

Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning 2016

Community: University Heights
Minutes by Trees Forever Field Coordinator: Hannah Howard
Date and Time: Saturday, April 9th, 9 AM
Meeting Length: 7 Hours
Location: St Andrews Church
Meeting Number and Title: #4 TAB Workshop

Number of community members in attendance by group:

Seniors/Mobility impaired: 12
Active Recreationists: 18
Parents: 7
Children: 6
Steering Committee: 5

Names of committee members in attendance: Virginia Miller, Kip Sheldon, Michael Gay, Sara O'Sullivan, Nancy Barth

Others: Megan Hassel (court reporter); Scott Timm (Iowa State); Miao Fagzhou (Iowa State); Jessica Adiwijaya (Iowa State); Hannah Howard (Trees Forever); Carl Barnhart (Trees Forever); Carole Teator (Trees Forever)

Meeting Summary:

The Transportation Assets and Barriers Workshop in University Heights had a great turnout with 48 participants. Schedule of focus groups below:

9:00 to 11:00 Seniors and Mobility Impaired (12)
10:00 to 12:00 Parents and Children (13)
11:00 to 1:00 Active Recreationists (18)
1:00 to 3:00 Steering Committee (5)
3:30 Presentation of Results

During each focus group participants pointed out their commonly used routes throughout University Heights, what they considered to be assets in the community, undesirable aspects, and potential, beneficial community improvements. The majority of University Heights is made up of residential property, so there were not very many destinations within city limits. However, many residents are active and frequently exercise throughout the community on foot or by bike.

Participants identified the shade and tree canopy throughout the community as well as the trail through the woods on the north end of town as assets to University Heights. When discussion began on some of the barriers throughout the community, traffic was the largest issue identified throughout each focus group. With so many people passing through University Heights to access the hospital, the University of Iowa or Iowa City, it

Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning 2016

can be hard for pedestrians to cross Melrose or for bicyclists to ride with traffic. Due to the high volume of bus and car traffic on Melrose, bicyclists commonly use the sidewalk.

The desired improvements expressed by workshop participants included items like bike lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks and intersections, improved lighting, benches and signage. Desired signage included entryway signage into the community as well as signage to improve safety for children and other pedestrians. Currently, most people passing through have no idea when they are entering or leaving University Heights. Participants would like to see signage that stands out and gives an identity to the community. With such high traffic volumes going through University Heights specifically on Melrose, focus group participants expressed the need for bike lanes. Bike lanes along Melrose would separate bike and foot traffic while creating a safe place for bicyclists alongside vehicle traffic.

In addition to signage and bike lanes, focus group participants also wanted to see more improvements for pedestrians. Many places in the community are not connected by sidewalks and can make it difficult for children or mobility impaired residents to get around in the community. Adding additional sidewalks and widening the sidewalks along Sunset and Melrose would be a welcomed improvement. Poor lighting is also a problem along major streets and sidewalks in town, so participants would like to see lighting along streets like Melrose, Koser and Highland.

At the end of the day 14 focus group participants and visioning committee members returned for the presentation of results. Hannah provided residents with more information about Community Visioning, the meeting process and how their input will be used. Iowa State interns showed everyone how to access the Community Visioning website and provided instructions to view the photos and comments taken during each focus group. This website is accessible online to everyone but all focus group participants are anonymous. Many workshop participants expressed excitement regarding the visioning process and a willingness to get involved further down the road.

Next Meeting: TBD