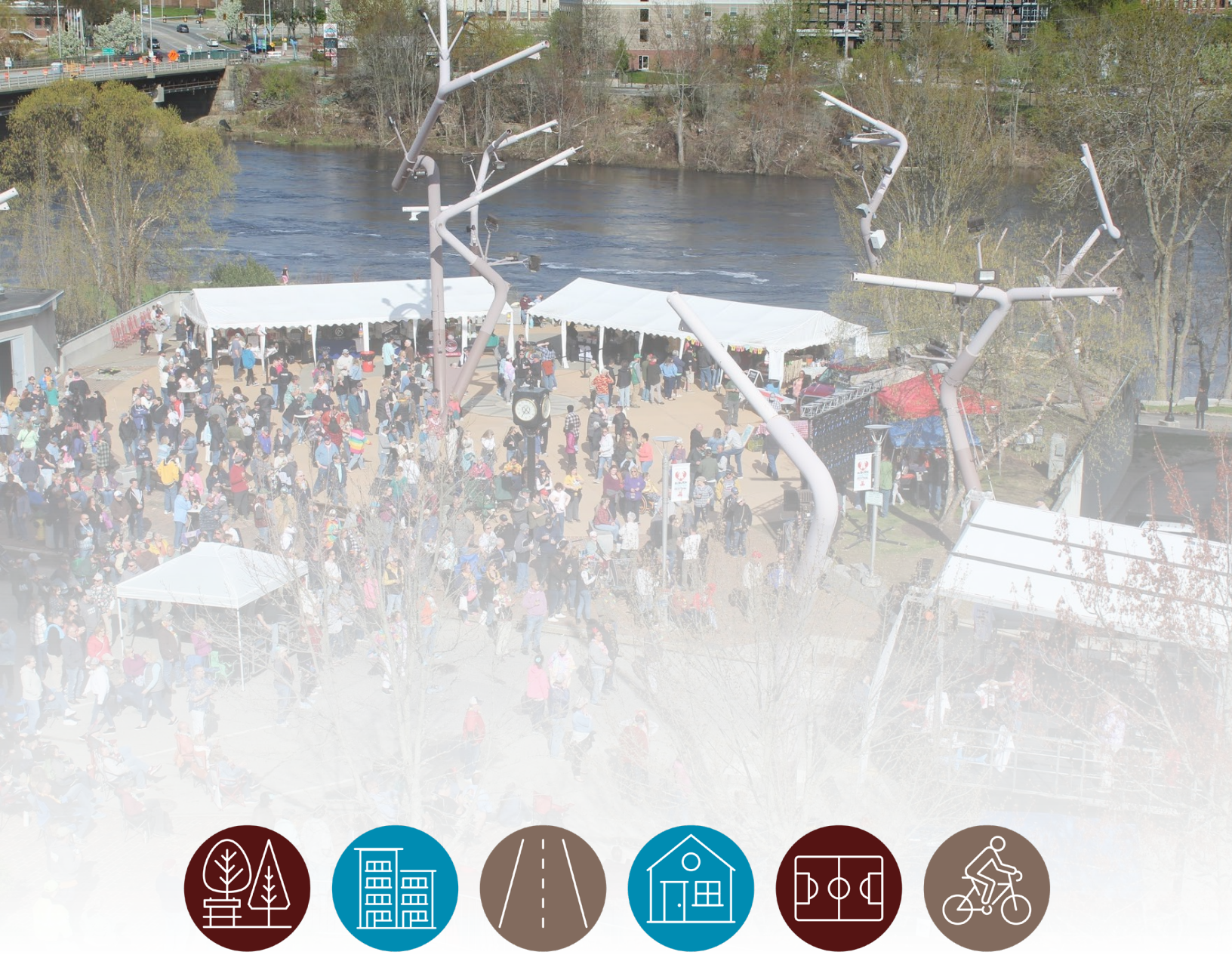

AUBURN

2026 Comprehensive Plan

MOVING AUBURN FORWARD: **TOGETHER**.

City of Auburn, ME

Engagement Summary

September 29, 2025

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Introduction

As part of the City of Auburn's (City) Comprehensive Plan Update, City staff, Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) members, and the City's consulting partner (BerryDunn) conducted a public engagement effort to obtain input from Auburn's residents, workers, and visitors. The goal of this effort was to identify community values and priorities, provide information to inform the creation of the City's vision statement, and guide plan development and policy recommendations. The engagement strategy included the following events and activities:

- A comprehensive survey open to all community members
- A youth survey of local middle and high school students
- A focus group event with 11 different focus areas
- Tables at community events, including National Night Out, the PAL Center Backpack Drive, and the Lewiston Farmers Market
- Three open house events aimed at the general population
- Listening sessions at the Drop-In Center and focus group with staff
- A youth forum
- Poster and dot engagement at various locations in Auburn, including City Hall, the Drop-In Center, General Assistance Office, and New Beginnings
- Online engagement via a Social Pinpoint website

To help inform the community of the project, there were several methods used to engage participants in the process:

- Mailings were sent out to more than 10,000 households to inform them of the project and community survey.
- Roughly 1,500 organizations, businesses, and individuals were invited to participate in the focus group event.
- Over 1,500 organizations, businesses, and individuals were directly invited to participate in the open house events. Physical posters or social media posts about the events were also shared at City Hall, Senior Community Center, Norway Savings Bank Arena, the Auburn Community Facebook Group, the Taylor Pond Association website and Facebook page, the Lewiston-Auburn Metro Chamber of Commerce Newsletter, the Auburn Public Library, Edward Little High School, and on City of Auburn social media accounts.
- City staff also tabled at local community events, provided engagement activities at local organizations, and held listening sessions. Staff tabled at the Lewiston-Auburn Farmers Market,

National Night Out, and PAL Center Backpack Drive. Posters with dot activities were placed at City Hall, Drop-In Center, and New Beginnings. A listening session was conducted at the Drop-In Center.

The table below summarizes outreach totals and engagement event totals from March through August 18, 2025.

Table 1.1: Total Outreach and Engagement Inputs March 2025 – August 2025.

Event	Total Engagements or Participants
Outreach	
Mailings	~11,000
Focus Group Invites	~1,500
Open House Invites	~1,500
Social Pinpoint Website Visitors	1,087
Engagements and Inputs	
Social Pinpoint Email Sign Ups	46
Social Pinpoint Ideas Wall and Forum Posts	85
Social Pinpoint Map Posts	105
Social Pinpoint Budgeting Tools	16
Social Pinpoint Form Responses	50
Community Survey Responses	541
Middle School Survey Responses	285
High School Survey Responses	143
Focus Group Attendees	77
Natural Environment Open House Attendees	30
People and City Services Open House Attendees	15
Built Environment Open House Attendees	9
Photo Contest	3
Drop-In Center Listening Session	11
Farmers Market Interactions	22
National Night Out Interactions	125
Youth Forum Interactions	15
PAL Center Backpack Drive Interactions	185
Total Invites and Mailings:	**15,087**
Total Engagements or Inputs:	**1,763**

Source: BerryDunn and City of Auburn outreach tracking

This high-level summary details each engagement as well as its results, aimed at summarizing feedback received from community members. Across all engagements, several themes emerged. Below, these themes are categorized by subject area.

General Vision

- Auburn should be a safe, exciting, and friendly place to live, and an appealing destination for visitors.
- Protecting natural resources, parks, and rural areas is a priority.
- Auburn should be affordable for everyone, with housing, food, and transit options that are accessible to households of all income levels.
- Auburn should be a place for young people to thrive, grow, and stay. This might include improving recreational opportunities for those ages 5-25, keeping educational quality high, and investing in future infrastructure, services, and housing.

Housing and Affordability

- Cost of living, tax burden, and overall affordability are top priorities across engagement activities.
- Auburn needs housing at a variety of price points, including housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income households.
- A variety of housing types are needed to meet the needs of residents moving forward.
- Housing shortages are seen as a barrier to livability and economic development.
- New development should be located where buildings and infrastructure exist to provide new housing while protecting natural resources and agricultural land.
- Improvements should be made to reduce the number of vacant or abandoned buildings and facade improvements are needed for abandoned or aging buildings throughout Auburn.

Transportation, Walkability, and Connectivity

- Infrastructure is needed to improve and expand walkability and bikeability.
- Public transit is underdeveloped and critical for improving equity in access to jobs, education, and services (especially to areas outside of Lewiston-Auburn).
- Sidewalks, traffic calming, and bike lanes are priorities for improving street safety.

Parks, Recreation, and Natural Assets

- Parks, trails, lakes, and outdoor recreation access are valuable assets, and access to recreation amenities should be expanded.

- The City's natural beauty and access to open space should be preserved as Auburn grows.
- Climate change and environmental sustainability are rising concerns, with support for conservation, water quality improvements, and forests and agricultural land conservation.
- Lake Auburn is an asset that should be protected.

Economic Development and Local Business Support

- Auburn should become a destination, with more shopping, dining, and entertainment, rather than a pass-through community.
- Downtown should be revitalized to attract more visitors.
- Auburn's downtown lacks foot traffic and retail spending power, tied to affordability issues.
- Workforce challenges are common, including staffing shortages, especially for food service, construction, and trade industries.

Services

- There is a need for better support for unhoused individuals, alongside accessible mental healthcare, addiction recovery.
- There is a need for better coordination among providers and with the City.
- Youth services and activities are lacking.

Education and Youth Opportunity

- Education quality, affordability, and access are the key to Auburn's future.
- Auburn needs more adult education and job training opportunities, particularly trade programs.
- There is a need for more teen-focused entertainment and gathering spaces, particularly those in walking distance from schools and denser residential areas.

Infrastructure and City Services

- Roads and infrastructure maintenance are a core concern.
- The City should focus on traffic flow, safety, litter control, pothole management, and responsive services.
- Visual quality, especially of entry corridors like Washington Street, is important to Auburn's economic future.

Community Identity

- Auburn's sense of community, friendliness, and small-town feel are valued by residents.

- Events, festivals, and civic spaces are ways to strengthen community ties and support local businesses.
- The community is undecided on what Auburn's identity is today but would like to promote unifying features and a greater sense of identity for the City in the future.

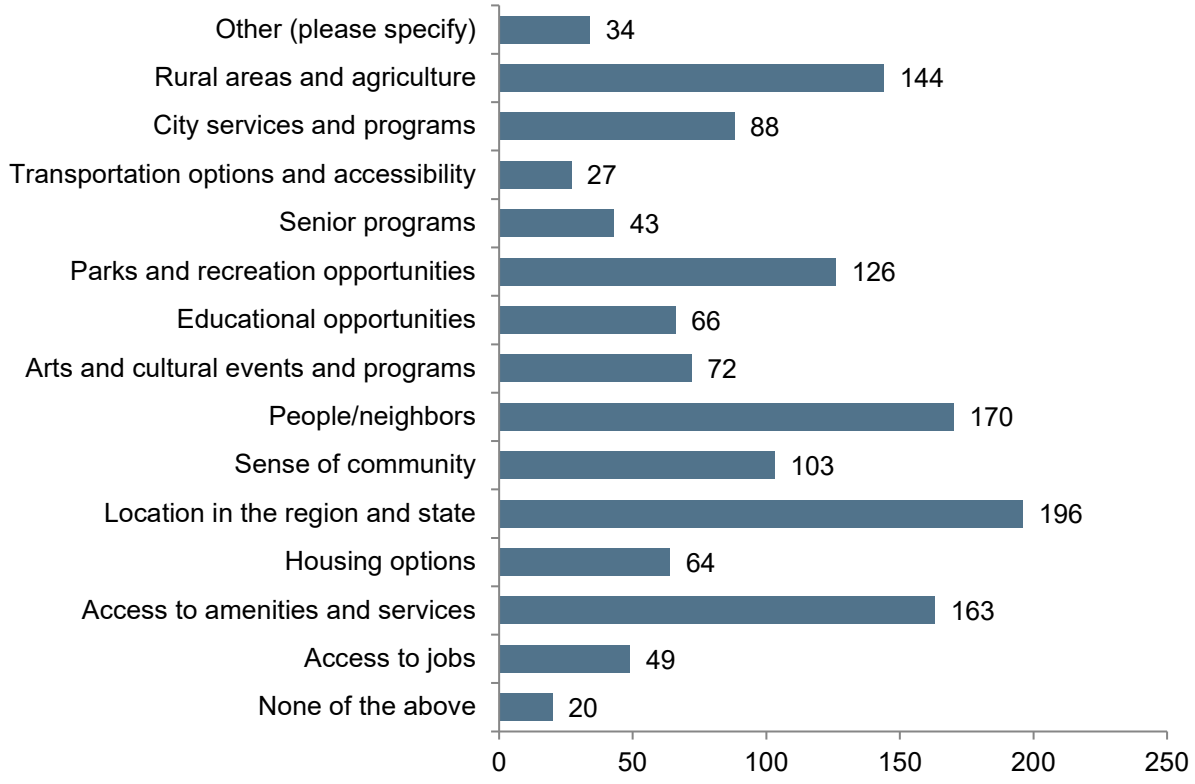
Community Surveys

General Community Survey

The City distributed a community survey via postcards mailed to residents, flyers posted at several locations, and social media and email outreach. The survey generated 541 responses and covered a variety of topics related to the Comprehensive Plan.

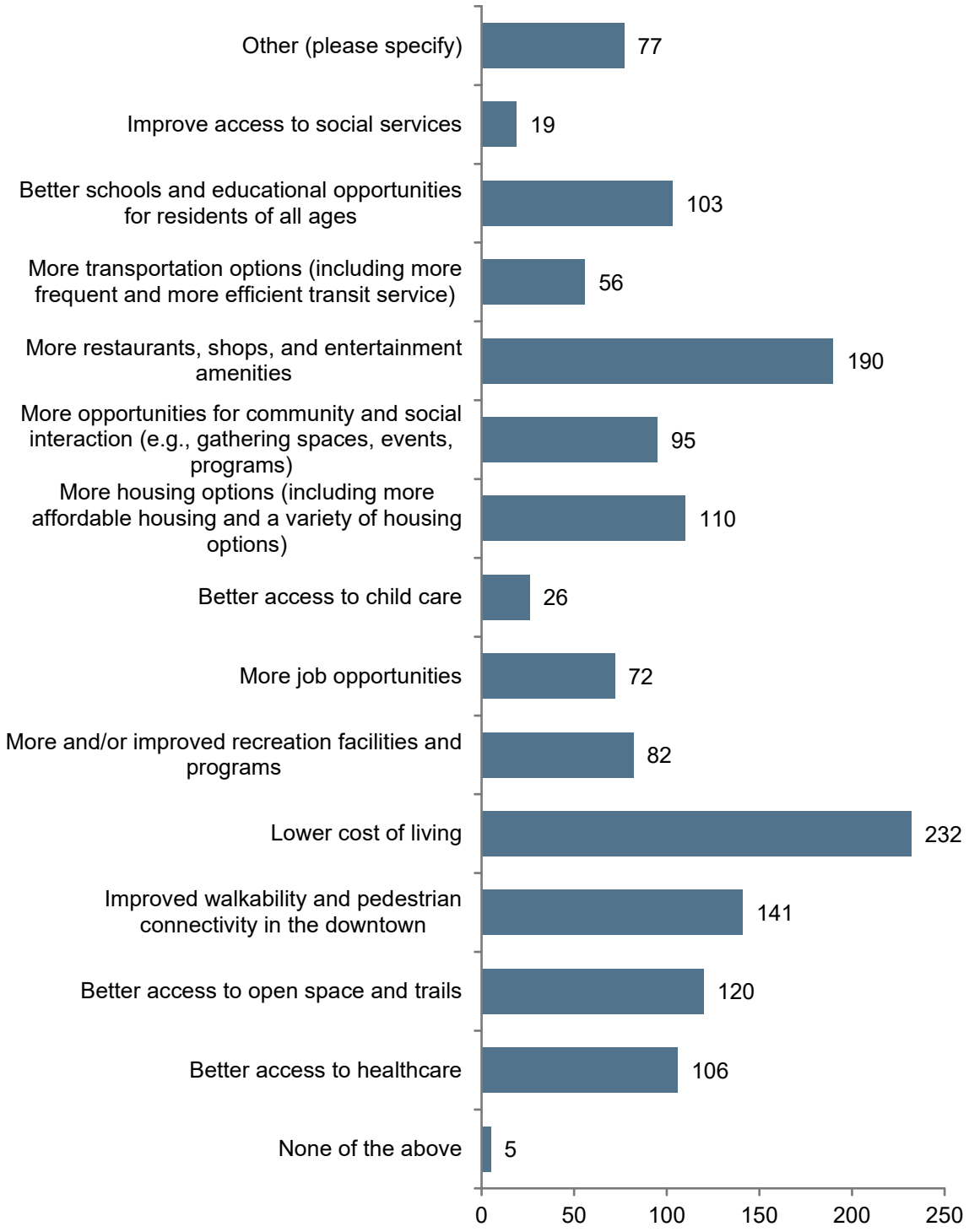
When asked what they value most about Auburn, respondents highlighted the City's location within the region and state, its strong sense of community, and the friendliness of neighbors. Parks and recreational opportunities, along with access to amenities and services, were also frequently mentioned as important aspects of life in Auburn.

Figure 1.1: What do you value most about Auburn?



Source: Community survey

Figure 1.2: Which changes would most improve your quality of life?



Source: Community survey

Looking ahead to the next decade, many respondents indicated a desire for more walkable and bikeable infrastructure, as well as expanded public transportation options both within Auburn and to surrounding areas. Housing needs are expected to shift, with some residents seeking larger homes to accommodate family changes, while others anticipate downsizing or transitioning to more affordable or accessible housing.

Survey participants also shared their priorities for City spending. High-priority areas included road and infrastructure maintenance, public safety services, housing affordability, and recreational programs. Enhancing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure was also seen as a valuable investment.

Overall, most respondents rated their quality of life in Auburn positively. Positive feedback centered on the City's location, community spirit, available amenities, and access to nature and education. However, concerns were raised about the tax burden, road conditions, safety, affordability, and support for unhoused individuals.

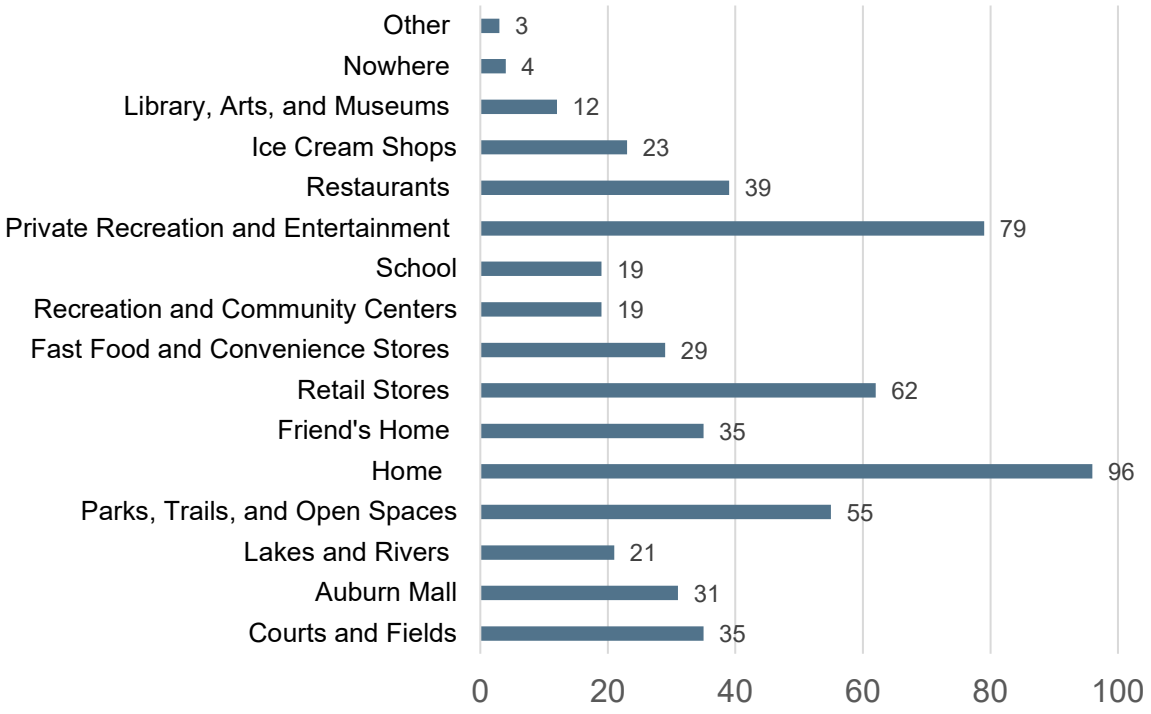
When envisioning Auburn's future, residents emphasized the importance of increasing affordability, maintaining infrastructure, expanding parks and recreation, and supporting local businesses. Improving education, walkability, and environmental sustainability were also common themes. The overarching vision is to make Auburn more affordable, accessible, and environmentally conscious, while preserving its natural beauty and fostering a vibrant, inclusive community.

School Surveys

The City conducted two surveys among students in Auburn: one for middle school students, and one for high school students. A total of 428 students participated in the survey, with 285 from the middle school and 143 from the high school.

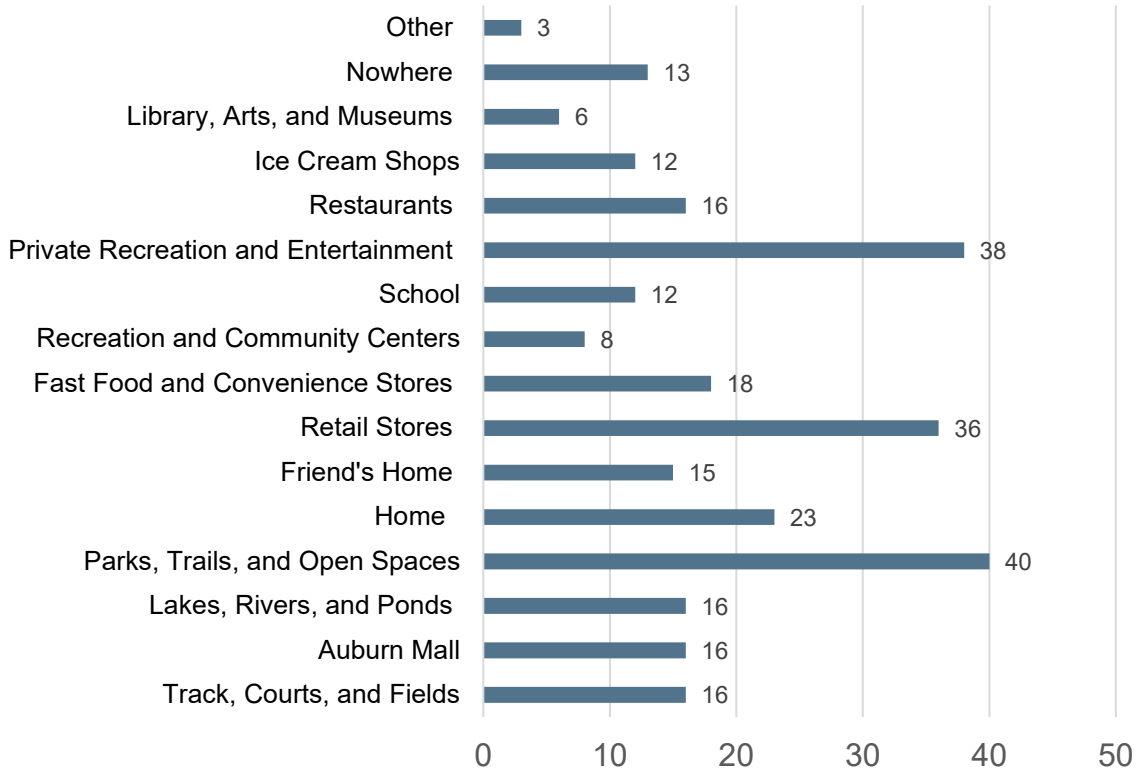
Students' favorite places in Auburn include parks, trails, lakes, and recreational centers. Middle schoolers especially enjoy fast food options, retail stores, and entertainment venues like Lost Valley and trampoline parks. High schoolers also favor parks and the Auburn Mall but show slightly less interest in private entertainment venues. When asked how they get around the City, middle schoolers primarily rely on rides from adults or walking, while high schoolers also include driving themselves and using public transportation.

Figure 1.3: Middle Schoolers' Favorite Places in Auburn



Source: Survey distributed to Auburn middle school students

Figure 1.4: High School Students' Favorite Places in Auburn

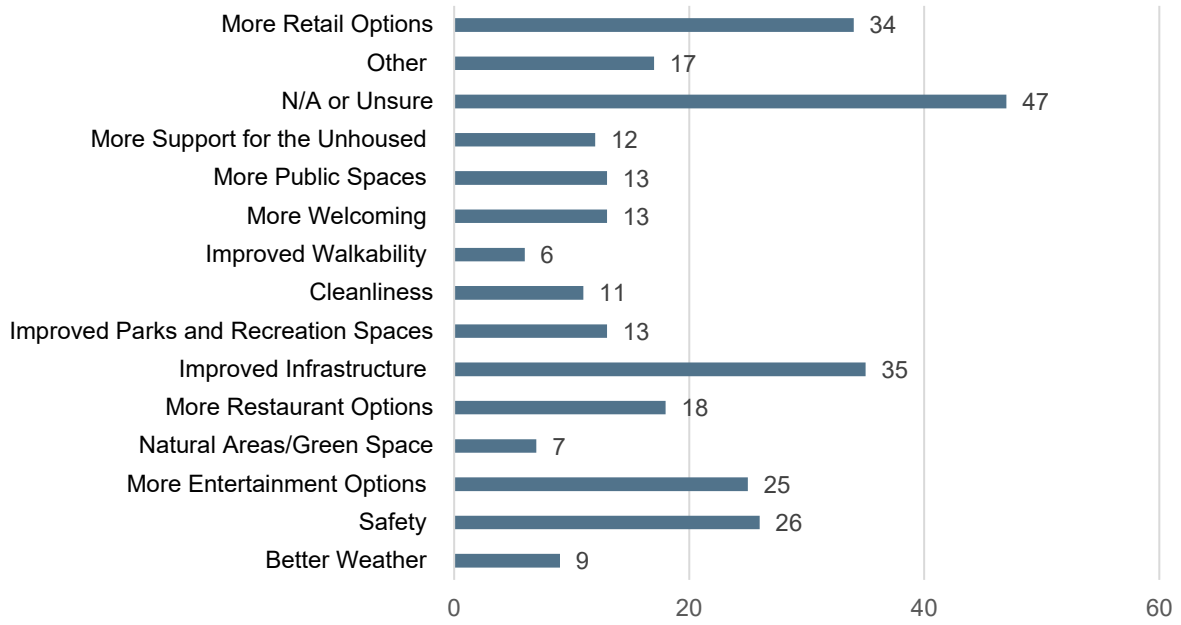


Source: Survey distributed to Auburn high school students

When asked what they would tell a newcomer their age about Auburn, responses varied. Middle schoolers often described the City as "nice," "walkable," and "friendly," though some noted it can be "boring" or "cold." High schoolers echoed similar sentiments, with a mix of appreciation for the community and critiques about limited entertainment and retail options.

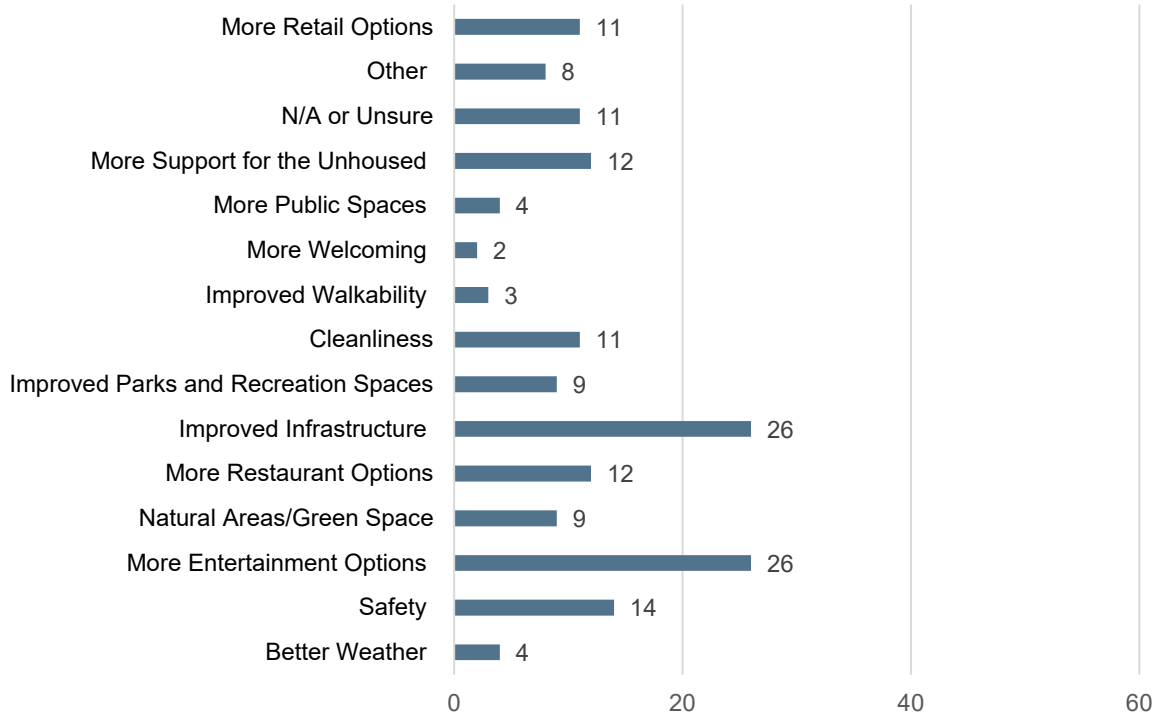
Students were also asked what they would change about Auburn. Both groups emphasized the need for more entertainment, better infrastructure, and improved parks and recreation. High school students were particularly vocal about the need for more public spaces and support for the unhoused. Infrastructure concerns included roads, traffic, and public transit.

Figure 1.5: What Middle School Students Would Like to Change in Auburn



Source: Community survey distributed to Auburn middle school students

Figure 1.6: What High School Students Would Like to Change in Auburn



Source: Community survey distributed to Auburn middle school students

A key question asked high schoolers whether they would choose to stay in Auburn as adults. The majority said “no” or “maybe,” citing reasons such as boredom, a desire for better job opportunities, and Auburn’s cold weather. Those who wanted to stay appreciated the community and proximity to family.

Open House and Community Events

The City of Auburn and the CPC held a series of open house events to discuss priorities for the Comprehensive Plan with community members. The events included a natural environment open house, a people and City services open house, and a built environment open house. All three events were held in person, with the natural environment event held at Lake Grove Park in Auburn, the people and City services held at Edward Little High School, and the built environment event held at the Auburn Senior Center.

Participants were given a series of interactive ways to express their opinions, concerns, and hopes for Auburn’s future, and were also offered the opportunity to provide feedback on general questions about challenges and priorities for Auburn in conversations with City staff and CPC members.

Each activity conducted at open house events was recreated on Social Pinpoint to allow those who were unable to attend an opportunity to provide feedback on the same questions and topics.

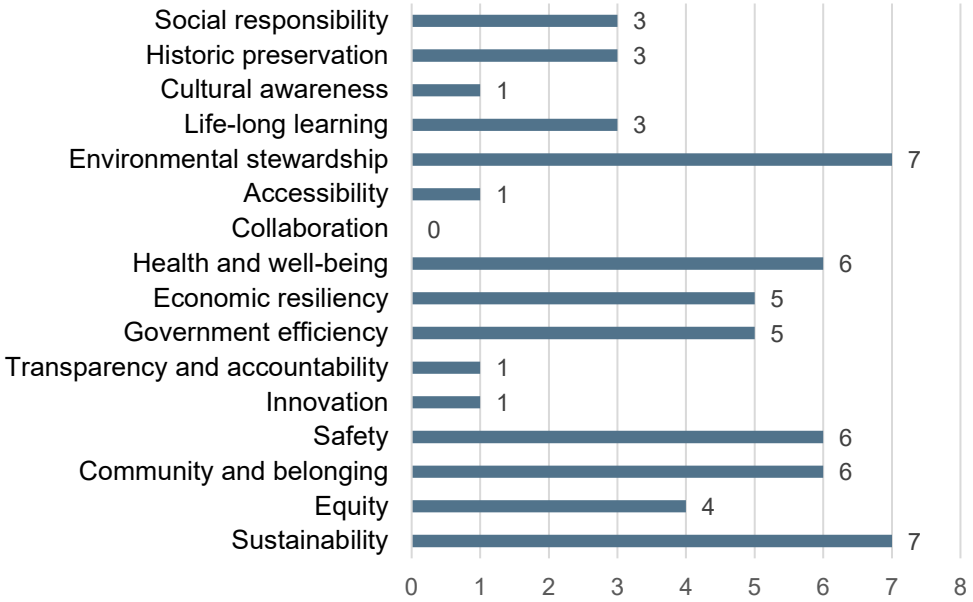
City staff also attended several community events, including the National Night Out, the PAL Center Backpack Drive, and the Lewiston Farmers Market. Additional engagement was conducted at the Drop-In Center and at a youth forum, and the PAL Center. Dot-voting activities were also displayed at City Hall, General Assistance Office, New Beginnings, and the Drop-In Center.

Between the open house events, community events, dot-voting activities, and Social Pinpoint, similar activities and questions were used. These activities and responses were aggregated and compiled into four categories: general visioning, the built environment, the natural environment, and people and City services. Information gathered from all community and open house events and Social Pinpoint are summarized below.

General Visioning

At the open houses and community events, as well as online, a set of questions were asked to help inform the creation of the vision statement. Results from all events and online activities are compiled below.

Figure 1.7: What Values Should Guide our Comprehensive Plan?



Source: Community dot-voting activities conducted at each open house event, Social Pinpoint

How would you describe Auburn's identity today? (12 responses)

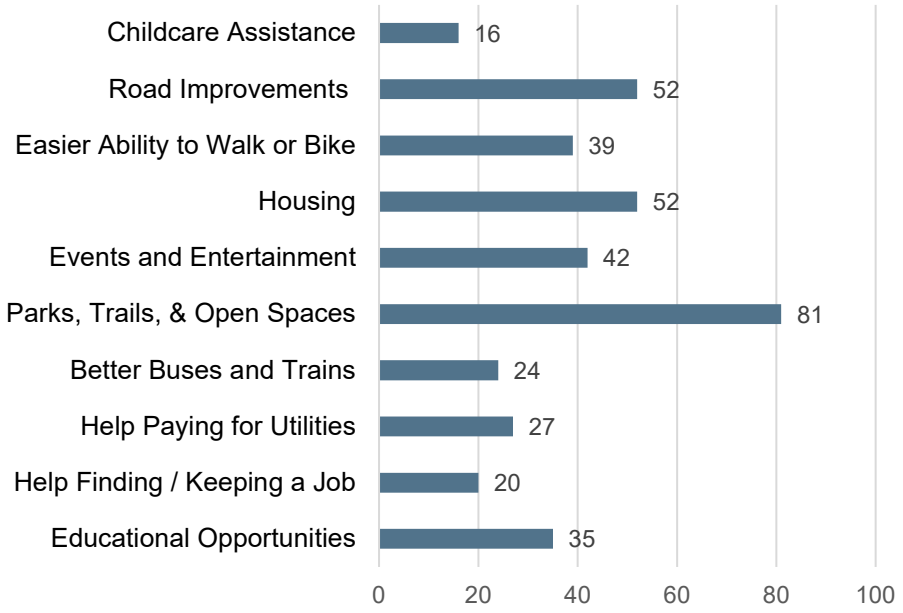
- Residential or neighborhood oriented (4 responses)
- Rural or small-town (3 responses)
- Retail (3 responses)
- Friendly (2 responses)
- In transition (3 responses)
- Other: diverse, accepting, hardworking, authentic, and opportunistic

How would you like people to describe Auburn in 10 years? (24 responses)

- Great outdoor access and recreation amenities (6 responses)
- New or exciting businesses – business-friendly (3 responses)
- Affordable or accessible to everyone (2 responses)
- A strong downtown (2 responses)
- Great schools (2 responses)
- A destination (2 responses)

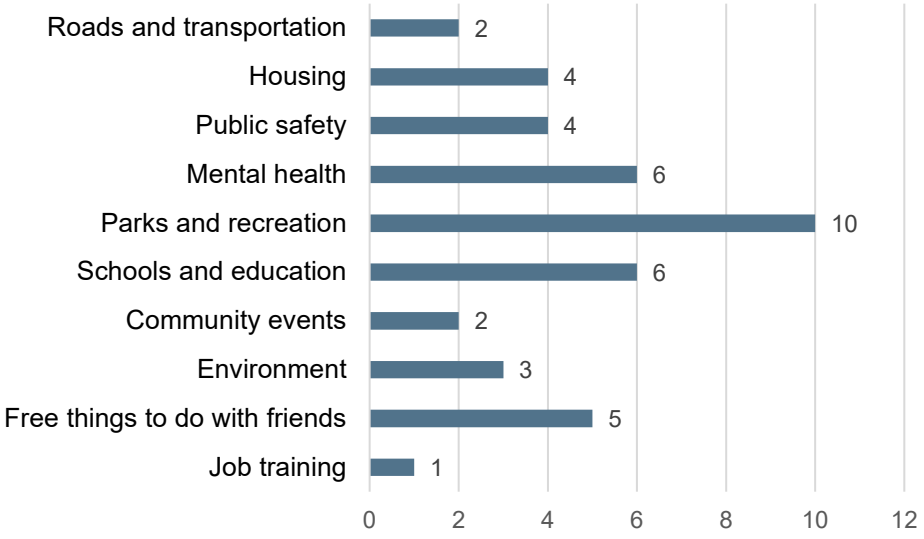
- Other: family friendly, peaceful, vibrant, likeable, reduced homelessness, growth

Figure 1.8: PAL Center Backpack Drive Future priorities



Source: Dot-voting activity at the PAL Backpack Drive

Figure 1.9: Youth Forum Future Priorities



Source: Dot-voting activity at the youth forum

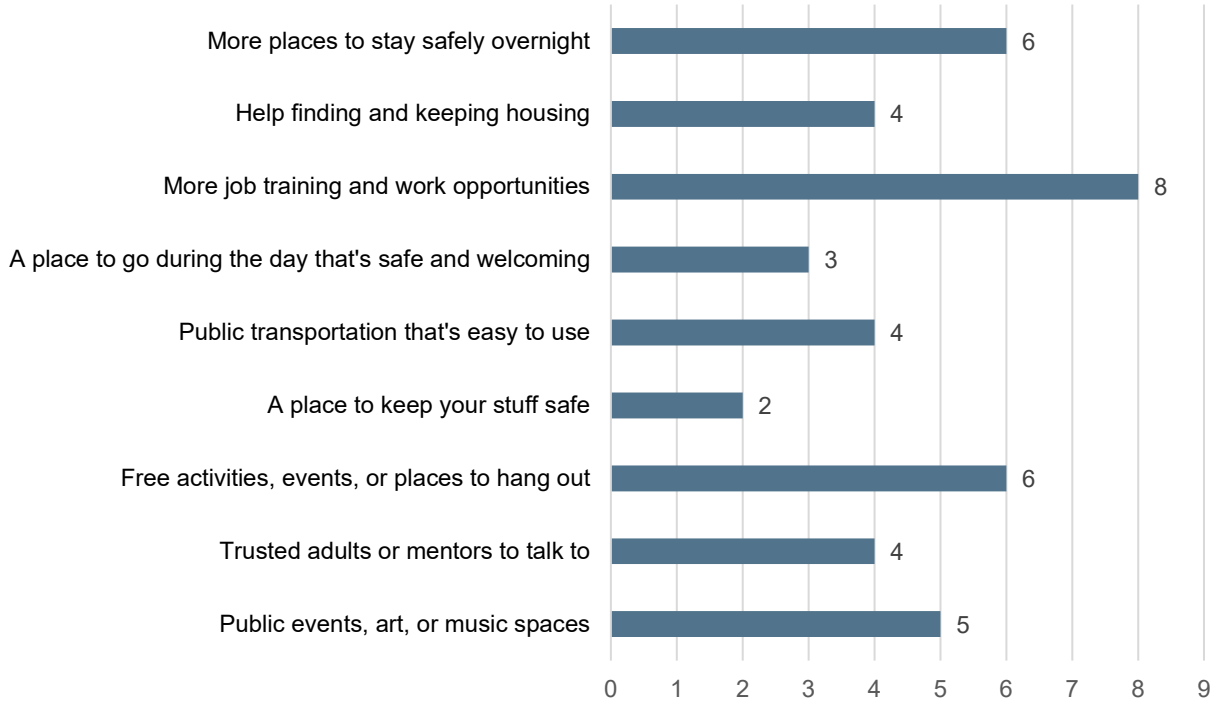
What does the term "affordability" mean to you? (34 responses)

- People can afford basic needs like housing, food, taxes, electricity, clothing, transportation and have extra money left over (8 responses)
- Costs within means of average residents
- Food and housing security
- Better prices for groceries or housing
- Making purchases within one's budget

What are Auburn's strengths? What is missing? (8 responses)

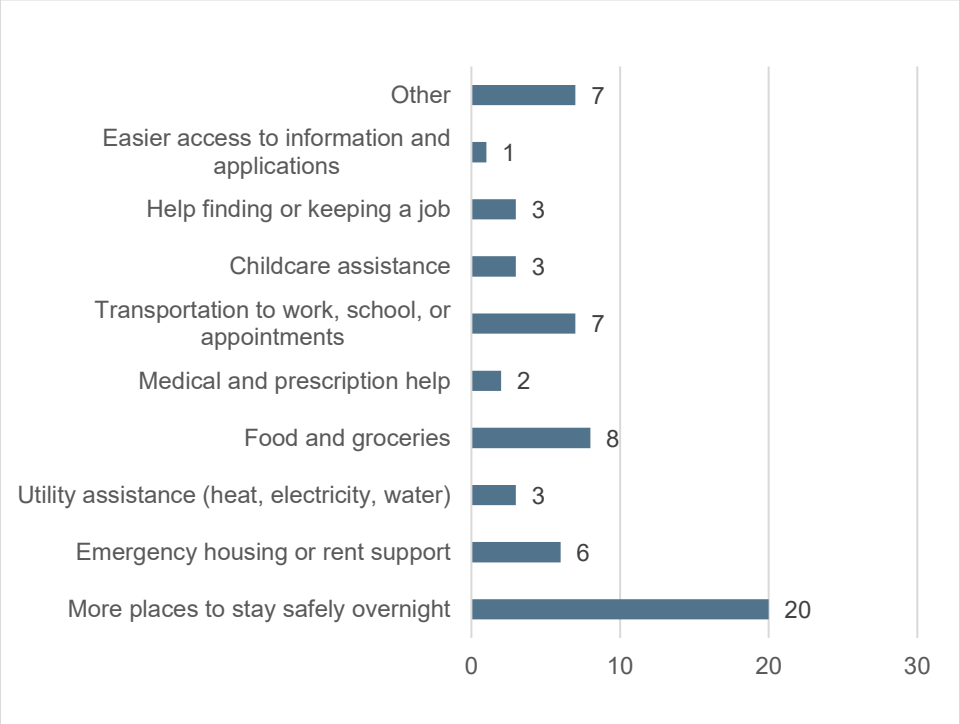
- Strengths
    - Access to stores
    - Access to medical care
    - Location in the State
    - Farmland and watershed protection
    - Transportation
    - Relative affordability
- Missing
    - Activities for people ages 18 – 30
    - Neighborhood design and form
    - Pedestrian-friendly streets
    - High taxes
    - Strong downtown

Figure 1.10: What Would Make the Biggest Difference in Helping You Feel Safe, Supported, and Hopeful for the Future?



Source: Dot-voting activity at New Beginnings

If You Could Change Things in the City to Make it Easier to Get By, What Would it Be?



Source: Dot-voting activity at the Drop-In Center and General Assistance Office

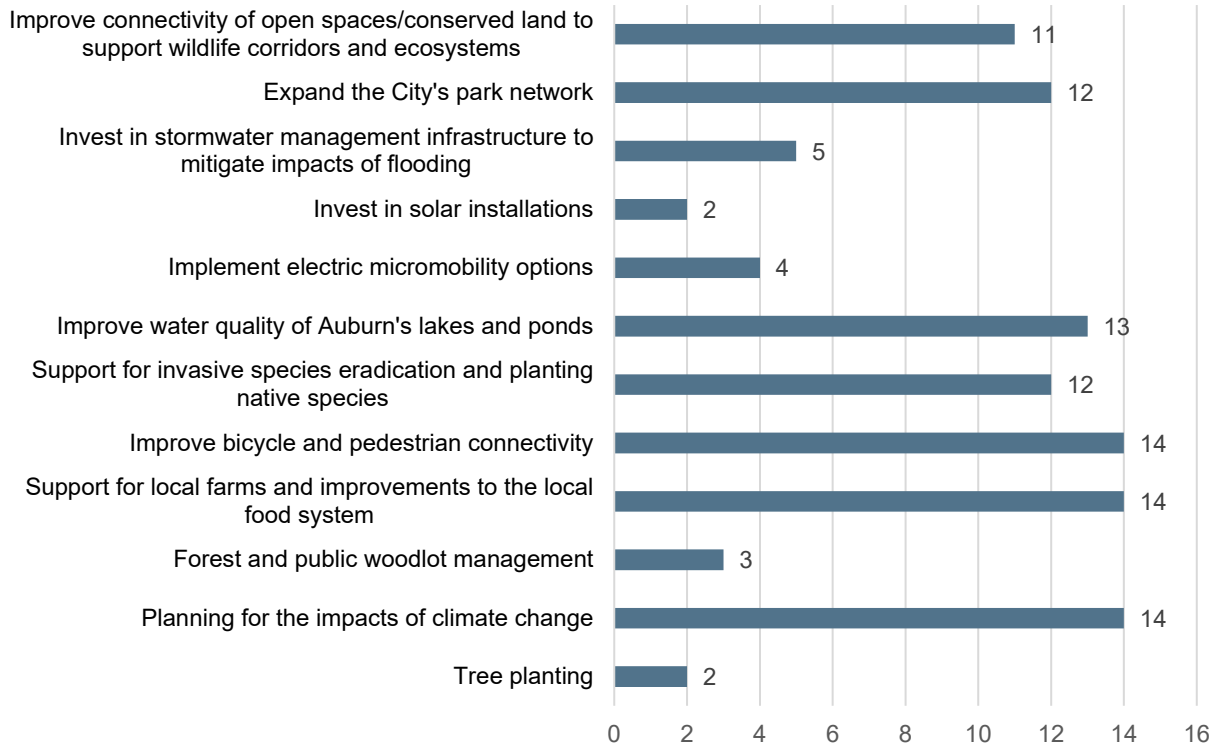
Other:

- More child care facilities and more options for children with autism in the Lewiston/Auburn area
- Help finding and keeping housing and transitional housing
- Expanded Drop-In Center hours
- Ending mass homelessness
- Better food options at the Drop-In Center
- Improved safety

Natural Environment

Water and Natural Resources

Figure 1.11: How Would You Allocate Funds for the Following Environmental Initiatives?



Source: Dot-voting activity at the Natural Resources Open House event, Social Pinpoint

What do you value most about Auburn's natural environment? (14 responses)

- Trails and greenbelt (4 responses)
- Agriculture and Resource Protection Zone (3 responses)
- Trees (2 responses)
- Other: Natural beauty, country roads, wildlife, Lake Auburn

What do you think the City should do to protect water and natural resources (21 resources)

- Protect and improve Lake Auburn water quality through limited development, stormwater management, strong agreements with towns in the watershed, and education resources (8 responses)
- Improved education and involvement in environmental initiatives (3 responses)

- Improve stormwater management (2 responses)
- Other: improve policies, increase recreation access, preserve the agriculture zone with some expanded uses

Agriculture and Forestry

How can we better protect forested areas from development or climate impacts? (23 responses)

- Strong zoning requirements (2 responses)
- Direct growth to areas with existing buildings or housing (5 responses)
- Conserve forests and open space (5 responses)
- Limit new development (2 responses)
- Natural resource protection (e.g., wetland and vernal pool protection) (2 responses)
- Other: Research PFAs, eliminate invasive species, protect the agriculture zone

How can the City better support local food systems? (9 responses)

- Community infrastructure for processing (2 responses)
- Other: Community gardens, incentives for farmers and producers, plant fruit trees, develop a directory of producers and farms, develop an urban food hub

What is the future of the agriculture and resource protection zone? (9 responses)

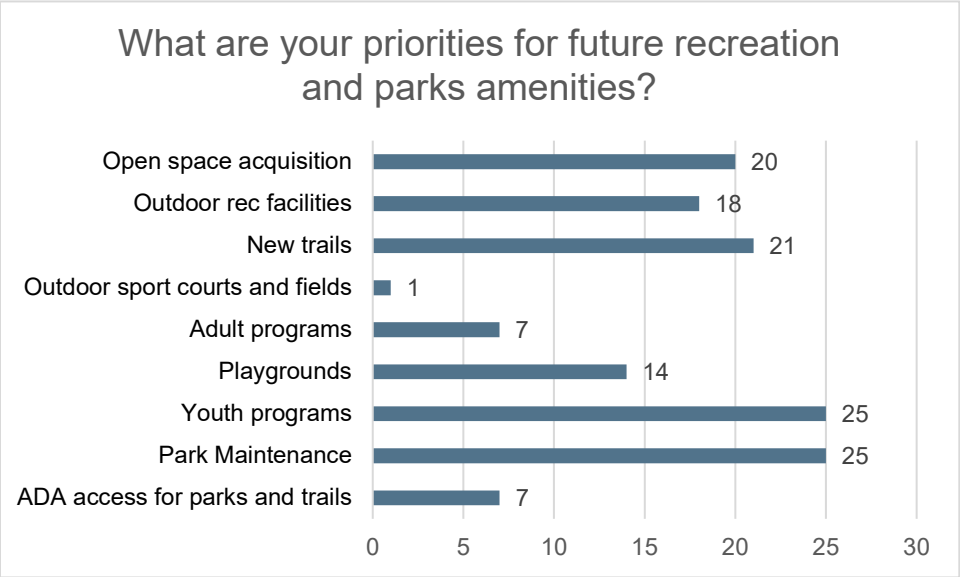
- Diversity uses (3 responses)
- Keep it as it is (6 responses)

What are barriers to accessing local food in your neighborhood? (3 responses)

- Venue for local farmers to sell food, or Auburn farmers market

Recreation

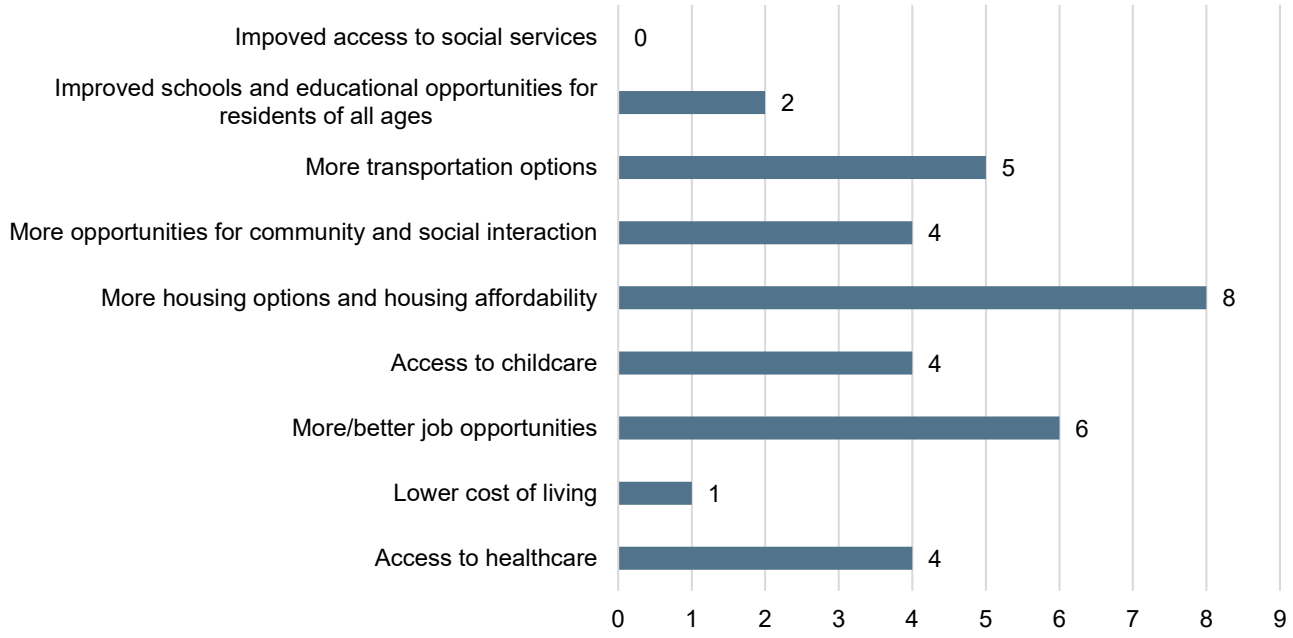
Figure 1.12: What are Your Priorities for Future Recreation and Parks Amenities?



Source: Budgeting activity at the Natural Resources Open House event, Social Pinpoint

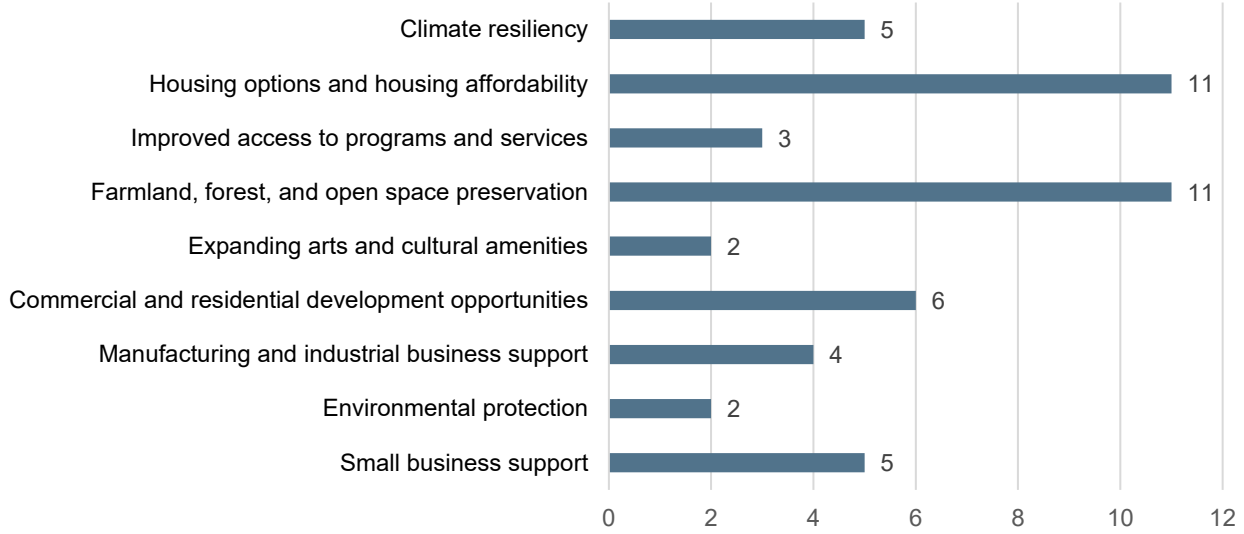
People and City Services

Figure 1.12: Which Services or Amenities Would Improve Your Quality of Life?



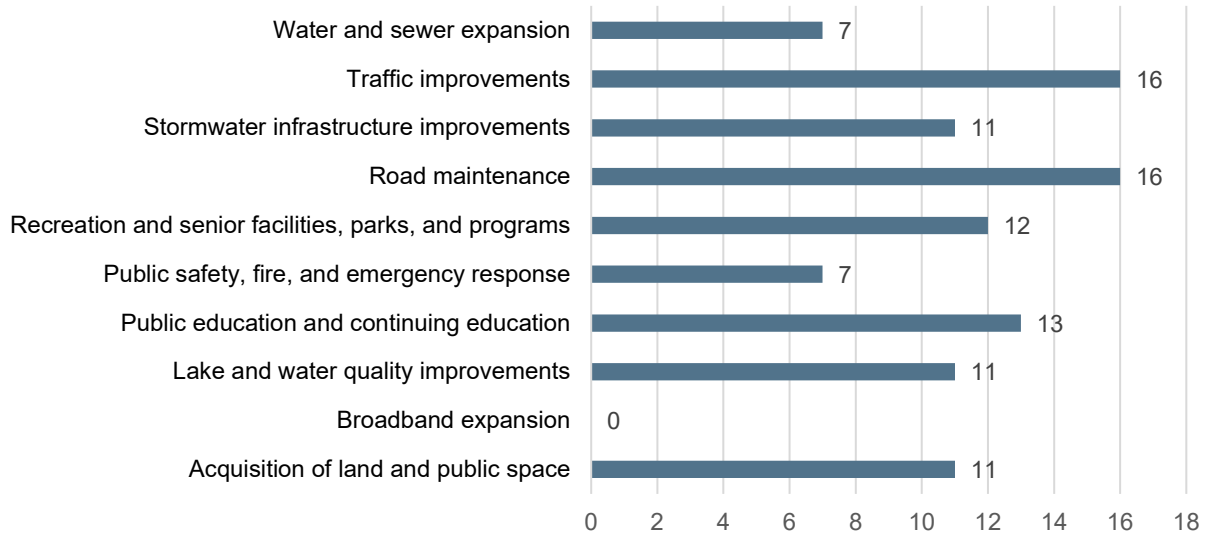
Source: Dot-voting activity at the People and City Services Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Figure 1.13: What Policy Areas Should the City Focus On?



Source: Dot-voting activity at the People and City Services Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Figure 1.14: What Infrastructure Projects Should the City Prioritize?



Source: Budgeting activity at the People and City Services Open House event, Social Pinpoint

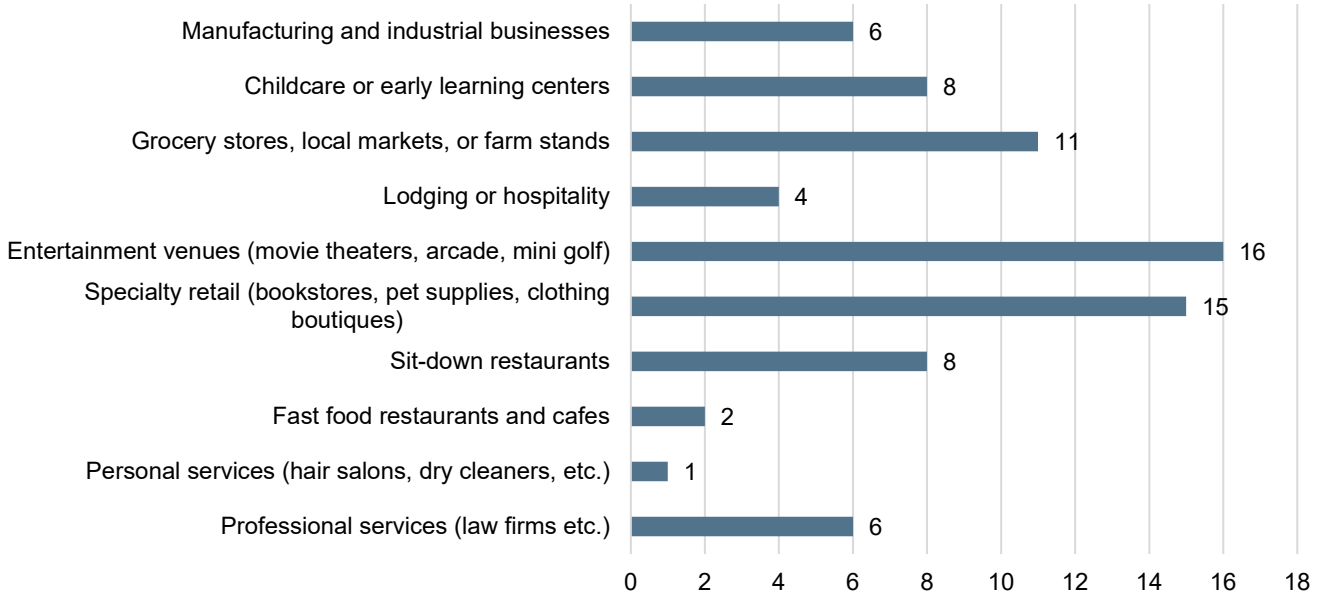
Built Environment

Auburn's Economy

Figure 1.15: What Types of Commercial Development Do You Think Would Benefit Economic Growth in Auburn?

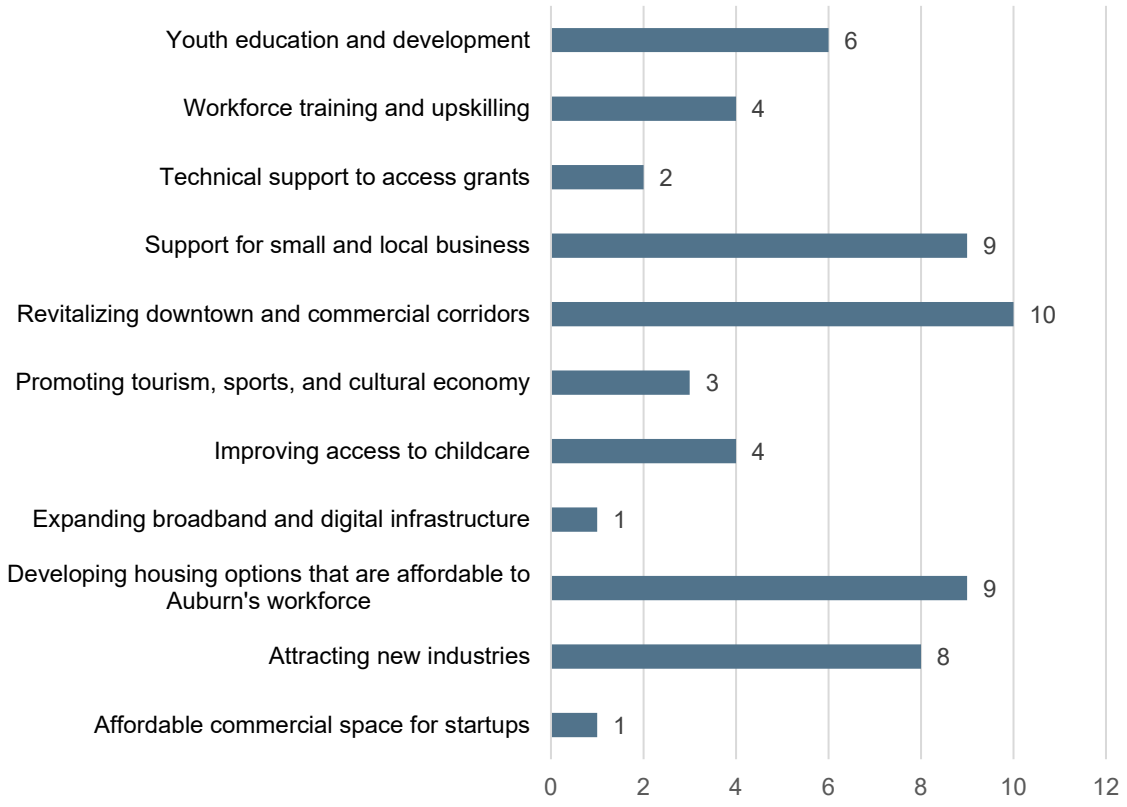
Source: Dot-voting activity at the Built Environment Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Figure 1.16: What Types of Businesses Would You Like to See More of in Auburn?



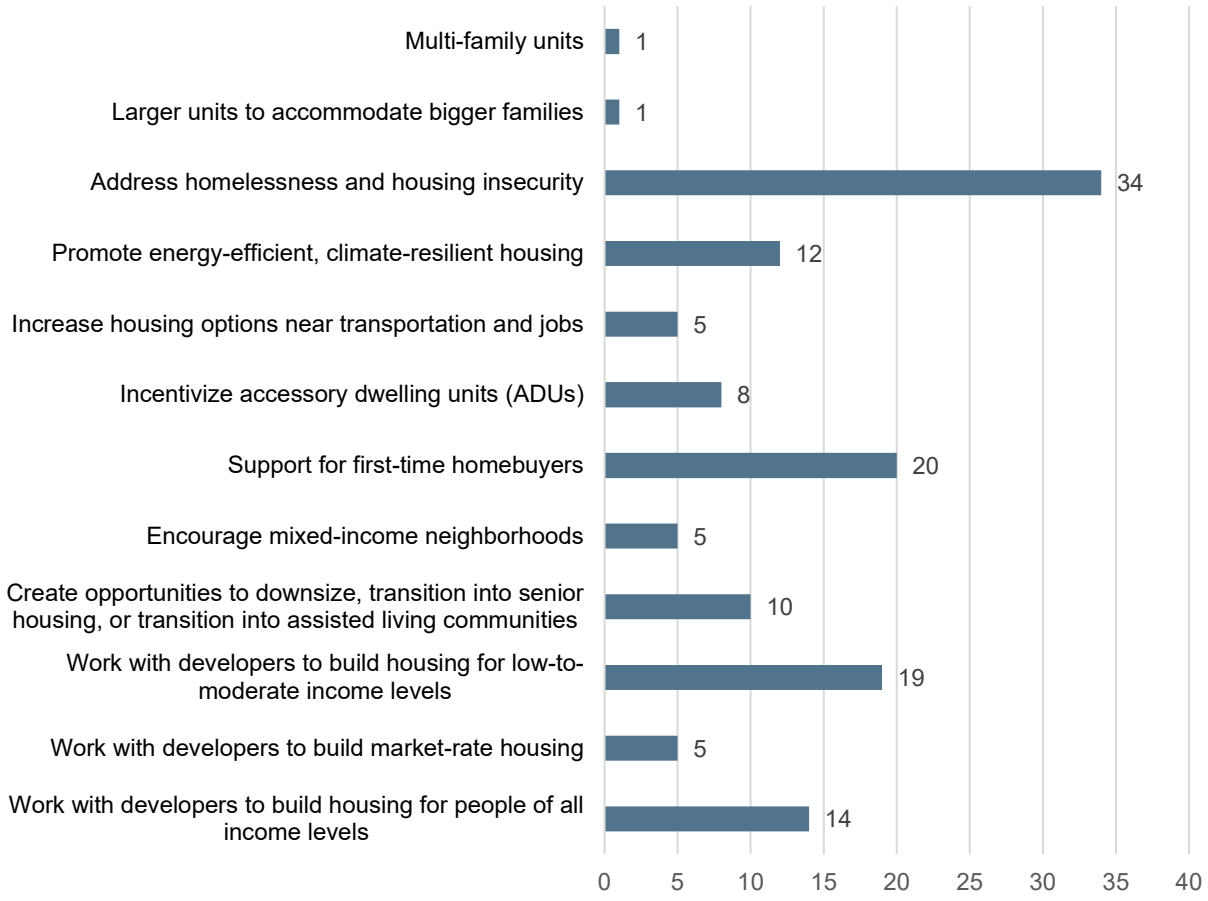
Source: Visual preferences activity at the Built Environment Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Figure 1.17: Which Economic Incentives Should Be Prioritized?



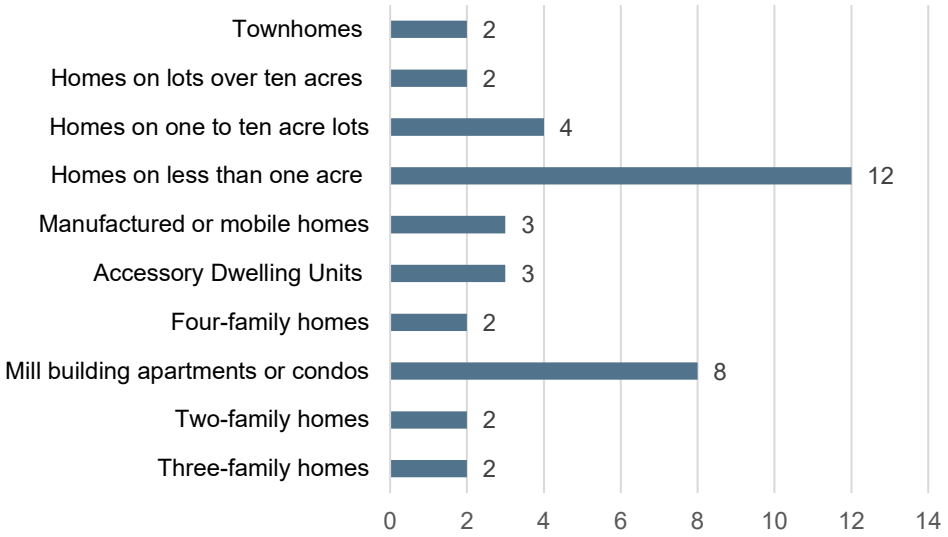
Source: Dot-voting activity at the Built Environment Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Figure 1.18: Which Housing Initiatives Should the City Prioritize?



Source: Dot-voting activity at the Built Environment Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Figure 1.19: What Types of Housing Do You Think Are Needed to Support Auburn Residents in the Future?



Source: Visual preferences activity at the Built Environment Open House event, Social Pinpoint

Transportation

Figure 1.20: What Types of Places Do You Wish You or Your Family Could Walk or Bike to?

Source: Dot-voting activity at the Built Environment Open House event, Social Pinpoint

What Are Your Transportation Challenges? (4 Responses)

- Traffic congestion (4 responses)

What Barriers Exist to Getting Where You Need to Go?

- Traffic volume
- Road maintenance
- Lack of passenger rail
- Access between New Auburn, downtown, and Lewiston

Auburn's History

What are your favorite historic sites or buildings in Auburn?

- Library
- Barker Mill
- City Hall
- Engine House

Drop-In Center

The Drop-In Center serves as a low-barrier physical space for unhoused individuals to rest and replenish. The Center is open two days a week and serves nearly 100 individuals in those two days. The engagement materials for the Comprehensive Plan were available and displayed for the month of July.

Safety

Concerns about safety and a desire for more resources promoting safety emerged as a common theme. More places to stay safely overnight was the most frequently cited change that individuals at the Center vocalized would make daily life easier. Many individuals also expressed the need for a place to keep belongings safe.

Resources to Promote a Path Forward

Unhoused individuals frequently voiced an interest in resources that might provide a path out of homelessness, such as assistance obtaining documentation or mail and more work opportunities. Underpinning the issue of houselessness, however, is the need for more affordable housing and resources to connect unhoused individuals with housing opportunities.

Figure 1.21: If You Could Change One Thing in the City to Make it Easier to Get By, What Would it Be?

Source: Dot-voting activity at Drop-In Center

In addition to the dot-voting activity, City staff conducted listening session with unhoused residents (five residents) as well as six service providers. Key themes from these conversations include the need for improved collaboration, increased education, and expanded services.

1. Collaboration: There is a need for a gap analysis of social services provided by both the City, private, and nonprofit organizations to determine overlaps and gaps.

2. Education for the public about the unhoused community to help improve support and reduce stereotypes or stigmas around the unhoused.

3. Services: Provide services and improve communication and awareness around services to help people access services. Some ideas included a mobile care truck and lockers for people to store their belongings.

Community Focus Groups

The City of Auburn and the CPC held a focus group event on July 11, 2025, to discuss priorities for the Comprehensive Plan with community leaders. The meeting was held in person at Edward Little High School and consisted of discussions in table groups divided by discussion topic, as outlined below. There were more than 70 participants in attendance, including community service providers, industry leaders, City elected officials and staff, small business owners, and other community members. Participants were also offered the opportunity to provide feedback on general questions about challenges and priorities for Auburn in conversations with City staff and CPC members. The following is a summary of key themes heard from participants in each group and other feedback collected.

Hospitality and Retail

The hospitality and retail group included a variety of small businesses in Auburn across a variety of sectors, including restaurants, trades, outdoor recreation, retail operations, and more. Thirteen participants attended this meeting.

Strengths

- The local restaurant community in Auburn has a keen sense of community and a real interest in helping each other when challenges arise.
- Many businesses have a consistent, repeat customer base. People support local businesses repeatedly when they choose to visit them.
- The Auburn/Lewiston area is the second largest metro area in Maine, providing a large, local customer base.

Challenges

- Auburn is a commuter area, with residents leaving the City for everything but their housing. Auburn is not a destination, and there are not enough local events and amenities to attract tourists.
- The availability and suitability of the workforce is a concern. Many restaurants and trades have had trouble retaining qualified employees.
- With many Auburn residents earning lower wages than nearby communities, leisure activities and services have become unaffordable to most people in the area. When residents' rent, taxes, and transportation costs are too high, they will not spend money on food, entertainment, and luxury services.
- There are public safety concerns in Auburn, and employees have felt unsafe in some areas of downtown Auburn. They emphasized the need for drug treatment options and an increased public safety presence.

Goals

- Make Auburn a destination city. Festivals, events, and amenities could draw visitors, especially a music venue. Businesses would benefit from increased traffic from events like the Balloon Festival.
- Increase availability of all types of housing—from low-income, affordable units to luxury developments. Support the development of a range of options to aid in Auburn's growth as a diverse and sustainable community.
- Engage in climate resiliency efforts, as changing weather patterns have already begun to impact sales for a variety of local businesses.

Essential and Social Services

This group included service providers from a variety of organizations, from New Mainers support networks to local senior service providers. Fifteen community members participated in the discussion.

Strengths

- The Auburn/Lewiston area has a large community of local organizations that serve a variety of populations.
- Individuals in Auburn have a strong desire to improve their community, opening the door to increased support and funding from the City.

Challenges

- There is a growing unhoused population in Auburn, with a variety of contributing factors. The largest areas of service needed include addiction services, mental health resources, employment opportunities, and low-income housing opportunities.

- Auburn has several organizations that provide similar services, risking duplicating efforts. There is a need to work together on initiatives to best serve the community. Asset mapping could help identify duplicate or missing services.

Goals

- Create a new position for city-level navigator, who would be responsible for helping residents locate and obtain support that they qualify for.
- Develop diverse housing options–including low-income, multigenerational, mixed-use, high-end, rental, and other housing options.
- Continue to invest in current issues, with special attention paid to shaping youth development and sustainable economic growth to support necessary services.

Education and Youth Services

This group was comprised of representatives from local schools, community colleges, educational nonprofits, and more. Seven participants contributed to this group.

Strengths

- There is existing collaboration between educational and youth services, with a variety of organizations represented.
- Existing support services, like the Purple Bus from Central Maine Community College, are strong drivers of success in the community.

Challenges

- Many teens lack structured opportunities and transportation access, leading to worse career outcomes.
- Post-secondary education and child care are increasingly unaffordable to many Auburn residents.
- Recreational activities for young people are limited.

Goals

- Establish a collaborative effort with community organizations to create more recreational activities for young people in the community, with potential for a teen center, collaborative efforts with Parks and Recreation, and the addition of new transportation options.
- Explore creating a shelter for unhoused youth in the community, potentially to be shared with Lewiston.

- Identify and develop opportunities for education for adults in Auburn, both trade-related and academic.

Environment and Sustainability

Several groups in Auburn representing environmental efforts were present, along with City staff and interested individuals. The group had nine members, with written comments submitted by community members who were unable to attend the discussion.

Strengths

- Auburn has a variety of natural resources, especially Lake Auburn and its associated watershed.
- Auburn's existing network of parks and trails provides a strong environment for outdoor recreation.
- A strong community of local organizations works in Auburn to help the community work toward long-term protection and engagement with the natural environment.

Challenges

- There is an increasing threat of climate change and associated damage to local natural resources, along with threats from invasive and displaced species.
- As Auburn grows, urban noise generation and pollution will grow with it, harming surrounding natural areas. Urban sprawl will increasingly threaten agricultural areas.
- Increased extreme weather events will disproportionately affect lower-income and vulnerable communities in Auburn.

Goals

- Enhance the local tree canopy, adaptive reuse of wastewater, flood assessments, water quality management, and other climate resilience measures.
- Increase efforts to educate the Auburn community on climate change, extreme weather preparedness, invasive species management, and outdoor recreation resources.
- Conduct an inventory of parks and natural resources, and other open spaces, with a dedicated City staff person to coordinate the resources (e.g., Urban Forester, Sustainability Coordinator).

Agriculture and Food Systems

In this focus group, local farmers, nonprofit representatives, and City staff discussed issues relating to local agriculture efforts, food access, and climate. Nine community members were present.

Strengths

- There is a strong community of local farmers, environmental groups, and community organizations that are actively working to better serve Auburn's communities.
- Auburn has a significant percentage of its land that is zoned for agricultural purposes, creating opportunities for local businesses.
- Small-scale farming tax breaks and grants exist and are extremely important to local farmers.

Challenges

- Climate change is a concern, as it may significantly affect food production and farm infrastructure in the coming years.
- The overall profitability of local farming is a challenge, with small-scale agriculture unable to charge fair prices without risking becoming unaffordable to local communities.
- Auburn residents may not have access to local foods where they shop, especially those who have less disposable income.

Goals

- Allow a diverse set of uses for farmland to allow farmers to continue to produce while bringing in additional revenue through commercial ventures (agrotourism, small-scale nonagricultural business on farmland).
- Build infrastructure that is climate-resilient and diverse to combat known climate risks.
- Investigate re-zoning agriculture zones to allow for different uses on some land, including small businesses and limited development.

Real Estate, Housing, and Development

A group of developers, construction company executives, local service providers, and City staff participated in this group. Fourteen group members were present.

Strengths

- There are a variety of possible development initiatives and potential solutions to address housing and development needs.
- The City's sewer and water infrastructure is well-maintained and supports current uses.
- New Mainers can fill employment gaps within the City, with the City employing roughly 150 New Mainers on various projects with staffing shortages.

Challenges

- Housing is a paramount concern, with a significant need for housing at every level (low-income to luxury).
- Staffing construction and infrastructure projects is also a concern, with many potential employees unable to afford to live in Auburn.
- City staff involved in the discussion expressed a concern that the best areas for development have been utilized, leaving areas with low utility-connectivity and natural resources as the only realistic development sites.

Goals

- Increase development, as it would be beneficial to the City's economy. Explore mixed-use developments and infill developments as potential ways to maximize available resources. Consider new ways to incentivize land development using tax incentive programs.
- Support more high-income housing to attract residents with disposable income, who would boost Auburn's economy.
- Support development of industrial areas, particularly around the airport, to provide high-quality employment opportunities for locals.

Transportation and Mobility

The transportation and mobility focus group was made up of local transit advocates, community organizations, and City staff.

Strengths

- Auburn's central location within Maine is an asset, with potential transit to Lewiston, Portland, and other communities as a likely and welcome proposal.
- Existing access to natural areas and trails for transportation and recreation is strong.
- Ongoing traffic calming initiatives are steering the City in the right direction for public safety and walkability.

Challenges

- Safety, especially surrounding bikeability is a concern. There are several incomplete bike lanes and areas without sidewalks.
- The lack of public transit options is a barrier to employment, education, and livability in Auburn.
- Planned traffic calming measures have been slow to be implement, with many projects stalled on State-owned routes.

- The areas surrounding downtown Auburn are visually unwelcoming, especially along Washington Street.

Goals

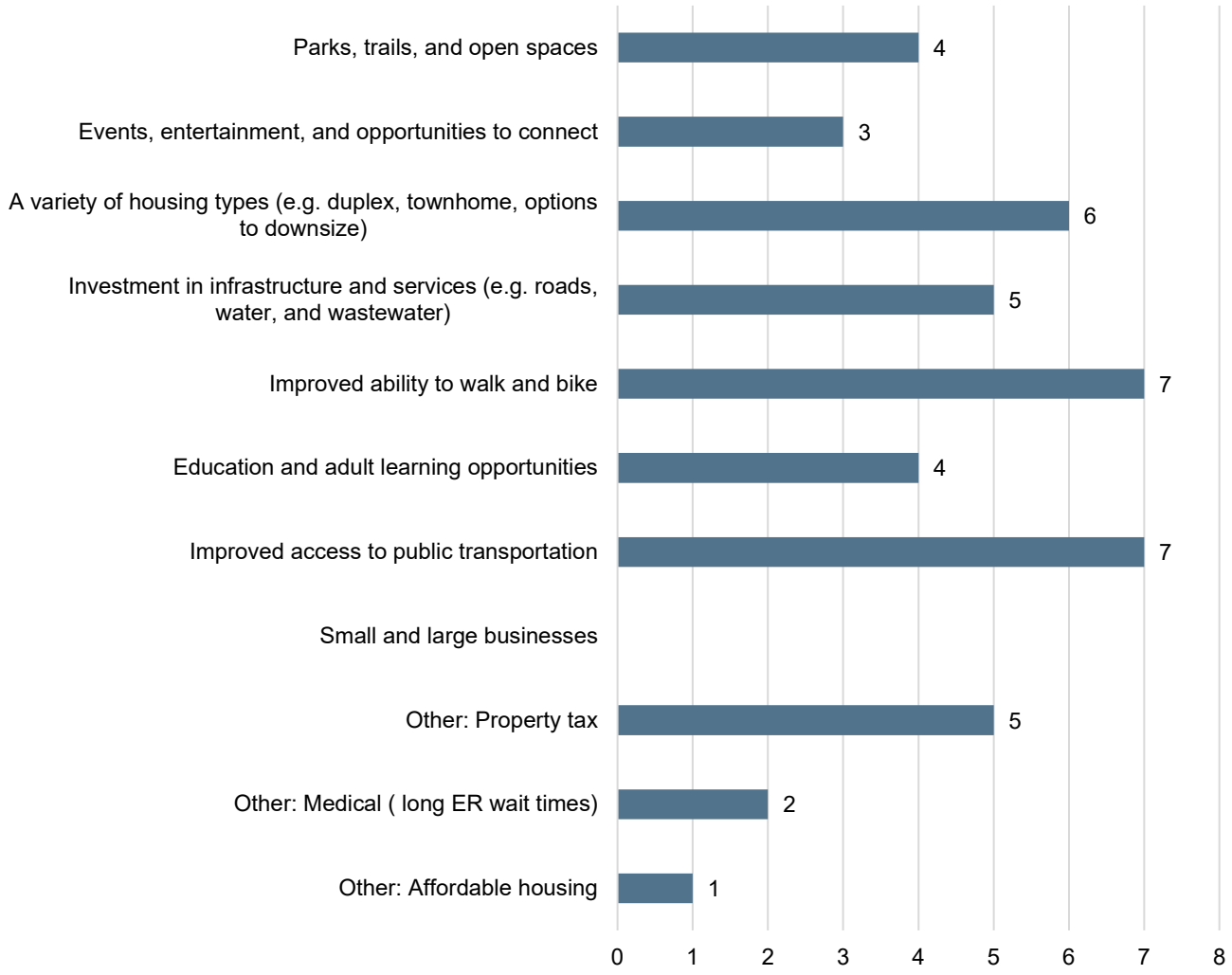
- Increase local and regional bus services, especially to the Portland metropolitan area.
- Implement climate protection measures, including increasing the electric vehicle infrastructure in the area.
- Focus on walkability and bikeability in land use planning, along with ensuring roads are well-maintained and visually appealing.

Future Investment Priorities Dot-Voting Activity

Separately from their table-group discussions, attendees were given the opportunity to express preferences for future investments through an interactive voting activity. Several areas for potential investment were provided, with residents placing dot stickers beneath the topics they prioritized for funding.

Housing was the most popular area for investment (22), with infrastructure and services next (12), followed by parks, trails, and open spaces (10), improved ability to walk and bike (8), education and adult learning opportunities (8), events, entertainment, and opportunities to connect (6), small and large businesses (6), and improved access to public transportation (5).

Figure 1.22: What Investments Do You Think are Most Important to Support a Strong Community?



Source: Dot-voting activity at the focus groups event