

FINAL
JULY 2014



CITY OF AUBURN

community vision report

imagine 
AUBURN
dream today. shape tomorrow.

prepared by



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I. Introduction



2014 Petpalooza Dog Trot

In the winter of 2014, the City of Auburn began a citywide community engagement process to actively involve the community in envisioning and shaping the future of Auburn. The Imagine Auburn Visioning process is a first step toward updating Auburn's Comprehensive Plan document to better reflect the needs and desires of its residents and business community and the City's role and significance in the region. As part of this comprehensive outreach process, the City engaged approximately 800 residents (1.09% of the population) from winter 2013 through spring 2014. Auburn residents contributed their ideas and opinions regarding the City's assets, challenges, core values and vision for the future. The next phase of the Comprehensive Plan update will include a complete review and overhaul of the existing Comprehensive Plan to bring its language in line with the new vision and the community input received.

This Community Vision Report presents a synthesis of the input received during the Imagine Auburn community engagement process. This report provides initial guidance for future policy and planning decisions about key topics related to the City's growth and development. Vision topics include neighborhoods and housing, the local economy, commercial development, transportation, parks and City services, natural environment and community health.

I. INTRODUCTION

The goals, issues and opportunities presented in this report will be the foundation for the next phase of the Comprehensive Plan update process and will help facilitate the development of the goals, policies and implementing actions that will comprise the elements of the Comprehensive Plan. After this introduction, the Community Vision Report includes the following sections:

- II. **Planning Context.** A description of the City of Auburn and its surrounding context.
- III. **The Planning Process.** A description of the Imagine Auburn process and the community engagement methods used.
- IV. **Vision Themes.** An expanded vision statement outlining a series of themes that represent a collective vision for the City. These themes reflect a comprehensive synthesis and evaluation of all Imagine Auburn findings.
- V. **Goals, Issues and Opportunities.** A detailed summary of key outreach findings that establish a framework to help set the direction of the Comprehensive Plan Update. Includes a set of broad preliminary goals reflective of community needs and desires, as well as issues and opportunities identified by the community.
- VI. **The Comprehensive Plan Update.** An overview of the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update process and timeline.

II. Community Planning Context



2012 International Festival

This chapter provides local and regional community context for the City of Auburn planning area. Key information presented includes Auburn's physical location, its unique neighborhoods and surrounding regional context; key statistics and facts about Auburn residents, including race and ethnicity demographics, languages spoken and economic status; and a brief summary of the City's facilities and assets.

Regional Location and Neighborhoods

The City of Auburn is located on the boundary between King and Pierce Counties in western Washington, approximately ten miles south of Seattle and five miles northeast of Tacoma. The City covers approximately 30 square miles of land area, and is bordered by the cities of Federal Way, Pacific, and Algona to the west, Kent to the north, Sumner to the south, and unincorporated King County to the east. The Muckleshoot Indian Reservation is partially located within the southern City limits.

Historically an agricultural area, Auburn's population and housing density have increased in recent decades due to its proximity to the regional urban centers of Seattle and Tacoma. A number of natural features contribute to the planning area's landscape. Both the Green and White Rivers run through Auburn. Lake Tapps is just

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to the south of the city limits, and Puget Sound is approximately five miles to the west.

For the purposes of this effort, Auburn is comprised of eight neighborhood areas¹: West Hill, North Auburn, Downtown, Lea Hill, South Auburn, Plateau, SE Auburn and Lakeland. Auburn's commercial areas include Downtown, Auburn Way North Corridor, the Outlet Connection, Auburn Way South Corridor and Lakeland Town Center.

Community Profile

Auburn's estimated total population is 74,860.² Auburn's median age is 33.5,³ more than 10% younger than the State average of 37.5.⁴

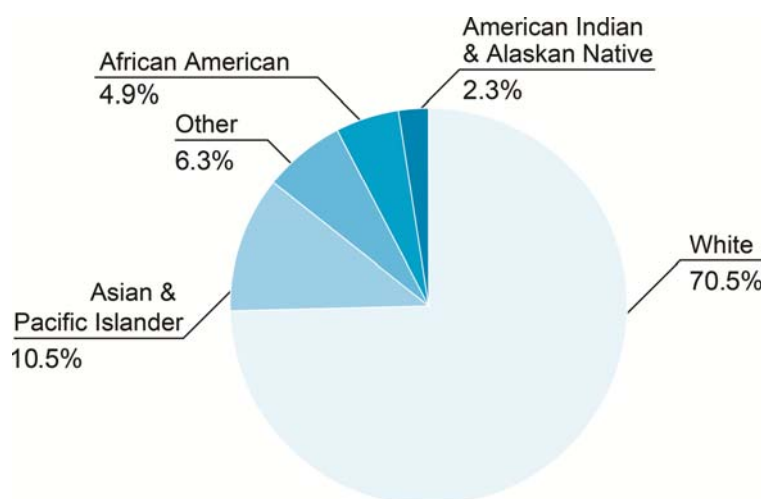


Figure 2-1. Race and Ethnicity Identity of Auburn Residents

Approximately 30% of Auburn residents identify as a race or ethnicity other than white or Caucasian.⁵ More than a third of minority residents (10.5% overall) identify as Asian and Pacific Islander.⁶

¹ These neighborhood designations are for planning purposes only and not an official division of neighborhoods by the City.

² City of Auburn, Office of Financial Management

³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

⁶ Ibid.

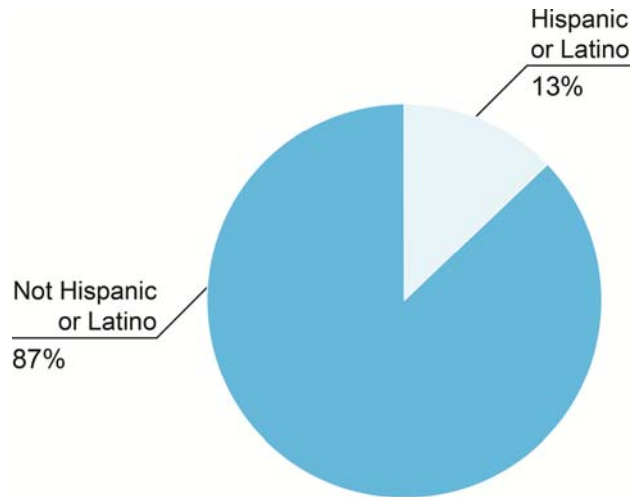


Figure 2-2. Percent of Auburn Residents that Identify as Hispanic or Latino

A total of 13% of Auburn residents identify as Hispanic or Latino.⁷ One quarter (25%) of Auburn's residents speak a language other than English at home.⁸ Of those residents, about one third (8% overall) speak Spanish.⁹

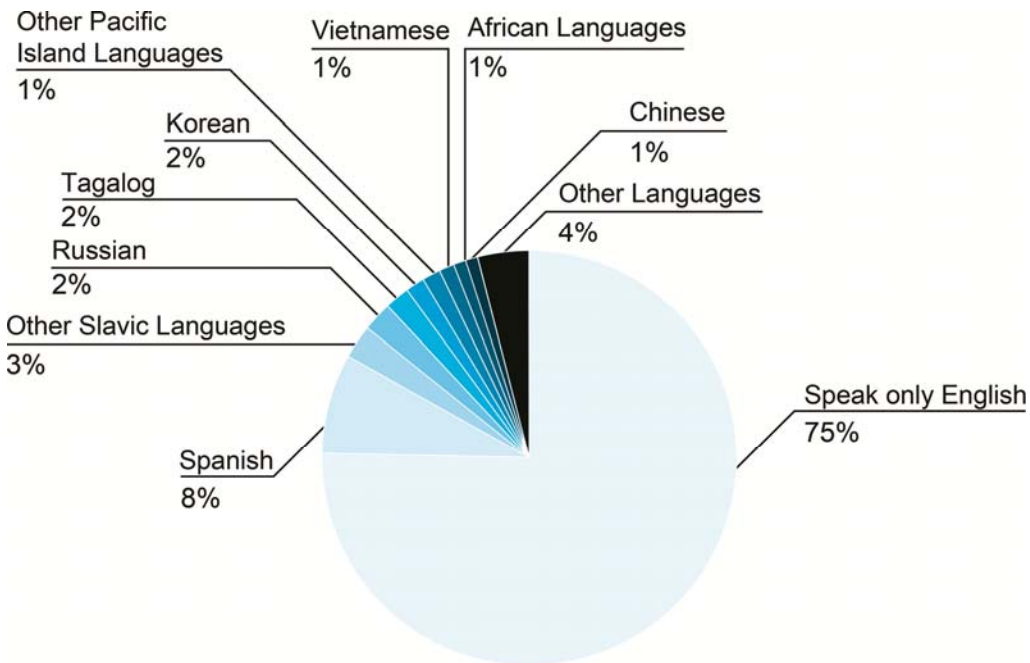


Figure 2-3. Languages Auburn Residents Speak at Home

Auburn's median household income is \$54,329.¹⁰ This is about 8.5% lower than the state median (\$59,374) and approximately 24% (23.7%) lower than that of King

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

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County (\$71,175).¹¹ The top two areas of occupation for Auburn residents are management, business, science and arts (28.5%), and sales and office (28.5%).¹²

The community’s major employers include industrial, educational, governmental and service entities such as MultiCare Auburn Medical Center, Auburn School District, Boeing, Certainteed Corporation, Emerald Downs Race Track, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Express, General Services Administration, Green River Community College, Muckleshoot Casino Enterprises, Safeway Distribution Center, The Outlet Collection (regional shopping center), and United Parcel Service.¹³

The unemployment rate in Auburn is 10.6%.¹⁴ Approximately fifteen percent (14.9%) of Auburn families live on incomes below the federal poverty level.¹⁵

Facilities and Assets

Major travel corridors State Route 167 (north-south), and State Route 18 (east-west) connect Auburn to the surrounding region. Auburn is also home to a Sound Transit commuter train station, a service connecting the Puget Sound area from Everett to Lakewood.

Auburn has 28,405 total housing units. Approximately 60% of housing units are owner occupied, and 40% are renter occupied.¹⁶

The City’s public education system includes four school districts—Auburn, Dieringer, Federal Way and Kent—which include 15 elementary schools, four middle schools and four public high schools. Green River Community College provides local opportunities for higher education. The King County Library system operates one public library in Auburn at Les Gove Park.

The City of Auburn maintains a diverse set of recreational, cultural, educational and natural spaces and facilities. System highlights include: the library, fitness and recreation facilities at Les Gove Park and Community Campus including senior-oriented social and recreation opportunities,

City of Auburn Infrastructure

- Miles of roadway: 216
- Miles of water pipeline: 250
- Miles of sewer pipeline and force mains: 210
- Miles of storm pipeline: 197
- Miles of storm ditches: 27
- Developed parks: 28
- Miles of recreational trails: 23

(Source: City of Auburn staff)

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey
¹¹ Ibid.
¹² Ibid.
¹³ City of Auburn website: <http://www.auburnwa.gov>
¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey
¹⁵ Ibid.
¹⁶ Ibid.

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education programs, and health and wellness services at the Senior Activity Center; sports and play facilities at the Game Farm Park; 120 acres of wetland habitat at Auburn Environmental Park; an 18 hole facility, pro shop, restaurant and community ballroom at the Auburn Golf Course; and local cultural heritage experiences at the White River Valley Museum and Mary Olson Farm.¹⁷

¹⁷ City of auburn website: www.auburnwa.gov

III. The Planning Process



2010 Clean Sweep Event

The “Imagine Auburn” Comprehensive Plan Visioning process employed a variety of communication and outreach methods to ensure broad, inclusive community engagement and participation. This chapter describes these methods, and the ways in which they engaged residents and stakeholders in envisioning the future of Auburn and strived to build momentum for long-term community involvement.

This visioning process emphasized a three-pronged approach to communications and outreach that focused on education, promotion and engagement. The approach was designed to ensure that Auburn residents, business owners, property owners, organizations, and community members are:

- Well-informed about the Auburn Comprehensive Plan, the role and importance of comprehensive planning, and the community planning process leading up to development of the Plan;
- Encouraged to participate in a range of interactive events and outreach activities; and
- Engaged in providing feedback on a preferred vision and goals for the future of Auburn.

III. THE PLANNING PROCESS

Stakeholder Interviews

In winter 2013-2014, MIG, Inc. (MIG) conducted telephone interviews with 13 stakeholders as part of the Imagine Auburn visioning process. The City provided a selection of interviewees. MIG staff scheduled the interviews and provided a consistent set of interview questions to participants in advance to help facilitate discussion. The interviews were designed to explore community values and key and emerging trends, as well as assets, opportunities and challenges in the City of Auburn.

Interviewed stakeholders included: members of the Auburn City Council, Junior City Council and Planning Commission; Auburn Downtown Association; Auburn School District; Boeing; Muckleshoot Indian Tribe; White River Estates Homeowners Association; YMCA; as well as a community religious leader, property manager and community organizer, and a local architect.

Community and Committee Meetings

In February through April 2014, Auburn City staff facilitated 13 meetings with residents and community leaders throughout Auburn. These meetings were designed to inform participants about the Comprehensive Plan and to gather information about the community's desired future for Auburn. In addition to conducting meetings in each of the eight neighborhood areas, the City met with the following groups:

- Auburn Food Bank Board of Directors
- Auburn Noon Lions Club
- Auburn Youth Resources Board of Directors
- Joint Parks Board, Arts Commission, and Tree Board
- Joint Planning Commission/Planning and Community Development Committee
- Junior City Council
- Municipal Services Committee (City Council sub-committee)
- Senior Center Advisory Board
- YMCA Board of Directors

Each meeting included a brief process overview and facilitated discussion of Auburn's assets and best qualities, issues and challenges, as well as future opportunities and participants' vision for Auburn's future. The format of each meeting was adjusted based on the number of participants. Approximately 120 people participated in the neighborhood and community meetings. Participants were encouraged to use the online questionnaire (described below) to provide additional information.

Community Questionnaire

In spring of 2014, MIG administered an online questionnaire targeting Auburn residents. The questionnaire was administered in the format of a multiple choice survey with opportunities for open answer comments. The questionnaire was available on the City of Auburn's website for approximately two months (February – March).

In addition, the City developed a hard copy version of the questionnaire translated into Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese. Project staff worked collaboratively with community leaders and partner agencies such as King County Public Health Department and the YMCA to distribute translated copies of the questionnaire into the community.

The goal of the questionnaire was to collect qualitative information to inform the City's understanding of residents' 20 year vision for the future of Auburn. Specific questions focused on priorities around the following subject areas:

- **Where we live:** housing types, neighborhoods and residential character
- **Our unique character and sense of place:** the city's physical character and community values
- **Where we work and shop:** the city's commercial character, employment and economic development
- **How we get around:** walking and biking, transit and freight, automobile travel, and street function and character
- **Our parks, services and facilities:** parks, recreation, community facilities, and city services
- **Our natural environment:** the city's natural resources and ecological health
- **A healthy community:** overall community and environmental health

A total of 551 people completed the questionnaire.

Social Media Campaign

MIG and City staff designed and managed a social media campaign to engage the public online and build enthusiasm for the Comprehensive Plan. Project staff created posts and tweets to generate “buzz” about the visioning process and disburse information, as users reposted content to their own networks of friends on Facebook and Twitter. Community members were encouraged to respond to posts and tweets, creating an online forum for public discussion of critical community issues and future opportunities. In addition to promoting Imagine Auburn outreach events, MIG and the City also used social media to “share back” results and findings from neighborhood meetings and the online questionnaire.

Grocery Store Tabling

City staff set up tables at three grocery stores around Auburn to provide opportunities for passersby to share their perspective on Auburn's future vision and priorities. This outreach method was employed to reach beyond conventional meeting formats and incorporate true grassroots means of engaging people who live, work and play in Auburn. Approximately 35 people shared their thoughts and desires for Auburn's future via grocery store tabling.

City Council Retreat

The Auburn City Council holds an annual retreat to discuss pertinent topics. This year's retreat, held April 3rd and 4th 2014, was focused on City government relations and the future vision of Auburn. The Council discussed the City's Core Values, Vision and Mission Statement. This retreat work was done in parallel with the Imagine Auburn vision process so that this report could combine the input gained through community outreach activities with the Council's governmental insight.

The City Council agreed to embrace these core values:

- Innovative
- Respectful
- Dedicated
- Hard-working
- Ethical
- Fair
- Responsive
- Supportive of the Arts
- Supportive of Life-Long Learning
- Environmentally Sensitive
- Trustworthy
- Financially Responsible
- Charitable
- Safe
- Transparent
- Engaged
- Embrace Diversity (Pluralistic)

Vision Open House

On May 21, 2014, the City of Auburn City Council hosted a town hall session in the Auburn Golf Course Banquet Room as part of the Imagine Auburn community visioning process. Community members participated both in person and online via webcast. Building on earlier public outreach efforts, the Vision Open House was designed to gather public input on broad vision themes, community priorities and preferences around the character of future development, looking forward twenty years into Auburn's future.

The event began in an open house format, with opportunity to review and comment on a series of display boards presenting key facts and process findings. This was followed by a facilitated polling exercise. Mayor Nancy Backus provided opening and closing remarks and answered questions posed by community members. MIG, Inc. facilitated the electronic polling activity and related discussion.

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Approximately 40 community members participated in the event in person and by webcast. A total of 31 people participated in the polling exercise in person and four people participated online.

IV. A Vision for the Future



2014 Volunteer Luncheon at Senior Center

The following vision statement was developed by City Council during their 2014 retreat in an effort to capture and reflect the community's needs and desires for Auburn's future. The extensive input shared by participating community members during the five-month Imagine Auburn visioning process revealed general community alignment with the City Council's work.

In 2035, Auburn is...

Your premiere community with vibrant opportunities.

V. Goals, Issues and Opportunities



2009 Clean Sweep Event

This chapter provides a detailed presentation of current issues and opportunities facing the Auburn community, as well as preliminary goal statements to help set the general direction of the Comprehensive Plan update. All findings reflect community input received over the course of the Imagine Auburn visioning process and represent community members' expressed needs and desires for Auburn. MIG developed the following statements through a systematic review and synthesis of written input, notes and summaries of each community engagement activity. Issues and opportunities are not intended to reflect consensus opinion.

Goals, issues and opportunities are organized under five categories:

- Where we live, work and shop
- Our unique community
- How we get around
- Our local economy
- Our parks, services and facilities
- Our natural environment

V. GOALS, ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. Where We Live, Work and Shop

A. Goals

- 1.1 Manage Auburn's growth in a manner that encourages community and business development while also preserving the City's valued assets and qualities.
- 1.2 Provide a variety of housing types that support a high quality of life for current residents and attract new residents to Auburn neighborhoods.
- 1.3 Promote and revitalize Downtown as heart and soul of the Auburn community, with thriving living, arts, culture and entertainment options.
- 1.4 Build on the distinctive character of each neighborhood to create a patchwork of unique places.
- 1.5 Ensure safe, well connected and accessible neighborhoods with healthy food, parks and local services in close proximity.

B. Issues and Opportunities

- 1.A **Controlled, well planned growth:** Actively manage Auburn's progression from a suburban to an urban community, focusing on planned growth and expansion. Give careful consideration to appropriate limits on density and building height, seeking community input along the way.
- 1.B **Diverse housing types:** Encourage a diverse mix of housing types throughout Auburn, including single family homes, multi-family housing and mixed-use development. Vary housing based on neighborhood context.
- 1.C **Walkable neighborhoods:** Create walkable neighborhoods with safe, continuous sidewalks and accessible shopping, parks, amenities and centers of community activity nearby.
- 1.D **Downtown living:** Support the development of housing Downtown in correlation with efforts to enhance livability in the area. Encourage safe and comfortable pedestrian walkways, cafes and restaurants, a variety of businesses, access to recreation/open space, and healthy food options.
- 1.E **Senior housing:** Encourage quality senior housing in town so residents are able to stay in the community.
- 1.F **Homes for the middle class:** Create opportunity for the development of homes for middle income families and individuals.

- 1.G Property maintenance:** Improve the condition of the City’s aging housing stock. Encourage maintenance of private properties and the reliable repair, maintenance and improvement of multi-family housing. Consider tools such as low-interest loans, incentives and code enforcement.
- 1.H Neighborhood engagement and safety:** Increase community engagement at the neighborhood level. Improve neighborhood safety by engendering stronger resident participation in neighborhood associations, block watch groups, etc.
- 1.I Neighborhood grocers:** Facilitate the equitable distribution of quality grocery stores in Auburn. Bring grocery stores to neighborhoods, improving access to healthy foods, and seek out desired grocers to establish locations in the city (i.e., Trader Joes and Whole Foods).
- 1.J Farmers markets:** Explore possibilities for new or expanded farmers markets held in different locations and/or on different days of the week, and year-round (indoor).
- 1.K Dining options:** Attract more dining options to Auburn, including restaurants offering healthy, mid-priced meals for residents and destination dining, with restaurants appropriate for special occasions and out of town visitors. Restaurant variety in Auburn is limited.
- 1.L Entertainment:** Support the establishment of entertainment businesses. Target both youth and adults (examples: movie theater, bowling alley, music venues, nightlife).
- 1.M Retail character:** Focus on attracting small, independent and family friendly businesses. Support Auburn’s long-time “established” businesses, including small and local business, which help make Auburn a unique place. Discourage the proliferation of “vape shops”, pawn shops, and chain businesses.
- 1.N Sidewalk culture:** Support opportunities for Downtown and neighborhood businesses to engage with the street (example: outdoor cafés/restaurant seating).
- 1.O Transit-oriented development:** Encourage and provide retail and service uses proximate to centers of transit.

2. Our Unique Character

A. Goals

- 2.1 Preserve Auburn's historic assets, honor community traditions, and nurture values of family and community.
- 2.2 Continue to embrace and celebrate Auburn's diverse multi-cultural, multi-generational community and continuously strive for inclusive leadership and decision-making.
- 2.3 Build a strong brand and identity for the City that residents and the business community relate to and take pride in.
- 2.4 Enhance the visual quality of Auburn's built environment and rights of way, encouraging attractive, high-quality, environmentally sustainable development and landscape design.

B. Issues and Opportunities

- 2.A **Family oriented community:** Prioritize facilities and services important to families, including quality education, affordable childcare, accessible healthy food, safe walking and biking routes to schools, social services, parks and playgrounds, and recreation opportunities for children, youth and seniors.
- 2.B **Culture of caring:** Preserve the city's personable small-town character and culture of service to others. Continue to support Auburn's tradition of volunteerism and protect City investments in social and family services.
- 2.C **Community partnerships:** Work collaboratively across organizations to address and respond to challenges and implement solutions to community issues, and create continuity in the effort to empower and engage the entire community.
- 2.D **Community planning and leadership:** Encourage diverse voices in leadership roles and community planning processes. Provide ample opportunities for residents to engage and participate in City decision-making processes. Take steps to ensure that all local populations and neighborhoods are represented. Include perspectives of the tribal community, long-time residents, new residents and Auburn's many ethnic and cultural communities.
- 2.E **Community events:** Continue and build upon Auburn's tradition of gathering for large community events, such as parades, holiday celebrations and cultural events (examples: 4th of July, Veterans Day).

- 2.F The Auburn brand and image:** Explore possibilities for establishing a cultural “niche” in Auburn to enhance community character, pride and purpose, to draw tourists and new residents from the region, and to catalyze new business. Re-brand the City in cooperation with the local business community and residents (examples: Edmonds arts community, Kent’s sports events).
- 2.G Regional significance:** Explore ways to take better advantage of opportunities provided through Auburn’s location, standing as a regional transportation hub and connections to regional urban centers.
- 2.H Design standards and visual quality:** Establish standards to ensure high quality design of new development, particularly for new housing and business storefronts.
- 2.I “Mid-city” scale:** Encourage higher density development that supports family living and mixed uses. Maintain height limitations that keep Downtown and other development to an appropriate scale.
- 2.J Arts and culture:** Continue to support and expand arts programs and cultural organizations such as the Auburn Symphony, Auburn Valley Creative Arts, Auburn Avenue Theater, Performing Arts Center, White River Valley Museum and others.
- 2.K Historic preservation:** Honor Auburn’s history and heritage in decision making processes. Preserve historic assets and encourage opportunities for the public to share and learn about Auburn’s past. Treat found artifacts, archeological sites and paleontological sites with respect and proper legal process.
- 2.L Agricultural heritage:** Explore opportunities to celebrate and showcase Auburn’s agricultural heritage, including support for local farmer’s markets and restaurants that support local growers and producers. Showcase agricultural heritage through continual support of the Mary Olson Farm.
- 2.M Street trees and landscaping:** Improve neighborhood and arterial streetscape visual character, particularly with trees and landscaping. Improve the care of street trees; plant more trees and reduce paved and impervious surfaces.
- 2.N A healthy community:** Combat obesity, asthma, diabetes and other increasingly common health issues through environmental design.

3. How We Get Around

A. Goals

- 3.1 Develop an efficient, well-connected transportation system to support a variety of travel modes, including automobile, public transit, walking and biking.
- 3.2 Strive for efficient, well maintained and uncongested streets for travel within Auburn.
- 3.3 Improve the safety, connectivity and quality of the bicycle and pedestrian networks and related facilities.
- 3.4 Create a more walkable environment and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes.
- 3.5 Improve public transit service throughout the City and better connect the City to the region for residents, visitors and businesses.

B. Issues and Opportunities

- 3.A **Inter-neighborhood connectivity:** Implement solutions to overcome the loss of connectivity caused by physical barriers that divide neighborhoods, such as train tracks and major thoroughfares.
- 3.B **Roadway repairs:** Repair and improve the condition of Auburn roadways. Roadway development and improvements have not kept pace with the City's expansion. Get creative about how to fund roadway improvements and other needed infrastructure improvements.
- 3.C **Sidewalks:** Develop and maintain a complete network of wide, protected sidewalks to increase neighborhood connectivity and ensure pedestrian safety. Repair sidewalks in older neighborhoods and build sidewalks and fill gaps where needed (Lea Hill example).
- 3.D **Street lights:** Ensure street lighting is adequate and in good repair, particularly in areas served by transit and frequently traveled by foot or bicycle (examples: 4th St NE, 21st in South Auburn).
- 3.E **Safe crossings:** Extend crosswalk countdown timers at major roads to allow adequate crossing time for seniors and others (example: Auburn Way).
- 3.F **Bicycle network:** Address the gaps and barriers in the bicycle network. Create an expanded network of safe, connected bicycle facilities to improve travel between neighborhoods and to and from schools and commercial areas. Where possible, separate bike lanes and paths from roads.

- 3.G Trail and park connections:** Improve Auburn’s system of trails and better connect existing parks and recreation areas and amenities. Build a pedestrian bridge across the White River to provide greater access to Game Farm Wilderness Park.
- 3.H Arterials and corridors:** Revitalize and improve the quality of experience for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians along corridors including Auburn Way North (including Auto Row), Auburn Way South, and East Main Street; focus on visual character, quality landscaping, multi-modal transportation and access, and a diversity of local serving businesses.
- 3.I Regional access:** Work with Sound Transit and others to increase the hours and frequency of transit services that connect Auburn to other cities in the region to better serve residents and visitors (look “beyond the commuter”).
- 3.J Local transit:** Expand and increase access to local transit that connects neighborhoods to education, jobs and commercial centers, particularly for the benefit of transit-dependent populations such as low income communities, youth and seniors. Increase the frequency of existing transit service.
- 3.K Alleviating traffic:** Reduce traffic congestion and improve the flow of traffic by installing left turn lanes and signals where needed and by better synchronizing traffic lights (examples: A and C Streets, West Valley Highway).
- 3.L Speeding:** Implement solutions to reduce speeding in higher traffic neighborhoods and along neighborhood streets commonly used as shortcuts to freeways and major arterials.
- 3.M Parking:** Explore options for management of Downtown parking and encourage more parking at the Sounder train and bus station for commuters.
- 3.N Wayfinding:** Develop a consistent system of signs and interpretive elements to help people navigate the community and find key destinations.
- 3.O Goods movement:** Maintain and improve the transportation system in support of local and regional industry and commerce (e.g., rail connections for Boeing and other large businesses, extension of Highway 167 to the Port of Tacoma).
- 3.P Railroad crossings:** Address safety and traffic flow issues and concerns at railroad crossings.
- 3.Q Collaborative planning:** Expand the collaborative relationship with the Muckleshoot Tribe; focus in part on transportation planning around Auburn Way South (SR 164) corridor and the Highway 18/SR 164 interchange. Continue coordination with the State Department of Transportation.

4. Our Local Economy

A. Goals

- 4.1 Activate Downtown as the business core of Auburn while providing needed goods and services to all Auburn neighborhoods.
- 4.2 Protect Auburn's industrial and manufacturing job base while attracting a diversity of new jobs and businesses to the city.
- 4.3 Create a strong local economy that welcomes, encourages and promotes small, independent businesses.
- 4.4 Become a model for the nation around how to respond to and alleviate poverty in the suburbs.

B. Issues and Opportunities

- 4.A **Downtown businesses:** Focus business development efforts Downtown. Facilitate a diverse mix of business types, including locally owned shops and high-quality regional brands and potential anchor businesses. Support "community trademark" businesses and long-time business owners (example: Rainbow Café).
- 4.B **Neighborhood businesses:** Support an equitable distribution of community serving businesses within walking distance or close driving distance of Auburn's residential neighborhoods (examples: grocers, pharmacies, coffee shops).
- 4.C **Business variety:** Encourage a diverse mix of business types, including locally owned and "non-chain" shops and high-quality regional brands. Focus on businesses that will provide local employment opportunities and businesses that will provide resources and activities that Auburn currently lacks.
- 4.D **Local jobs and wages:** Attract and retain more businesses and professional jobs, both to generate needed city revenue and to create more living and family wage job opportunities.
- 4.E **Small business support:** Encourage more support and assistance for small businesses and retain small businesses Downtown. Explore options such as small business grants and storefront improvement grants.
- 4.F **Industry incentives:** Continue to invest in infrastructure and services that support Auburn's major employers. Create incentives for larger corporations and employers to establish offices in Auburn.

- 4.G Private investments:** Work to ensure that Auburn’s large businesses pay their “fair share” in needed infrastructure and improvements, including but not limited to street maintenance and repairs.
- 4.H Economy of innovation and creativity:** Foster an economy of innovation and encourage the establishment of creative and technology focused businesses in Auburn, attracting younger people to the city.
- 4.I Poverty:** Address poverty in Auburn and related issues such as homelessness, unemployment and hunger.
- 4.J Crime and public safety:** Address crime and public safety issues including truancy and drug use.
- 4.K Adult mentorship and training:** Encourage more adult education, job assistance, mentorship and training to eliminate poverty and remove barriers to opportunity.
- 4.L City investments:** Focus the use of limited City resources towards significant social and economic challenges affecting the community such as poverty and jobs.
- 4.M Vacant and underutilized properties:** Convert vacant and underutilized lands to productive uses. Use vacant land Downtown to catalyze positive change, focusing on transit-oriented development opportunities around the Souder station. Better utilize the area surrounding the Auburn Municipal Airport. Convert vacant or underutilized warehouses to active and productive uses.
- 4.N Home vacancies:** Reduce home vacancies in order to increase the residential tax base.

5. Our Parks, Services and Facilities

A. Goals

- 5.1 Strive to become a “full service city,” with a focus on places, spaces and services that support positive community interaction, community health and safety, and the social and economic sustainability of families.
- 5.2 Expand infrastructure and City services to all neighborhoods, including recently annexed areas.
- 5.3 Maintain Auburn’s high quality parks and recreation facilities and ensure accessibility of parks and facilities to all Auburn residents as the community grows and expands.
- 5.4 Collaborate with the County, regional governments, and private organizations to provide high quality health and social services and to address issues of poverty and need.
- 5.5 Work with neighborhood groups, emergency services staff, law enforcement and community-based organizations to improve community safety and disaster readiness and to prevent crime.
- 5.6 Continue Auburn’s tradition of accessible government and expand Auburn’s leadership model to reflect its diverse cultures and communities.

B. Issues and Opportunities

- 5.A **Libraries:** Work with the King County Library System (KCLS) to keep libraries open and active and maintain facilities and hours of operation, ensuring community-wide access. Auburn’s libraries are a critical resource and valued community asset.
- 5.B **Neighborhood parks:** Establish parks in every Auburn neighborhood and ensure that neighborhood parks are clean, safe and cared for (example: Lea Hill).
- 5.C **Community center:** Build a community center with gathering spaces, activities for all ages, and fitness classes and equipment.
- 5.D **Dog parks:** Develop dog parks or establish designated off-leash areas.
- 5.E **Park and trails connectivity:** Enhance accessibility to parks and open spaces (such as the greenbelt) through hiking and biking trails that provide recreation opportunities and connect to schools and neighborhoods. Close trail gaps and complete the Green River Trail.

- 5.F Pea patches:** Provide more opportunities for community gardening for those residents who do not have room to garden at home (example: in neighborhoods with multi-family housing).
- 5.G Programs and recreation:** Expand recreation and outdoor education programs through collaborative efforts with local schools and organizations. Partner with regional organizations to increase opportunities for intramural sports.
- 5.H Summer events:** Expand the offering of free summer events in Auburn's parks and expand evening special event offerings to include entertainment, local vendors and other attractions that draw a crowd.
- 5.I Places and activities for youth:** Create opportunities that engage youth year-round in safe, supportive and active environments (examples: summer youth employment program, clubs, public service opportunities). Maintain and expand places and spaces for Auburn youth (examples: skate parks, pea patches for kids, bowling alley, skating rink).
- 5.J Youth empowerment and engagement:** Encourage youth participation in community planning and decision making (example: Jr. City Council). Expand youth services and resources (example: Auburn Youth resources).
- 5.K Quality public education:** Encourage and support increased investment in the public school system. Continue to address issues that affect student learning and access to opportunity including poverty, safety and language barriers. Focus on connecting kids to the community to encourage those who grow up in Auburn to stay in Auburn.
- 5.L Higher education:** Encourage and support continued investment in programs and offerings at Green River Community College. Explore ways to expand higher education opportunities locally, such as extension programs or satellite campuses of established universities in the region. Consider focusing efforts in areas of new science and technology,
- 5.M Accessible government:** Continue the Auburn tradition of highly accessible, responsive government. Continue to foster relationship with community and faith leaders. Increase accessibility through multi-lingual communications and new technologies.
- 5.N Wi-fi access:** Improve wi-fi access Downtown and community-wide.
- 5.O Social services:** Continue to support and expand social services provided by the City and non-profit organizations such as addiction and mental health services, transitional housing and emergency shelters for people without homes and survivors of domestic violence.
- 5.P Rehabilitation services:** Facilitate the provision of support services for residents in need of drug and alcohol rehabilitation.

V. GOALS, ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 5.Q Homelessness:** Address the broader scope of needs for homeless residents (examples: food distribution, shelters, mental health services, job assistance, etc.).
- 5.R Police and emergency services:** Maintain Auburn’s high level of service and professionalism and increase police presence and responsiveness, particularly in areas subject to trespass and drug-related activity. Continue to increase law enforcement in correlation with future population growth.
- 5.S Physical access to services:** Improve access to family and social services and increase locations for health care access within Auburn. Consider creating a “one-stop” center for community, health and social service resources.

6. Our Natural Environment

A. Goals

- 6.1 Maintain a high degree of stewardship for Auburn's natural assets and resources.
- 6.2 Protect, preserve and restore natural habitat and biodiversity, including protected species and their habitats.
- 6.3 Promote stewardship of water resources by improving water quality and encouraging natural stormwater management.
- 6.4 Strengthen community connections to the White and Green rivers.
- 6.5 Create a comprehensive community plan for disaster preparedness and hazard mitigation.

B. Issues and Opportunities

- 6.A **Trails and greenbelts:** Preserve and protect greenbelts and complete trails for regional access.
- 6.B **Open spaces:** Protect Auburn's natural and open spaces, balancing the importance of access to nature with wildlife habitat and resource protection.
- 6.C **River and wetland health:** Give more attention to river water quality and the health of Auburn's wetlands and riparian areas.
- 6.D **Connections to the river:** Create stronger connections to the rivers through parks and public river access/boat launches.
- 6.E **Rural landscapes:** Protect rural landscapes, which are important aspects of the city's historic character, and support protection of rural landscapes surrounding the city.
- 6.F **Urban forest:** Restore, enhance and maintain Auburn's tree canopy to slow stormwater runoff, provide shade and improve community character.
- 6.G **Water quality:** Protect the quality of ground water and drinking water through careful management and monitoring.
- 6.H **Native landscaping:** Use native trees and plants where possible in parks, open lands and beautification areas to conserve water and enhance habitat value.

V. GOALS, ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 6.I Green building:** Encourage the use of sustainable materials and building practices in all renovation and new development.
- 6.J Alternative energy sources:** Reduce energy use and promote the use of renewable energy sources.
- 6.K Air quality:** Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from community and municipal sources for a cleaner and healthier community.
- 6.L Emergency and natural disaster preparedness:** Plan, train and collaborate with community groups such as non-profit organizations and churches to plan, prepare and respond to scenarios including earthquake, volcanic eruption (lahar flow), flood, wildfire and tsunamis.

VI. The Comprehensive Plan Update



2014 Clean Sweep Event

The Imagine Auburn visioning process was the first phase in Auburn's Comprehensive Plan update process. The process was a critical step in developing a community-driven vision to guide Auburn's future growth and progress over the next 20 years. The next phase of the Comprehensive Plan update will include a complete review and overhaul of the existing Comprehensive Plan to bring its language in line with the new vision and the community input received.

Draft Comprehensive Plan development will begin July 2014 and will continue through December 2014, with review by the Planning Commission and the public at key points during the process. The updated Comprehensive Plan will address urban design, land use, transportation, capital facilities, economic development, environmental resources, parks, recreation, arts, utilities and housing. A full draft of the Plan will be available for public review during the first quarter of 2015 in correlation with Planning Commission public hearings in March and April. City Council review and action will take place May through June 2015. Auburn is required to submit its completed Comprehensive Plan to the State of Washington by June 30, 2015.

