FIGURE 51**

KEY THEME

Student priorities align with the public at-large, with higher preference for enhanced arts and entertainment options, as well as alternative transportation options.



Retain & Re-Imagine Mapping

Just like the general public, students were asked to identify on a map places they would like to 'retain' and 're-imagine'. The results are shown in Figure 52. Like the general public, parks and recreation, public gathering spaces, Downtown, and the ACDA Museum were important places to retain. Roadway, parks improvements, and general beautification were the most frequent comments for areas to be re-imagined.

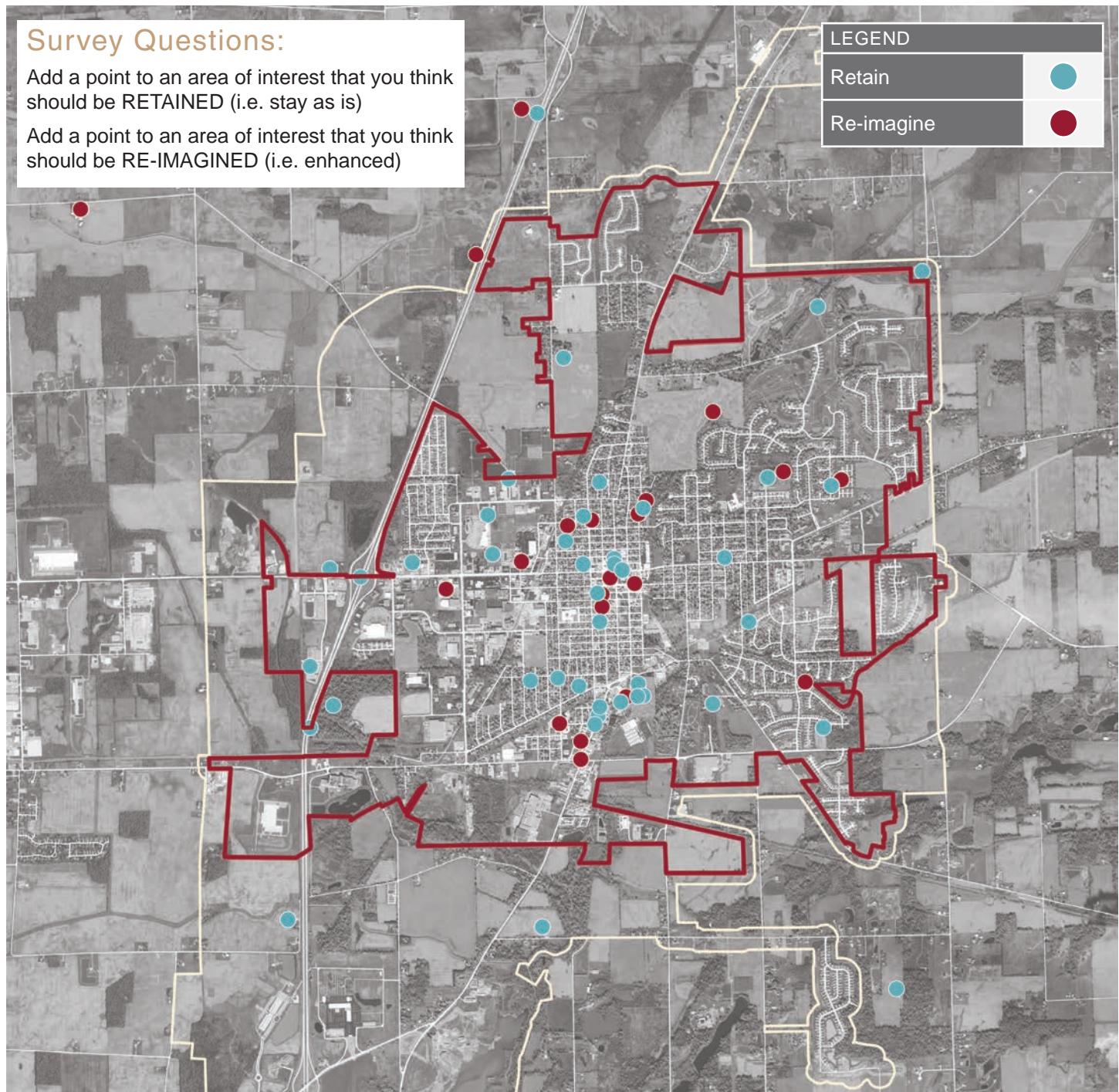


FIGURE 52

Post-Grad Plans

More than one-third of students said that they do not know what they will do after finishing school, and follow up questions provide some insight. About 35% of student respondents said that they plan to stay in Auburn after school or leave temporarily then return (Figure 54). For those who plan to stay or return to Auburn, their affinity with the area is mostly attributed to family, hometown, or small town environment.

Alternatively, more than one-fourth of survey participants said that after finishing school they plan to leave Auburn and not return. When asked why they don't plan to come back, common responses related to a lack of things to do or see, as well as limited job opportunities, a lack of diversity and inclusivity, and a general desire to travel to new places. Improvements that might attract Auburn's youth are summarized in Figure 53.

Survey Question:

Are there specific improvements that would attract you to stay or return to Auburn?



21% referenced entertainment (i.e. events, activities, attractions, etc.).



13% referenced increasing or improving housing.



10% referenced jobs and / or training.

Other improvements:

- Improved bikeways
- Better trail system
- Better public transit options
- More access to nature and/or land
- More public gathering places
- More tourist attractions
- Expansion of the arts

FIGURE 53

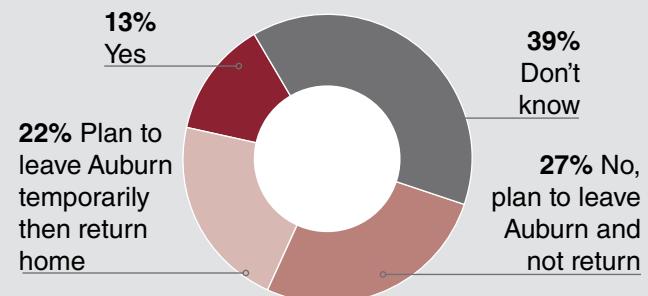
KEY THEME



39% of students don't know whether they will stay in Auburn after finishing school. Efforts to expand job opportunities, activities and amenities, housing options, and public spaces are opportunities to attract and retain youth.

Survey Question:

Do you think you will stay in Auburn after you finish school?



Survey Question:

Why will you stay or return?

Common Themes:

- Hometown connection
- Safety and/or affordability
- Small town feel
- Close to family
- General attraction to the area

Survey Question:

Why will you not stay or return?

Common Themes:

- Limited job opportunities
- Desire to see new places and experience change
- Little to do for entertainment
- Lack of community diversity and open-mindedness

FIGURE 54

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT Analysis is an exercise designed to identify and summarize a community's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The Auburn 2040 steering committee members brainstormed individually in workbooks and collectively as a group.

Top Three Choices

Following the group discussion, the steering committee choose the top 3 for the Strengths and Weaknesses as shown below. Some perceived weaknesses appear in more than one location within Auburn. For instance, gateways which need improvements are identified at each major entry way at the north, south, east and west borders of the city.

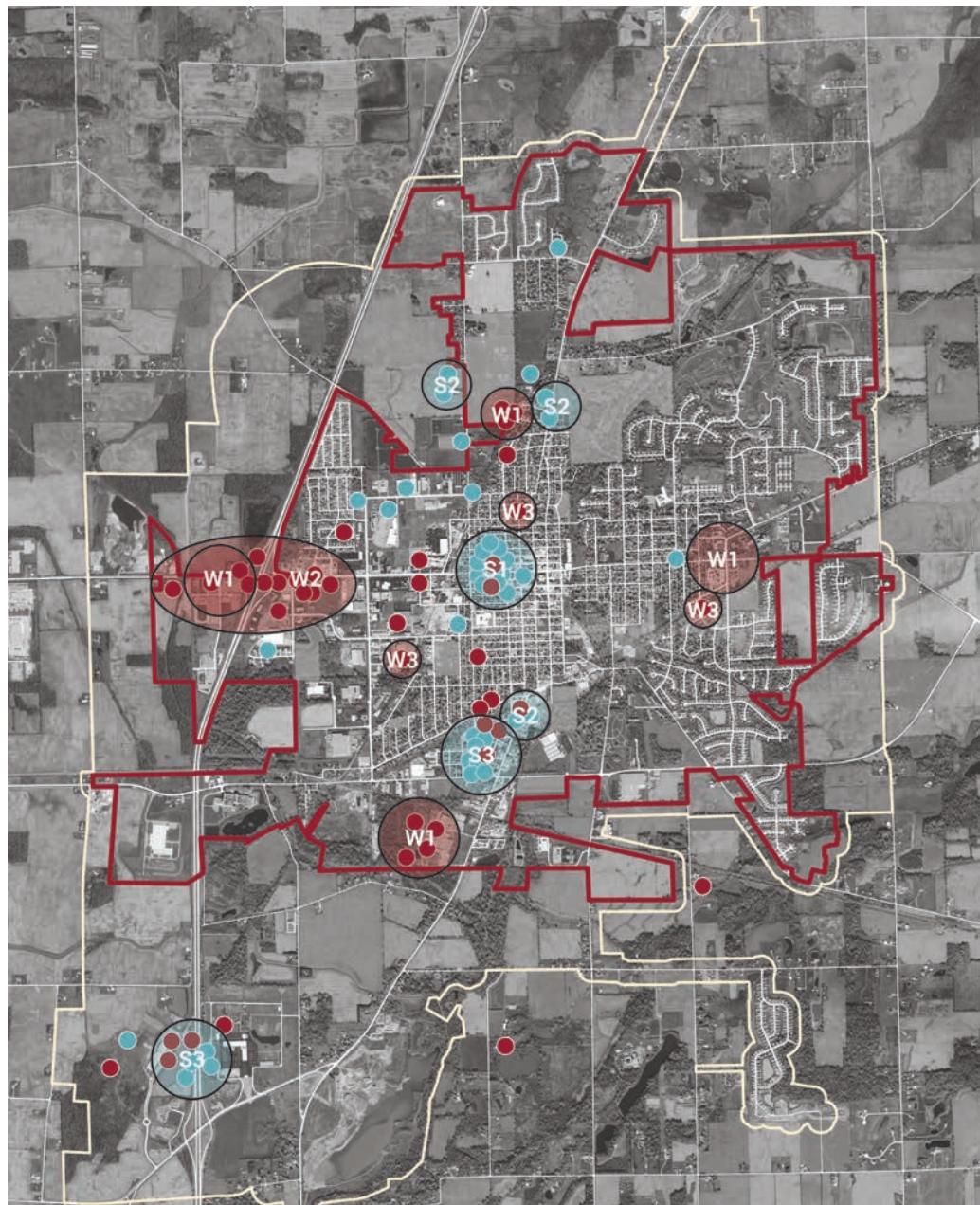


FIGURE 55

STRENGTHS

- S1. Downtown**
- S2. Arts & Parks (Entertainment)**
- S3. History / Community Culture**

WEAKNESSES

- W1. Gateways**
- W2. Commercial Corridor**
- W3. Arts & Parks (Waterways)**

Choosing a top 3 for strengths and weaknesses helps to organize recommendations for the future around community-supported themes.

S

WHAT ARE SOME OF AUBURN'S **STRENGTHS**?

- Safe
- Downtown
- Parks & recreation
- Location / accessibility
- Government services (AES, schools, library)
- Rich history
- Museums & cultural resources
- Local retail and dining
- Friendly / community-minded people
- Events / festivals
- Home values
- Creating destinations
- Community leaders
- Main Street

W

WHAT ARE SOME OF AUBURN'S **WEAKNESSES**?

- High electricity rates
- Limited transparency, inclusivity, & diversity
- Downtown parking
- Limited tourist attractions
- Lack of entertainment options; esp. for youth
- Lack of pedestrian & public transit options
- Housing options
- Downtown property maintenance
- Need for private investment
- Appearance and traffic flow of arterials

O

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT AUBURN'S FUTURE, WHAT **OPPORTUNITIES** DO YOU ENVISION?

- Downtown revitalization
- More community events / programming
- Enhanced parks & recreation amenities
- Walkability
- Population growth through quality of place investments
- History / historic preservation
- Gateway & corridor enhancements
- More community engagement / representation
- Regional collaboration
- (Re)Development sites

T

CAN YOU THINK OF ANYTHING THAT MIGHT **THREATEN** OR LIMIT THOSE OPPORTUNITIES?

- Financial resources
- Ability to attract new young residents
- Affordable housing
- Public & government buy-in / understanding of ROI
- High cost of energy for businesses
- Parking
- Business attraction & retention
- Workforce attraction & retention
- Status quo mindset
- Lack of community pride
- Aging infrastructure

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Stakeholder interviews were conducted with business owners, employers, residents, and other community members to add detail and specificity to the feedback received from the general public. The stakeholder groups convened on August 11 and 12, 2020 and were asked to discuss Auburn's strengths and weaknesses in various interest groups. The feedback from each stakeholder group is summarized in this section.

Economic & Business Interest Group

Strengths

- DeKalb County's steel, automotive, and distribution industries are currently thriving.
- Access to I-69, DeKalb regional airport, Fort Wayne International Airport, and proximity to nearby major municipalities.
- Opportunity zone and TIF district established.
- Tourism that comes from the fair and ACDA Festival.
- Auburn is conveniently located such that people in more rural communities of DeKalb County can access retail without having to go to Fort Wayne. The anchor retailers in Auburn, such as Walmart and Kroger, experience sales levels that surpass those in Fort Wayne.
- The commercial core is healthy and offers opportunities for further economic development and unique public gathering / recreational features (Cedar Creek)
- The healthcare industry (new and improved medical offices/facilities) and schools are strong attractors to the community.
- Many strong family-owned or local businesses are located in Auburn.
- Collaboration between the business community and government was noted as something that is continuing to strengthen.
- Continuously improving electric and fiber services allowing businesses to remain competitive and for employees to work from home when necessary (COVID).

Weaknesses

- The homogeneity and high cost of available housing types and price points, and lack of diverse retail, restaurant, and recreational amenities is a barrier to attracting a young professional workforce that is looking for amenity-rich, walkable living.
- The importance of continuing to enhance Auburn's quality of life to attract young talent to live and work in Auburn.
- The cost of utilities (especially electric) or cost of extending infrastructure may deter new businesses.
- There is currently no small-business incubator in the County and stakeholders identified Downtown Auburn as a good location for one.
- Auburn is competing with Fort Wayne as well as up and coming places such as Carmel and Fishers.
- There is a lack of available class A office space and industrial space in Auburn, but costs make it impossible for investors to build on speculation, due largely to electric rates.
- There is a lack of residential options in Downtown Auburn, partly due to underutilization of upper levels of existing commercial buildings.
- Stakeholders expressed a desire to avoid an industrial bust with focus on new industries outside of manufacturing, such as high-tech businesses.
- Auburn's West Seventh Street commercial corridor was noted for its poor development/design and major traffic concerns.
- It was noted there seems to be a lack of collaboration between Auburn/DeKalb County and Fort Wayne/Allen County. It will be important to plan for the growth that is coming to Auburn's southern boundary due to the growth from Fort Wayne.

Transportation, Utilities, & Emergency Services Interest Group

Strengths

- The City and County communicate well and support each other.
- A program has begun to start replacing sidewalks, as well as installing sidewalks in areas where they do not currently exist.
- Tree Commission has been re-started, which is a positive for the community.
- Parkview DeKalb Hospital is a local asset for employment and medical needs.
- Water infrastructure has capacity for growth and current aquifers are at good levels.
- Stakeholders expressed satisfaction with the green infrastructure improvements along Sixth Street Downtown because it looks nice and needs little maintenance.
- AES is seen as a strong community asset, and the utility is adequately planning for future growth by installing extra and shared conduit lines.
- AES offers free community WiFi in Downtown and park areas.
- Auburn Electric maintains overhead lines by keeping them clear of branches and has a program for auditing utility poles for necessary replacements. They are making efforts to move utilities underground when possible in collaboration with Street Department projects and major development projects.

Weaknesses

- The Fire Department and EMT services are experiencing difficulties with staffing - volunteer numbers are down while cost of staffing are up.
- The jail is outdated and over capacity - inmates are being sent elsewhere which is costly.
- The railroad crossing on Wayne Street is an issue for emergency response. The City is looking into an over or under pass to remedy the situation.
- Participants noted that the community should ensure that any new locations for emergency services are located adjacent to areas of planned growth.
- While Auburn has all the water capacity it needs for growth, a lot of the infrastructure is significantly aged and in need of replacement.
- Storm water infrastructure is experiencing issues with capacity and certain areas in Auburn are prone to flooding.
- Electric/fiber utility is costly, and there is high demand for these services which has been challenging to meet.
- Stakeholders brought up issues with Auburn's major gateways/access points and transportation network, including traffic on W. Seventh Street where convenient traffic flow is lacking. Safety should be a top priority for supporting existing businesses and planning new developments.
- Stakeholders would like to see better, continuous trail connections between Auburn and Fort Wayne, and in the greater regional context of DeKalb County as it relates to surrounding counties and trail systems
- There is a lack of affordable housing in Auburn, as well as a lack of available apartments.
- Very little efforts in utilizing green infrastructure/construction techniques, as well as no incentives to make such improvements.

Environmental & Outdoor Recreation Interest Group

Strengths

- There is much support for parks and recreation through a collaboration of several entities working with the Parks Department, including City and County governments, Eckhart Public library, public schools, Tree Commission, Heimach center, and ACRES land trust.
- Existing parks system is offering passive and active recreational opportunities; the public is supportive of conservation efforts.
- The Parks Department has been expanding their programming and special events. They are also exploring options to start expanding programming to less traditional recreational park functions, like Esports (video games), theater arts, crafts and cooking, etc.
- ACRES Land Trust is a strong asset and ally in the region for natural preservation and trails. Their conservation areas are not programmed, but offer space for other entities to use for their programming at no cost.
- Auburn's neighborhood parks are well distributed in the older neighborhoods.
- The YMCA offers amenities otherwise not available in Auburn, such as an indoor pool and outdoor splash pad.
- Cedar Creek is a community asset, though largely untapped; there is movement in creating a 'blueway' along the Creek. There is currently a bank stabilization program underway to improve creek conditions.
- The community is supportive of the new skate park at Eckhart Park for reaching a new audience.
- Parks Department will be updating their master plan, including data from the Auburn 2040 survey. The Parks Plan will include additional data on inventory, current conditions, and feasibility studies for various improvements/programming. This will guide the department in prioritizing their goals for the parks system.

Weaknesses

- There are limitations to programming and improving facilities due to staffing and financial needs. Also contributing to those limitations are differences in priorities between Parks Department, Parks Board, and citizens.
- The variety of playground equipment in the parks – stakeholders noted that parents often take kids to other cities for their park equipment. There is a lack of amenities for the differently-abled, such as senior citizens or children with cognitive or physical disabilities.
- Stakeholders expressed interest in more active park amenities like in Leo, such as wooden playgrounds, sensory gardens, and water features, as well as conservation/preservation areas.
- There is a desire for additional trail connectivity, and safer, more pedestrian oriented street crossings for the trails that exist. There is a need for education about safety and maintenance.
- Stakeholders identified an opportunity in creating a destination park that is accessible; as well as building a recreation center. Many citizens want to see a new community pool.
- While Auburn itself has a good trail system, the broader DeKalb County is a weak link in the regional trail system. There is often a negative perception of trails in rural areas (NIMBY) which may present challenges in acquiring key pieces of land for new trails.
- Cedar Creek is underutilized - there are not many places for kayaks/canoes to get in and out. There are challenges in using the creek due to uncertainty in water levels/rapid changes in the water levels throughout the seasons. There is very little interaction with the creek Downtown, at the fairgrounds, nor at the museum district.
- There was interest in creating a 'senior-friendly' park with low impact activities such as pickle ball and Tai Chi.
- As a whole, Auburn has a good quantity of park acreage for its population, but it could have better amenities within those parks. There are many underutilized parks that need to be reimaged and made useful again.

Downtown Interest Group

Strengths

- Lively, growing, active Downtown association. There has been a lot of growth thanks to strong efforts by entities like Auburn Main Street, Downtown Auburn Business Association (DABA), City of Auburn Building Planning and Development Department (BPD), and Downtown Auburn Review Committee (DARC).
- Downtown has very few vacancies on the first floor and many businesses are unique, locally owned, and thriving.
- Downtown is quaint, clean, convenient, safe, and pedestrian friendly. It has retained its historic value and charming “hometown” personality.
- Downtown is well activated - it places key businesses, organizations, and natural features within a very convenient proximity to each other - courthouse/government, police, Cedar Creek, established local shops/eateries, all within walking and/or biking distance of each other, the fairgrounds, the Eckhart Public library, McKenney-Harrison elementary, several churches, and the nearby museum district.
- Unique spaces like the James Plaza and Courtyard Park offer places for gathering, entertainment, and leisure within Downtown.
- Community members support the murals (art) currently present in Downtown, offering an opportunity for the future.
- The streetscape and green infrastructure improvements along Sixth Street received strong praise. Would be interested in façade/streetscape requirements if the City is willing to assist with the additional costs that would be incurred.

Weaknesses

- Caters to an older population, stores close too early (5 pm).
- Walkability could be improved - crosswalks especially. The improvements on Sixth Street included “bump-outs,” which would be well received at more intersections throughout Downtown.
- Parking is available but limited or restricted. It is not clear what is private vs public, some prime parking spaces which should be reserved for customers are being filled all day by employees, no parking limits are enforced to combat these issues, etc. No group consensus on if Downtown should have parking limits and enforcement; but there is consensus that employees should be given somewhere to park that is not in front of the businesses.
- There is currently no designated parking for residents, which could pose a problem if Downtown becomes more successful and busier.
- Property owners do not always do a good job advertising vacancies and the vacancies that do exist require investment from an incoming business - many businesses desire move-in ready office space. DABA is not always informed of these opportunities, leading to a missed opportunity for advertising, networking, or resources.
- Limited accessibility to 2nd floor office space (i.e. lack of elevators) causing some office-based businesses to stay in prime, ground floor retail locations on the square.
- Stakeholders would like to see additional bike amenities/bike lanes Downtown, but do not want to remove on-street parking.
- Stakeholders expressed interest in additional wayfinding and marketing for Downtown businesses.
- Downtown alleys were seen as an underused asset for creativity such as public art or pocket parks.
- It was noted that while people liked to live Downtown, a lot of shops and restaurants close too early for Downtown to be enjoyed by residents during the week. It is believed that introducing more residents Downtown would encourage businesses to remain open longer. In order for people to want to live here they will want amenities like a grocery store and private parking. The market is not strong enough to support a major grocery retailer or a parking structure (“chicken vs egg” dilemma).

Weaknesses (Cont)

- The farmers market needs a new, designated space Downtown. It is losing vendors at its current location.
- There is no conservation ordinance or historic commission - no entity focusing solely on preservation efforts, techniques, or funding, which would encourage and support many property owners in Downtown who still own historic properties.
- Several buildings were cited as sustaining years of neglect or deferred maintenance; stakeholders were interested in learning more about an opportunity for a designated historic district for preservation and/or architectural standards. On the other hand, stakeholders are reluctant to create more stringent requirements in the fear of deterring investments or basic maintenance.
- There could be more efficient collaboration between the hardworking entities: City of Auburn, Auburn Main Street, DABA, DARC, and various businesses. Some of these organizations are not adequately funded or staffed. There is lack of communication between each other and citizens. There is a need for an efficient platform to advertise, support, and involve all of these entities and their services/events.
- Wayfinding signage has not yet been implemented in Downtown.

Interlocal Collaboration Interest Group

Strengths

- Good connectivity with state highway access, regional airport, and passenger train in Waterloo.
- The region has a strong rural/suburban character, with available developable land to continue.
- DeKalb County and Auburn are well-positioned to capture growth coming from Allen County.
- AES is the only provider of fiber in the county and could become a large economic driver.

Weaknesses

- Infrastructure is hard to maintain in the unincorporated areas, lots of gravel roads, soils are challenging for septic systems.
- The County could do a better job marketing the short travel times to and from Fort Wayne to developers.
- DeKalb County updated its Comprehensive Plan in 2017, but it could use an update that is more thoughtful and includes high-level visioning.
- The 11A interchange is a great opportunity for new commercial and retail development; it will be important that the County and City are both prepared for growth in that areas.

Health, Education, & Human Services Interest Group

Strengths

- Hospital system and EMS services are an area strength.
- The library and its location were touted as assets. The building is admired for its architecture while the services make it one of the stronger library systems in the state.
- Interlibrary loans and statewide book sharing programs are also added benefits to the library.
- All DeKalb County students receive a free library card and services.
- The library is working on an expansion of its "library of things" catalog.
- Many different churches provide social services, as well as local nonprofits.
- There is a strong culture of collaboration between nonprofit organizations.

Weaknesses

- There is no homeless or emergency shelter in the county, and not many services for those with substance use and mental health needs. There are no programs for housing or career opportunities for ex-felons or those who may have limited options.
- DART is very dependable when it is scheduled; but it cannot assist citizens in a crisis or during many hours of the day. There is desire for a transit system with a standard schedule.
- Stakeholders would like to see a community center that services both youth and older adults.
- There is a shortage of multi-family housing.
- Auburn is lacking transitional housing or a halfway house. This amenity could also serve as an educational resource for people re-entering the workforce.
- Would like to see the trail system extended from Auburn to Fort Wayne.
- There are limited childcare options in Auburn; the YMCA is the only after-school program available. There is a need for under-two infant care in Auburn. Many parents in Auburn feel they need to stay home with their children instead of work because of the lack of childcare.
- Would like to see the city have an online resource that lists all of the social services available in the county and how to access them.

Residents & Neighborhood Interest Group

Strengths

- Neighborhoods are safe, clean, and well-lit with streetlights.
- Small town character with a good amount of events and restaurants.
- Parks and trails are a community asset and well-maintained.
- Auburn is a comfortable community for those who grew up in a rural area but need the access to jobs that a city provides.
- Auburn is a family-friendly community.

Weaknesses

- There is a lack of family-friendly amenities, specifically no pool, lack of kid-friendly restaurants, neighborhoods are not all connected by trail system, and lack of enforcement of speed limits.
- Stakeholders expressed a lack of racial and cultural diversity, as well as some resistance from existing residents for increased diversification.
- The community is aging and there is a lack of housing stock for older residents who would like to age in place.
- Other than Downtown, there are not many other neighborhoods that are walkable.
- There is a lack of affordable and low-income housing.
- Stakeholders expressed interest in neighborhoods that are both age and income diverse.
- There is desire for a destination park in Auburn and better amenities in the parks overall.
- Stakeholders desire stronger code and property

ADOPTED
01.18.2022

RESOLUTION #
01-2022

EXHIBIT A

