

Auburn Community Conversation #7

Location: Washburn Elementary School

Date: October 15, 2013

DISCUSSION QUESTION:

Given the difficult decisions that our community must face, and the reality that property tax increases must be minimized, what are our priorities for Auburn's future?

PRIORITIES INTRODUCED BY RESIDENTS

Listed in order as discussed by residents.

- Strong safe neighborhoods
- Taxes
- Access to more information
- Economic development
- Education

DISCUSSION NOTES

Points of view included:

Strong safe neighborhoods

- Need to maintain and cherish strong neighborhoods.
- Important to attract and retain young families
- Need to slow traffic down
- Maintain parks—very important to the quality of neighborhood life
- Make sure police coverage is responsive and sufficient.
- What strategies could be created to encourage neighborhood associations, block parties, cohesiveness, pride?
- What strategies could be created to help with littering?
- Some areas need sidewalks.

Taxes must be affordable yet sufficient to cover important services

- Why so high?
- Can services be consolidated?
- How do Auburn's taxes compare to taxes in other service center cities?
- School taxes must be sufficient to support quality schools.
- Worries about property taxes too high, especially for older residents.

Access to more information

- Residents want access to more information:
what services cost
what is contained in contracts
what are municipal service holidays
- Auburn website needs to include more information:
list of businesses
list of parks and recreation opportunities
links should be available by job titles not just by names,
should link to the school website.
- Could e-alerts be planned to give more opportunities for communications?

Economic development

- Need new businesses adding to the tax base.
- Need to involve more people in creating a big vision and practical steps.
- Involve real estate people more.
- Make downtown more pedestrian friendly.
- Do it smarter—some agreements don't make sense.
- Cost of police coverage to the retail areas?

Education

- Auburn needs a quality education system. Important to keeping families here.
- Have great teachers-dedicated! They need more support.
- Can we afford school tax increases?
- Schools need more resources.
- Make sure money is well spent.
- Businesses should get more involved. The Chamber's efforts are picking up.
- PTAs are very important.
- Can grandparents also become more involved?
- School buildings must be maintained.
- Schools are important neighborhood centers. Could be used more.
- The high school must be replaced. Need good science labs.
- Too many administrators?
- Need better marketing of what is great about our schools.
- Could there be a school newsletter to the community?
- Need to help more people understand mass customized education so they could support it..

Other

- Could the Auburn Education Foundation become more active?
- PAL center needs volunteers.
- Could residents vote on the city budget?
- Residents want more input on the city budget.