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City of Auburn Quality of Life Study Union Street Neighborhood

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Union Street Neighborhood

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Bates College, Lewiston, Maine
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Executive Summary

This project was conducted in collaboration with Auburn City Hall's Urban Development Office to better understand the perceptions of quality of life in the Union Street neighborhood (USN) in Auburn, Maine. This neighborhood, along with Downtown and New Auburn, have been deemed "blighted" by the City of Auburn. We administered surveys whose results will be considered in the City of Auburn's 5 Year Consolidated Plan. Part of this plan includes federal funding from a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant that Auburn will apply for this spring. This study informs Auburn's urban planning process by considering the local community's voices in making improvements to the USN.

Historically, blighted neighborhoods in urban areas were catalysts for urban renewal. While some neighborhoods expanded and flourished economically, blighted neighborhoods were neglected from this development process, leaving them in social and physical disrepair (Breger 1967, 376). In the past, city governments ignored the voices of low-income community members living in blighted areas, displacing these residents without care. City governments have realized, however, that citizen participation in the urban planning process is imperative to making successful change. The results from this project voice the needs and concerns from the USN residents, and thus are an important component of Auburn's urban planning process.

Our results illustrate that community members in the USN wish to address three main issues: housing, sidewalks, and public transportation. First, because the neighborhood is considered "blighted", there are many vacant lots and abandoned homes that people would like to see fixed. Second, residents reported that the sidewalks were poorly maintained, making it difficult to maneuver around the city, especially in the winter. Third, residents expressed the need for a more accessible and affordable public bus system in order to move about the city more easily. Finally, aside from tangible improvements, results indicate that even though residents want to see improvements to the city, not everyone is willing to donate their time to make these changes a reality.

The outcomes from our project suggest that the City of Auburn should direct their attention to low-income housing, better sidewalks, and improving the city bus system. By addressing the three primary needs of the USN, the City of Auburn can allocate their federal funding to help improve this community. We conclude our report by recommending certain projects that will further benefit the City of Auburn and ENVR 417 students.

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Introduction

This section provides a socio-historical context for the role of community participation in Auburn's urban planning initiative. In looking at specific historical and contemporary case studies, we highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the urban planning processes and demonstrate the evolution of urban planning's modern inclusion of community participation. This background allows us to identify and interpret Auburn's approach to city planning, and to reflect on the effectiveness of this approach. While our involvement in this project was limited by time, we hope that the City of Auburn can look to this report as a tool to assist their urban planning process. We will begin by examining the origins of urban development in the United States.

In approaching the history of urban planning, it is important to understand the concept of blight as it inspired a process that identified certain urban areas to be more acceptable than others. Traditionally, blight occurred when technological changes, economic growth, and overutilization of property shifted the way a city's land was used (Breger 1967, 376). While some parts of these developing urban areas began to flourish economically, other parts deteriorated (Breger 1967, 370). The perceived neglect and disrepair of these urban areas was termed "blight." Blight is a loaded word that represents the power dynamic between government and community in the urban planning decision making process (Bagchi-Sen & Weaver 2013, 62). In addition, we believe that the term "blight" has an impact on community member's perception of their environment and of their self-worth because of its negative connotation (Maas et al. 2009; Rasidi et al. 2012). Unfortunately, from the interwar period until today, the United States has employed this word in urban renewal programs. While interpreting the effect of the historical use of the term blight is not the main objective of our project, we believe that it is important to mention the potential impact of blight rhetoric on communities identified as "blighted." The main purpose of this report is to understand the USN's sentiments about their quality of life. Before delving into the inner working of this particular report, it is important to understand the evolution of citizen participation in city planning decision making.

Historically, urban renewal has been the process in which city governments use large-scale clearance of blighted areas in order to stimulate economic growth. Some anti-blight campaigns have been more successful than others and it has been shown that methodology and attention to specific community needs are imperative to the success of these projects (Ghasemzadeh 2013, 81). In post-Katrina New Orleans, for example, neighborhoods with both strong civic engagement and social capital had a demonstrable impact in reducing blight by influencing urban public policy (Weil 2012, 4). While communities such as this one may influence the decision making process, it is often the case that the economic development created from these changes tends to predominantly benefit upper and middle class citizens. Lower class communities, on the other hand, are often displaced from their neighborhoods as a result of these efforts (Kweit & Kweit 1980). The disjuncture between the pursuit of economic growth and the pursuit of economic stability, combined with the unequal distribution of decision making power, creates a complex relationship between local residents and political figures in charge of urban planning (Bowen 2006; Tulloss 1995, 517).

As seen in early case studies of urban renewal projects, economic development often overshadows the social interests of community members. One example of this unbalanced relationship can be seen in New York City's early urban development projects. During the 1950s, New York City was a leading pioneer in the shift towards urban renewal (Saunders 2006, 3). Development schemes, along with several highway building programs, required massive land

clearings and demolition of certain neighborhoods, which resulted in the displacement of half a million Manhattan residents (Saunders 2006, 3; Tulloss 520, 1995). In 1960, public outcry from the displaced communities opposed the continuation of the City's mega projects: they demanded that the City stop the destruction of these neighborhoods' social fabric. In response to public opinion, New York City shifted its attention away from extensive clearance of land, but it still aimed to make widespread changes (Saunders 2006, 3). This case study illustrates the dangers that come with a lack of citizen participation in the decision making process that occurs prior to development, and it shows that local communities who were once voiceless and invisible, can collaborate in order to combat mistreatment. Unable to ignore the demand created by their citizens, local governments have begun to include residents' concerns into the urban planning process (Brody 2003, 246). Modern inclusion of citizen participation has made recent urban renewal projects more morally sound.

Recent urban planning techniques have come to incorporate the use of citizen participation in organizational and implementation stages (Coburn 2003; Costa 2014; Davies 2011; McCann 2001). Though most studies have demonstrated the positive effects of community inclusion, some articles have also highlighted the potential disadvantages of this type of participation (Bagchi-Sen & Weaver 2013; Buss 2006; Bowen 2008; Brody et al 2003; Costa 2014). The faults of modern urban planning initiatives are less destructive than earlier urban renewal projects. Nonetheless, modern faults provide insight into how local governments can avoid making similar mistakes. Most of the pitfalls in community inclusion have stemmed from both the involvement of non-profit organizations and from developers. This has, in turn, led to decreased engagement with the local government, as well as insufficient communication of information within certain communities concerning financial viability of proposed projects (Costa 2014, 14; Elwood 2003; Irvin & Stansbury 2004). These issues highlight the importance of sharing knowledge both on the side of the community and the local government. Misinformation of the fiscal limits of these projects leaves local communities unable to create realistic ideas for future change (Costa 2014, 1). In terms of the government, their lack of involvement allows them to disempower their citizens by not assisting them in creating safer, economically stable neighborhoods (Costa 2014, 14; Davies 2011, 352).

On the upside, multiple case studies have demonstrated how community participation can prove to be an essential component of urban revitalization projects (Bowen 2008; Brody et al 2003; Coburn 2003; Irvin 2004; Weil 2012). For example, one scholar explains that in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, the inclusion of community information allowed the local government to pinpoint pollution sources that would have gone unnoticed otherwise (Coburn 2013, 423). In other words, local knowledge has the ability to empower citizens to act towards their own betterment while also producing a more participatory and deliberative climate (Coburn 2003, 430; Costa 2014, 12; Davies 2011, 353). Moreover, citizen inclusion forces elites to acknowledge the power of local knowledge in its relation to urban and environmental planning (Coburn 2003, 429; Cortese 2003, 17; Davies 2011, 351; Kweit & Kweit 1980). It is impossible to make large-scale changes in local communities without inside knowledge of the problems with which these communities are faced. The incorporation of this knowledge must be done reasonably and effectively to assure that its meaning is not lost or misconstrued.

What does this mean for Auburn, Maine? Auburn shares a similar past to that of its twin sister, Lewiston. Once booming mill towns with a constant influx of workers and income, the two cities have yet to fully transition to a new economy and image. At the moment, Auburn is applying for federal grants in order to refurbish deteriorating areas of the City. Currently, 70% of

the houses in three Auburn neighborhoods have been identified as blighted; these neighborhoods are Downtown, New Auburn, and Union Street (City of Auburn 2010, 49). Our work over the semester has been to collect data from the residents of the USN in order to find out what they believe to be the most needed services in their community. By looking at the data we collected as a group, as well as the historical and current narratives reviewed earlier, we hope to aid Auburn in accomplishing some of its new city planning and development goals.

This section has grounded our work in Auburn by providing an overview of other urban planning projects. In many of the historic and modern case studies we have looked at, both private organizations and city planners have taken the lead in organizing renewal projects (Coburn 2003; Costa 2014, 2). In some instances this has caused local governments to be disengaged in the planning process, and to be unaware of the needs and desires of their citizens. In the case of Auburn, however, the local government is dedicated in improving the quality of life of their community members. Although the City is applying for federal funding to improve the overall aesthetic and safety of their lower-income, "blighted" neighborhoods, the government is not required to collect this local knowledge. In working with Reine Mynaham and the Citizen Advisory Committee, it is apparent that they are making an effort to include a diverse array of community voices within the decision making process. Auburn is concerned about the social and environmental well being of its citizens, and we hope that their concern will materialize into meaningful urban planning decision making. Our work with the City of Auburn has demonstrated the potential that lies within partnerships between local communities and higher education institutions (Cortese 2003, 16). In addition, this report is a framework that future students can use to improve and develop this meaningful work within Auburn.

Methodology

      During the month of September, we worked with Reine Mynaham and the Downtown and New Auburn target neighborhood groups to cut down the length of the survey in order to make it more accessible to the community members. Since one survey was being administered across three different neighborhoods, groups needed to feel confident that the content of the survey reflected the interests of each of their respective communities. Negotiation on behalf of the groups allowed us to collectively design a functional survey. With Reine's approval, we were able to begin our fieldwork in the Union Street community on October 2nd.

      We administered 25 surveys from October 2nd to November 6th, 2014. Fieldwork was typically conducted on Thursday afternoons between the hours of 1:00 PM and 4:00 PM. Survey administration took approximately 20 minutes. To avoid presenting ourselves as outsiders, we decided to conduct the surveys on paper rather than electronically on tablets. Due to the high amount of foot traffic in the USN, participants were approached on the street. In addition to this, we conducted surveys with residents who were on their property, in the neighborhood's public park, or in various commercial parking lots. Lastly, Reine passed on the contact information of City Council members who had expressed interest in completing the survey. These particular surveys were conducted over the phone. The multiple ways in which we administered surveys insured a fairly representative sample of the USN. We understand, however, that we were not able to reach the entire population as surveys were mainly conducted outside and during a specific time period.

      The final component of our fieldwork methodology involved a post-surveying debriefing session. After each day in the field, we consistently made an effort to get together as a group to discuss the details of our experiences. These details included surveys that we administered, residents that we talked to, behaviors we observed, and even specific quotes that we remembered. This time of reflection, even before analyzing the data, allowed us to highlight common and important themes across our group.

      The final component of our project included the analysis of our survey data. In the second week of November, we collaborated with the two other groups to begin statistical analysis with the help of SurveyMonkey, an online analysis program. This program allowed us to express the USN residents and their greatest concerns statistically. What we believe to be the most significant results generated by SurveyMonkey can be found in the Results and Discussion sections.

Results

Through our analysis, we were able to identify the survey data that we feel best captures the USN residents' opinions regarding the most pressing issues in their community. The graphs below contain this information[1]. Before providing this data it is necessary to mention the validity of our results. Specifically, how representative our sample population is of the interests of the broader USN. Our sample size is inherently limited in terms of the number of people surveyed - 77 Auburn residents were surveyed in total, 25 of whom are members of the USN. Furthermore, the fact that we generally conducted surveys on Thursday afternoons may have inhibited our ability to collect data across a diverse array of individuals. Still, we believe that our findings are helpful in offering insight into how the USN can be changed to better the lives of those living there.
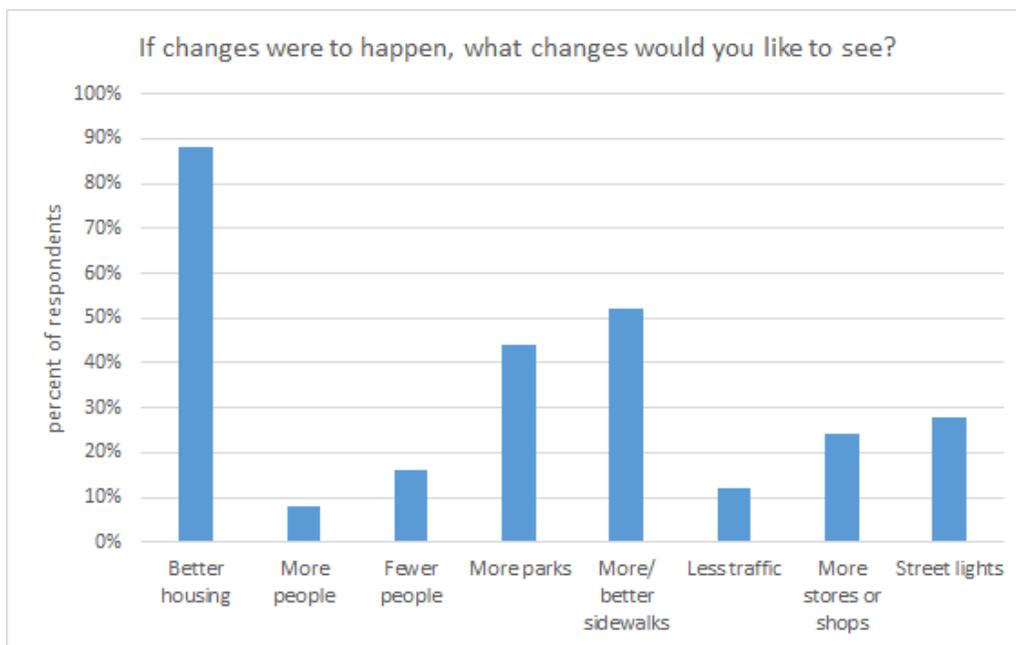
Figure 1: Percentage of respondents who wanted to see certain changes within their neighborhood (*n*=25).

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[1] See Appendix for Complete Data Set
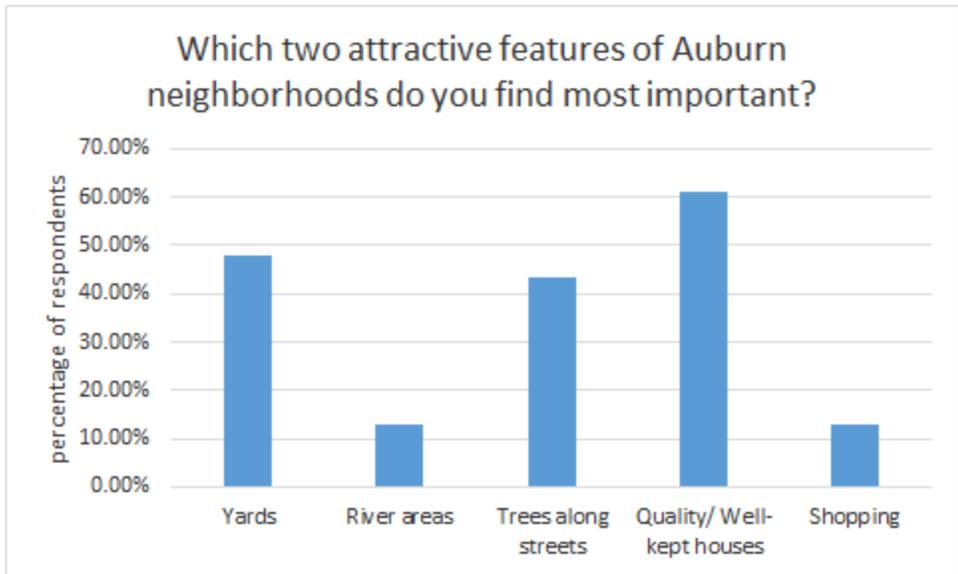
Figure 2: The features that USN residents believe to be most important in terms of attractiveness (*n*=23).
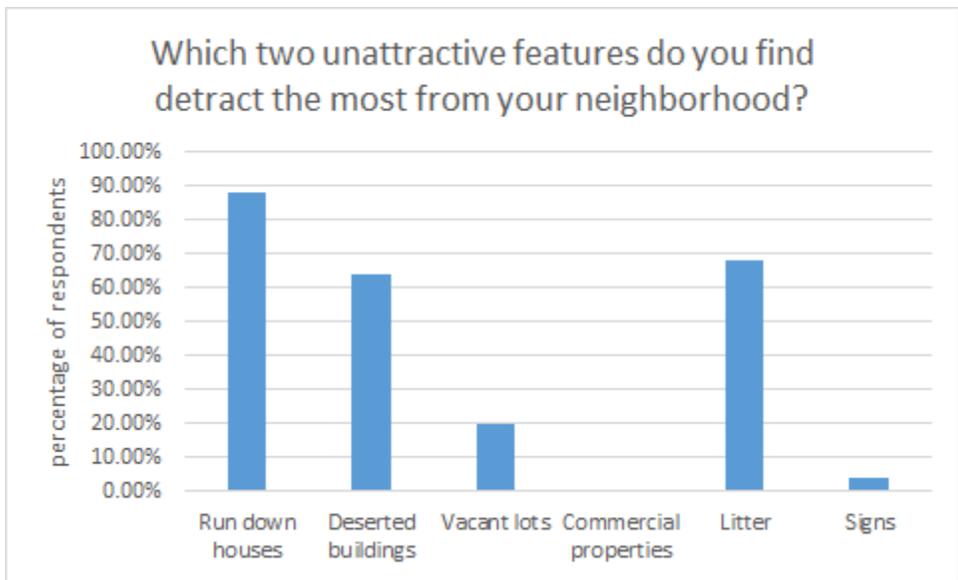
Figure 3: The features that USN residents believe detract from their neighborhood aesthetic (*n*=25).
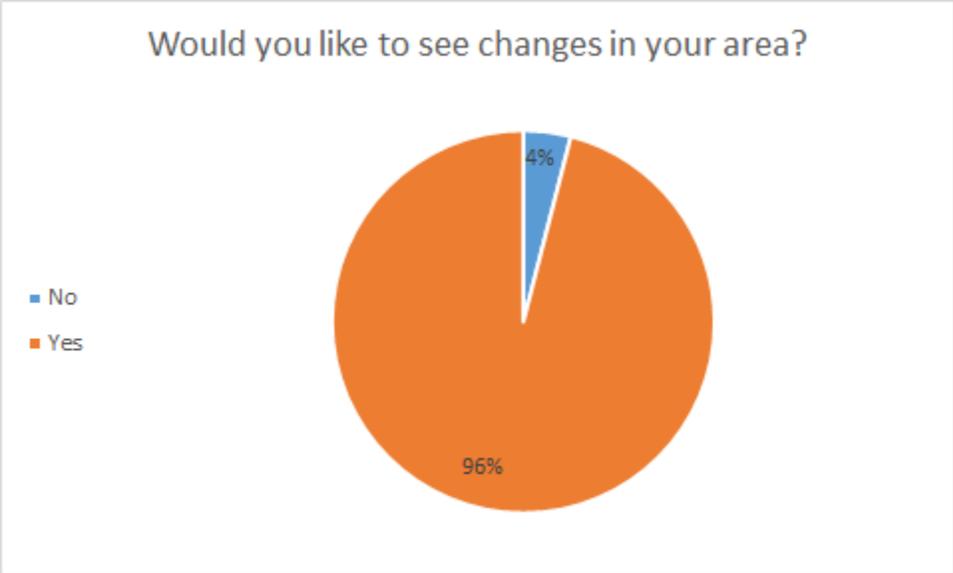
Figure 4: Percentage of USN residents who would like to see changes in their neighborhood (n=24).
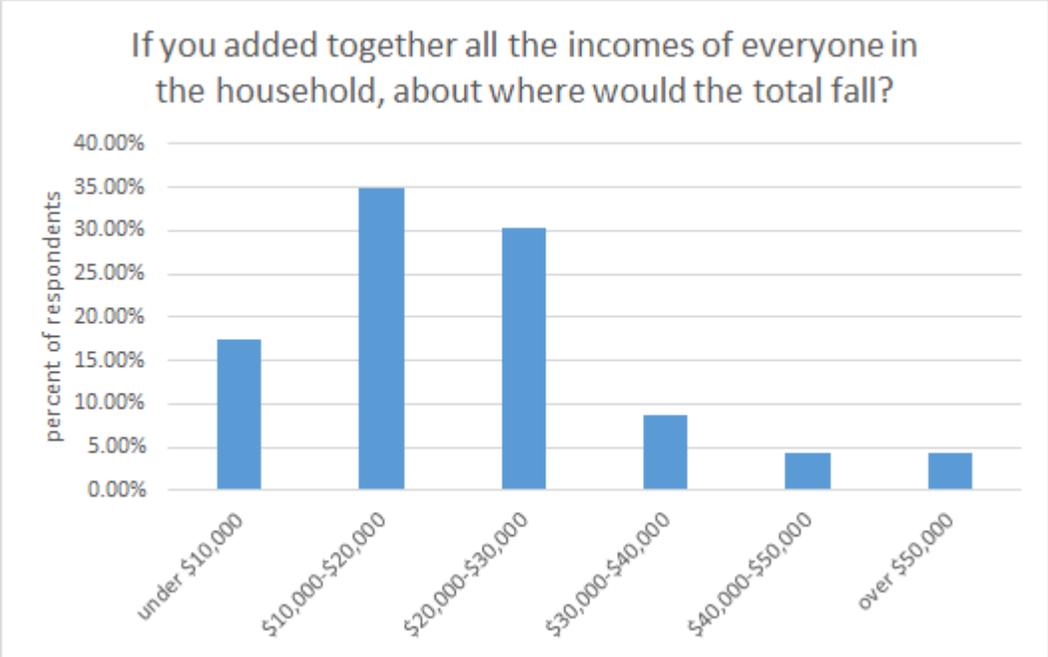
Figure 5: Annual household income of residents in the USN (*n* =23).

Figure 6: Percentage of respondents who are self-employed or employed for salary or wages (n=24).
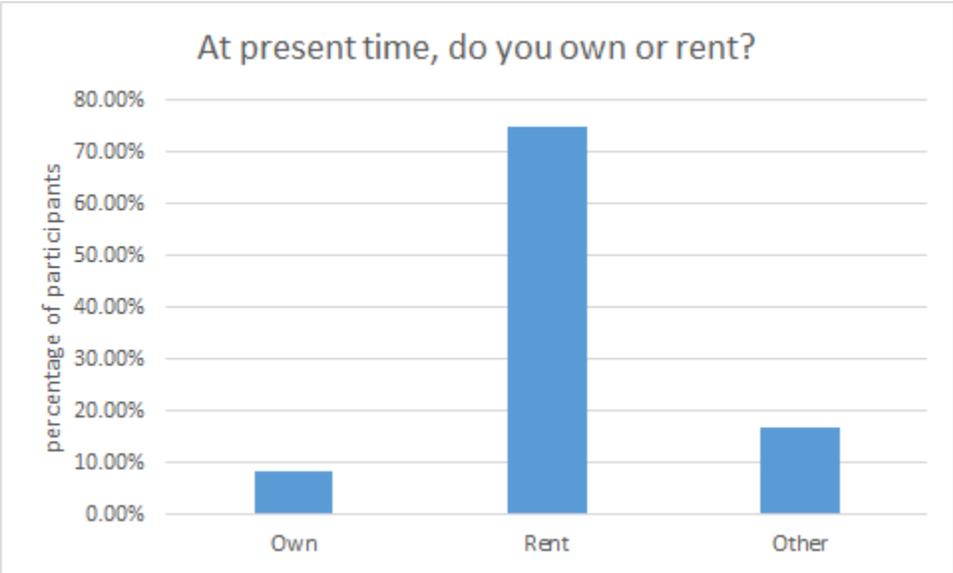
Figure 7: Percentage of respondents who own or rent (n=24).
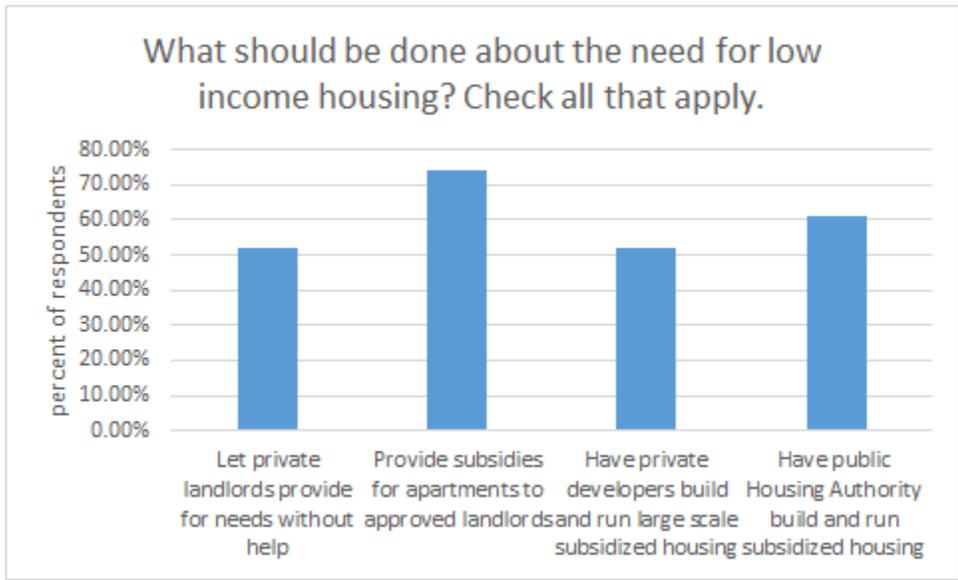
Figure 8: Residents' perspectives on potential low income housing projects (n=23).
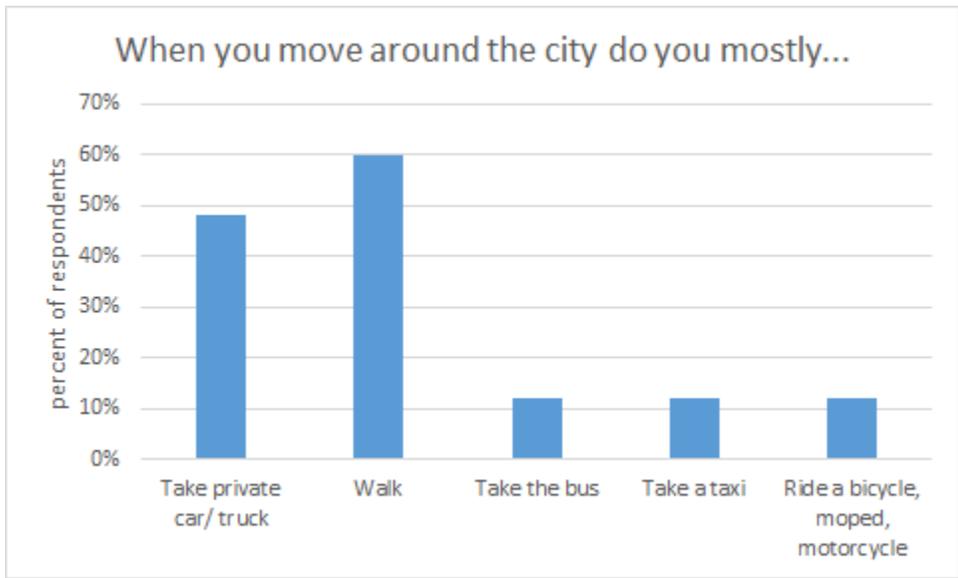
Figure 9: Residents' preferred mode of transportation in USN (n=25).
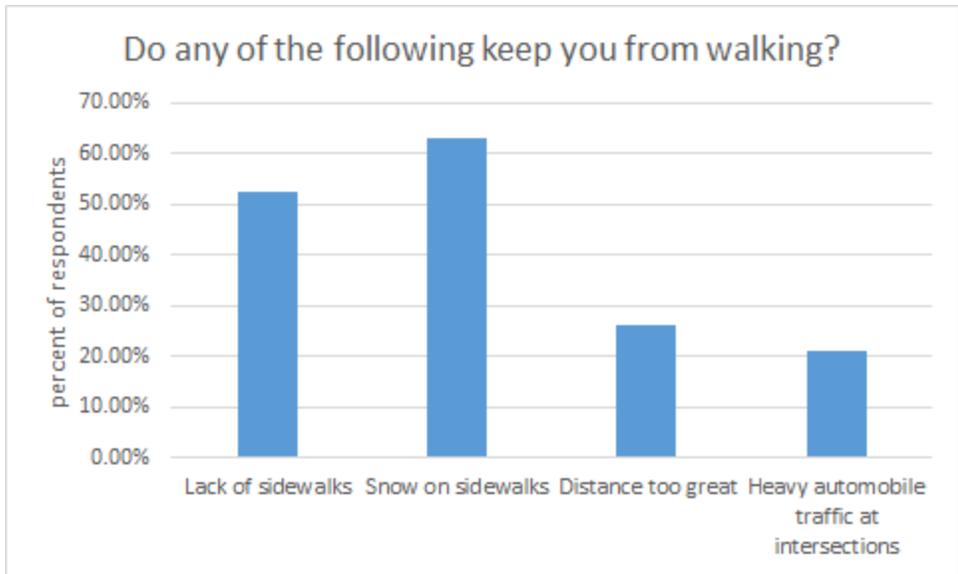
Figure 10: Barriers that keep residents from walking on the streets (n=19).
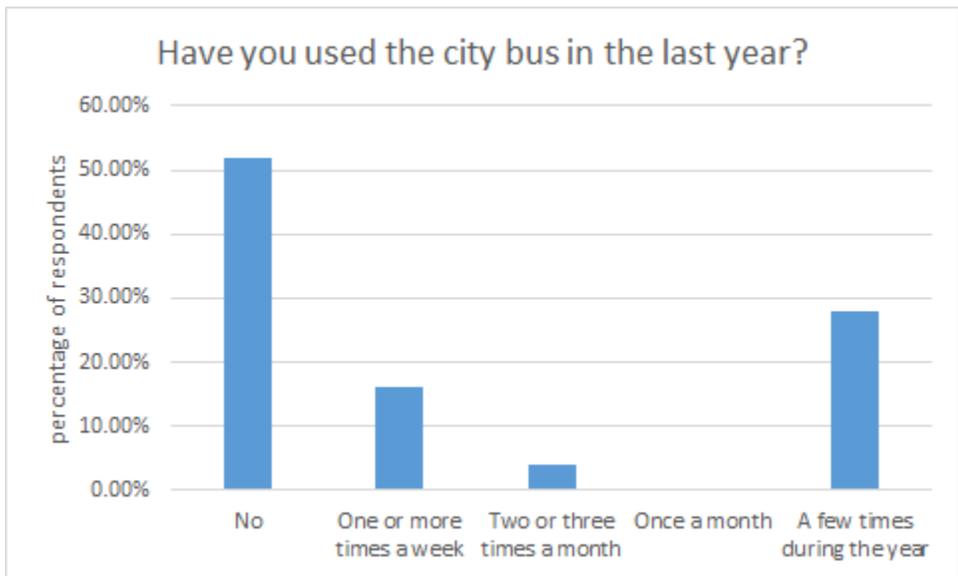
Figure 11: Participant bus usage in the last year (n=25).
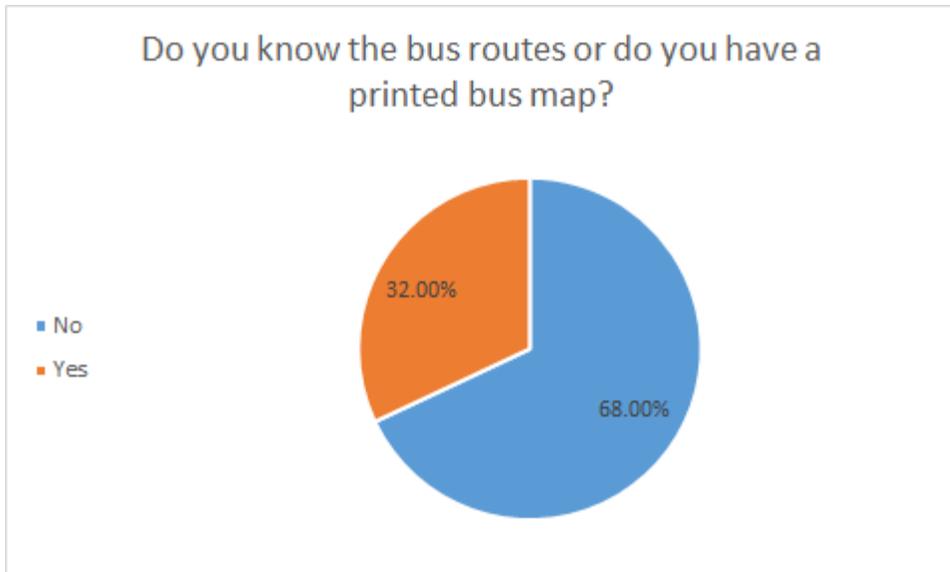
Figure 12: Percentage of respondents who know the bus routes or have a printed bus schedule (n=22).
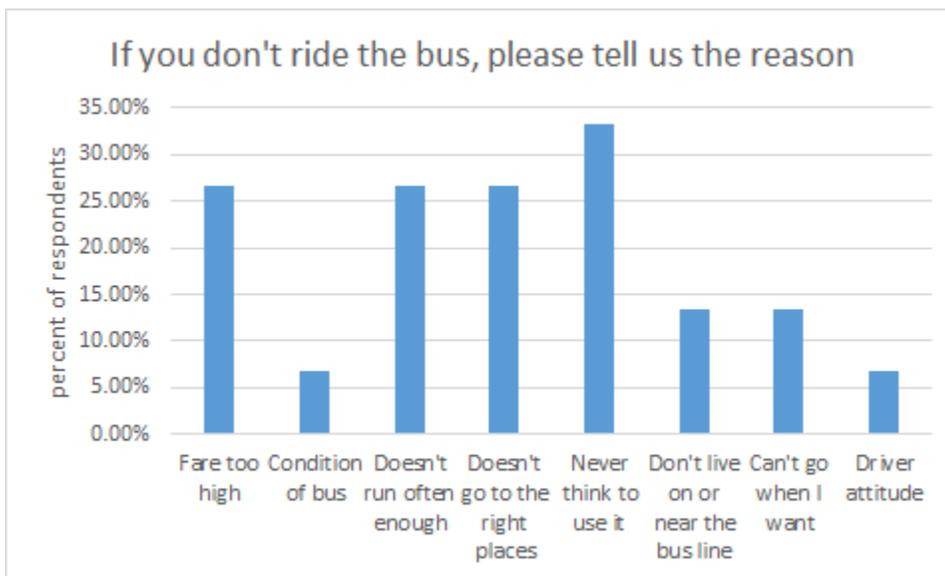
Figure 13: Reasons why respondents do not use the city bus (n=15).
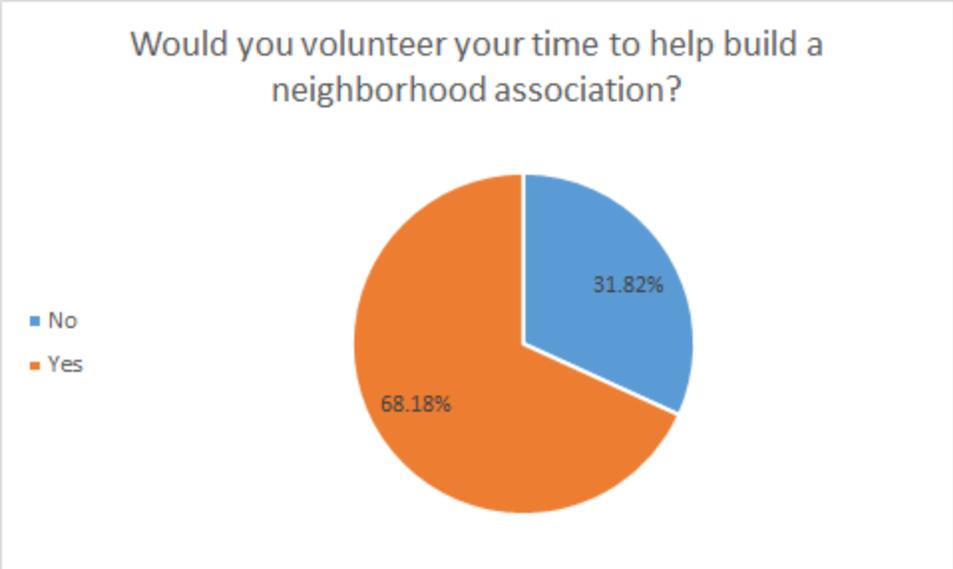
Figure 14: Percentage of participants who are willing to volunteer their time to help build a neighborhood association (n=22).

Discussion

The purpose of this survey was to assess Auburn residents' feelings about their quality of life. The survey was designed to collect responses that will assist the City of Auburn in appropriately allocating funds to each of the three target neighborhoods they were evaluating. This discussion focuses on the results collected in the USN and is broken into four parts, each of which explains a particular issue of importance to residents. Sections one through three address particular areas the residents would like to see fixed, namely houses, sidewalks, and buses. Section four addresses an underlying issue of citizen participation, or lack thereof, in the USN.

1. Housing

Our survey results provide insight into the USN residents' perception of housing in their community. Specifically, 88% of the USN residents responded with "better housing" when asked what changes they would like to see in the community (Figure 1). Moreover, when asked which two attractive features of Auburn neighborhoods are most important, about 61% and 48% of USN respondents answered "quality/well-kept houses" and "yards," respectively (Figure 2). Although the latter feature is not directly related to housing itself, the residents' emphasis on the attractiveness of yards speaks to the aesthetic importance of private property in general. Similarly, 88% of USN residents believe run down houses to be the most unattractive feature of their neighborhood (Figure 3). This information, coupled with the fact that close to 96% of USN residents wish to see changes in their area, implies that the overwhelming majority of the USN participants consider physical improvements to houses to be the community's most pressing issue (Figure 4).

The survey also revealed interesting connections between poverty and housing. More than half of the USN residents surveyed stated that their annual income is $20,000 a year or less (Figure 5). To put this in perspective, a four-person family with two adults and two children is considered low-income if their annual salary is below $23,283 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). Thus, a significant percentage of the USN population falls somewhere below or close to the national poverty line. Additionally, when asked if they were self-employed or employed for salary or wages about 38% of USN respondents replied with "neither." Close to 30% responded to that same question by stating, "not applicable" (Figure 6). This information suggests that a considerable percentage of the USN residents are not only poor, but also unemployed. Another possible explanation for this data might be that surveying during the day solely gave us access to a particular socioeconomic group.

Given the socioeconomic status of the USN and the fact that 75% of USN residents rent, the community is likely to be reliant on low-income housing (Figure 7). When asked what should be done about the need for low-income housing, close to 74% of the USN residents surveyed responded that subsidies should be provided to approved landlords for apartments. Meanwhile, about 52% believe that private landlords should be left to provide for needs without help (Figure 8). These statistics, however, contradict one another: the majority of residents believe that landlords need financial aid to fix apartments while about half believe that they should not receive help. One possible explanation for this contradiction is that residents feel that only certain landlords should receive financial aid, implying either that landlords are capable of taking care of their property on their own or that only some landlords are responsible enough to be provided with subsidies. Similarly, 61% of the residents believe that the Public Housing

Authority should build and run subsidized housing, while 52% think that private developers should build and run large-scale subsidized housing (Figure 8). This suggests that although a large percentage of residents think that constructing large-scale subsidized housing would benefit the neighborhood, they are unsure or indifferent over who should be in charge of the process.

A few of the residents that we spoke with explained that they were homeless and/or living at a friend's house, which could explain the statistic that 17% of the USN residents are neither owners nor renters (Figure 7). Beyond improvements in the overall quality and aesthetics of housing in the USN, the presence of homelessness and poverty suggest that more needs to be done in terms of making it fiscally easier for people to care for and find homes.

2. Sidewalks

The survey results also demonstrate that residents feel that sidewalk conditions are an issue in the USN and that improving them should be a top priority. Second only to the "better housing" option, which was discussed above, 52% of respondents expressed that they would like to see "more/ better sidewalks" as a potential change in the USN (Figure 1). Like the physical appearance of houses and yards, upgrading the physical condition of sidewalks in the USN would yield both practical and aesthetic benefits to the community. Sidewalks are a necessary part of a community's infrastructure. Not only do they provide individuals with the ability to move about their neighborhood, but they can also act as meeting spaces where people can gather and interact.

Sidewalks are especially important to the USN residents when considering that 60% of the surveyed population stated that walking is their primary form of transportation (Figure 9). Unfortunately, a variety of barriers exist that inhibit the residents' ability to walk. When asked, "Do any of the following keep you from walking?," 53% of participants responded with "lack of sidewalks," demonstrating that while the USN residents prefer to walk, they lack areas to do so comfortably and safely (Figure 10). This highlights the importance of having well-kept, safe streets in the neighborhood. If sidewalks are in disrepair then residents may resort to walking on streets which makes it difficult to move about securely and with ease. Additionally, winter places creates an added stress on an already weak aspect of the neighborhood. Snow on the sidewalks is another obstacle that 63% of the USN residents find inhibits their ability to walk around the neighborhood (Figure 10). Efforts aimed at maintaining existing sidewalks, constructing sidewalks where none exist, and clearing snow in the winter would make the USN a more walkable, and perhaps more sociable, environment.

Improving the sidewalks in the USN would be economically beneficial to the community. As discussed in the housing section, more than half of the USN residents live close to the poverty line and make $20,000 a year or less (Figure 5). Owning a personal vehicle is expensive. Although 48% of participants indicated that they use cars as a mode of transportation, walking short distances to local shops and residences is a more economically viable option. It is clear from this data that improving the quality of sidewalks in the USN would enhance the quality of life of many of its citizens.

3. Buses

Our data illustrates that residents in the USN seldom use the public bus as a mode of transportation (Figure 9). In the past year, only 32% of people reported that they have used the bus (Figure 11). Possible explanations for this behavior include lack of knowledge about bus routes, inaccessibility, and costs associated with the bus service. Sixty eight percent of people reported that they were unfamiliar with the routes and/or schedules of the city buses (Figure 12). Without knowing the bus routes residents cannot rely on the bus system as a primary means of traveling. The data suggests that information on the city buses is not effectively disseminated to the public and that more can be done by the City to inform residents about the bus system.

Unfamiliarity with the bus systems in the USN leads residents to resort to other modes of transportation. When asked how people move about the city, 60% of people mentioned walking, while 48% of people reported using their private car or truck (Figure 9). While walking is the most popular form of transportation, if community members were more knowledgeable about the bus routes then they would be more likely to use the bus. The data suggests that more can be done to both advertise the bus system in the USN and also inform residents about the benefits of using buses.

Other reasons why the bus system is not used often is due to the fact that it is inaccessible and expensive. Twenty six percent of respondents reported that the buses do not go to the right places (Figure 13). This suggests that the bus service does not stop at desired locations. If the bus made stops at more popular destinations, more people would be inclined to use it. Additionally, 26% of Union Street residents do not use the bus service because the bus fares are too expensive (Figure 13). As mentioned earlier, 34% of the participants' annual household income is between $10,000 and $20,000 (Figure 5). Perhaps adjusting the bus fares to the incomes of the USN community would entice residents to use the buses rather than more expensive forms of transportation, such as the use of personal vehicles. Moreover, better access to information about the buses would make those residents who can afford bus fares more likely to ride the bus.

Overall, USN participants expressed that the city bus is a weak form of transportation in Auburn because respondents are unaware of the services, the buses are inaccessible, and the rates are costly. When asks what they would like to see addressed by the City of Auburn to improve the neighborhood, 47% of the community members agreed that upgrading the bus system would be beneficial, highlighting the need for changes within the Auburn public bus system (Figure 1).

4. Collective Action Problem

Our data suggests there may be a collective action problem in the USN. Although the majority of residents would like to see changes made in the neighborhood, not everyone is willing to volunteer their time to address these issues. When asked if people would like to see changes in the Union Street community, 95% of participants reported yes (Figure 4). Even though there is an expressed interest in neighborhood changes, only 68% of community members are willing to dedicate their time to build a neighborhood association (Figure 14). One explanation of this issue is the possibility that residents lack a sense of neighborhood pride and, therefore, are unwilling to dedicate their time. We hope that through the implementation of the HUD Grant community members will gain a sense of attachment and dignity to the USN.

Outcomes and Implications

The purpose of this project was to assess the USN residents' perception of their neighborhood. Our results offer interesting connections between communal self-perception and urban issues in the USN.

An idea that is crucial to this project is the notion that engaging the community effectively in the urban planning decision making contributes to the overall well being of a community. Historically, citizens lacked voice in urban planning initiatives in the United States. Past attempts at urban renewal, without the participation of residents, allowed governments to make widespread urban changes that resulted in unjust displacements of whole communities and, in turn, social instability (Brody, Samuel D. 2003; Saunders 2006; Tulloss 1995). Fortunately, the modern inclusion of citizen participation, and its incorporation of local knowledge into the process, has made recent urban planning projects more successful. These projects demonstrate that local knowledge can inform urban planners in ways that allow them to make beneficial social and physical changes to urban environments (Bowen 2008; Brody et al 2003; Coburn 2003; Costa 2014; Davies 2011; Irvin 2004; Weil 2012). This survey is representative of the City of Auburn's efforts to learn from the USN residents in order to help the community.

The results of the survey indicate that housing, sidewalks, and buses are of greatest concern to USN residents and that improvements in these critical areas can enhance the community's welfare. Changes in housing might include winterizing existing housing and improving access to, and quality of, low-income housing. This would boost the community aesthetically and the quality of life in the neighborhood. Better maintenance of the neighborhood's sidewalks would provide similar benefits. Increasing usage of buses by reworking bus lines and publicizing the bus system would provide citizens with access to more of the city while offering a more economically and environmentally efficient means of traveling. While upgrading living conditions and increasing the capacity to travel are important, these changes can also render other significant, though perhaps less tangible, benefits to the USN.

Positive changes in the critical areas suggested above can strengthen the social fabric of the USN. Self-worth and human health are reflective of how people perceive themselves within their environment (Maas et al. 2009; Rasidi et al. 2012). A boost in the USN's standard of living, with specific attention paid to aesthetic qualities within the community, can work to cultivate a sense of pride in this community. Additionally, residents experiencing change that they themselves approve of has the potential to not only strengthen ties amongst community members, but can also promote trust between the community and the City. This might help alleviate the community's collective action problem by making residents more inclined to involve themselves in communal activities. These changes are particularly important contributions to a place characterized by poverty, dissatisfaction, and a lack of interpersonal communication. In conclusion, our survey results provide insight into the ways in which change can improve the social and physical dimensions of the USN.

Next Steps

While our project offers concrete suggestions for the purposes of the HUD grant, we believe that there are certain offshoot projects that can be pursued in the future to embellish the work we began this semester. These projects are suggestions for both the City of Auburn as well as for future ENVR 417 Capstone classes. Some of the recommendations we have come up with are concrete programs, whereas others are simply general ideas about conduct. Below is a list of our ideas for future work that we believe will benefit both the communities of Auburn and of Bates College.

For the City of Auburn:

Creation of a Neighborhood Association
One of the questions in our survey asked if residents would be willing to join a Neighborhood Association. Sixty eight percent of USN residents responded that they would be interested in becoming members of this sort of organization (Figure 14). We believe that this type of partnership would increase communication between residents and City Hall, as well as bring the neighborhood closer together. It is possible that this could also generate the sense of pride that we found the residents seemed to be lacking.

Implementation of Community Gardens in the Union Street Neighborhood
The creation of green and gardening space in the USN would serve as another space for residents to cultivate a sense of community. Additionally, it would provide them with an option to grow their own food and spend time outdoors. This project would give the residents something they could be proud of and feel responsible for.

Increased Communication between Auburn City Hall and Residents (Community Forum)
While this suggestion is not a formal project, in talking to our residents we learned that they feel there is a lack of communication between their community and City Hall. If ties between these two parties were strengthened, it would allow for there to be smoother implementation of projects, as well as up-to-date information about problems within the neighborhood. Additionally, it would allow the residents to feel more included in the city planning process, which would, in turn, foster a sense of trust between residents and City Hall.

For ENVR 417:

Continual Surveys within Blighted Areas of Auburn
Continued surveying, and more extensive surveying, in the blighted areas of Auburn would allow for City Hall to have an accurate understanding of the community's needs. We also understand that the time constraints of our project did not yield particularly accurate data, and we hope that further surveying would be able to provide a better sense of the true community needs. This would be an incentive for continued improvements and change, and could serve as an opportunity for there to be an established partnership between Bates students and Auburn City Hall.

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Appendices

Quality of Life Survey

NEIGHBORHOODS

What neighborhood do you live in?

_____ Downtown   _____ New Auburn   _____ Union Street

How well do people in this area know each other?

_____ Not at all   _____ A little bit   _____ Know each other well

Do people in your area chat or visit?

_____ Never   _____ Sometimes   _____ Often

Would you like to see changes in your area?

Life   No   _____ Yes

Would you volunteer your time to help build a neighborhood association?

_____ No   _____ Yes

If changes were to happen, what changes would you like to see?

_____ Better housing	_____ More or better sidewalks	Other:
_____ More people	_____ Less traffic	_____
_____ Fewer people	_____ More stores or shops	_____
_____ More parks	_____ Street lights	

YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT AUBURN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Please rate your neighborhood on each of the following characteristics.

	Poor	Fair	Excellent
As a place to live	_____	_____	_____
As a place to work	_____	_____	_____
As a place to shop	_____	_____	_____
As a place for entertainment	_____	_____	_____
As a place for recreation	_____	_____	_____
As a place people like to visit	_____	_____	_____
As a place to raise children	_____	_____	_____

Do you have any comments about these?

_____
_____
_____

ATTRACTIVENESS OF YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Here are some things people find attractive about your neighborhood. Which two are the most important to you?

_____ Yards	_____ Well-kept houses
_____ River areas	_____ Shopping
_____ Trees along streets	

Here are some things which people think make your neighborhood unattractive. Which two do you feel detract most?

_____ Run down houses	_____ Litter
_____ Deserted buildings	_____ Signs
_____ Vacant lots	_____ Other: _____

_____ Commercial properties

HOUSING

What should be done about the need for low income housing? (check all that apply)
Let private landlords provide for needs without help
Provide subsidies for apartments to approved landlords   _____
Have private developers build and run large scale subsidized housing   _____
Have public Housing Authority build and run subsidized housing   _____

At present time, do you own or rent? _____ Own   _____ Rent   _____ Other

How many years have you lived in this place?   _____

TRANSPORTATION

When you move about the city do you mostly....   _____ Take private car/truck   _____ Walk
_____ Take the bus   _____ Take a taxi   _____ Ride bicycle, moped, motorcycle
_____ Other

Do any of the following keep you from walking?   _____ Lack of sidewalks
_____ Snow on sidewalks   _____ Distance too great
_____ Heavy automobile traffice at intersections

Are there streets or intersections in your neighborhood which should be made safer or more convenient for
people who are walking such as yourself or school-age children? Please be specific.   _____
_____
_____

Have you used the city bus in the last year?   _____ No   _____ One or more times a week
_____ Two or three times a month   _____ Once a month   _____ A few times during the year

If you used the bus at least once a week, for what purpose(s) did you use it?   _____ Work
_____ School   _____ Shopping   _____ Recreation   _____ Errands
_____ Medical   Other: _____

Do you know the bus routes or do you have a printed map and schedule?   _____ No   _____

Here are some reasons why people don't ride the bus. If you don't ride the bus or you ride the bus less than once
a month, please tell us the reason.
_____ Fares to high
_____ Condition of the buses
_____ Doesn't run often enough
_____ Doesn't go to the right places
_____ Never think to use it
_____ Don't live on or near bus line
_____ Can't go when I want
_____ Driver attitude

How often does someone in your household call a taxi?   _____ Several times a week

| _____ Once a week | _____ 2-3 Times a week | _____ Once a month |
| _____ A few times a year | _____ Yearly or less | _____ Never |

FUTURE PRIORITIES

Please indicate the issues that you find important.

Provide housing for elderly _____
Provide family housing _____
Upgrade existing housing _____
Provide home weatherization program _____
Upgrade streets in older parts of City _____
Continue improvements in downtown _____
Build a swimming pool near downtown _____
Upgrade bus service _____
Expand park facilities _____
Build bike/jogging trails _____

Other (Please Specify) _____
Comments _____

Should public land be set aside for people who want to garden?   _____ No   _____ Yes

PERSONAL INFORMATION

How long have you lived in Auburn?

_____ Less than 2 years	_____ 11-20 years
_____ 2-5 years	_____ 21 or more years
_____ 6-10 years	_____ N/A

Have you always lived in Auburn?

_____ No
_____ Yes
_____ N/A

How many people including yourself live at this address?

Age - Under 5	_____ Male	_____ Female	Age 18-22	_____ Male	_____
Age 5-12	_____ Male	_____ Female	Age 23-64	_____ Male	_____
Age 13-17	_____ Male	_____ Female	Age 65+	_____ Male	_____

Are you self-employed or employed for salary or wages?

_____ No
_____ Yes
_____ N/A

If no, are there any barriers to employment?

_____ Child care
_____ Transportation
_____ Language skills
_____ Skills on how to apply for a job
_____ Skill to write a resume
_____ Knowledge of what employers want
_____ Computer skills
_____ Disability
_____ Other (please specify) _____

How many years of schooling have you had?

_____ 6 years or less	_____ Some College	_____ N/A
_____ 7-11 years	_____ College Graduate	
_____ High School Graduate	_____ Post Graduate	

If you added together the incomes of everyone in the household, about where would the total fall?

_____ Under $10,000	_____ $30,000 - 40,000
_____ $10,000 - 20,000	_____ $40,000 - 50,000
_____ $20,000 - 30,000	_____ Over $50,000

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Complete Data Set

Question 1:

What neighborhood do you live in?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Downtown	22.1%	17
New Auburn	45.5%	35
Union Street	32.5%	25
answered question		**77**
skipped question		**0**

Question 2:

How well do people in this area know each other?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Not at all	11.7%	9
A little bit	46.8%	36
Know each other well	41.6%	32
answered question		**77**
skipped question		**0**

Question 3:

Do people in your area chat or visit?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Never	13.0%	10
Sometimes	57.1%	44
Often	29.9%	23
answered question		**77**
skipped question		**0**

Question 4:

Would you like to see changes in your area?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
No	13.7%	10
Yes	86.3%	63
answered question		**73**
skipped question		**4**

Question 5:

Would you volunteer your time to help build a neighborhood association?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
No	34.8%	24
Yes	65.2%	45
answered question		**69**
skipped question		**8**

Question 6:

If changes were to happen, what changes would you like to see?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Better housing	62.7%	47
More people	8.0%	6
Fewer people	16.0%	12
More Parks	38.7%	29
More/better sidewalks	57.3%	43
Less Traffic	14.7%	11
More stores or shops	32.0%	24
Street Lights	33.3%	25
Other:		19
answered question		**75**
skipped question		**2**

Question 7:

Rate your neighborhood on each of the following characteristics.				
Answer Options	**Poor**	**Fair**	**Excellent**	**Response Count**
As a place to live	9	45	22	76
As a place to work	23	33	15	71
As a place to shop	26	31	16	73
As a place for entertainment	35	27	9	71
As a place recreation	22	37	14	73
As a place people like to visit	25	33	15	73
As a place to raise children	20	34	21	75
Do you have any comments about these?				8
answered question				**76**
skipped question				**1**

Question 8:

Which two attractive features of Auburn neighborhoods do you find most important?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Yards	42.0%	29
River areas	29.0%	20
Trees along streets	47.8%	33
QualityWell-kept houses	60.9%	42
Shopping	17.4%	12
answered question		**69**
skipped question		**8**

Question 9:

Which two unattractive features do you find detract the most from your neighborhood?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Run down houses	79.7%	55
Deserted buildings	65.2%	45
Vacant Lots	29.0%	20
Commercial properties	2.9%	2
Litter	69.6%	48
Signs	4.3%	3
Other		6
answered question		**69**
skipped question		**8**

Question 10:

What should be done about the need for low income housing? Check all that apply.		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Let private landlords provide for needs without help	35.1%	20
Provide subsidies for apartments to approved landlords	64.9%	37
Have private developers build and run large scale subsidized housing	42.1%	24
Have public Housing Authority build and run subsidized housing	49.1%	28
answered question		**57**
skipped question		**20**

Question 11:

At present time, do you own or rent?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Own	32.9%	24
Rent	57.5%	42
Other	9.6%	7
answered question		**73**
skipped question		**4**

Question 12:

How many years have you lived in this place?	
Answer Options	**Response Count**
	69
answered question	**69**
skipped question	**8**

Question 13:

When you move around the city do you mostly...		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Take private car/truck	56.8%	42
Walk	51.4%	38
Take the bus	8.1%	6
Take a taxi	5.4%	4
Ride a bicycle, moped, motorcycle	9.5%	7
Other	5.4%	4
answered question		**74**
skipped question		**3**

Question 14:

Do any of the following keep you from walking?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Lack of sidewalks	43.6%	24
Snow on sidewalks	63.6%	35
Distance too great	29.1%	16
Heavy automobile traffic at intersections	29.1%	16
answered question		**55**
skipped question		**22**

Question 15:

Are there any streets/intersections in your neighborhood which should be made safer or more convenient for people who are walking such as yourself or school-age children. Please be specific.	
Answer Options	**Response Count**
	37
answered question	**37**
skipped question	**40**

Question 16:

Have you used the city bus in the last year?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
No	68.9%	51
One or more times a week	9.5%	7
Two or three times a month	2.7%	2
Once a month	1.4%	1
A few times during the year	17.6%	13
answered question		**74**
skipped question		**3**

Question 17:

If you used the bus at least once a week for what purposes did you use it?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Work	21.1%	4
School	31.6%	6
Shopping	42.1%	8
Recreation	15.8%	3
Errands	15.8%	3
Medical	36.8%	7
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0
answered question		**19**
skipped question		**58**

Question 18:

Do you know the bus routes or do you have a printed map or schedule?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
No	75.0%	45
Yes	25.0%	15
answered question		**60**
skipped question		**17**

Question 19:

Here are some reasons why people don't ride the bus. If you don't or you ride the bus less than once a month, please tell us the reason.		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Fare too high	14.3%	8
Condition of bus	8.9%	5
Doesn't run often enough	21.4%	12
Doesn't go to the right places	16.1%	9
Never think to use it	60.7%	34
Don't live on or near the bus line	10.7%	6
Can't go when I want	12.5%	7
Driver attitude	7.1%	4
answered question		**56**
skipped question		**21**

Question 20:

How often does someone in your household call a taxi?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Once a Week	7.4%	5
Two to three times a week	5.9%	4
Several times a week	2.9%	2
Once a month	5.9%	4
A few times a year	16.2%	11
Yearly or less	4.4%	3
Never	57.4%	39
answered question		**68**
skipped question		**9**

Question 21:

Please indicate the issues that you find important.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Provide housing for elderly	63.9%	46
Provide family housing	56.9%	41
Upgrade existing housing	61.1%	44
Provide home weatherization program	50.0%	36
Upgrade streets in older part of city	65.3%	47
Continue improvements in downtown	47.2%	34
Build a swimming pool near downtown	27.8%	20
Upgrade bus service	37.5%	27
Expand park facilities	58.3%	42
Build bike/jogging trails	59.7%	43
Other (please specify)	11.1%	8
answered question		**72**
skipped question		**5**

Question 22:

Should public land be set aside for people who want to garden?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
No	14.9%	10
Yes	85.1%	57
answered question		**67**
skipped question		**10**

Question 23:

How long have you lived in Auburn?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 2 years	13.7%	10
2-5 years	20.5%	15
6-10 years	5.5%	4
11-20 years	20.5%	15
21 or more years	39.7%	29
n/a	0.0%	0
answered question		**73**
skipped question		**4**

Question 24:

Have you always lived in Auburn?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
No	69.0%	49
Yes	29.6%	21
N/a	1.4%	1
answered question		**71**
skipped question		**6**

Question 25:

How many people, including yourself, live at this address?								
Number of Family Members								
Answer Options	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7+**	**Response Count**
Age Under 5	12	4	0	0	0	0	0	16
Age 5-12	7	4	0	0	0	0	0	11
Age 13-17	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
Age 18-22	12	1	0	0	0	0	0	13
Age 23-64	35	4	0	0	0	1	0	40
Age 65+	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Age Under 5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Age 5-12	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Age 13-17	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Age 18-22	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Age 23-64	20	2	0	0	0	0	0	22
Age 65+	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	8

Gender			
Answer Options	**Male**	**Female**	**Response Count**
Age Under 5	9	7	16

Age 5-12	7	4	11
Age 13-17	3	3	6
Age 18-22	9	4	13
Age 23-64	36	6	42
Age 65+	10	1	11
Age Under 5	0	1	1
Age 5-12	0	2	2
Age 13-17	0	1	1
Age 18-22	1	5	6
Age 23-64	6	19	25
Age 65+	2	6	8

Question 26:

Are you self-employed or employed for salary or wages?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Yes	50.7%	36
No	35.2%	25
n/a	14.1%	10
answered question		**71**
skipped question		**6**

Question 27:

If no, are there any barriers to employment?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
childcare	41.9%	13
transportation	16.1%	5
language skills	6.5%	2
skills on how to apply for a job	16.1%	5
skills to write a resume	6.5%	2
knowledge of what employers want	19.4%	6
computer skills	9.7%	3
disability	45.2%	14
Other (please specify)	22.6%	7
answered question		**31**
skipped question		**46**

Question 28:

How many years of schooling have you had?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
6 years or less	4.1%	3
7-11 years	5.5%	4
high school graduate	43.8%	32
some college	23.3%	17
college graduate	17.8%	13
post-graduate	4.1%	3
n/a	1.4%	1
answered question		**73**
skipped question		**4**

Question 29:

If you added together the incomes of everyone in the household, about where would the total fall?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
under $10,000	15.9%	11
$10,000 - $20,000	23.2%	16
$20,000 - $30,000	17.4%	12
$30,000 - $40,000	10.1%	7
$40,000 - $50,000	11.6%	8
over $50,000	21.7%	15
answered question		**69**
skipped question		**8**