# **Emerging Themes**

The ISU research team conducted virtual focus groups with active recreationists, parents, and the Alleman visioning committee. Not enough Alleman residents from the other demographic groups volunteered to participate, so those sessions were canceled. As a result, the information presented here is not inclusive of all transportation user types. However, understanding the similarities and differences among user types who are represented will offer insight when the visioning committee identifies programming objectives.

#### **Desirable Qualities and Features**

Walking is the most popular form of exercise among the three focus-group types; parents and actives also bike. Peace and quiet, safety, and scenic views make walking more enjoyable for these groups. The schools offer a network of walkways where people feel safe and are sheltered from the wind. All three groups enjoy scenic views and natural beauty while walking and/or biking, naming the views along NE 6th Street as attractive.

#### **Undesirable Qualities and Features**

Although residents enjoy the scenery along NE 6th Street, all three groups identified that corridor as a barrier to pedestrians and cyclists because it carries a lot of traffic, including high-school drivers, and there is no sidewalk or trail. Inconsistent sidewalks throughout town and roads with narrow or no shoulders are also impediments to walkers and bikers. Actives feel constrained by the lack of bike trails in town, and parents find the limited options for recreation inconvenient. Flooding along Fourmile Creek and pooling water in the streets are seasonal issues.

### **Desired Improvements**

Increased connectivity emerged as an important theme among participants. Active recreationists and parents want sidewalks that connect neighborhoods to the high school. Actives and steering committee members want trail connections between Alleman and recreation venues such as the High Trestle Trail and the Heart of Iowa Trail at Huxley. All groups noted the need for a sidewalk or trail along NE 6th Street between "Alleman proper" and the Alleman Estates.

Active recreationists are most interested in creating safe bike paths in and around Alleman. Along with the steering committee, this group suggested adding sidewalks throughout town as well.

Parents would like an additional exit from the schools to mitigate traffic congestion during school start and end times. They indicated that the one-way entrance and exit at the elementary school is inefficient. This group would also like access to the high school track for walking. Finally, parents said that Alleman should have a public park with shelters, grills, a gathering space, a playground, and fitness equipment.

session, there's not...a whole bunch of traffic, but if you're trying to do something at the school start time or when school gets out, the traffic can be kind of congested."

to Alleman Estates. I think that would be helpful, especially for the kids who

"There [are] no sidewalks at

all, but...when school is not in

**Parents** 

"[NE 6th Street] would be a good road for a walking path of some sort."

"I bike and walk a lot. We have

no sidewalks in Alleman and

there are no bike trails, so if

we want to get on a bike trail,

l either ride down Highway 69

or I go out...134th to [NW 16th

Street] and down to 126th...

and then over to Polk City."

live in Alleman Estates. They

could more easily get back

and forth to the schools."

"A barrier is the oneway in, one-way out of the [elementary] school because as our population is increasing, that traffic isn't going to get any slower or any less..."

"[Kids bike in] the middle school parking lot and the middle school sidewalks because th[ose are] really the only sidewalks...around."

"I bike to work from time to time, but if there's

a way to make that safer, that's definitely

something I'd be interested in rather than

needing to bike down the highway. There's

not a good conducive way to do that without

biking and walking right on the road."

"[Highway] 69 is always a problem area. That's probably the highest traffic, highest speed [area]...I feel like we all figure out our paths and routes based on what we know about peak times...We make accommodations based on the barriers that exist today."

"I live down in the estates.
I've been known to walk up
[to town]. I've been known to
ride my bike up there, and...
if there was a trail or a path or
something between the two
areas, I would probably be
prone to do it more often."

"That area around the schools is definitely an asset because it's maintained very well and it's always plowed...It's just a nice sidewalk all around there."

"[Highway] 69 is always
a problem area. That's
probably the highest traffic,
highest speed [area]...I feel
like we all figure out our
paths and routes based
on what we know about
peak times...We make
accommodations based on
the barriers that exist today."

"The lack of the shoulders in the ditches...[is] common all throughout town, whether you're up by the schools or down by 134th or west."

Steering Committee

"Alleman has talked about a sidewalk from the southern area up to the main area, but we have to buy it back from the farmers."

any place safe for walking and biking where you're not worried about other drivers all the time."

"I would like a bike path that would connect us...down to 118th and [Highway] 69, because you can pick up sidewalks from there. Once you're into Ankeny, you can go [to] downtown Des Moines without having to get on a road again."

Actives

Alleman
What People Said

## **Transportation Assets and Barriers**

Julia Badenhope, Sandra Oberbroeckling, Chad Hunter

Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation

