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# Auburn Avenue Corridor

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

CINCINNATI, OH | 27 JUNE 2016

# Housing Survey Summary

DDA staff surveyed more than 1,500 rental units in Mt. Auburn and portions of the surrounding neighborhoods of Over-The-Rhine, Corryville, CUF, Clifton Heights and Walnut Hills.

Overall occupancy rate is 96.8%, which is considered a high operating level. A 95% occupancy rate is considered healthy as it allows for mobility in the marketplace.

In Mt. Auburn, the occupancy rate is 95.1%. The occupancy is slightly lower than typical, which is attributed to Gilman Gardens in the initial rent up following a substantial renovation of the property. Units in the renovation process at the Historic Limited Liability property on Sycamore Street also contributed to a slightly lower occupancy rate.

A wide range of rents are in the marketplace due to the close proximity to the University of Cincinnati. A significant portion of Mount Auburn and the Auburn Avenue corridor are within one mile of the center of campus. The high shares of student tenancy in rental properties exist as far south as McGregor Avenue. In several cases, rentals in this area also were successfully marketed as Airbnb's.



Auburndale

## RENT RANGE BY UNIT TYPE MT. AUBURN NEIGHBORHOOD

Unit Type	Collected Rent Range
Studio/Efficiency	\$430 - \$655
One-Bedroom	\$495 - \$829
Two-Bedroom	\$650 - \$1,780
Three-Bedroom	\$750 - \$2,100



Malvern Apartments

The high-end of the rent range reflects student tenancy where more than one student often contributes to the rent.

Auburndale, at the north end of the Auburn Avenue corridor, achieves the highest studio and one-bedroom rental rates in

the neighborhood and also attracts the highest share of students. The majority of area rental properties in the neighborhood total less than a few dozen units, and have significant deferred maintenance and property amenities limited to a laundry room. While these properties offer units at affordable rates to lower-income households, the overall quality is limited. Larger, well-maintained income-restricted properties, such as the 52-unit Malvern Apartments on Eleanor Place, are 100% full with lengthy waiting lists.

According to a 2010 Affordable Housing Advocates study, there are 275 rental-assisted housing units in the Mt. Auburn neighborhood, of which 174 are assisted through the HUD Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. The voucher program allows tenants to take the rental-assistance voucher wherever they move, so the actual number in the neighborhood will fluctuate year-by-year. The addition of project-based rental-assisted properties would ensure “affordability” of more housing stock in the neighborhood long term.

A review of the City of Cincinnati Department of Buildings and Inspections records indicate that the Uptown area has 300 buildings that are ordered to be vacated and/or kept vacant due to code violations. The Over-The-Rhine area alone has 301 vacant buildings currently listed.

Of the 300 vacant buildings listed in Uptown, Mt. Auburn has 82, or a little more than one-fourth of Uptown's vacant buildings. The majority of Mt. Auburn's vacant buildings are in single-family homes and other commercial structures. Just 12 of the vacant buildings are among multifamily of four or more units.

## KEY AREA DEMOGRAPHICS

Although the student population heavily influences the demographic makeup of the entire Uptown Area, Mt. Auburn has retained a higher share of families and a more diverse population in terms of age and income. A demographic comparison of Mt. Auburn and the Uptown Area is below. Notably, both areas have employment well in excess of the resident population. This “daytime” population base is one of the most important criteria to attract most retail businesses and restaurants.

	Mt. Auburn	Uptown Area
<b>Population (2016 est.)</b>	5,269	43,872
<b>Total Households (2016 est.)</b>	2,325	18,806
Renters	1,663 (71.5%)	14,962 (71.5%)
Owners	662 (20.5%)	3,844 (20.4%)
Families	1,008 (43.4%)	6,010 (32.0%)
<b>Median Age</b>	32.4	25.1
<b>Average Household Size</b>	2.18	2.03
1-Persons	40.9%	46.6%
2-Persons	29.4%	28.2%
3-Persons	13.8%	11.6%
4-Persons+	15.9%	13.6%
<b>Household Incomes Less than \$25,000 (est. 2016)</b>	42.0%	49.9%
Median Household Income (est. 2016)	\$30,393	\$25,089
<b>Annual Resident Spending – Food Service &amp; Drinks</b>	\$5 Million	\$39 Million
<b>Total Employees</b>	7,470	62,935

Source: ESRI, Incorporated and 2010 Census

## FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS RESTAURANTS AND OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS THAT SELL FOOD, PREPARED OR PREPACKAGED

Other than Christ Hospital's in-house restaurants and cafeteria, Mt. Auburn is currently limited to a couple convenience stores, taverns and specialty food businesses. By comparison, Corryville and Over-The-Rhine have more than 200 establishments selling food and beverage products.

- Convenience stores: Short Stop Market and Body Snatchers
- Taverns: Mad Frog and Milton's
- Specialty food businesses: Graeter's and Boba Cha



Body Snatchers

All of these establishments are on the periphery of Mt. Auburn except the corner convenience store, Body Snatcher, at Auburn Avenue and Dorchester Avenue (not open during last visit and unable to verify status by phone).

## EARLY TAKEAWAYS - HOUSING

- Strong market, locally and regionally, from an occupancy perspective
- Few larger rental properties in market today to support additional common area amenities
- Rental market is heavily influenced by student population
- Affordable housing for lower income households is available, but much of it is low quality
- Opportunities likely exist to improve housing and preserve affordability through State and Federal funding programs; New Market Tax Credits should be considered for mixed-use development
- Modern market-rate rental housing which appeals to more moderate-income local workforce is lacking.

## EARLY TAKEAWAYS - RETAIL/RESTAURANTS

- Currently, Auburn Avenue does not have the necessary market exposure to support conventional retail businesses (no nearby retail driving shoppers and much higher traffic volumes in other areas of Uptown)
- Complete lack of neighborhood restaurants/cafes/coffee shops
- Approximately \$5 Million in annual resident spending on food service and drinks, somewhat low considering the number of residents
- Daytime population (i.e. local employees) spending needed to bolster food sales
- Nearly three-fourths of neighborhood's total employment is concentrated at Christ Hospital

# Survey Outcome

HANDOUTS & ONLINE

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## WALK TO AUBURN?

**MOST PARTICIPANTS (75%) SAID YES**

**THE REST SAID NO**

- Some said it's too dangerous
- Some said they bike don't walk

## WHAT SECTIONS DO YOU WALK?

**THE WHOLE LENGTH**

**TO DOWNTOWN**

**DORCHESTER TO MCGREGOR**

**CHRIST TO DORCHESTER**

**UC TO PROSPECT HILL**

## HOW TO MAKE AUBURN MORE WALKABLE?

**IMPROVED STREETSCAPE**

- Wider sidewalks
- More trees
- Add bump-outs
- Bike lanes
- Lampposts
- Benches

**TRAFFIC**

- Public parking other than on-streets
- Slow down traffic

**DESTINATIONS**

- Cafes/Restaurants
- Retail shops

## TRAFFIC & SAFETY

**WAYFINDING**

- Drivers do not know where they are going

**TRAFFIC HOTSPOTS**

- Mcmillian & Auburn
- Sycamore/Dorchester/Auburn
- Mason & Auburn
- McGregor & Auburn
- @ Christ moving South

**SAFETY**

- Dangerous getting off bus and crossing the street
- Turn lanes lead to weaving traffic

**TRAFFIC**

- Rush hour in the evening is backed up
- Cars move too fast

**DRUG ACTIVITY**

- Estelle Ave to Malvern Hill

## DESTINATIONS?

**GROCERY**

- Kroger - OTR, Newport, St. Bernard & Walnut Hills
- Findlay Market
- OTR
- Oakley Station
- Hyde Park

**EATING OUT**

- Main Street
- OTR
- Downtown
- Northern Kentucky
- Clifton
- Northside
- The Banks
- Short Vine
- Hyde Park

**ENTERTAINMENT**

- Main Street
- OTR
- Downtown
- Clifton
- Northside
- The Banks
- Hyde Park

## WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE?

**DEVELOPMENT**

- New Development should be Pedestrian Oriented
- Perservation
- Renovate Historic Properties
- Revamp Dorchester & Auburn Intersection

**BEAUTIFICATION**

- Less Power Poles
- Attractive Entry at Sycamore Street Hill

**SENIOR APARTMNETS**

**TRAVEL**

- Red Bike Station
- Connect to Parks
- Connect to OTR
- Better parking options

**DESTINATIONS**

- Community Garden
- Dry Cleaners
- Coffee Shop
- Restaurants
- Bakery
- Pet Shop
- Health Food Store
- Cozy Bar
- Brewery
- Co-op Work Space

# Meeting Summary

WHAT WE HEARD

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## DEVELOPMENT

### WELLINGTON PLACE DEVELOPMENT

- Why is there no retail here?
- Can something better be done with the corner parking lot?

### PARKING

- Parking garage to cut down on surface lots? Focus on non-contributing buildings for potential sites of new lots/garages
- No parking on east side of Auburn Ave- this hurts the storefront on that side

### HOUSING OPTIONS

- Do NOT want to see clifton-esque 500+ unit developments
- Do NOT want to attract student housing - ie houses chopped into a million little units for low rents
- DO like house conversions to condo ownership
- There are 50 efficiency units being built on auburn ave to serve a BSN program
- Modest to low income housing @ \$300-\$400/mo. - preserve what we have, perhaps create more. A lot of work when into securing the current housing.

### SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

- Flatiron building
- 2448 Auburn Ave- at end of street. Historic house they'd like to see saved
- Big historic building at highland and dorchester- very big space inside
- Large blue house on SE corner of mcmillan- owned by the church and now for sale
- Auburn Ave and Wellington
- Christ Hospital owns 3 vacant historic homes north of the main hospital

## DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED

### NEW RETAIL/COMMERCIAL

- Does not want to see the cheap new-build retail like what is on Campus at UC due to the typical high turnover and short life-span of those spaces
- Wants to see conversion of existing buildings and renovation of existing retail spaces
- Need to ID the building owners of problematic properties (neglect, eye sores, unsafe, etc)
- Dont want to recreate corryville
- There are only 4 storefronts on East side of Auburn Ave currently- dont have parking options and currently vacant

## TRAFFIC & SAFETY

### CONNECTIVITY

- 60' right of way, will need to explore what is possible in that area, priority bike/bus lanes would be extremely difficult.
- Many bad drivers going to christ hospital - dont know the area well and drive dangerously
- Wants to spend dollars on creating connectivity in the neighborhood for residents, not through-traffic connectivity.

### SCHOOL SAFELY

- Consider the traffic from school bus routes
- Try to slow down traffic for the of kids at taft elem who walk to/from school
- Look at the congestion from the 2 schools that dismiss at the same time, plus the hospital shift change about 30 minutes later.
- Address better crossings and street lighting in relation to the "Walking school bus" program and elderly people crossing over to the hospital

### ADDRESS THE TRANSPORTATION ISSUE AND CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- Shuttles,
- Hop on hop off.
- Example: tank in covington

### STREET CAR

- Want to see street car in this area. Try to get pedestrian access down to inwood near vine street school (the proposed new stop?)
- Feasibility of streetcar expansion depends on next mayor and success of grant applications for funding. Chris feels it's likely that we will see streetcar expansion.

## DESTINATIONS

### WHAT IS MISSING

- Walking distance supermarket - "Mt. Auburn is a food desert"
- Drug store
- Dry cleaner
- Laundromat
- Doctor's office
- Pet shop - many dog owners in the neighborhood
- Retail that serves low-income people such as a dollar store, CVS or Walgreens. Looking for a low price point and common staples such as milk, bread, etc
- Locally owned shops and restaurants such as found in OTR

### BUSINESS DISTRICT

- Wants City recognized BD to access funding, that means we need retail to qualify
- Mt. AUburn was already earmarked as a potential BD site by another study. Thats good!
- Wants it to also help with employment, job training and added revenue to the neighborhood
- Concerns over BD negatively impacting people who cant afford to maintain their property, ie burdening low income people.