



The C.R. Roberts Trail is appealing to both walkers and cyclists for its smooth, wide surface and many amenities, including benches, exercise stations, trees, and a shelter with seating, access to water, and a bike repair station.



Dysart Park's quality sidewalks, shelters, playing fields, and tree coverage allow for a range of activities and make it an appealing place to relax.

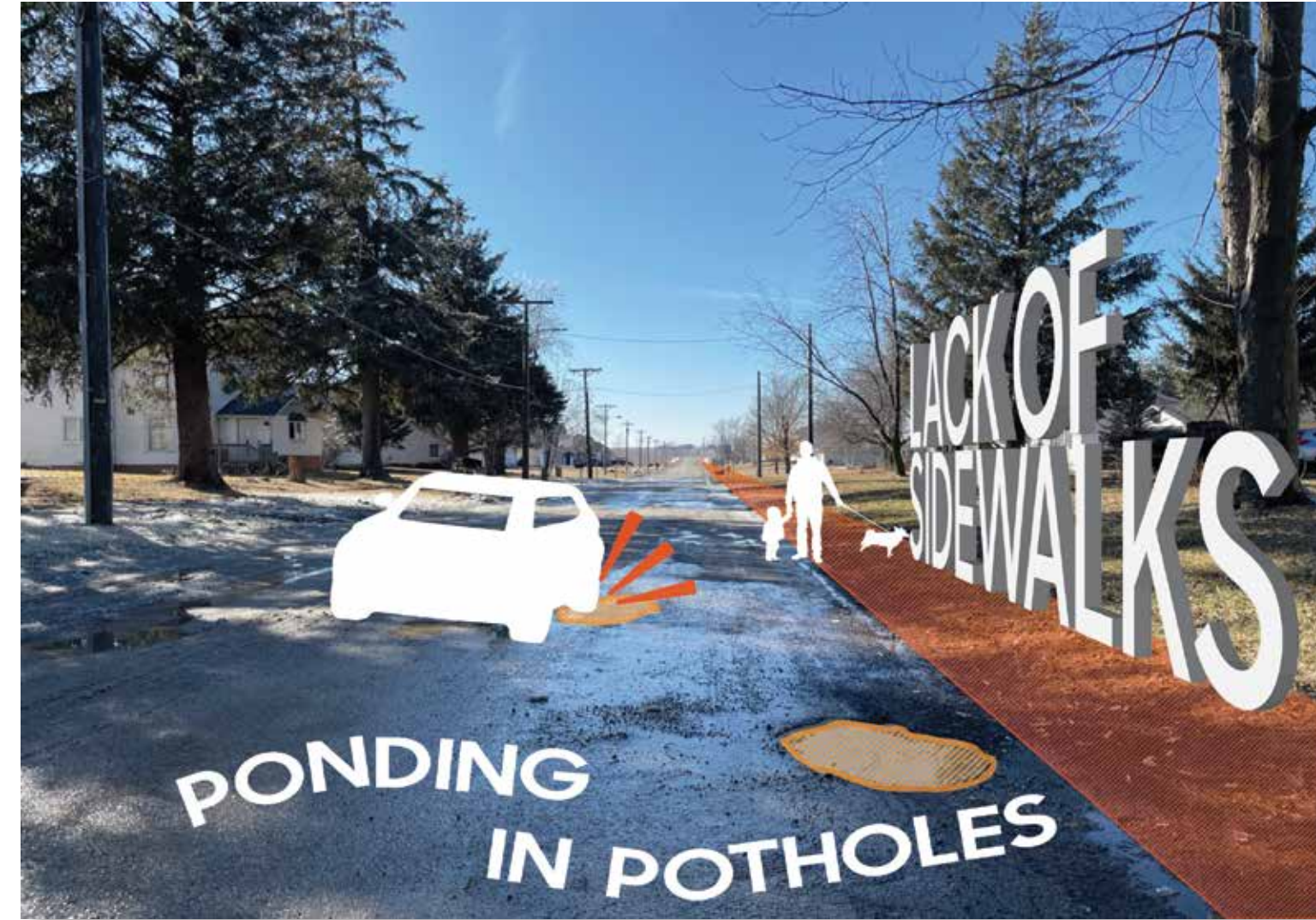


The well-maintained sidewalks and good curb height, along with streetlights and numerous businesses make downtown an enjoyable place to walk for people of all ages and abilities.

# Dysart Overview



The fast traffic and the absence of a pedestrian path and crosswalks along Highway 21 make walking difficult during peak travel times.



The numerous potholes on Iowa Street make it difficult for drivers to navigate, and the lack of sidewalks forces pedestrians to walk on the grass or along the street.



Kids have to walk to and from school in the roadway on Sherman Street because the sidewalks are broken and uneven or nonexistent.

## What Factors Affect Transportation in Dysart?

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 Dysart, 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 Dysart 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 Dysart residents with different transportation needs to participate in focus groups. A total of 38 residents attended Dysart's workshop. Participants were separated into five user groups and the Dysart 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.



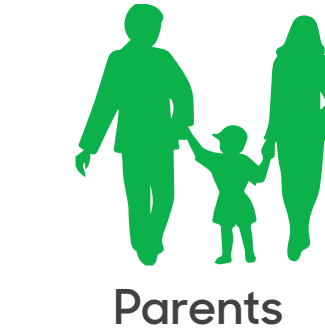
**(6 participants):** This user group is directly affected by accessibility barriers such as high curbing and uneven sidewalks that make it difficult to operate mobility-aiding equipment effectively. Handicapped parking, curb ramps, and smooth surfaces are critical transportation features.



**(4 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.



**(10 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.



**(5 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.



**(8 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.


## Transportation Assets and Barriers Analysis

Julia Badenhop, Sandra Oberbroeckling, Britney Markhardt

Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation







**Actives**


"We have been blessed with a lot of trees, and the big trees beside the sidewalks have heaved the sidewalks up."

"I loved walking the trail, but that one mile gets pretty boring...so I would like to see more variety in walking areas, maybe even a trail through the arboretum...that gives you some...just scenery, and then...mileage markers..."

"I just don't walk the trail anymore because there's nothing to connect it to."

"I would like to see the trail expanded to connect on both sides to go down to the southern part of the town."

"...I wish that they would restore some habitat, some kind of trees or bushes... [that] would bring the birds back..."



**Youth**


"It might be nice to have a bike trail going from Dysart to Traer."

"There are a few streets that just have curbs; they don't have [ramps] going down... you have to kind of pick up your bike to get on the sidewalk."

"[On the trail near the elevator is] a weird jump from concrete to gravel, and...it feels somewhat unsafe sometimes...especially if there [are] the semis going in and out from the grain elevator."

"I like to bike out on the trail every once in a while... [because] you get to see more trees and stuff."

"It's sketchy to drive [on Tilford St] with two cars...especially when...either a big truck or a big van [is] going through there... [It's] very narrow."



**Parents**

"[It's] difficult to access...the [Dysart Drive-in]...we have to... take our kids through...private business driveways...because the only other option is driving on or riding, [or] walking on [Highway] 21."

"One of our dreams...would be a bike trail going to Traer..."

"...if your kids get a certain age and you want to start logging some miles on the bike, options are...not great for Dysart."

"...there's just not enough bike path, so there [are]s a lot of people running in the streets... ideally they'd have a [dedicated] place to run."

"[A] safety concern [is that during school] pickup... parents are sitting there with a bunch of cars...parents will pull up in front of the elementary and there [are] kids running out to their parents..."



**Older Adults**


"I love to have trees along the way. There used to be wildflowers along [the trail], but you'd see animals in there; it was kind of scary."

"It would be an asset to the community to have access to [Dollar General] with your golf cart or...scooter or a bicycle where you didn't have to go out on the highway."

"...the road in front of the post office is very prone to potholes...so right in front of the post office, that's...a bad area."

"I think signage at the edge of town to tell [to] different areas would be good."

"...walk in the streets, and some of those are kind of treacherous this time of year, especially with the potholes and the speed bumps."



**Mobility Challenged**

"When it's icy the ramps get icy...[when] your balance isn't very good, [you] need something to hold on to...going into eat at a restaurant or something..."

"Our trail is great; it's blacktopped, and it's very nice, but we would like to extend it... throughout town..."

"...when you step down off the curb, you don't have your balance as well, and the curbs [on Main Street] are so high you can go down. We do have good [curb ramps]...[but] you have to walk down [to the end of a block]...to get down..."

"...it would be nice to have either a very level trail or a blacktopped trail [through the Nature Preserve]."

"In the past we've talked about hooking the bike trail up to the school so children could ride their bikes safely to school."



**Steering Committee**

"[C.R.] Roberts Trail is walkable...there [are] benches... it has exercise equipment and the water station and the shelter."

"Tilford is...such a narrow street... It's only [60-feet] wide...and they allow parking... you can barely ride a bike down it. Two bikes just about don't fit."

"...a lot of kids in the summertime are riding their bikes around... or just during the year kids [are] walking to and from school; any trail should incorporate the schools...so [people] could get to school on the trail, and [are] off the roads."

"[People] living on Estelle...have very young kids...there is one 'Slow Children at Play' sign, but the truck traffic there is heavy."

"...sidewalks are inconsistent [all over town]...There are some places where the sidewalk will stop and then you have to go over grass and then get to the sidewalk."

# Dysart

## What People Said

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User Types	Destinations and Activities			Desirable Qualities and Features			Undesirable Qualities and Features				Most Desired Improvements and Activities				
	C.R. Roberts/ Old Creamery Trail	Recreation Trail	Heritage Arboretum	Access to Natural Areas	Trees	Outdoor Recreation Opportunities	Inadequate Sidewalk Infrastructure	Deteriorating Roadways	Heavy & High-speed Traffic	Poor Trail Conditions	Insufficient Connectivity	Trail Connections	Roadway Repairs	Pedestrian/ Cyclist Safety Features	Trail Enhancements
Actives	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mobility Challenged	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Older Adults	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Youth	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Parents	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Steering Committee	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	<p>C.R. Roberts/Old Creamery Trails is a popular destination among all user groups. The trail features a shelter with station, a water fountain, bike racks, and a bike repair like the trees and flowers and enjoy watching butterflies.</p> <p>Dysart Park is a venue for a variety of community activities such as the farmers market and Little League. Residents appreciate the trails and paths in the park, the gazebo, the shelter, the playground, and the mature trees.</p> <p>Participants in the active, mobility-challenged, and steering-committee groups identified the Heritage Arboretum as a community asset, describing it as "peaceful," "wonderful," and "fantastic."</p> <p>Both adults and youth value the access to picturesque natural areas afforded to them by the C.R. Roberts/Old Creamery Trail, the Heritage Arboretum, and the Nature Preserve.</p> <p>All user types mentioned the importance of trees to the community. Youth and older adults said that it's nice to see trees while walking, and parents and mobility-challenged individuals take pleasure in the shade that mature trees provide throughout town.</p> <p>People of all ages and abilities appreciate the outdoor recreation opportunities in town, including the tennis courts, and playground in Dysart Park.</p> <p>Broken, narrow, and missing sidewalks are a bone of contention for all groups. Participants said that tree roots have pushed up the sidewalks in the older parts of town and that kids walk in the street to and from school because the sidewalks on their route are inconsistent.</p> <p>Most groups raised the issue of deteriorating roadways throughout town. Frequently mentioned streets include Sherman, State, Tilford and Iowa, as well as portions of Main, Connell, and Jefferson Streets.</p> <p>The grain elevator brings heavy semi and farm traffic into town which is a concern because it is located along the C.R. Roberts Trail. Parents and youth mentioned congestion during school drop-off and pickup times, and actives noted that traffic often speeds through town.</p> <p>While the trail is considered an asset, all user groups identified problems with it. People feel unsafe on the segment near the co-op because of truck traffic. Other concerns are a dearth of trees, the limited length, and the fact that the trail is not cleared during winter.</p> <p>Several groups took issue with a lack of pedestrian/cyclist connections in town. For instance, people living on the south end of town don't have easy access to the museum, the Nature Preserve, and Dollar General. Other destinations that are hard to reach by bike or on foot are the drive-in, the schools, and Dollar General.</p> <p>More trail connections are a priority among all user types. Residents would like a local trail loop connecting the arboretum, the Nature Preserve, and the cemetery. Some people desire regional trails to Traer and Black Hawk County.</p> <p>Steering committee members, older adults, mobility-challenged individuals, and youth want better road conditions throughout town to make it easier and safer to drive and bike on Dysart's streets.</p> <p>Pedestrian/cyclist safety is important to focus-group participants. Suggestions include placing "Slow down kids at play" signs in residential areas, repairing existing sidewalks, and designating a bike lane on Sherman Street.</p> <p>Some focus groups offered ideas for improving the existing trail, including paving the trail to Garrison, adding restrooms and more benches and installing some type of bridge over the co-op crossing.</p>														

Actives walk, bike, and run regularly for recreation or exercise. They enjoy walking at the cemetery because it's peaceful. This group also enjoys natural areas and will travel out of town to Seven Hills Farms and Hickory Hills to experience nature.

Mobility-challenged individuals walk, bike, drive, and use golf carts and side-by-sides. They would like paved paths at the Heritage Arboretum and the Nature Preserve. This group suggested a sidewalk program to fund sidewalk repairs for those who can't afford it.

Older adults get around town by walking, biking, driving, and using golf carts and side-by-sides. This group pointed out the need for an affordable transportation service, as well as an assisted-living facility. They would like a paved path behind Casey's to Dollar General to provide better access for golf carts.

Youth walk, bike, and run. Older youth also drive and use golf carts. They find school drop-off and pick-up times hectic because of traffic congestion. This group would like more trees in the park and an outdoor sports complex in town.

Parents walk, bike, run, drive, use golf carts and e-scooters, and carpool. They are concerned for the safety of their children, and worry about kids running between cars, some of which are backing up, during school drop-off and pickup times. This group would like a safer route to both the elementary and middle schools.

Steering committee members walk, bike, and drive to local destinations. They prefer to walk along streets with little vehicular traffic and enjoy routes where they can see gardens. This group sees better sidewalk code enforcement as a way to improve conditions for pedestrians.

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## Emerging Themes

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