What We Did

To supplement the data collected from adult residents, Community Visioning Program staff at Iowa State University conducted focus groups and a survey at Central CSD Middle School/High School in January 2020.

ISU design interns interviewed one 9th grader and held a focus group with three upperclassmen to understand the factors and conditions that affect transportation use among these unique users. Like the transportation assets and barriers workshop held with other user types, the high school focus groups employed small-group conversations, mapping, and photos of the best and worst to understand local transportation.

The survey addressed high school students' experiences and needs as drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists. The questionnaire was similar to that used in the random-sample survey mailed to adult Elkader-area residents. Respondents were asked to identify routes to school, walking routes, and biking routes. In addition, we asked what qualities and features are important to youth when they engage in these activities. Survey respondents were self-selected; a total of three students completed the questionnaire.

Focus Groups: What They Said

High school focus-group participants primarily drive and walk to local destinations in town. Their concerns, which are similar to other focus-group demographics, include the conditions of the sidewalks, rough and narrow streets, lighting and visibility, and flooding. Like other groups, high school students value the Pony Hollow Trail, the river walk, and the scenic areas in and around Elkader. Participants identified better lighting, a new dam, flood mitigation, and a school track as desired improvements.

"They could use a light...along [Main Street by the Peace United Church] in my opinion. You...can't see anything past five o-clock down there."

"[There are] a lot of roads that turn into one-way streets because people park on the side and roads are just really, really narrow."
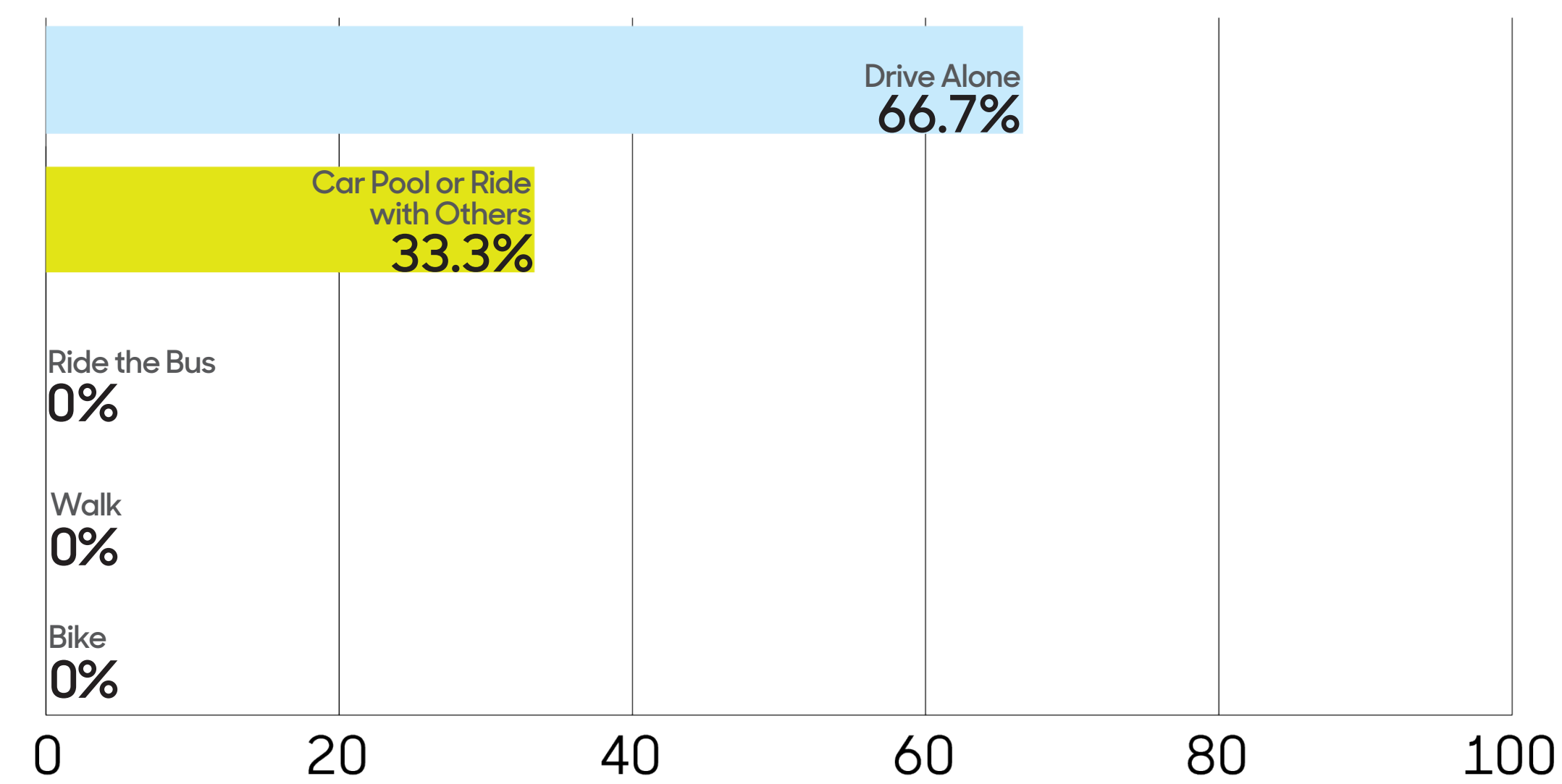
"I think we have a lot of nice scenery. We have a really nice river walk."

"I think another bridge would be nice too. We were talking about maybe doing that in town, but that never really happened, because, really, [the Keystone Bridge] is the only way [across the river]."

"Pony Hollow Trail is really popular, I think. A lot of people like using that. We take care of that pretty well..."
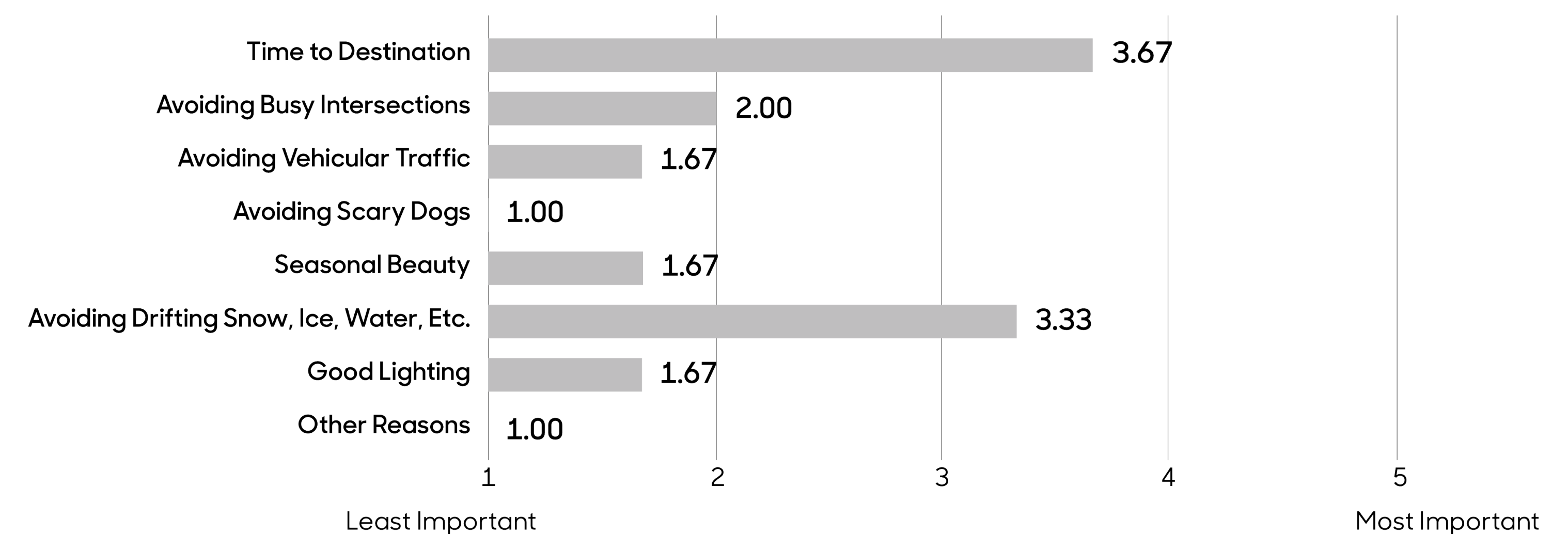
How They Travel

Most high school survey participants drive alone to local destinations. None of the respondents rides the bus, walks, or bikes to get around town.

Drive Alone
66.7%

Car Pool or Ride with Others
33.3%

Ride the Bus
0%

Walk
0%

Bike
0%

0   20   40   60   80   100

Why They Go That Way

High school survey respondents were asked to draw the routes that they take to school on a map. These routes are included with the commuting routes identified by Elkader residents, shown on board 5d. They were also asked to rank characteristics and features that factored into their choice of route to school on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important. Among high school survey participants, time to destination is the most important factor, with a mean value of 3.67. Avoiding weather-related issues such as snow and ice (3.33) is the second most important factor determining routes to school. Avoiding busy intersections and vehicular traffic, avoiding scary dogs, seasonal beauty, and lighting are not considered important.

Factor	Value
Time to Destination	3.67
Avoiding Busy Intersections	2.00
Avoiding Vehicular Traffic	1.67
Avoiding Scary Dogs	1.00
Seasonal Beauty	1.67
Avoiding Drifting Snow, Ice, Water, Etc.	3.33
Good Lighting	1.67
Other Reasons	1.00

1   2   3   4   5
Least Important   Most Important

High School Transportation Survey and Focus Groups
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