

CITY OF SHORELINE

Aurora Square Brand Report

October, 2015



Introduction

The Aurora Square project takes into consideration multiple aspects of influence. We understand this project is a **branding** process, not a “rebranding,” in that the property has never truly had it’s own identity. With outsiders of the property considering it to be the “Sears property,” we know there is ample opportunity and need for an entirely new brand identity. While it is currently a mix of retail offerings, it is a shopping center with massive potential to be much more.

Currently, Aurora Square may have a negative connotation with the word “Aurora,” in that the Aurora highway is synonymous with rundown businesses and uncleanliness. However, the Shoreline community is a family and student friendly town that is progressing rapidly. This progression deserves a centralized social environment with a much improved status.

Sears’ shape and position in Aurora Square essentially separates the property into two different centers presenting a challenge. The property has an assortment of shopping options and a diverse collection of ownership groups.

Our objective for the Aurora Square brand is to create an identity that sets the stage for the future of the property, strongly connects to the established demographics, and creates a “heart of Shoreline” connotation that separates itself from Aurora’s negative description.

Demographics

The area around Aurora Square is primarily made up of Shoreline residents, Shoreline Community College students/staff, and Aurora commuters. While the target demographic is not limited to Shoreline residents, we do know that they have a median age of 42 years old, and 65% of Shoreline households are family households. The average household income is \$64,182 with employment at 62% and unemployment only at 4%. These statistics show healthy consumer probability for families.

The demographics surrounding Shoreline Community College students show higher numbers for white and non-hispanic students at 52.3%, while the next closest ethnicity group is Asian/Pacific Islander at 10.8%. The average age of the students leans heavily towards a younger age at 25 years old. These students are primarily commuters being that there is no campus housing and that SCC is a two-year institution, thus making the Shoreline property a to-and-from destination with incredible potential to be a retreat for the students and staff.

Aurora commuters in general are another major target market for the property being that thousands of people use Highway 99 to get to and from their desired destination. This highway serves many purposes for commuters, allowing us to develop demographics based on these purposes. Auto dealers maintain a strong presence on 99 along with numerous auto-related retailers and service providers showing that commuters may also be in need of these services. Asian (primarily Korean) businesses and markets are also concentrated along the highway making the Asian demographic an important target along with the Asian population at SCC.

Competition

Understanding the competition allows us to better develop our goals and objectives in branding the Aurora Square Property. There are different categories of competition that affect the branding process in certain ways. We can consider our direct competition to be the more local retail, services, shopping centers that are in the area, while our indirect competitors could be considered the locations that are still within a respectable radius but also hold many of the aspects that the Aurora Square Property strives to be.

Local Retail/Services

Aurora Avenue North serves as the direct competition for local retail shops and services. As well as big box stores and national chains. However, this major transit route is currently being redesigned and redeveloped to improve not only pedestrian safety and vehicular capacity, but the aesthetics and welcoming nature overall. Aurora Avenue North has an older feel with more traditional retail and dining amenities. It is a road with much diversity and a wide array of different types of businesses ranging from coffee shops to restaurants of varying ethnicities, auto repair shops and home goods stores, large chain stores and smaller businesses. Just down the street from Aurora Square you can find Starbucks, a barbecue restaurant, an auto wholesale store, a paint store, a Mexican restaurant, a Korean restaurant, and a casino.

Other Shopping Centers

Other notable competitors to the Aurora Square property are Northgate Mall, Alderwood Mall, Ballard Downtown, Aurora Village, Edmonds Downtown, Lake City at 125th, and Third Place Commons. Northgate and Alderwood Mall are the closest “malls” in the vicinity of the property. Each offers a one-stop shopping atmosphere that is much more a destination for shoppers, but often limits itself to national chains. Aurora Village is the nearest “shopping center” and features more directly competitive retail offerings in the form of big-box retailers like Home Depot and Costco — the highest competition for Sears.

On the other hand, Edmonds' and Ballard's downtown areas offer a local and eclectic shopping experience in competition of the locally-owned and unique businesses sought by a new Aurora Square property. Lake City at 125th also offers a variety of shops and restaurant options and is considered direct competition in that it is in an easily accessible location and provides the ability for a quick stop, rather than a whole mall experience. Lastly, we feel Third Place Commons offers the social and community aspects of competition that the Aurora Square Property strives to embody.

University Village

While this shopping center has a lot of other competitors between them and Aurora Square, it can be described as one of our indirect competitors that holds the landmark ideals desired for the Aurora Square Property. With over 50 stores ranging from fashion and technology, to services and restaurants. University Village is considered a true "lifestyle center" with greenery and aesthetic walkways, while also boasting local boutiques and national retailers alike. They are family and pet friendly with outdoor seating and abundant colorful flower beds.

Mill Creek Town Center

Another "lifestyle center" that holds similar ideals that Aurora Square aspires to be. This outdoor mall acts as a social core to the Mill Creek area with over 80 retailers and a true park-like setting. The idea of Mill Creek Town Center being a central go-to destination for social activity is extremely appealing to our brand strategy.

Survey of Aurora Square Stakeholders

We surveyed respondents from the Friends of Aurora Square (FOAS) group to find out more about the property's current position and future ideals. We found valuable results that direct our brand strategy in many ways.

Currently, the FOAS group feels the property is very modest, discreet, and quiet with a subdued vibe. When asked whether the property is more colorful or black and white, respondents felt it was more black and white with a very simple look and feel. Challenges the property faces seem to be the current layout, large open asphalt, lack of walkability, and too many property owners. They do feel, however, that it is a great location that hosts strong demographics in families and high income neighborhoods. Its proximity to Shoreline Community College is considered a massive opportunity and its position just off Highway 99 provides space for its own identity away from Aurora businesses.

In the years to come the respondents would like the brand to be more modern, high-tech, and colorful. They would like it to be moderately expensive with a more refined feel. Many of the respondents see the future property with lots of green space and a more park-like atmosphere. Family-friendly amenities such as a playground and patio space are high on the list of wants. Respondents want to see locally-owned businesses that speak to the needs of surrounding demographics in SCC students and Aurora commuters. Even a nightlife atmosphere with a large restaurant that hosts a "hip" bar and family food to give the property a well-deserved "downtown" feeling.

Brand Strategy

In developing our brand strategy, we kept in mind all of the factors presented above and further established concrete goals and objectives to accomplish throughout this process. We want the brand to speak to the City of Shoreline and represent the heart of the city as a beacon of progress and development. We also understand Aurora Avenue holds a negative connotation that has no relationship to Shoreline and its residents. We are striving to avoid this connotation in building our new brand. The property's position next to Shoreline Community College serves as a pinnacle objective for the brand to not only relate to, but to provide a safe and desirable destination for students and staff to enjoy consistently. Because of this association, we envision 160th Street West being transformed into "College Way" in order to tie *Shoreline Place* to the nearby Shoreline Community College. This would increase the visibility of *Shoreline Place* and SCC, from the heavily trafficked Aurora Avenue North.

It is also our goal to set the stage for the future of this property by establishing an ideal of progress and momentum. By incorporating "life" elements such as planters, vibrant art, gathering spaces, and bold messaging, we can accomplish this ideal of progress. This is in line with our recommendation for "*tactical urbanism*" where the Shoreline Farmers Market, food truck corrals, and other events could be moved to the upper lot to begin promoting *Shoreline Place*. It is in the best interest for this brand to represent this progress and provide a vision for the community and push the property's owners to take charge and commit to the challenges that the property faces.

Keywords and Brand Attributes

Throughout the creative process, we used the following themes as guidelines for the brand:

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Modern | 8. Current | 15. Upscale |
| 2. Colorful | 9. Safe | 16. Cohesive |
| 3. High-Tech | 10. Lively | 17. Distinct |
| 4. Local | 11. Playful | 18. Casual |
| 5. Welcoming | 12. Central | 19. Refined |
| 6. Family Friendly | 13. Spontaneous | 20. Accessible |
| 7. Cool | 14. Community | |

New Brand



Shoreline Place is a strong name which immediately conjures a notion of belonging. All people value a sense of place and seek a spot to call their own. This is the place to be. The property positions itself as a “third place” (after home and work), a social surrounding often thought important for establishing feelings of togetherness in a frequently fragmented society.

In his book, *The Great Good Place*, Ray Oldenburg breaks down the characteristics that define that sense of place. A place must be open and accessible to visitors, and in walking distance for many. Available commerce should be affordable and food and drink, while not essential, are important aspects. A place must be accommodating, meaning it provides the wants of inhabitants and guests — the goal being that everyone feel their needs have been fulfilled. A good place involves regulars who habitually congregate there. It is welcoming and comfortable, and both new friends and old should be found there.

Many of the elements of our brand strategy are represented in the *Shoreline Place* name, bringing people together and creating a community for local residents and students alike.

Shoreline Place is the place to...





SHORELINE
PLACE

PYLON SIGNS

SHORELINE
PLACE

FARMERS MARKET
* SATURDAY *

FRESH GOODS
CRAFTS * MUSIC
FOOD TRUCKS!

Pier 1 imports

Marshalls

Kyoto 駅



SHORELINE
PLACE

Pier 1 imports

Sears Outlet

CKO
kickboxing

SEARS
AUTOMOTIVE CENTER



SHORELINE
PLACE



Apple Store



24
HOUR **FITNESS**

BED BATH & **BEYOND**

J. CREW



MONUMENT SIGNS



SHORELINE
PLACE

15300



SHORELINE
PLACE

15300



Marshalls

SHORELINE
PLACE



WAYFINDING SIGNS



SHORELINE
PLACE



- PIER 1 IMPORTS
- MARSHALL'S
- SHAKE N' GO BURGERS
- AARON BROTHERS
- SEATTLE CHILDREN'S
- KYOTO
- CKO KICKBOXING
- SEARS AUTOMOTIVE



SHORELINE PLACE

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CENTRAL MARKET

SALVATION ARMY FAMILY STORE

US BANK

SEARS

TROPICAL TAN



SHORELINE PLACE

CENTRAL MARKET

SALVATION ARMY FAMILY STORE

US BANK

SEARS

BED, BATH & BEYOND

TROPICAL TAN

J. CREW



POLE BANNERS





SHORELINE
PLACE

SHORELINE'S
GATHERING
PLACE

Shannon
774-8211

Marshall's

