

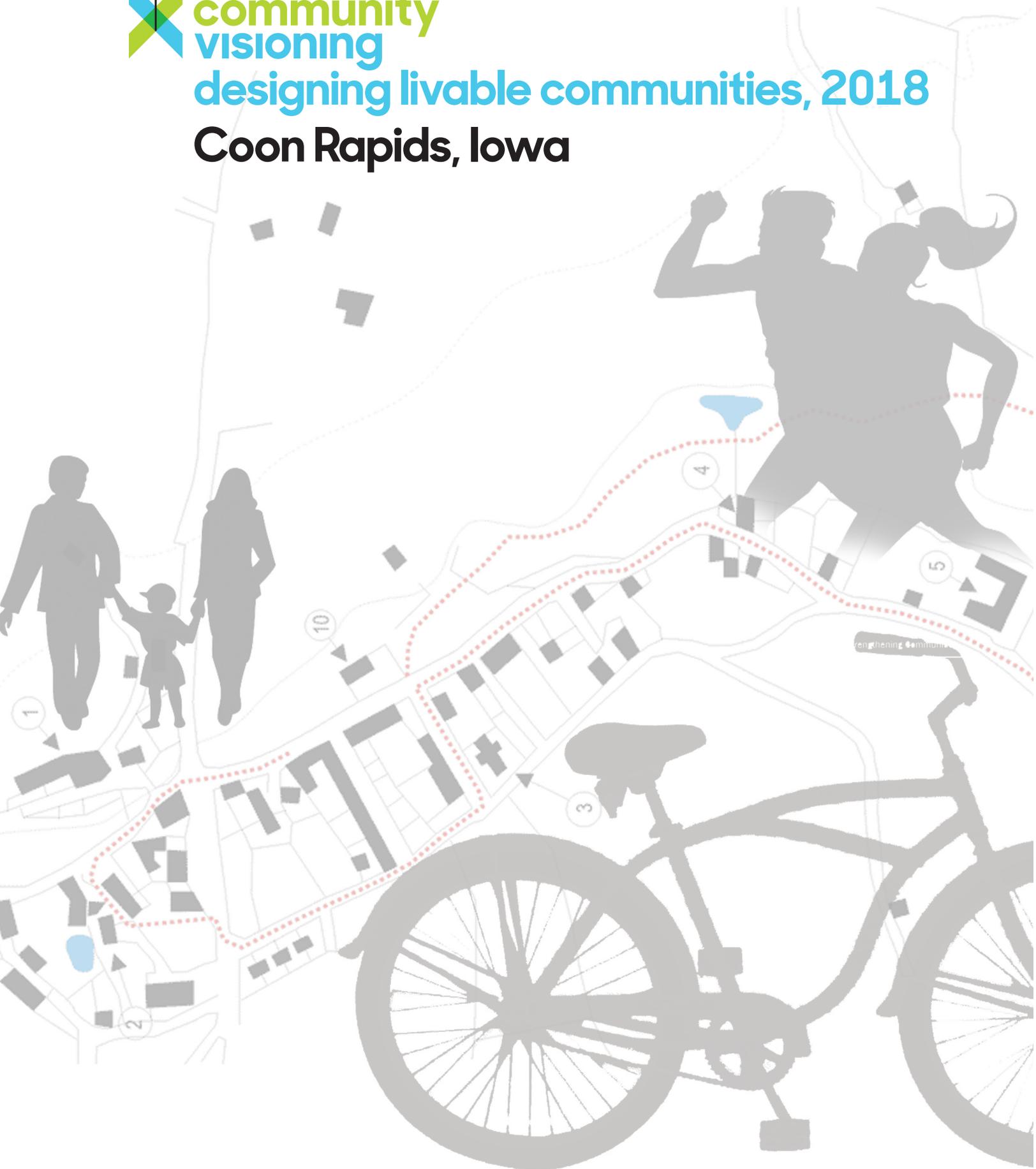


Iowa's Living Roadways

**community
visioning**

designing livable communities, 2018

Coon Rapids, Iowa





"Put a lake in Whiterock Conservancy for a destination place...for a reason to get on the bike trail and ride to a lovely lake to stay over or fish. Put a trail to the lake."



"To improve my community, creating habitat for birds, pollinators (butterflies, bees) is important!"

"Make the trails open to motorized vehicles, golf carts/gators for seniors or handicapped people at all times."



Introduction

The Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program is a collaboration involving the Iowa Department of Transportation, the Living Roadway Trust Fund, Iowa State University and Trees Forever. One of the primary objectives of the Community Visioning Program is to assist participants in the process of building livable communities—that is, creating an environment that not only meets residents' basic needs but is also aesthetically appealing.

With assistance from Iowa State University's Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology, ISU visioning program staff conducted a survey to better understand the transportation patterns and behaviors, needs and desires of Coon Rapids residents. Surveys were mailed to 300 randomly selected residents living in Coon Rapids and the surrounding area. To increase the response rate, the study was publicized through the local media and follow-up packets were mailed to nonrespondents.

With adjustments for ineligible respondents (e.g., incorrect addresses, no longer living in the community), the final sample size was 264. A total of 136 people returned surveys, for a response rate of 51.5%. (A response rate of 20% is considered valid.)

Why Do A Survey?

The survey gives the visioning steering committee objective, representative information for the goal-setting phase of community visioning. The quantitative data collected from survey responses complements the qualitative information gathered from the focus groups at the transportation assets and barriers workshop.

The modes of transportation that residents use and the routes they take suggest suitable types of transportation enhancements in these areas. Having a sense for people's willingness to help either financially or with their time is important because many transportation enhancements are funded from multiple sources, including grants, private donations, in-kind contributions, and volunteers. Understanding what types of improvements are important to residents gives the committee insight into how to prioritize projects.

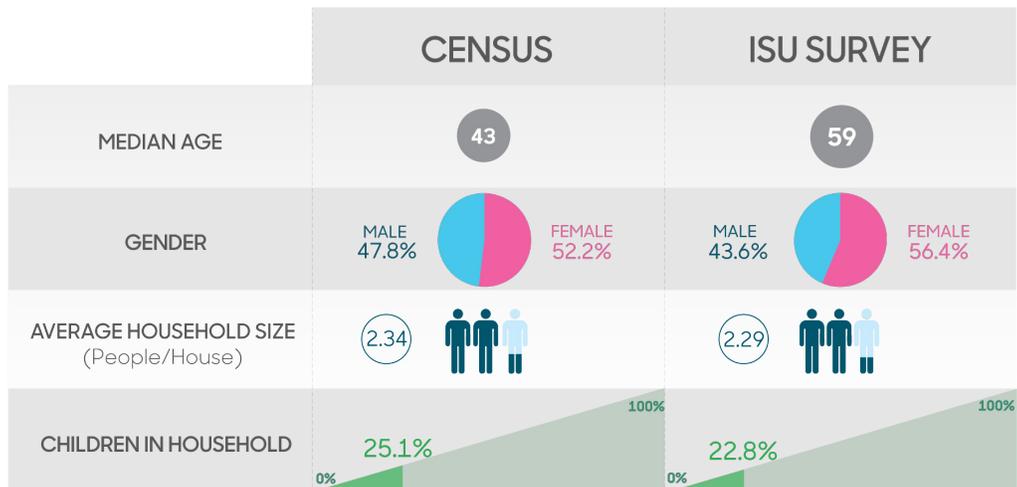
What Did We Find Out?

We asked survey recipients what routes they used most often for going to work, walking, and biking. We also asked whether or not residents would like a recreation trail and where they think it should be. We also discovered what residents think is most important in terms of transportation enhancements that address issues such as accessibility, mobility, and safety. Finally, we learned whether or not residents are willing to contribute their time or their financial resources to making enhancements to Coon Rapids. This series of boards summarizes the results of the survey as follows:

- Willingness to Help
- Enhancement Priorities
- Commuting Routes
- Walking Routes
- Biking Routes
- Desired Trail Routes

How Did We Do?

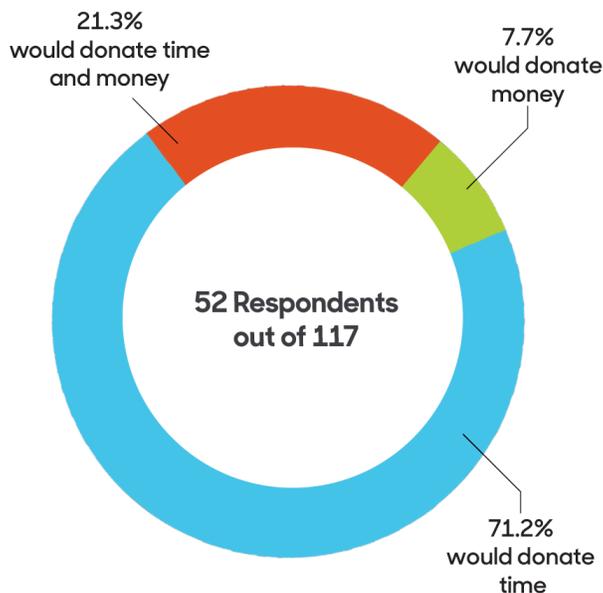
The demographics of the respondents are somewhat different from those obtained from the 2016 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate. For example, the survey respondents median age of 59 is significantly older than the 2016 estimated average age for Coon Rapids residents of 43. In terms of gender, average household size, and number of children in the household, survey respondents are similar to the 2016 estimates.



Source: US Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates.

ARE PEOPLE WILLING TO HELP?

More than 44% said YES!



Willingness to implement change

Most survey participants who answered this question are willing to contribute their time and talent to community improvements (71.2%), while just over 21% would contribute both time and talent and financial help. Nearly 8% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to contribute financially.

Compared to other small towns in Iowa, Coon Rapids residents are slightly more willing to become involved in improving their community. In 2014, on average, 43% of residents in small, rural towns volunteered to help with a community project.¹

How Do You Get People to Help?

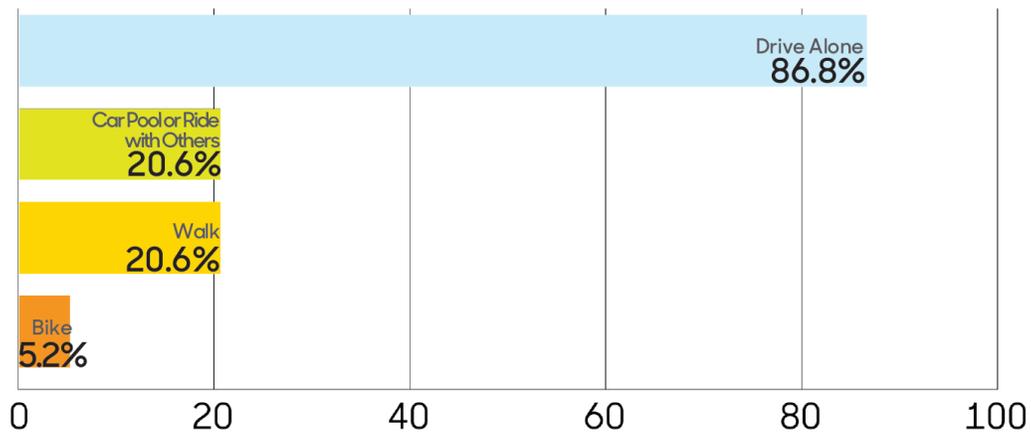
In 2014, the most common reason residents in small-town Iowa said they didn't become involved in community projects is that no one asked them (34%). Twenty-eight percent on average said that they don't have time, which is significantly lower than the 2004 average of 59%. Sixteen percent indicated that they didn't know how to become involved, and 7% said that no community project needed volunteers.¹ These results indicate that the best ways to get people involved in community projects is to simply ask, along with advertising opportunities through traditional and social media outlets.

¹ *Sigma: A Profile of Iowa Small Towns 1994 to 2014* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, 2015).

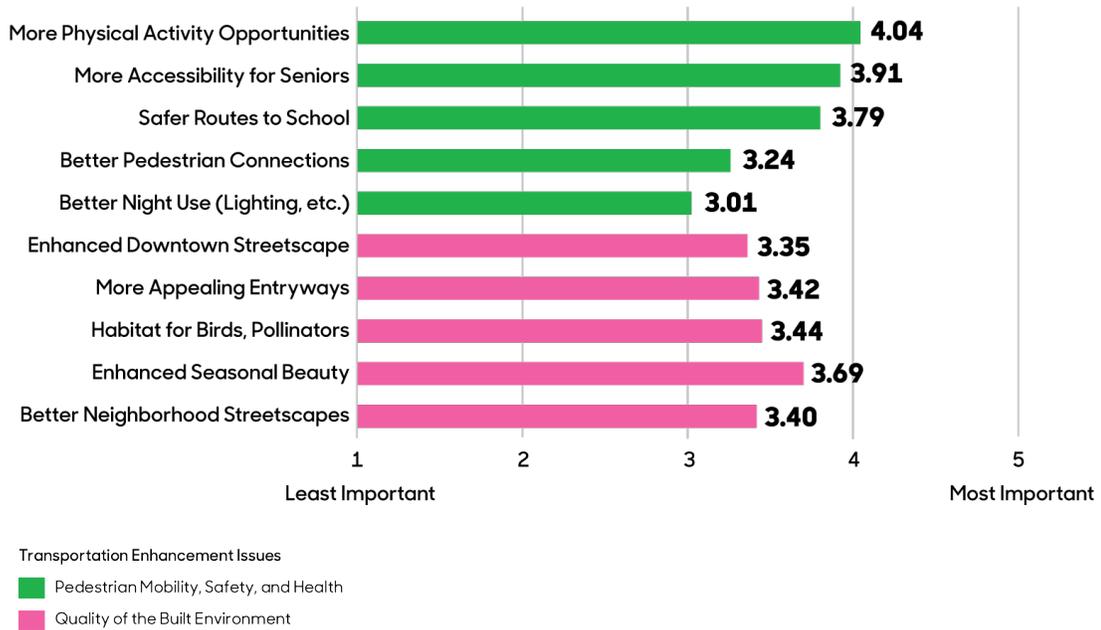
How Do Coon Rapids Residents Travel?

Most survey respondents drive to important destinations such as the convenience store, the post office, school, and church (86.8%). More than 20% car pool or ride with someone else. Some people indicated that they walk or bike, but the primary mode of transportation in Coon Rapids is by vehicle.

Please note that some respondents indicated that they use more than one mode of transportation to get to work; therefore, percentages add up to more than 100%.

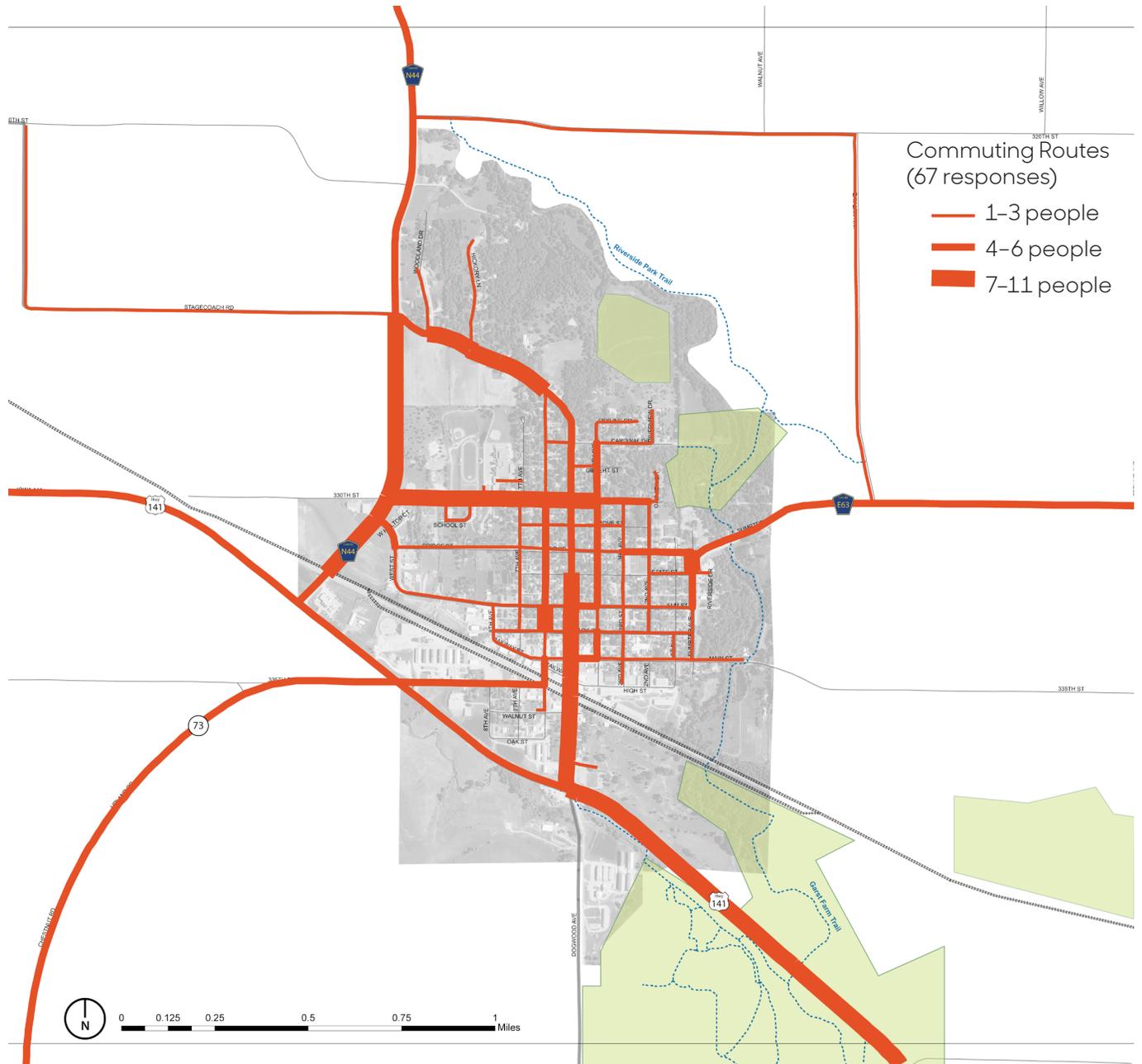


WHAT TYPES OF ENHANCEMENTS ARE IMPORTANT? Mobility, Safety, and Health!



Importance of transportation enhancement by type (118 responses)

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, participants in Coon Rapids ranked creating more opportunities for physical activity as most important, with a mean value of 4.04. Other transportation enhancements that address pedestrian mobility, health, and safety are also considered important. Environmental and aesthetic issues are less important among respondents, with mean values ranging from 3.35 to 3.69. These findings are consistent with the views expressed by focus group participants during the Transportation Assets and Barriers workshop held in March 2018.



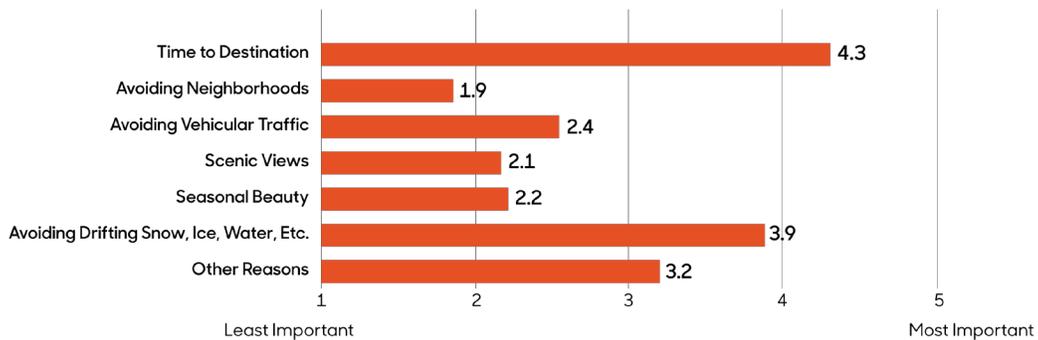
Map Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, "Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems Library," <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislibx/>.

How People Get To Work

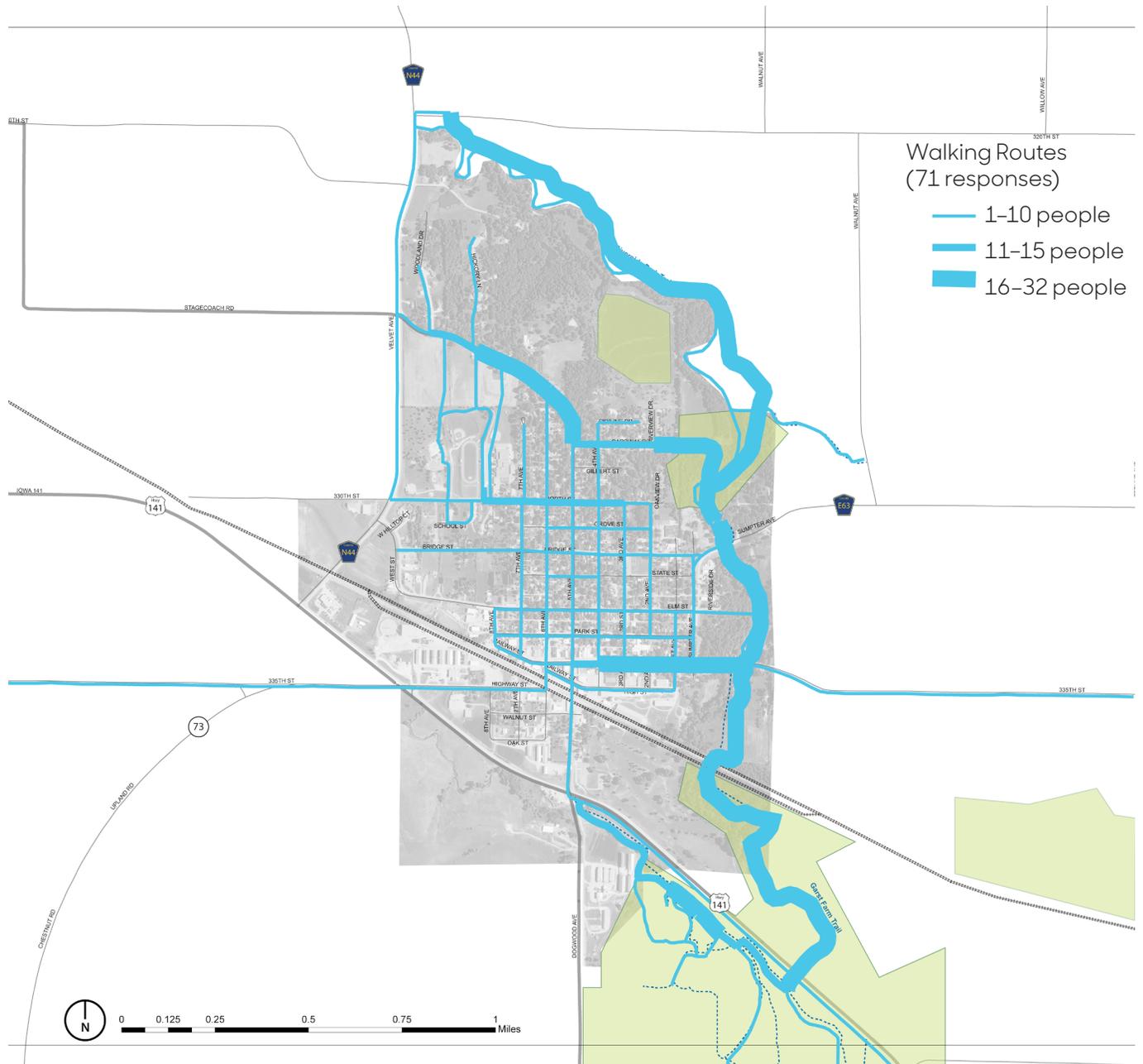
This map shows the commuting routes identified by 67 survey respondents. The frequency that the routes are used is depicted by their thickness, with most frequently used routes being the thickest. The primary commuting corridor in Coon Rapids is Highway 141 to the east. Some people also go west on Highway 141 and travel on Highway 73. In town, North Street, 5th Avenue, Stagecoach Road and County Road N44 are the most heavily traveled.

The circulation patterns that emerge when routes for biking, walking, and commuting are overlaid suggest suitable types of transportation enhancements. For example, where pedestrian and vehicular traffic intersect, such improvements could include creating better visibility, defining crossing points, or improving signage.

Why They Go That Way



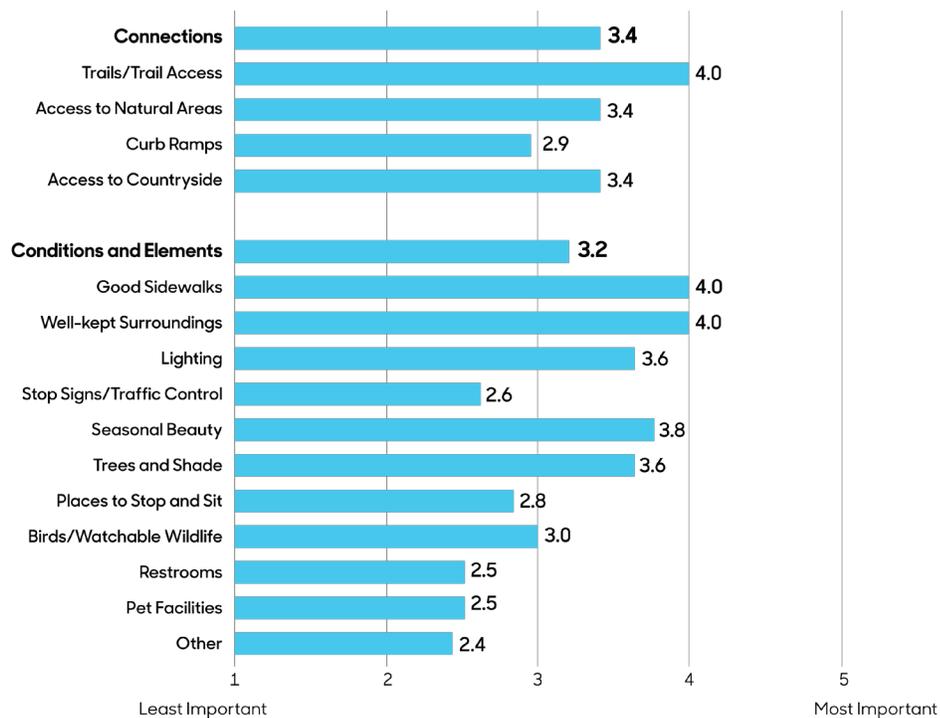
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, survey participants ranked the characteristics and features that factored into their choice of commuting route. Among Coon Rapids participants, time to destination is clearly the most important factor, with a mean value of 4.3. Avoiding weather-related issues such as snow and ice is also considered important, with a mean value of 3.9. Avoiding neighborhoods, scenic views, and seasonal beauty are not critical factors in determining commuting routes. Some of the other reasons, which have a mean value of 3.2, include fewer stops, having cell phone reception, and avoiding pedestrians.



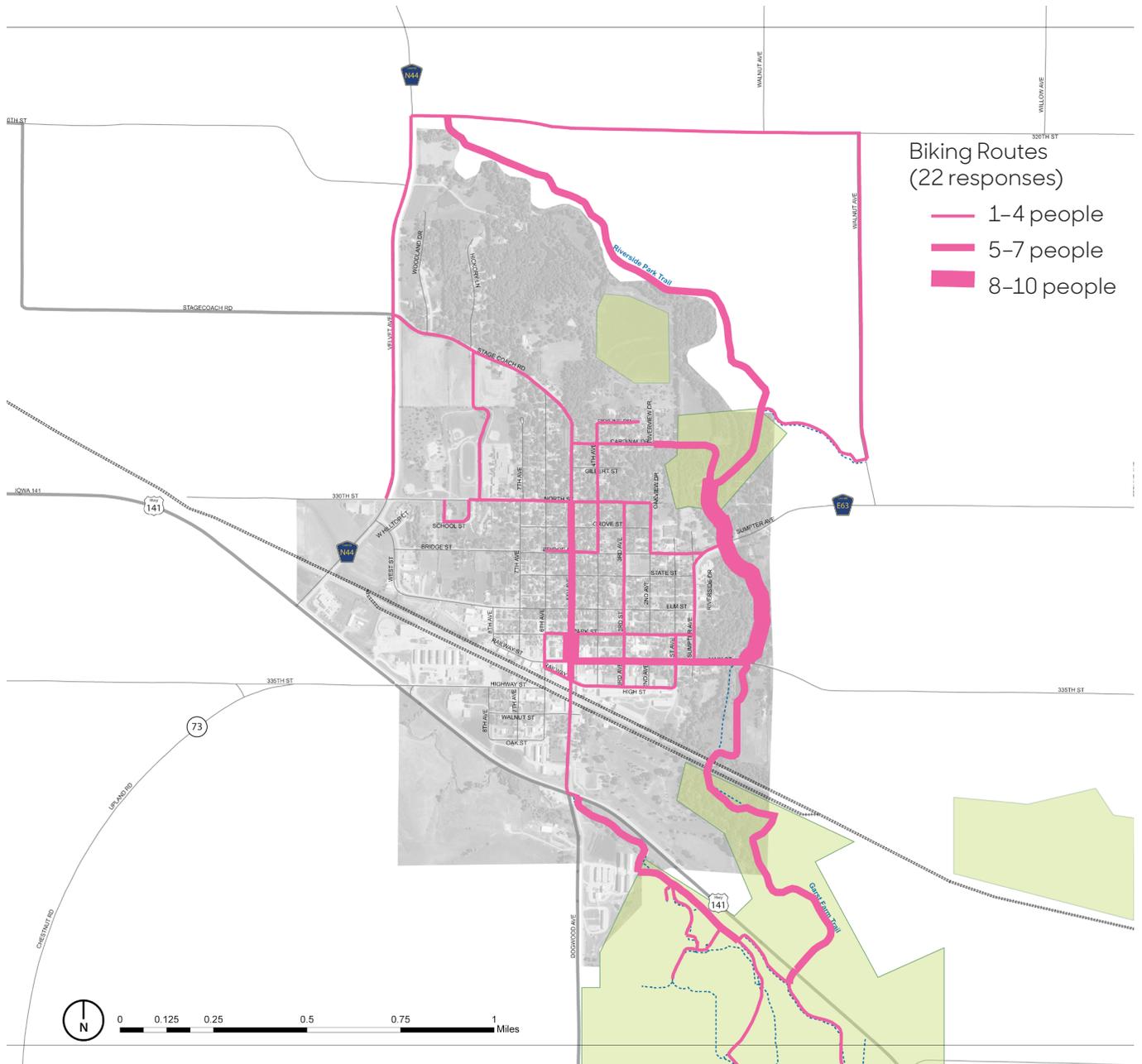
Where People Walk

This map shows the walking routes identified by 71 survey respondents. The frequency that the routes are used is depicted by their thickness, with most frequently used routes being the thickest. Walkers take advantage of the Riverside Park Trail and the Garst Farm Trail. Some users also walk the streets in town. Trails within the Whiterock Conservancy are also popular. Streets in town frequented by walkers include Stagecoach Road, Cardinal Drive, and Main Street.

Why They Go That Way



On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, survey participants ranked the characteristics and features that made their walking experience better. These features are categorized as either "connections" or "conditions and elements." Among Coon Rapids participants, connections are somewhat more important than conditions/elements with mean values of 3.4 and 3.2, respectively. In terms of connections, access to trails is most important with a mean value of 4.0. Good sidewalks and well-kept surroundings are the most important elements to walkers (4.0 each), followed by seasonal beauty (3.8).

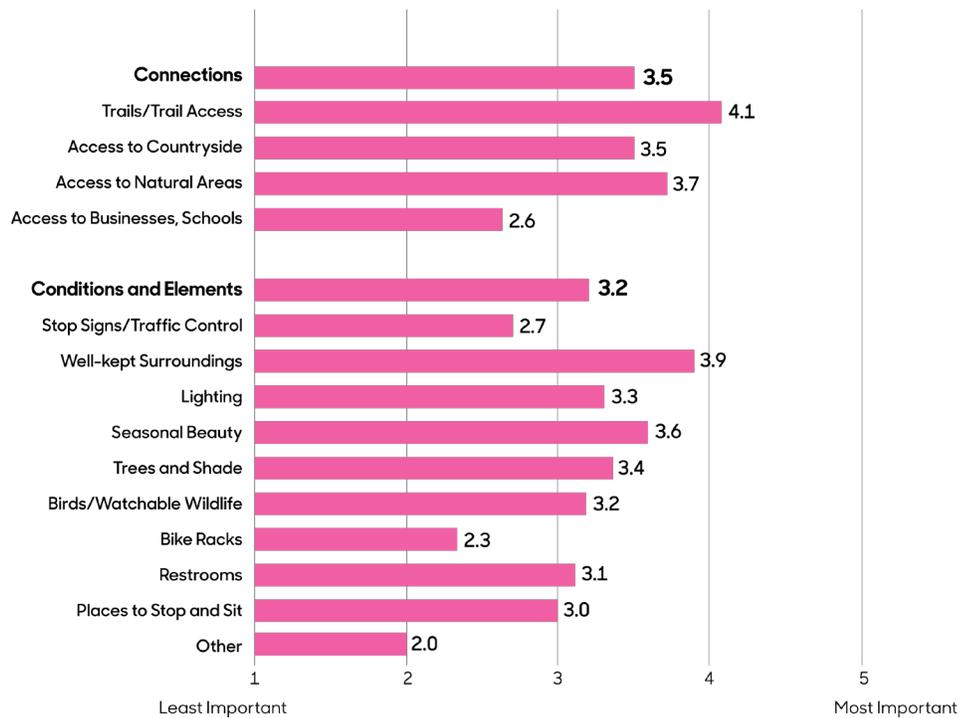


Map Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, "Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems Library," <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislib/>.

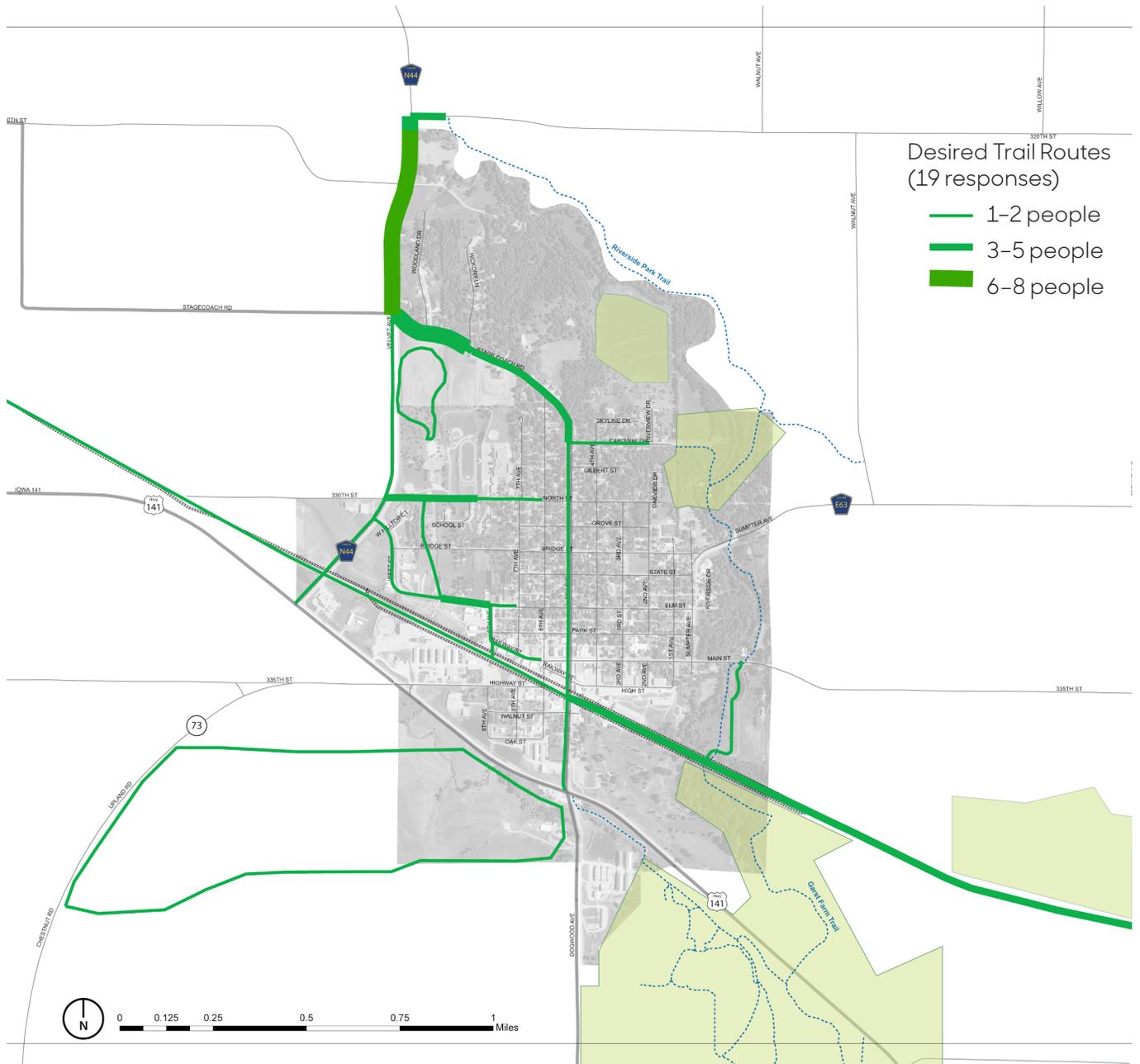
Where People Bike

This map shows the biking routes identified by 22 survey respondents. The frequency that the routes are used is depicted by their thickness, with most frequently used routes being the thickest. Like walkers, cyclists use the Riverside Park Trail and the Garst Farm Trail, as well as trails within the Whiterock Conservancy. Some bikers ride on the roads outside city limits. A few bikers also ride on the streets in town. Streets in town frequented by bikers include Cardinal Drive and Main Street.

Why They Go That Way



On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, survey participants ranked the characteristics and features that made their biking experience better. These features are categorized as either "connections" or "conditions and elements." Among Coon Rapids participants, connections are somewhat more important than conditions/elements with mean values of 3.5 and 3.2, respectively. In terms of connections, access to trails is most important with a mean value of 4.1. Well-kept surroundings are the most important element to bikers (3.9), followed by seasonal beauty (3.6) and trees and shade (3.4).

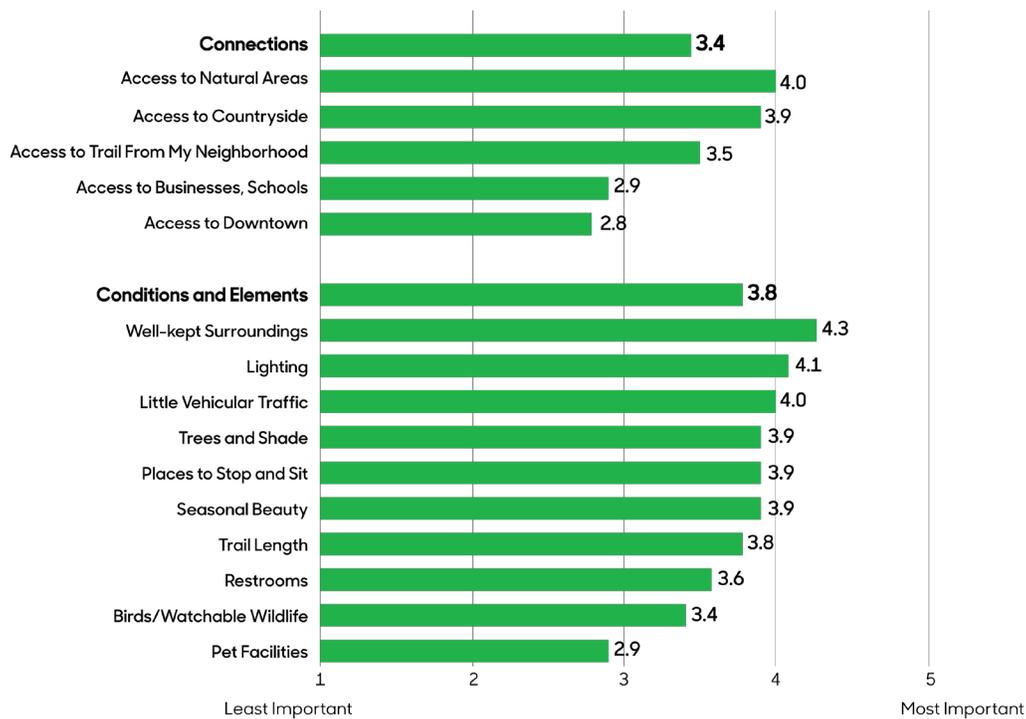


Map Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, "Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems Library," <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislibx/>.

Where People Want Trails

This map shows the desired trail routes identified by 19 survey respondents. The frequency that the routes are identified is depicted by their thickness, with most frequently identified routes being the thickest. The most popular desired trail would follow Stagecoach Road to County Road N44, turn north, and connect to the Riverside Park Trail. Some survey participants suggested a trail along the rail line. A few people would like a trail from Stagecoach Road south along 5th Avenue to Highway 141.

What Trail Features Are Important



On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, survey participants ranked the characteristics and features that made their trail experience better. These features are categorized as either "connections" or "conditions and elements." Among Coon Rapids participants, connections and conditions/elements are have nearly equal importance with mean values of 3.4 and 3.5, respectively. In terms of connections, access to natural areas and the countryside are most important (3.7 each). Well-kept surroundings are the most important element (4.0). Other factors include trash receptacles and access for golf carts (3.1).

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