

CHAPTER TWO: CITY PROFILE/EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.0 Population

Regional Context

Auburn is located in Lee County, Alabama, the state's 8th largest county with a 2015 estimated population of 156,993¹. Auburn is part of the Auburn-Opelika Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which is coterminous with the boundary of Lee County and has a 2015 estimated population of 156,993. The Auburn-Opelika MSA is part of the Columbus-Auburn-Opelika GA-AL Combined Statistical Area (CSA), which also includes:

- **Columbus MSA**
Chattahoochee County, GA; Harris County, GA; Marion County, GA; Muscogee County, GA; and Russell County, AL
- **Auburn-Opelika MSA**
Lee County, AL
- **Valley, AL Micropolitan Statistical Area²**
Chambers County, AL The Valley Micropolitan Statistical Area was added to the Columbus, GA MSA in 2013.
- **Tuskegee Micropolitan Statistical Area²**
Macon County, AL The Tuskegee Micropolitan Statistical Area was removed from the Columbus, GA MSA in 2013.

The 2015 estimated population of the Columbus-Auburn-Opelika CSA is 504,865.

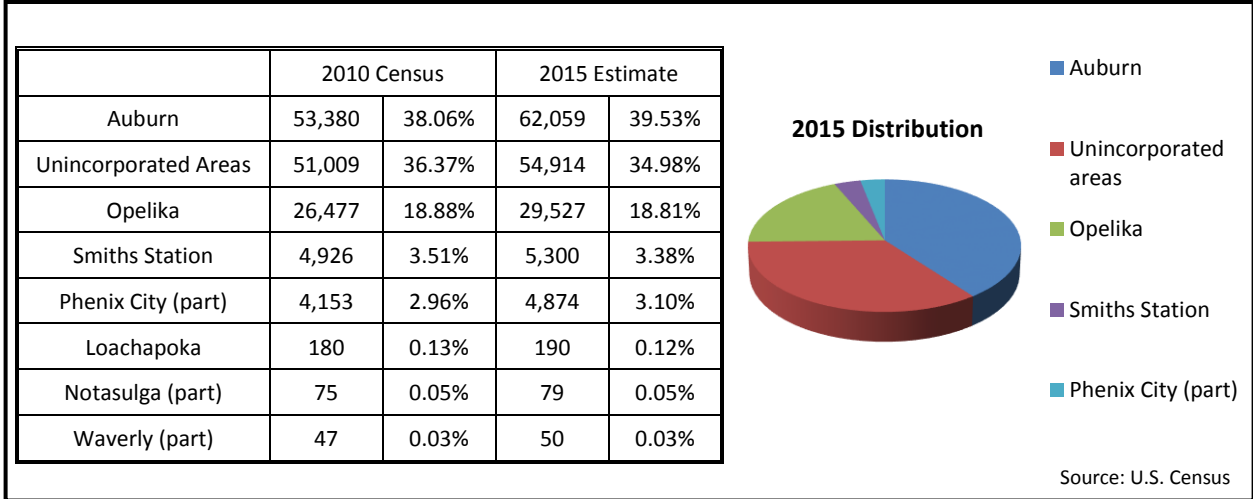
Lee County

The City of Auburn's estimated 2015 population is 62,059 according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Auburn is the largest city in Lee County. A graphic comparison of the population of various jurisdictions in Lee County is shown in Figure 2.1. Lochapoka and the portions of Notasulga and Waverly are not shown in the pie chart, as their populations are too small to be represented accurately

¹ American Fact Finder <http://factfinder.census.gov>

² US Office of Management and Budget

Figure 2.1: Lee County Population Distribution by Jurisdiction



Growth

The City of Auburn and Lee County have been among the fastest growing communities in Alabama for some time. The table below shows population change since 1970 for the cities of Auburn and Opelika, Lee County, and the State of Alabama.

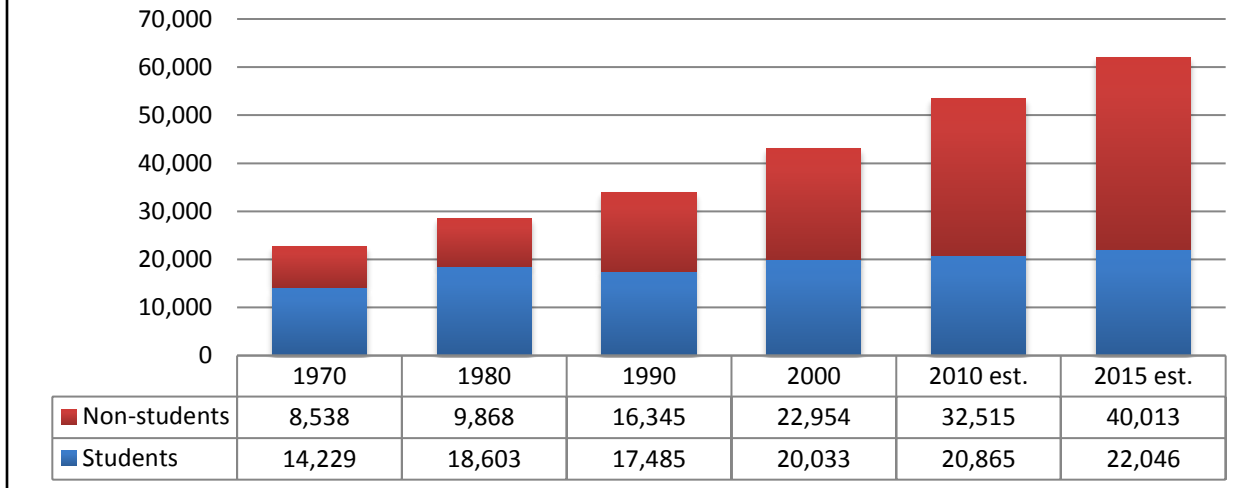
Table 2.1 - Population Change: 1970 to 2015							Source: U.S. Census
Jurisdiction	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015 est.	% Change
Auburn	22,767	28,471	33,830	42,987	53,380	62,059	172.6%
Opelika	19,027	21,869	22,122	23,498	26,477	29,527	55.2%
Lee County	61,268	76,283	87,146	115,092	140,247	156,993	156.2%
Alabama	3,444,354	3,894,025	4,040,587	4,447,100	4,779,736	4,858,879	41.1%

The City of Auburn has seen tremendous growth since 1970, almost tripling in population since that date. Some of that growth is attributable to growth in the student population at Auburn University (AU). Figure 2.2 shows the student population as a share of the City of Auburn’s total population from 1970 to the 2015 population estimate³.

In 1970, college students constituted approximately 63% of Auburn’s population. By 2010, that estimated percentage had decreased to 39.1% and is estimated to be 35.5% in 2015. If the university continues with plans to cap enrollment at 25,000, the proportion of students to non-students will continue to decrease. Using AIGM (Auburn Interactive Growth Model) population projections, the City of Auburn will have a population of 87,916 by 2030 (based on the 2010 city limits and the concept plan scenario in Chapter 3); even if every Auburn University student lived in the City limits (which has never been the case), the resulting student share of the population would be 28%. This will have a number of implications for the City’s future growth, including increased household sizes, increased demand for family housing, and changes to the City’s demographics. The current proportion of non-student to student population is approaching a 2 to 1 margin.

³ American Fact Finder <http://factfinder.census.gov>

**Figure 2.2 - Student/Non-Student Population:
1970 to 2015**



Diversity of race has remained fairly constant from 1990 to 2010 in Auburn. The most noticeable trend is an increase in the percentage of people of Hispanic origin. This trend is consistent with an overall trend in which the Hispanic population is growing quickly across the South. According to the Census, the Hispanic population of Lee County grew from 552 in 1990 to 4,571 in 2010, an 828% increase and represents approximately 3% of the overall Lee County population.

Auburn is slightly less diverse than Lee County. In 2010, 71.3% of Lee County’s population was white, 22.7% African-American, 2.6% Asian, and 3.4% other.

Racial Composition for the City of Auburn

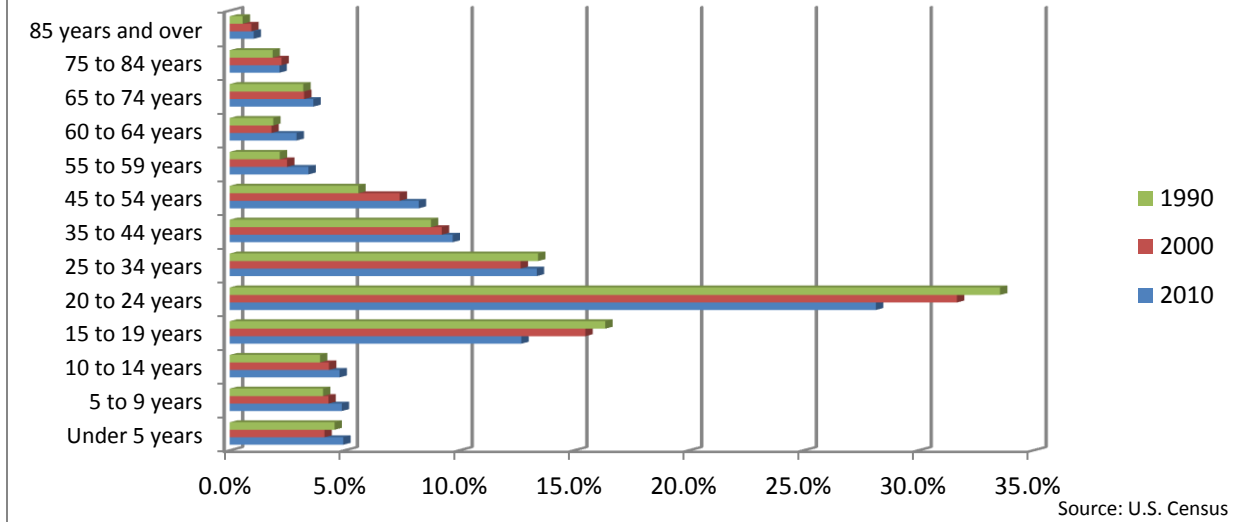
	1990	%	2000	%	2010	%
Total Population	33,830	100%	42,987	100%	53,380	100%
White	27,016	80.0%	33,553	78.1%	40,069	75.1%
African-American	5,531	16.4%	7,217	16.8%	8,834	16.5%
Asian	1,138	3.4%	1,422	3.3%	2,825	5.3%
Other	85	0.3%	795	1.8%	1,652	0.3%
Hispanic*	314	0.9%	666	1.5%	1,551	2.9%

*People who classify themselves as “Hispanic” may be of any race. For example, in the 2010 column the 1,551 people who identify themselves as Hispanic are all also included in one of the four other categories above. Source: U.S. Census

Age Composition

As expected in a city with a large university student population, the median age in Auburn is quite low, at 23.3 years of age, in 2010. The Lee County median age in 2010 was 29.5, and in the State of Alabama the median age was 37.9 years in 2010.

**Figure 2.3 - Age Distribution Auburn:
1990 to 2010**



As noted earlier, the share of the overall population that consists of students has been decreasing, from 51.6% in 1990 to 39.0% in 2010, as Auburn’s non-student population grows. This trend is shown in Figure 2.3. It shows noticeable decreases in the percentage of the population aged 15 to 24 years, and increases in all categories from 35 years to 85 years and over. Though the school-age population appears constant in regard to distribution, the increase in overall population will result in corresponding increases to the school-age population, with corresponding increases in need for school infrastructure.

Educational Attainment

	1990	%	2000	%	2010	%	2014 Est.	%
Population 25 years and over	12,766	100.0	17,060	100.0	22,294	100.0	25,538	100.0
Less than 9th grade	700	5.5	453	2.7	513	2.3	638	2.5
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	819	6.4	1,049	6.1	936	4.2	817	3.2
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	1,861	14.6	2,188	12.8	3,010	13.5	3,473	13.6
Some college, no degree	2,339	18.3	3,001	17.6	3,456	15.5	3,754	14.7
Associate's degree	657	5.1	823	4.8	1,092	4.9	1,558	6.1
Bachelor's degree	2,960	23.2	4,555	26.7	6,777	30.4	7,738	30.3
Graduate or professional degree	3,430	26.9	4,991	29.3	6,510	29.2	7,585	29.7
% high school graduate or higher	11,247	88.1	15,558	91.2	20,845	93.5	24,082	94.3
% bachelor's degree or higher	6,390	50.1	9,546	56.0	13,287	59.6	15,323	60.0

Source: U.S. Census

With Auburn University as a major employer, the City of Auburn population over the age of 25 is highly-educated. The proportion of Auburn’s population over 25, as shown in the above table, with a high school education or better is 94.3%, compared to an Alabama state average of 83.7%_and a national average of 86.3%. It has improved since 1990 by 6.2%. The estimated proportion of Auburn’s population with a bachelor’s degree or higher in 2014 was 60.0%, compared to an Alabama state average of 23.1% and a national average of 29.3%. This level of educational attainment is an advantage for business recruitment.

Household Type

The U.S. Census defines a household as “all the people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence.” A family household contains “a group of two or more people who reside together and who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption”; non-relatives living in a family household are not included for certain census tabulations. This difference between family and non-family households has historically been useful in cities such as Auburn to make statistical distinctions between the student and non-student populations; increasing changes in household structure that are increasing the number of non-family households nationally may render this as a less useful tool in the long-term.

Table 2.5 - Households by Type								
	1990	%	2000	%	2010	%	2014 Est.	%
Total Households	13,444	100.0	18,421	100.0	22,111	100.0	21,644	100.0
Family households (families)	5,530	41.1	7,238	39.3	9,900	44.8	10383	48.0
With children	2,732	20.3	3,429	18.6	5,137	23.2	5430	25.1
Without children	2,798	20.8	3,809	20.7	4,763	21.5	4,653	21.5
Nonfamily households	7,914	58.9	11,183	60.7	12,211	55.2	11,261	52.0
Householder living alone	4,374	32.5	6,778	36.8	7,476	33.8	6,796	31.4
65 years and over	513	3.8	827	4.5	979	4.4	866	4.0

Source: U.S. Census

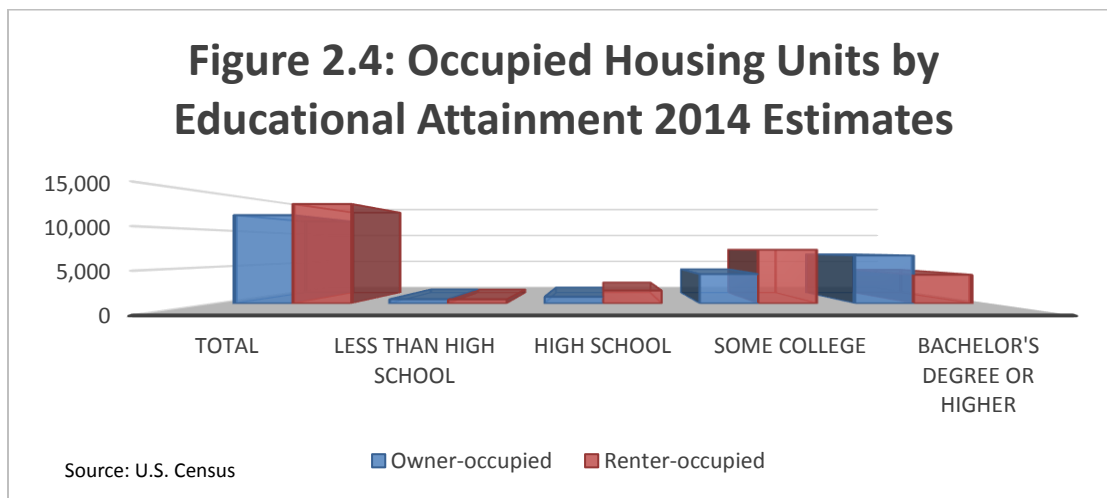
The distribution of household types in Auburn has changed since 1990 with the number of family households increasing by almost 7% since 1990, see previous chart. Family households have increased to 48% and households with children have increased by more than 5% to over half of the total family households. While there has been a decrease in the percentage of nonfamily households, the overall number of householders living alone during this 24 year period has remained the virtually the same. While the nation as a whole, and the State of Alabama, saw an increase of 17% and 15% respectively in non-family household population from 2000 to the 2014 estimated population⁴, Auburn saw an almost 7% decrease. The decrease in the share of non-family households as a percent of the total is indicative of the decreasing share of the Auburn population that consists of students.

From 1990 to the 2014 Census population estimate, the number of households in the City of Auburn increased by 61%, while overall population increased by 83%. The rate of household increase is being outpaced by the rate of population increase. Nationally, the number of households increased by 5.6 million between 2005 and 2010 and an estimated 2.0 million between 2010 and the 2014 estimates.

⁴ American Fact Finder <http://factfinder.census.gov>

	1990	2000	% change from 1990	2010	% change from 2000	2014 Est.	% change from 2010
Auburn	2.23	2.12	-4.93%	2.24	5.66%	2.23	-0.45%
Lee County	2.50	2.42	-3.20%	2.44	0.01%	2.44	0.00%
State of Alabama	2.62	2.49	-4.96%	2.48	-0.01%	2.55	+2.82%

Household size has fluctuated in Auburn from 1990 to 2014, but the estimated size is currently where it was in 1990, while the household size in Lee County and Alabama has been trending downward. Auburn households tend to be smaller than households at the county or state level. This difference is attributable in part to the large student population in Auburn, which is reflected in the 2014 Census estimate⁵ difference in household size between owner-occupied, 2.58 persons, and renter-occupied, 2.32 persons, per household (not shown in table). While the Census does not directly track student households, the following chart clearly shows the correlation between persons who have been or are currently enrolled in college (“some college”) and renter-occupied households.



Income & Poverty

Because of Auburn’s large student population, the City’s poverty rate is high, despite the City’s apparent prosperity. The disparity between family income (families include two or more related people) and household non-family income is very significant. It is useful to point out here that the low non-family income may be attributable, in part, to students with non-reported income from sources including family allowances or support while in school. According to the US Census Bureau, the estimated 2014 median family income for Auburn was \$77,638, an increase of 5.7% from 2010, and the 2014 estimate for nonfamily house income was \$18,530, a decrease of 5.9% over the same period. For the same period, 2010-2014, the estimated median family income in Alabama was \$54,724, an increase of 4.7% and \$65,443 in the nation, an increase of 4.9%. Median non-family household income for the 2010-2014 period in Alabama was \$24,650, an increase of 7.1% and for the US \$32,191, an increase of 3%.

⁵ American Fact Finder <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Table 2.7 - Income & Poverty							
Source: U.S. Census							
	1989	1999	% change from 1989	2010	% change from 1999	2014 Est.	% change from 2010
Median family household income	\$35,876	\$55,619	55.0%	\$73,458	32.1%	77,638	5.69%
Median nonfamily household income	\$6,662	\$9,677	45.3%	\$19,683	103.4%	18,530	-5.86%
Poverty rate (all people)	39.90%	38.10%	-1.8%	24.1%	-14%	31.3%	+7.2
Jan 1989 to Jan 1999 CPI increase (South Urban): 34.48%						US Department of Labor	
Jan 1999 to Jan 2010 CPI increase (South Urban): 33.58%						US Department of Labor	
Jan 2011 to Jan 2014 CPI increase (South Urban): 8.13%						US Department of Labor	

Income indicators have improved significantly in Auburn since 1989. From 1989 to 2010, family income in Auburn jumped 105%, or more than double, while non-family income increased by 195% to almost three (3) times what it was in 1989. While the year over year increase in median family and non-family household income increased an average of 5% and 9.3% annually for the period between 1989 and 2010, the median household estimate average for the period between 2010 and 2014 has only increased at 1.4% with the average non-family household estimated income decreasing by 1.5%.

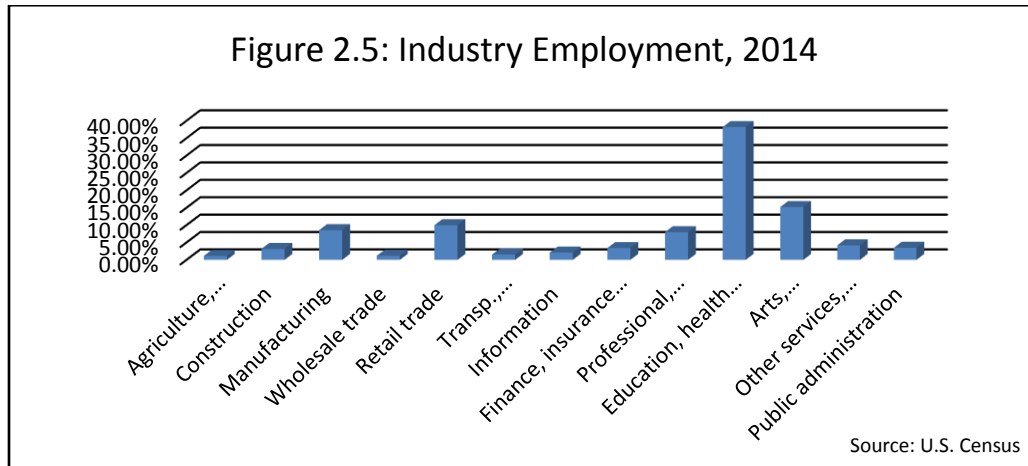
The significant increase in both household income categories between 1989 and 2010 may have helped reduce the overall poverty by 14% during that period; however, the estimated 2014 poverty rates have increased 7.2% to a total rate of 31.3%. This higher rate of poverty could be attributed to the higher number of college students in the community who may be receiving financial assistance from parents or other sources and, as a result, their reported household income is below the poverty level. The Census Bureau has tracked the estimated poverty by school enrollment for the City of Auburn, which includes college students, since 2007. Many of the students included in this count are likely from areas outside of Auburn; however, consideration should be made to students who may be from families in Auburn who maybe be classified as living below the poverty rate (see Table 2.8). The overall estimated 2014 poverty rates for the Nation was 15.6% (+1.2%), Alabama 18.9% (+1.5%), and Lee County 23.6% (+4.4%) have increased as well, but at a lesser rate⁶

Table 2.8 - Poverty Status for College Students within the City of Auburn						
	2007		2010		2014	
	Number of students	% of City Population	Number of students	% of City Population	Number of students	% of City Population
Undergraduate	8,233	18.6%	7,449	16.1%	10,525	20.0%
Graduate	904	2.0%	1,235	2.7%	1,600	3.0%
Total	9,137	20.7%	8,684	18.8%	12,125	23.0%

⁶ <http://factfinder.census.gov>.

Labor Force

The Census defines the labor force as those 16 years of age and older who are employed, looking for employment, or are in the armed forces. The 2014 American Community Survey estimate of the size of Auburn’s labor force to be 26,152. The relatively small number compared to Auburn’s overall population is a function of the large student population. The largest employment sectors remains education and health care at 38.2% - previously at 36%, followed by arts, entertainment, and hospitality at 15.2% - previously 11.9%, and then retail trade at 10% - previously at 12.5%.



Employment in Auburn is dominated by Auburn University with approximately 7,958 employees. The top 10 employers in Auburn are shown in Table 2.9:

Table 2.9 - Largest Employers, 2006 and 2015					
Source: City of Auburn Economic Development Department, Alabama Department of Labor					
Employer ranking based on 2015 data	# of Employees 2006	% of city employment 2006	# of Employees 2015	% of city employment 2015	Change in %
Auburn University ⁽¹⁾	7,047	27.62%	7,958	29.75%	+2.13%
Auburn City Schools	685	2.68%	975	3.64%	+0.96%
City of Auburn and Auburn Water Works Board	570	2.23%	650	2.43%	+0.20%
Briggs & Stratton Corporation	750	2.94%	445	1.66%	-1.28%
Borbet Alabama, Inc.	150	0.59%	415	1.55%	+0.96%
CSP Technologies NA, LLC (Former CV Holdings)	150	0.59%	395	1.48%	+0.89%
SCA, Inc.			385	1.44%	
Masterbrand Cabinets, Inc.	450	1.76%	375	1.40%	-0.36%
Wal-Mart Supercenter	340	1.33%	345	1.29%	-0.04%
Seohan Auto USA Corporation			260	0.97%	
Total	10,142	39.75%	12,408	46.39%	+6.64%

⁽¹⁾ Includes temporary and seasonal employees

2.1 Housing

Housing Units

In 2016, The City of Auburn has approximately 30,297 housing units, up from approximately 26,761 in 2011, excluding units on the campus of Auburn University. These units are shown in Table 2.10.

In addition to housing units within the City, Auburn University has approximately 1,350 units of student housing which can accommodate approximately 4,800 students.⁷

Using City of Auburn GIS data from 2011 and 2016, the percentage of single-family detached units as a total of dwelling units has increased by 1.3% from 2011 to 2016, while the percentage of all other units decreased by 0.7%.

Table 2.10 - Housing Units by Type, 2011 and 2016 Source: City of Auburn

Type	2011		2016		Change
	Unit Count	% of Total	Unit Count	% of Total	
Apartments/Condominiums	12,149	45.4%	13,019	43.0%	-2.4%
Private Dorm			565	1.9%	+1.9%
Single-Family Detached	10,329	38.6%	12,077	39.9%	+1.3%
Duplex	1,765	6.6 %	1,942	6.4%	-0.2%
Mobile Homes	1,045	3.9%	1,045	3.4%	-0.5%
Townhouses	784	2.9%	780	2.6%	-0.3%
Mixed-Use Commercial/Residential	308	1.2%	215	0.7%	-0.5%
Dormitory - Off-Campus	200	0.7%	394	1.3%	+0.6%
Triplex/Quadplex	56	0.2%	260	0.9%	+0.7%
Other	123	0.5%			
Total	26,761	100%	30,297	100%	*+ 13.2%

* Percent increase in total housing units between 2011 and 2016



⁷ <http://www.auburn.edu/administration/housing/>

Type	2000	2010	2014 Estimate
Homeowner	3%	4.6%	4.2%
Rental	8.8%	9.3%	5.4%
Median Rental Rate	\$446	\$677 (2010)	\$791

Age of Housing

The age of existing housing stock provided a rough estimate of the quality of existing housing stock. Older homes that are well-maintained are an asset to the City of Auburn. Older homes do, however, often contain health hazards as well as maintenance issues that are found less frequently in newer homes.

	2010		2014		% Change in Units
	Number of Units	% of Units	Number of Units	% of Units	
Built 2010 or later			852	3.4%	+3.4%
Built 2000 to 2009	6,369	27.0%	7,427	30.0%	+3.0%
Built 1990 to 1999	6,115	25.9%	5,894	23.8%	-2.1%
Built 1980 to 1989	3,468	14.7%	3,583	14.5%	-0.2%
Built 1970 to 1979	3,824	16.2%	3,365	13.6%	-2.6%
Built 1960 to 1969	2,006	8.5%	1,684	6.8%	-1.7%
Built 1950 to 1959	901	3.8%	1,194	4.8%	+1.0%
Built 1940 to 1949	419	1.7%	342	1.4%	-0.3%
Built 1939 or earlier	444	1.9%	379	1.5%	-0.4%
Total	23,576	100%	24,270	100%	+2.9%

Home Ownership

As with other indicators, the rate of home ownership in Auburn is lower than national rates due to the City's high student population. The trend is, however, changing as the character of Auburn's population changes over time. In 2000, housing units in Auburn were 40.9% owner-occupied and 59.1% renter-occupied. In 2009, housing units in Auburn were 44.4% owner-occupied and 55.6% renter-occupied, a significant change. By 2014, the estimated owner-occupied units had slipped slightly back down to 43.8% and renter occupied increasing to 56.2%.

Vacancy and Rental Rates

With the volume of new construction in Auburn since 2000, vacancy rates are an important indicator regarding the adequacy of the housing market to meet the needs of Auburn's growing population. Nationally, apartment vacancy has been on the rise, reaching an all-time high at the beginning of 2010.

Rental rates increased by 7.4% in the period from 2000 to 2014 (Table 2.12). The Rent of Primary Residence component of the Consumer Price Index for Southern cities in Auburn's population range increased by 51.9% during that period, suggesting that the rental market is performing well, as higher demand for units results in higher rents. In addition, a number of luxury apartment communities have entered the market since 2000.

2.2 Citizen Survey

The Auburn Citizen Survey is administered every year by ETC Institute, a firm that specializes in market research for local governments. While relevant results from the survey will be discussed in each section, a summary of the 2016 results follows.

Highlights from the 2016 Citizen Survey:⁸

- Satisfaction with the value received for City tax dollars/fees is 30% above the national average.
- Satisfaction with the overall quality of City services is 31% above the national average.
- Overall satisfaction ratings increased with 64 of the 68 areas that were assessed in both 2006 and 2016 improving or remaining the same. 50 areas overall showed significant improvement (increases of 4% or more). Some of the most significant improvements occurred in 5 areas with improvements of 20% or more.
 - Quality of community recreation centers
 - Maintenance of walking trails
 - Community recreation centers
 - Maintenance of swimming pools
 - Visibility of police in retail areas
- Overall priorities for the next two years
 - Flow of traffic congestion and management
 - Maintenance of City streets and facilities
 - Maintaining the quality of the school system
- When asked for “perceptions of the city” in five (5) qualities, the overall perceptions have shown significant increases (4% or more) between 2006 and 2016. Auburn ranks significantly above other communities in the US who were also surveyed by ETC Institute.

	2006	2016	2016 US Mean
Overall quality of life in the City	86%	91%	74%
Overall image of the City	81%	87%	63%
Overall quality of City services	77%	86%	55%
Overall appearance of the City	71%	76%	67%
Value received for city tax dollars and fees	68%	75%	45%

⁸ 2016 Citizen Survey conducted by ETC Institute