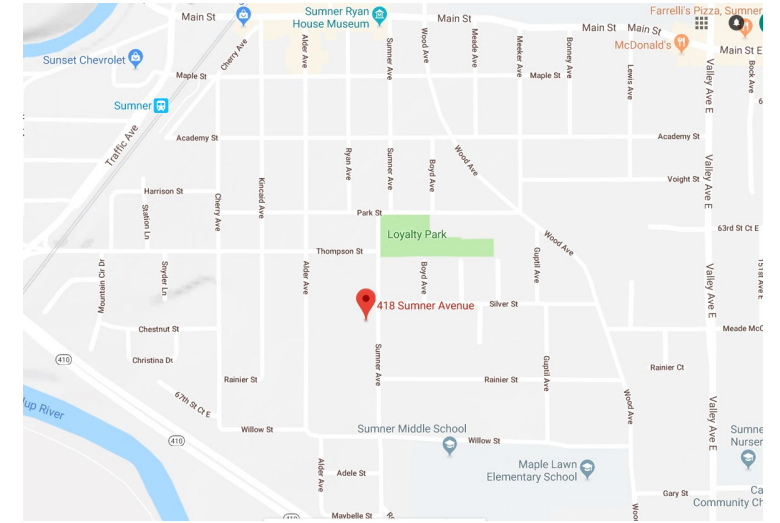
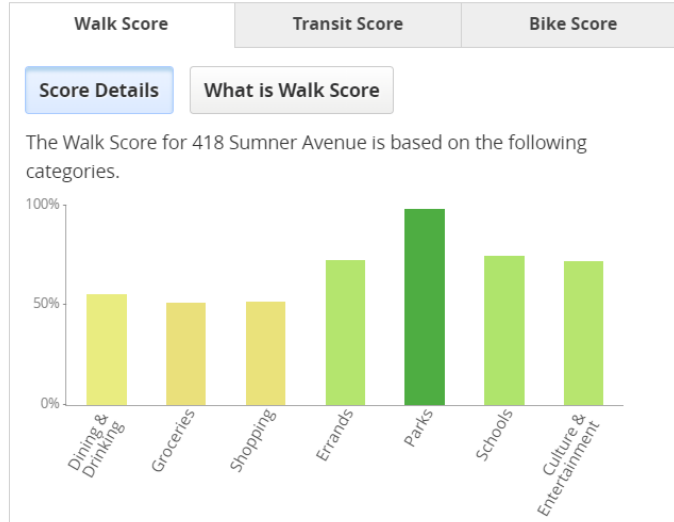


Melony
Pederson
Assignment 1
Sumner, WA



Walk Score **61** Bike Score **73**



Sumner is a city of 10,000 people in Washington State in the Puget Sound Region. We've lived here for the past eleven years and my wife has lived in this area her entire life. One of the city's largest draws is the ease of commuting to neighboring Tacoma and Seattle via the Sounder Commuter Train and its quaint charm. Sumner has an Americana Main Street with everything from crepes to antiques, many parks and trails and is quite walkable for some typical errands. My home is indicated on the second map near Loyalty Park and we'll see how healthy this community is by taking a walking tour and benchmarking against ULI's 21 Recommendations from the Building Healthy Places Toolkit.



As I began my walk I was happy to see at the end of my block a new sidewalk was installed at a formerly treacherous intersection for pedestrians. The City worked with the homeowner to removed a row of shrubs that significantly hindered sightlines and accommodate the new sidewalk and planting strip. Around the corner is a Sumner School District Complex; complete with a newly remodeled elementary and ,middle school. An Early Learning Center is under construction currently and scheduled to complete for Fall enrollment. While these are technically private uses the grounds are open to the community to use the new track at the middle school and playground and the elementary school. Having these schools so close to home was a huge draw for where we bought our home. We wanted to make sure the kids could walk to school everyday and we could walk to their events at night. The reality of the situation however is that the suburban mindset still has many parents drive their kids even when they are well within walking distance. I hate to admit my own kids fall into this category however I can at least say it was not under my watch. **Perhaps a campaign including the City and School District to get families walking could be a successful way to get those parents out of their cars.**



Beyond having a few educational facilities tucked into the residential neighborhood we also have several community focused spaces; several churches, a VFW and a Boy Scout Hall. Having this mix of land uses, including Loyalty Park, helps keep the neighborhood stay active and encourages use. The parks in Sumner each focus on a unique attribute, Loyalty focuses on younger families and gatherings. There are ample tables and BBQ's for warm weather parties, a large play structure for kids as well as a new Zip Line added to freshen the appeal of the City's oldest park. While this park encourages multigenerational use through its amenities it could install better drinking water features and perhaps a covered area to protect from the misty weather.



Loyalty Park



While the streets are very well connected in Sumner you can tell an 'old' street from a new one pretty easily. Our older area of downtown has small scale streets designed before the heavy influence of the automobile. The lower left quadrant shows Alder Avenue in the oldest area of our core. The majority of the streets however have enough width to accommodate parking on both sides and two lanes of traffic very comfortably. **Its on these streets that we can introduce permanent bike lanes or even parkettes to help mitigate speeding.** The pedestrian environment is a top priority for the city and sidewalks are always being worked on around town. There is even a sidewalk program for homeowners to participate in where they can go in on improving their right of way at a discount.

This last stop is to show the evolution of a city. This is the site of a former Red Apple grocery store across from City Hall and one block from the Train Station. The store went out of business shortly after a Fred Meyer was built on the other side of town. Would I love to have a grocery store a few blocks from home? Yes I would. However, the grocery business doesn't allow for stores of this size in my market any longer. While Sumner does it's best to recruit a Trader Joe's it simply does not have the headcounts or income levels to warrant one. This raises the question for me on what can we do to help private business place their locations in an equitable, healthful and profitable way?

Currently the City owns the lot and intends to release and RFP shortly for a mixed use development. They've increased the height allowance here as well to further encourage density near transit. In the mean time it is a paid lot for commuters taking the Sounder.



Turns out Sumner is pretty healthy while leaving some room for improvement. When comparing to the 21 recommendations in ULI's Building Healthy Places toolkit we have 10 covered explicitly. Just within my fairly homogenous area of town there is a mix of land uses, streets designed for people, sidewalks and planting strips encouraging use, plenty of space for biking, a lovely stair at the middle school (not pictured), several park spaces for multigenerational play as well as facilitating social engagement and last but not least an increase on access to nature.

Right outside my 4 block radius is the Fred Meyer, on the Key its indicated by the red star. Many people in that neighborhood do walk to do their shopping and I'm happy to report a new multi-family development is underway directly adjacent to the Fred Meyer.

While there is room to bike on the streets its simply through lack of use, if the streets were busy with traffic and parked cars the atmosphere would change. It would be prudent for the City to take advantage now of the openness to establish set bike lanes.

There are five of the recommendations that Sumner could do a little more with. One is hosting a Farmers Market, again this gets tricky due to a neighboring city having a really successful weekly market. Is it healthier to have one great local market and have the farmers only need to staff one a week OR is it better to have one in every city thereby increasing accessibility for shoppers but stretching the resources of the farming community?

Another is supporting gardening and farming. Sumner has a rich history of farming and as time has progressed that farmland has shrunk and almost completely disappeared. Again, this is a critical time where the City has an opportunity to foster the farm to table conversation while there is still acreage within town by working with the farmers on programming and any needed assistance.

I briefly mentioned the need to increase access to drinking water at Loyalty Park. There is currently an older water fountain that I doubt gets much use. In the time of Hydroflasks and Doggie Daycares its time to upgrade to something closer to what's pictured here.

While smoking is banned in parks already, signage might help curb the use, especially with vaping becoming more and more frustrating for regular park goers.

Minimizing noise pollutions is another work in progress for the city. I've mentioned several times the central train station which is wonderful for commuting but brings with it freight trains as well. These whistle and blow their horns all through the day and night which has prompted the City to work with BNSF on sound mitigation for the closest neighbors.

With these attainable shifts made Sumner's health index could reach an all time high!



Sumner Key

