



Northside Recreation Complex has good pedestrian connectivity to town, ball fields, a pergola, and ample parking.



People feel uncomfortable walking along Avenue C and crossing Highway 39 because traffic is heavy and there is no buffer or crosswalks.



Uptown is nicely landscaped and has pedestrian-friendly curbs and ramps, wide and level sidewalks, and safe crossings.



The Highway 30/59 interchange, referred to as "The Bucket of Worms," is hard to navigate because of the heavy, fast traffic and confusing configuration.



Yellow Smoke Park trails weave through scenic natural area; walkers and cyclists can take in the beauty of the lake from the smooth, shaded paths.



Uptown has only a few handicapped parking spaces that accommodate side-loading vans; some ramps are located around the corner, requiring the mobility challenged to travel on the street.

## What Factors Affect Transportation in Denison?

Transportation is integral to small-town life and a vibrant economy. In the context of the Community Visioning Program, we recognize walking, biking, and driving as quintessential modes of travel to various destinations important to residents and visitors. Access to these destinations is crucial for many everyday activities—getting to work and school, participating in community events, and providing for basic needs such as food, health care, and healthy activity.

In this participatory assessment, we want to find out which factors and conditions affect transportation use in Denison, where these factors and conditions are most prevalent, and how they influence route and transportation choices locally. Because residents have the best knowledge of how Denison’s transportation system works, we use focused, small-group conversations, mapping, and photos of the best and worst to understand local transportation.

## Different Users = Different Needs

To capture insights about transportation from a variety of perspectives, we invited Denison residents with different transportation needs to participate in focus groups. A total of 48 residents attended Denison’s workshop. Participants were separated into five user groups and the Denison steering committee.



**(5 participants):** This user group represents those in the community who engage in outdoor recreation, including cycling, walking, running, swimming, skiing, etc. The availability of multiple venues for outdoor recreation matters to this group.



**(3,1 participants):** Accessibility—both in terms of physical access and proximity—is a major concern for this user group. Handicapped parking, curb ramps, and smooth surfaces are critical transportation features. Because some people in this user group do not or are unable to drive, having goods and services within walking distance is important.



**(23 participants):** This group uses primarily non-motorized modes of transportation, so pedestrian- and bike-friendly streets and sidewalks are important. These users value the ability to get to destinations on foot or via bicycle and having goods and services within walking distance.



**(3 participants):** Safety of their children is a primary concern of this user group. Access to safe and easy routes to school activities is another significant factor to this group. Parents of young children desire smooth, wide surfaces for strollers.



**(7 participants):** More than 48% of Denison’s population is Hispanic, making this group a significant demographic. This group tends to consist of working-age parents; as a result, their needs are similar to those of Anglo parents. However, some do not drive and need to find rides to work and other locations.



**(6 participants):** The common denominator for this user group is that their observations are influenced by special knowledge of the transportation system acquired during the Community Visioning assessment process. As a result, this group is more representative of decision makers.

**Actives**

- "We will walk [to Nite Hawk] in the summer...there needs to be a better way to get there from over [Highway 210]."
- "...when we go biking in other communities or areas, we'll see older people where they have their electric bikes [and] they're... having a great time...We can't do that [in Denison]...and it pushes people elsewhere to do that."
- "[Highway] 30's really grown over the last five years as far as businesses...but [it doesn't feel safe] to be down there [on foot or a bike] because the sidewalks are so thin..."
- "...[it's] impossible without a car to get to [the soccer fields on South 5th Street]...there's no walking trail...it's [just] a gravel road to get there."
- "I like [the] idea of getting [a trail] along the Boyer River because we don't really showcase [it]...It's not really that hilly...Once you get there, you could ride along the [river] and we like to ride along the rivers."
- "...[the intersection of 2nd Avenue N and 14th Street is] a blind spot...you have to keep on nudging your car out to make sure a car's not coming."
- "Near Broadway [Elementary] School, there's... a four-way crossing... there's normally a lot of traffic from busses and then parents...and...there [are] a bunch of little kids walking too, and sometimes they don't necessarily pay attention to the road and who's coming. So that causes a lot of problems."
- "I love that bridge [in Yellow Smoke]. It has a good view... It's a wide-open space ...[and] if you look over it, sometimes there [are] birds there too, just minding their own business."
- "...there is a crossing signal [at S 12th Street and Highway 30], but it is not very well marked and...I don't feel like the light is very long, so we really have to rush across the street..."
- "...people...like to walk [on N 10th Street], but there's not a walking trail...It's a 20[-mph] speed zone, but people go pretty fast, because it's the back route to the schools...a lot of people...would appreciate...a walk[ing trail]."
- "...only a little bit of [Yellow Smoke trail] is in town, but that part of it, I think, is wide. It's smooth... and it's pretty and scenic...the bike/walking trail itself is a nice trail."
- "[In] the older, original part of town...some [sidewalks] are narrow. Some are wide. Some are... broken. Some are nonexistent... biking and walking...[are] kind of hard...[and] pushing a stroller."
- "...coming from the north going south to Highway 30... can get icy on all of [the north-south streets in winter]."

**Youth**

- "...my mom says I can't really go anywhere by myself because I live near a highway. There [are] not a lot of sidewalks."
- "[I would like] more trails to walk on... I like Yellow [Smoke] Park, but sometimes it's the same old nature... sometimes you want to go somewhere new."

**Parents**

- "One of the things that one enjoys when walking in the autumn time is to look, look at the colors, the different colors [on the trees]."
- "...[a good taxi] service is much needed here, because not everyone in the town drives...not everyone has [a driver's license]... [and] when [immigrants] arrive here...it is not easy to acquire a car immediately..."
- "It would be a very good benefit for the community if there [were] bike lanes...and the one who does not have a car, you grab the bicycle and go to the store."
- "...in general...there are many sidewalks that are not very accessible...there are no ramps to go up or down... You can't get up with [a wheelchair]...or walk with the babies in the strollers."
- "So we don't really have a great biking or walking area, because...[the hills] discourage some people...you can bike the trail [in Yellow Smoke Park], which I'll do, but...it's a lot of up and down."
- "I have an accessible van with a side-loading ramp, and on the corner of Broadway and Main, which is a fairly busy corner, there's one area [where] I can park, but...you have to get onto the street and go around the corner... to get to the curb cut. And that [feels unsafe]."
- "I do want to get back into walking and adding easier access trails or sidewalks through town would be nice."
- "The median [of Highway 30] on the east end of town, where it's divided isn't wide enough to be a turn lane...Tail end of cars stick out, and you're always [wondering] 'Am I going to get rear ended or not? Where do you go?'"
- "...since there are a lot of people [who] bike and walk [along Highway 30], we [want to] have...traffic signals and...painted crosswalks... because...[vehicles] fly... they're not [going] 35 [mph]...It's terrible."
- "...we're a little bit concerned about... the ability to cross any of [the] highways that don't have a designated crosswalk or designated crossing signal."
- "...many people go to Yellow Smoke [Park]. [We would like] a way that you could enter from town on a bicycle [so] you would not have to go by car."
- "[Washington Park is] a real nice place. They even have picnic tables [that] have cutout[s] so that I can [use] my chair..."
- "...the only viable bicycling...and dedicated walking area is the Yellow Smoke [trail], and it is very difficult to get there [by bike] from anywhere [in town]..."
- "[Yellow Smoke is] a beautiful place to walk; it's safe."

**Spanish-speaking Parents**

**Older Adults & Mobility Challenged**

**Steering Committee**

# Denison

## What People Said

**Transportation Assets and Barriers Analysis**  
 Julia Badenhop, Sandra Oberbroeckling, Britney Markhardt  
 Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation



User Types	Destinations and Activities			Valued Features		Undesirable Qualities and Features					Most Desired Improvements and Activities					
	Yellow Smoke Park/Wheels to Heels Trail	Uptown	Northside Recreation Complex	Scenic Views & Natural Areas	Outdoor Recreation Opportunities	Inadequate Sidewalk Infrastructure	Gaps in Cyclist/Pedestrian Connectivity	Parking Limitations	Traffic-flow Problems	Winter Weather Challenges	Highway 30 Corridor Conditions	Sidewalk Improvements	Pedestrian/Cyclist Connections	More Trails	Highway 30 Corridor Enhancements	
Actives	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Actives walk and bike for recreation and exercise. This group wants more amenities for cyclists, including a bike repair stations at the trailheads by the dog park, and restrooms at various locations. Actives also think the park shelter at Tuckers Pond should be updated.
Older Adults & Mobility Challenged	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Older adults and mobility-challenged individuals primarily drive. Older adults also walk and use the hospital shuttle. Mobility-challenged individuals use wheelchairs and would like public transportation that can accommodate them. Older adults find the trailhead on 6th Avenue N difficult to access because of the steep hill.
Youth	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Youth walk, bike, carpool, and ride the bus to get around. Older youth also drive. This group thinks that a buffer is needed between Hillcrest Park and the roadway. They also want access points to the high school parking lot and the city soccer fields, as well as bigger parking lots.
Parents	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Parents drive, walk, bike, and run. They are primarily concerned with the safety of their children, and safe pedestrian/cyclist crossings are important to them. Parents would like the sidewalks to be wide enough to accommodate two walkers or cyclists side by side.
Spanish-speaking Parents	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Spanish-speaking parents drive, carpool, walk, and bike. This group expressed the need for a shuttle service to and from the packing plants. They would like a skate park for young people, and a new location for the Latino soccer league, because they aren't allowed to make needed upgrades such as adding seating to the city-owned fields.
Steering Committee	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Steering committee members walk, bike, and drive vehicles and UTV/ATVs. Steering committee members want to improve "The Bucket of Worms" to reduce confusion. This group would also like railroad overpasses for pedestrians and/or vehicles, as well as entryway beautification.

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## Emerging Themes

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