



People appreciate the wide, smooth trail to Westview Park and the ball fields. Natural features and pedestrian-scale lighting enhance the trail experience.



Turning onto Main St in the downtown can be challenging because of blind spots created by parked cars.



Residents like downtown Main St because it hosts many social spaces. Vehicular traffic is light and the city keeps the roadway well cleared in winter.



Uneven and heaved sidewalks on Maple St are a prime example of the problematic sidewalk conditions identified throughout the community.



Conditions of the sidewalks and road along Hwy 2 between Lynn and Main St are noted for being smooth and wide.



Poor drainage along Elm St leads to ponding and muddy conditions after storm events. Pedestrians find it difficult to use the broken and incomplete sidewalks.

What Factors Affect Transportation in Donnellson?

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 Donnellson, 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 Donnellson’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 Donnellson residents with different transportation needs to participate in focus groups. A total of 26 residents attended Donnellson workshop. Participants were separated into three user groups and the Donnellson steering committee.



Actives

(0 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.



Mobility Challenged

(0 participants): This user group is directly affected by accessibility barriers such as high curbing and uneven sidewalks that make it difficult to operate mobility-aiding equipment effectively. Handicapped parking, curb ramps, and smooth surfaces are critical transportation features.



Older Adults

(6 participants): Accessibility—both in terms of physical access and proximity—is a major concern for this user group. Because some people in this user group do not or are unable to drive, having goods and services within walking distance is important.



Youth

(6 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.



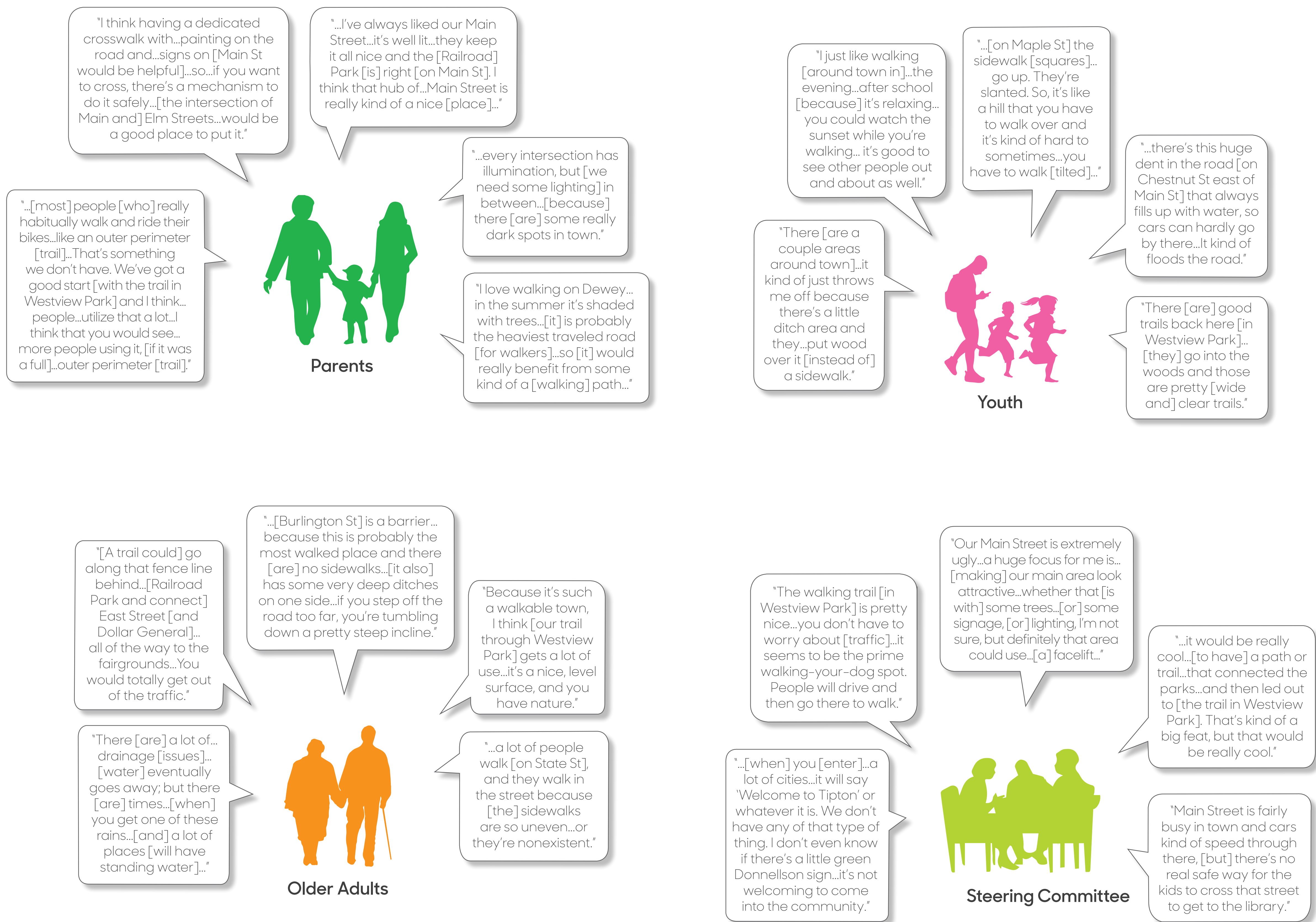
Parents

(10 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.



Steering Committee

(4 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.







Donnellson

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	Valued Destinations, Activities, and Qualities					Undesirable Qualities and Features					Most Desired Improvements and Activities				
	Smooth Surfaces	City Trail	Community Parks	Scenic Views	Walking Outside	Drainage Issues	Insufficient Lighting	Inadequate Sidewalk Infrastructure	Heavy and High-speed Traffic	Inferior Roadway Conditions	Safe Crossings on Main St	Roadway Infrastructure Repairs	Sidewalk Improvements	Flood Mitigation	Trail Development
 Older Adults	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●
 Youth	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●		
 Parents	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
 Steering Committee		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<p>Several groups identified smooth surfaces—for example, the paths east of Main St on Hwy 2, Madison St/Hwy 2, and county roads around town—as important for safe and easy travel. Parents appreciate the smooth county roads and Main St north of downtown for biking.</p> <p>The community trail was praised by all groups for its separation from traffic, level surface, and connection to nature. Parents like that they can send their children to the ball fields without worrying. Residents also enjoy the camaraderie of encountering neighbors along the path.</p> <p>People of all ages enjoy the local parks. Westview Park features the community trail winding through it, baseball fields, and a pretty wooded area. Railroad Park is easily accessed from Main St and is a walking destination. May's Park is valued for its basketball/pickleball court.</p> <p>All user groups revel in the natural beauty and fresh air that can be found in Donnellson. They particularly appreciate the picturesque wooded area in Westview Park—perfect for birdwatching—and the tree-lined Dewey Ave, which offers a nice ambience for daytime strolls.</p> <p>Residents take pleasure in walking whether on the city trail, at the fairgrounds, or along city streets. Youth and parents enjoy the playgrounds, and the tree-lined Dewey groups said they vary their walking routes regularly.</p> <p>Donnellson is plagued with widespread drainage issues causing frequent flooding and standing water problems throughout town. Residents report challenges navigating flooded streets, with notable concerns around Elm St, where standing water can flood the roadway after a rainfall.</p> <p>Adult participants said that inadequate lighting creates safety issues in areas such as the new loop trail extension and East St. The darkness extends to areas with heavy tree canopies, such as Dewey Ave. As a result, residents to avoid walking and running after dark.</p> <p>All groups find it hard to walk in town because of extensive sidewalk issues. Inconsistent, broken, and uneven sidewalks force pedestrians to walk on the street. Wooden bridges in lieu of sidewalks contribute to the overall difficulty of walking in the area.</p> <p>Adults worry about speeding and heavy traffic in town. They reported speeding as a common problem, especially on Main St and Dewey Ave. Traffic congestion at the intersection of Orchard St and Dewey Ave, because of the seal-coat surface. Potholes were cited as a nuisance for both drivers and cyclists.</p> <p>Roadway conditions through town pose challenges for all transportation modes. Parents said that most city streets are difficult and uncomfortable to navigate because of the seal-coat surface. Potholes were cited as a nuisance for both drivers and cyclists.</p> <p>Steering committee members, parents, and youth advocated for improved pedestrian crossings on Main St. They would like to see a dedicated crossing at either the Elm St or Chestnut St intersection with flashing pedestrian crossing signs paired with marked crosswalks.</p> <p>Residents want road conditions to be addressed all through town. Specific upgrades named were repairing potholes and gutters on all roads. Activists suggested making all streets concrete so they are easier to use.</p> <p>All participants expressed a strong desire for smooth and well-maintained sidewalks throughout town. Suggestions include fixing existing sidewalks on streets such as Elm and University Sts, among others, and adding new sidewalks to improve pedestrian accessibility and safety.</p> <p>Adult participants would like storm drain is installed to address water runoff issues and alleviate standing water. Additionally, older adults talked about enhancing surface drainage measures to further improve safety and provide separation from traffic. There's enthusiasm for a paved perimeter trail that would connect various destinations and parks. Several groups suggested adding trails on Burlington St and Dewey Ave.</p>															
<p>Older adults drive and walk in town. They think that Donnellson needs a visitors center because it is the first exit along the Avenue of the Saints in Iowa. This group also wants a dog park where their dogs could run.</p>															
<p>Youth, walk, bike, and ride the school bus. Older youth also drive. They appreciate that the number of conveniently-located bus stops makes it easy to get to school. This group would like all the streets widened and striped.</p>															
<p>Parent walk, bike, and drive automobiles, golf carts, and ATV/UTVs. They are primarily concerned for the safety of their children. Parents would like heated sidewalks. They also think removing two parking spots on Main St at the intersection of Elm St would improve visibility.</p>															
<p>Steering committee members walk and drive to local destinations. They want more trees and better streetscaping to make the roads "gorgeous." This group also suggested making public parking more attractive, building a new Main Street, and installing a veterans memorial.</p>															