



Iowa's Living Roadways

**community
visioning**

designing livable communities, 2018

Forest City, Iowa





"Many in our community love hiking/walking and love their dogs, but we don't have the greatest facilities here. A great start would be our sidewalks. Too many people are forced to walk on the side of the street because half of the sidewalks do not connect."



"[We need] ride share—better/improved transportation for seniors and the disadvantaged that would also be available on weekends."

"Development of walking/biking trail on the west side of town increases safety, encourages fitness, showcases schools and public recreation facilities...allows alternative transportation to Winnebago and 3M, and positions development of housing on the west nearer schools and employment centers. Go west!"



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 Forest City residents. Surveys were mailed to 300 randomly selected residents living in Forest City 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 98 people returned surveys, for a response rate of 37.1%. (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.

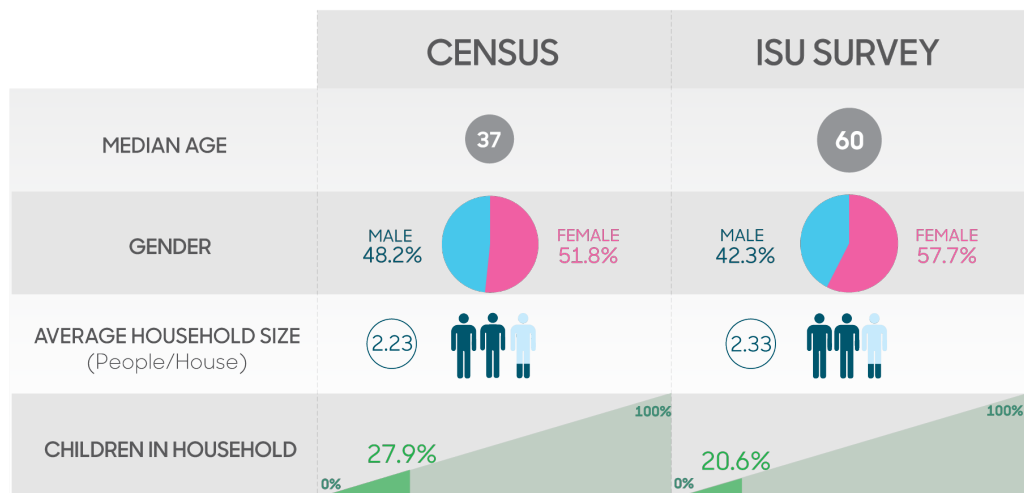
What Did We Find Out?

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 Forest City. 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?

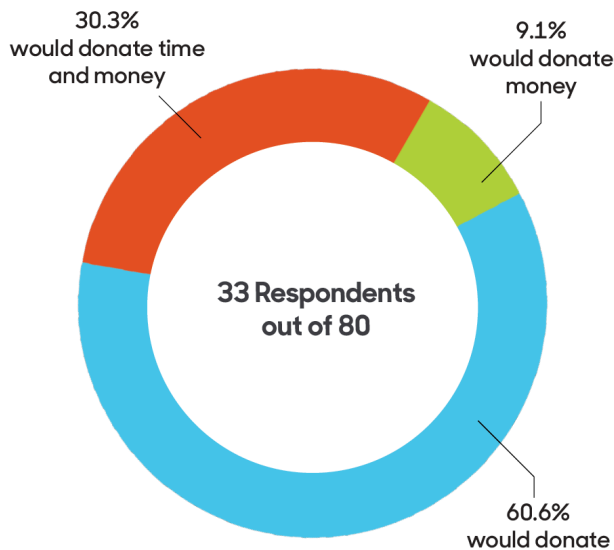
The demographics of the respondents are somewhat different from those obtained from the 2016 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate. For example, the survey respondents median age of 60 is significantly older than the 2016 estimated average age for Forest City residents of 37. The average household size of respondents is similar to that of the 2016 estimate. In terms of gender and number of children in the household, survey respondents' demographics differ from the 2016 estimates.



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

ARE PEOPLE WILLING TO HELP?

More than 41% said YES!



Willingness to implement change

Most survey participants who answered this question are willing to contribute their time and talent to community improvements (60.6%), while more than 30% would contribute both time and talent and financial help. Nearly 10% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to contribute financially.

Compared to other small towns in Iowa, Forest City residents are 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?

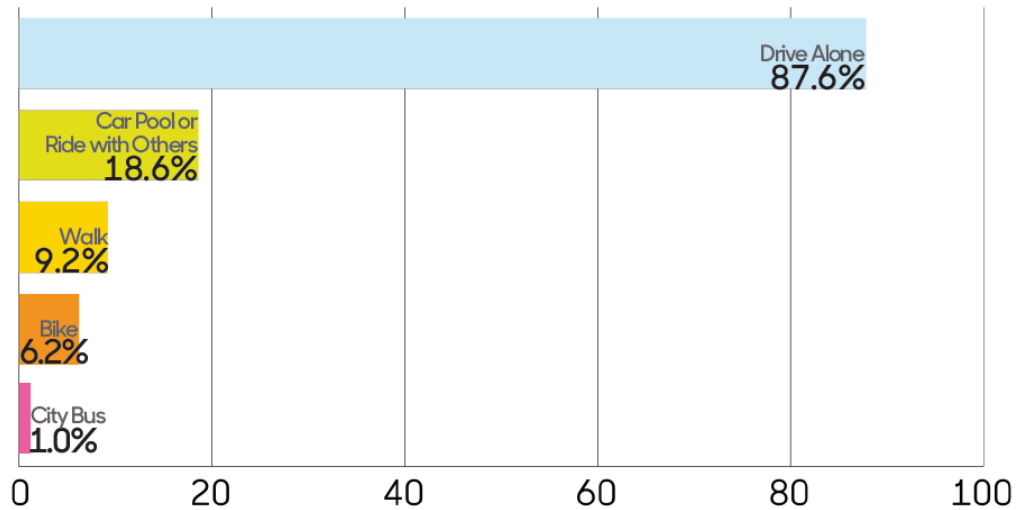
In 2014, the most common reason residents in small-town Iowa said they didn't become involved in community projects is that no one asked them (34%). Twenty-eight percent on average said that they don't have time, which is significantly lower than the 2004 average of 59%. Sixteen percent indicated that 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).

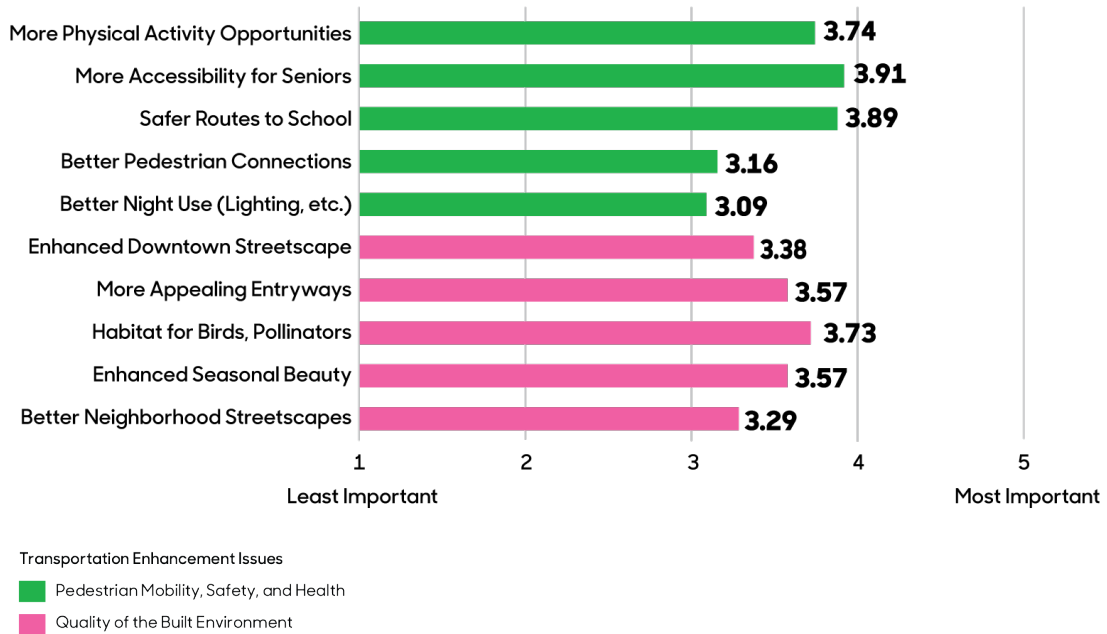
How Do Forest City Residents Travel?

Most survey respondents drive to important destinations such as the convenience store, the post office, school, and church (87.6%). More than 18% car pool or ride with someone else, 9.2% walk, and 6.2% bike. One percent of respondents take the city bus.

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%.

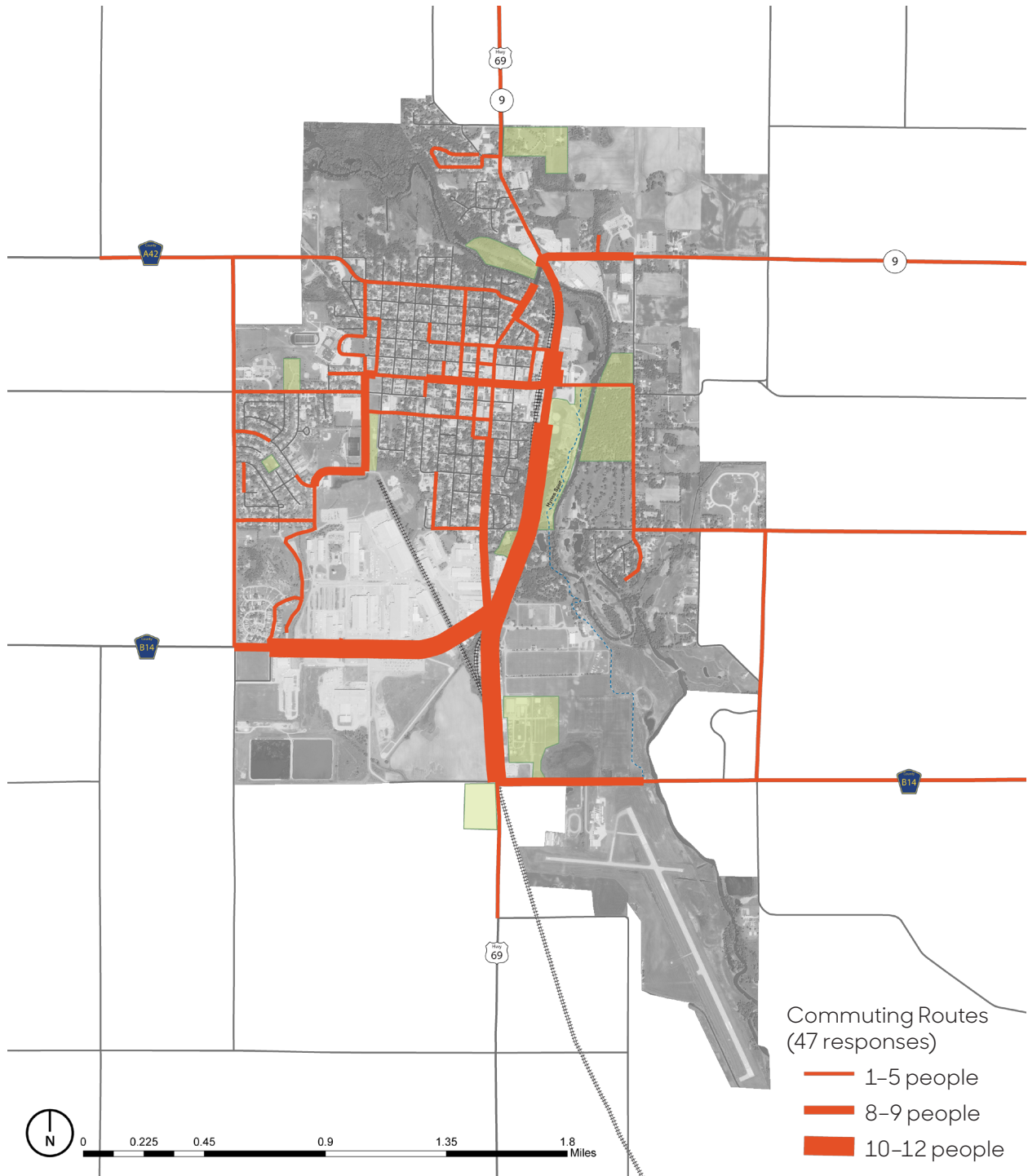


WHAT TYPES OF ENHANCEMENTS ARE IMPORTANT? Mobility, Safety, and Health!



Importance of transportation enhancement by type (84 responses)

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, participants in Forest City ranked creating more accessibility for seniors as most important, with a mean value of 3.91. Other transportation enhancements that address pedestrian mobility, health, and safety are also considered important, such as providing more opportunities for physical activity (3.74) and creating safer routes to school (3.89). In terms of quality of the built environment, creating more habitat for birds and pollinators is most important (3.73). These findings are consistent with the views expressed by focus group participants during the Transportation Assets and Barriers workshop held in April 2018.



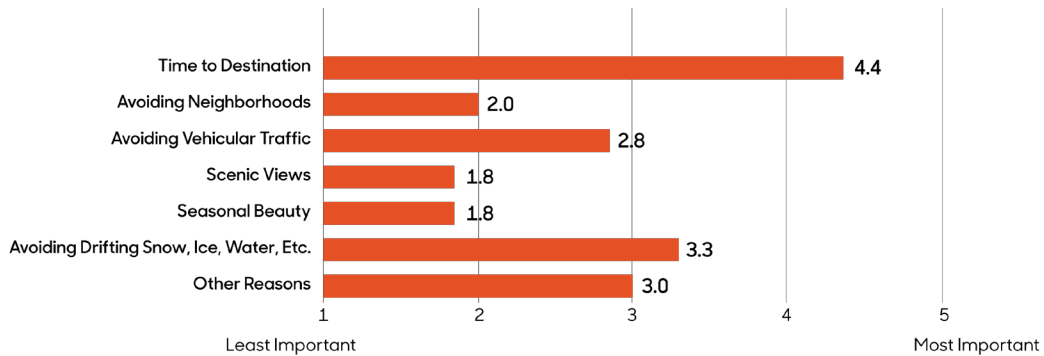
Map Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, "Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems Library," <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislib/>.

How People Get To Work

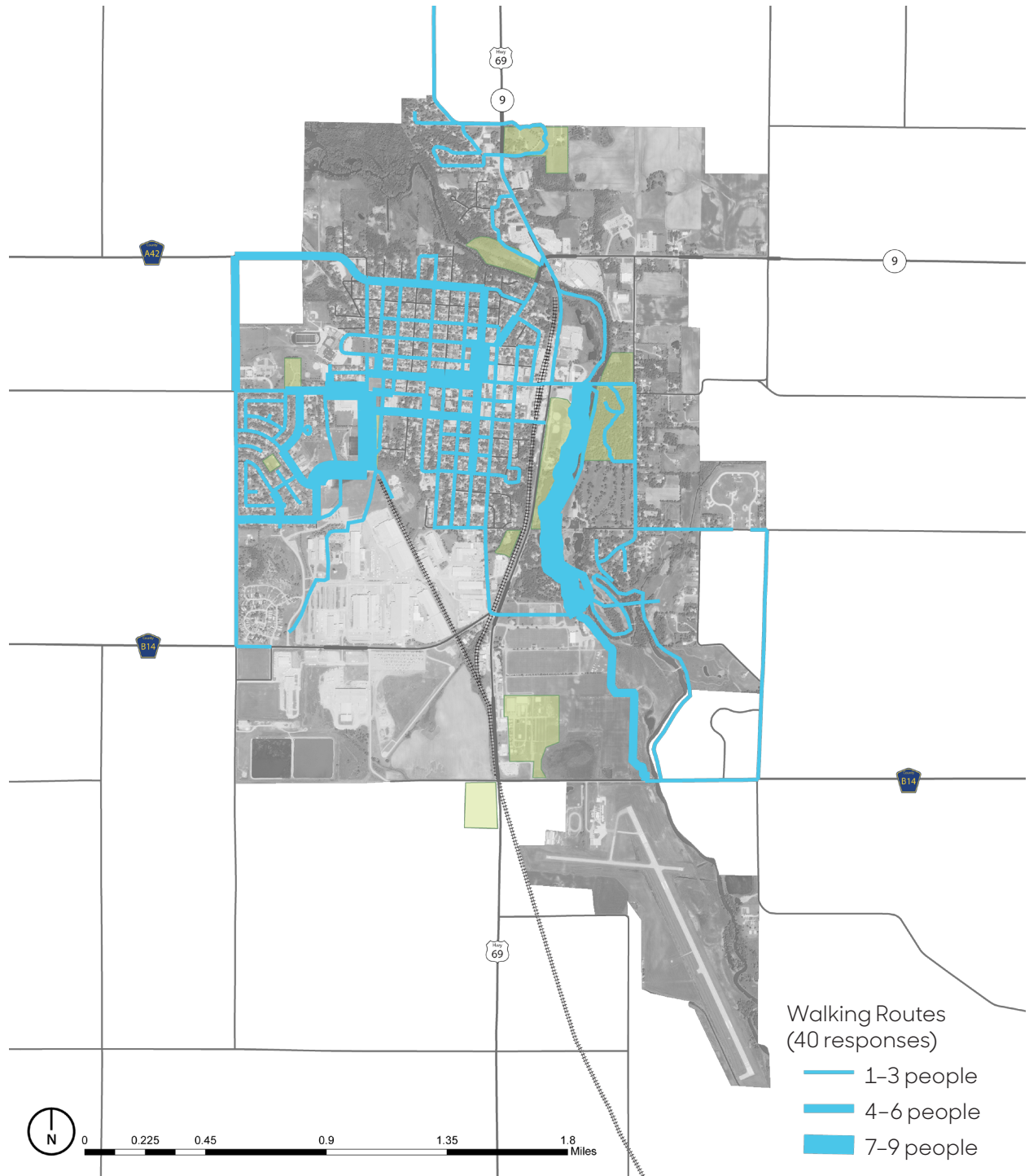
This map shows the commuting routes identified by 47 survey respondents. The frequency that the routes are used is depicted by their thickness, with most frequently used routes being the thickest. The primary commuting corridor in Forest City is Highway 69 north and south. Some people also go west on County Road A42 and travel east on Highway 9. In town, 335th Street is the most heavily traveled, followed by West J Street, John K. Hanson Drive, and South 4th Street.

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 Forest City participants, time to destination is clearly the most important factor, with a mean value of 4.4. Avoiding weather-related issues such as snow and ice is also considered important, with a mean value of 3.3, followed by other reasons (3.0), which include safe sidewalks and most direct route. Avoiding neighborhoods, scenic views, and seasonal beauty are not critical factors in determining commuting routes.

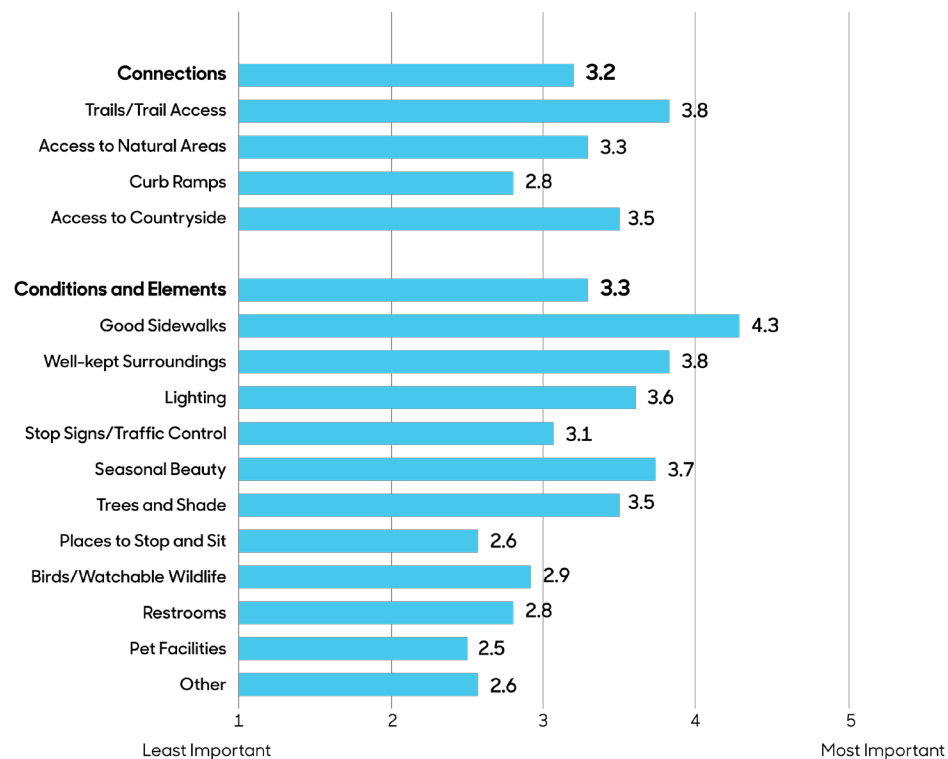


Map Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, "Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems Library," <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislibx/>.

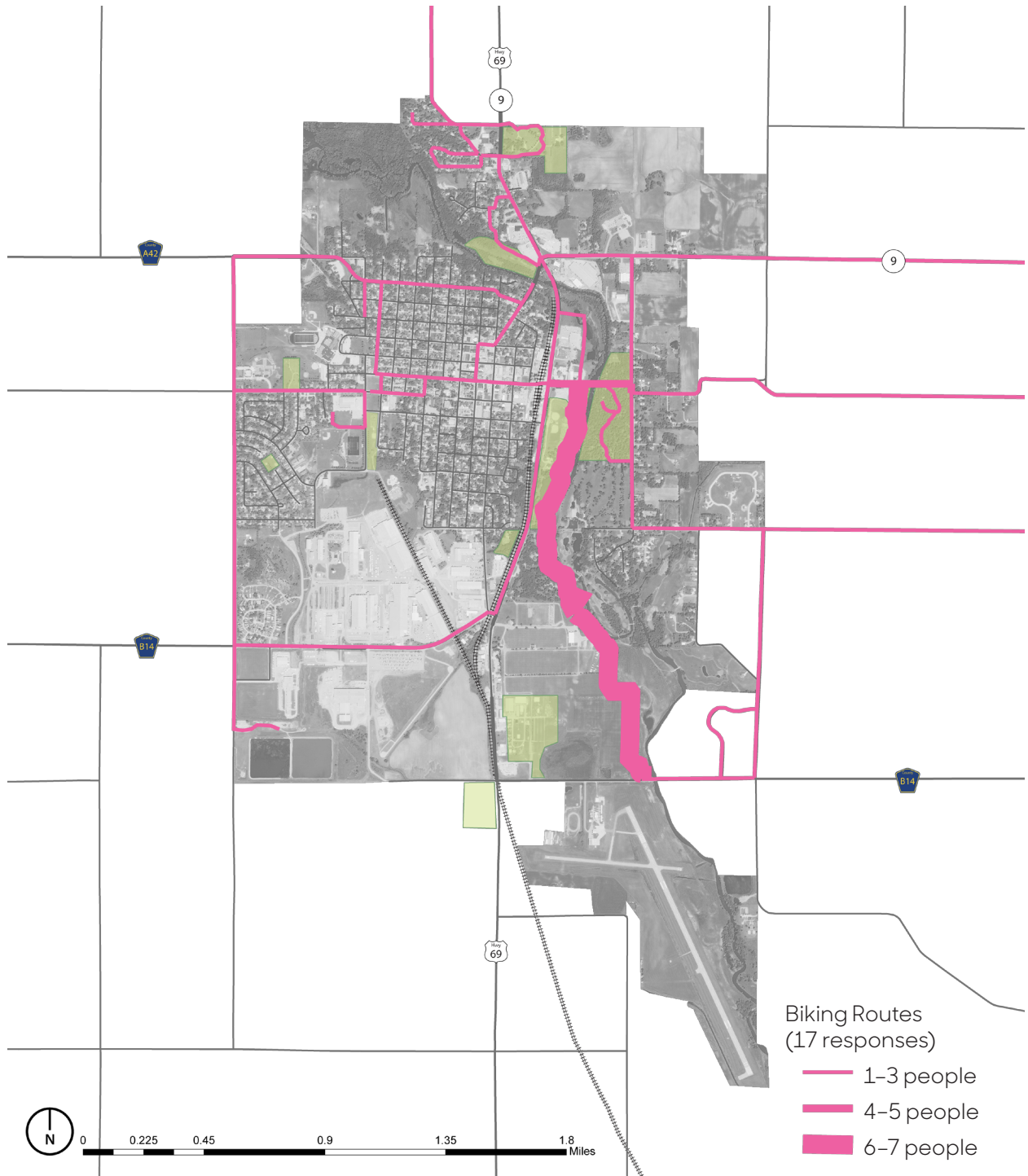
Where People Walk

This map shows the walking routes identified by 40 survey respondents. The frequency that the routes are used is depicted by their thickness, with most frequently used routes being the thickest. Hynes Trail is the most popular walking route among survey respondents. People also frequently walk the streets surrounding Waldorf University, as well as North Clark Street and West J Street. Some people walk in Clarks Woods Park and the cemetery.

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 Forest City participants, connections and conditions/elements are of similar importance, with mean values of 3.2 and 3.3, respectively. In terms of connections, access to trails is most important with a mean value of 3.8. Good sidewalks (4.3) are the most important element to walkers, followed by well-kept surroundings (3.8) and seasonal beauty (3.7). Other significant factors include lighting (3.6) and trees and shade (3.5).

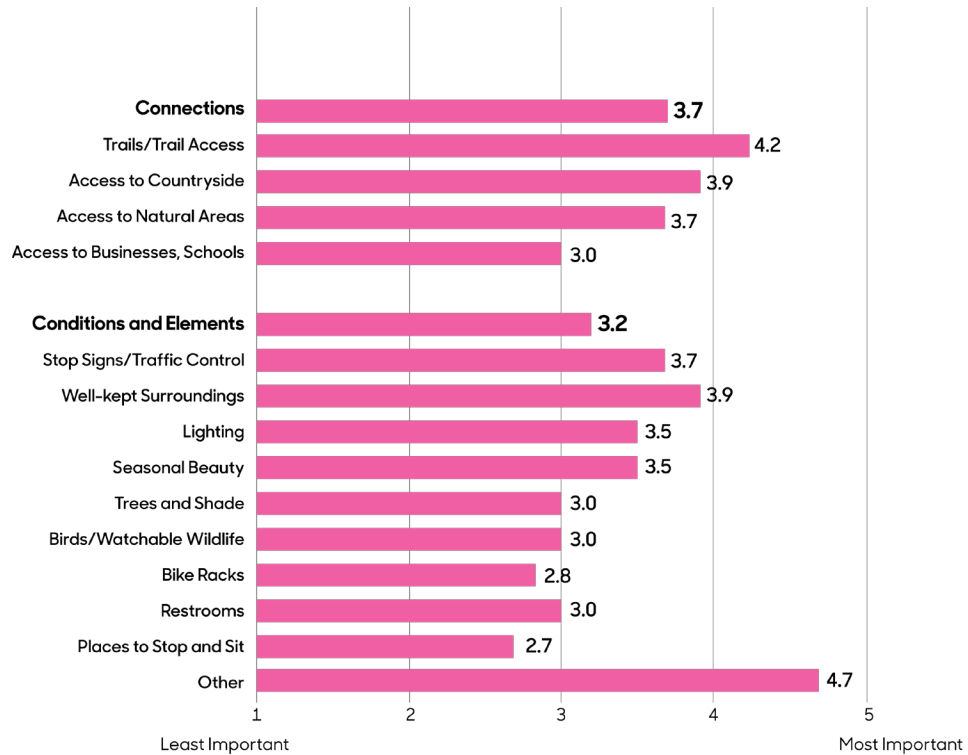


Map Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, "Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems Library," <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislib/>.

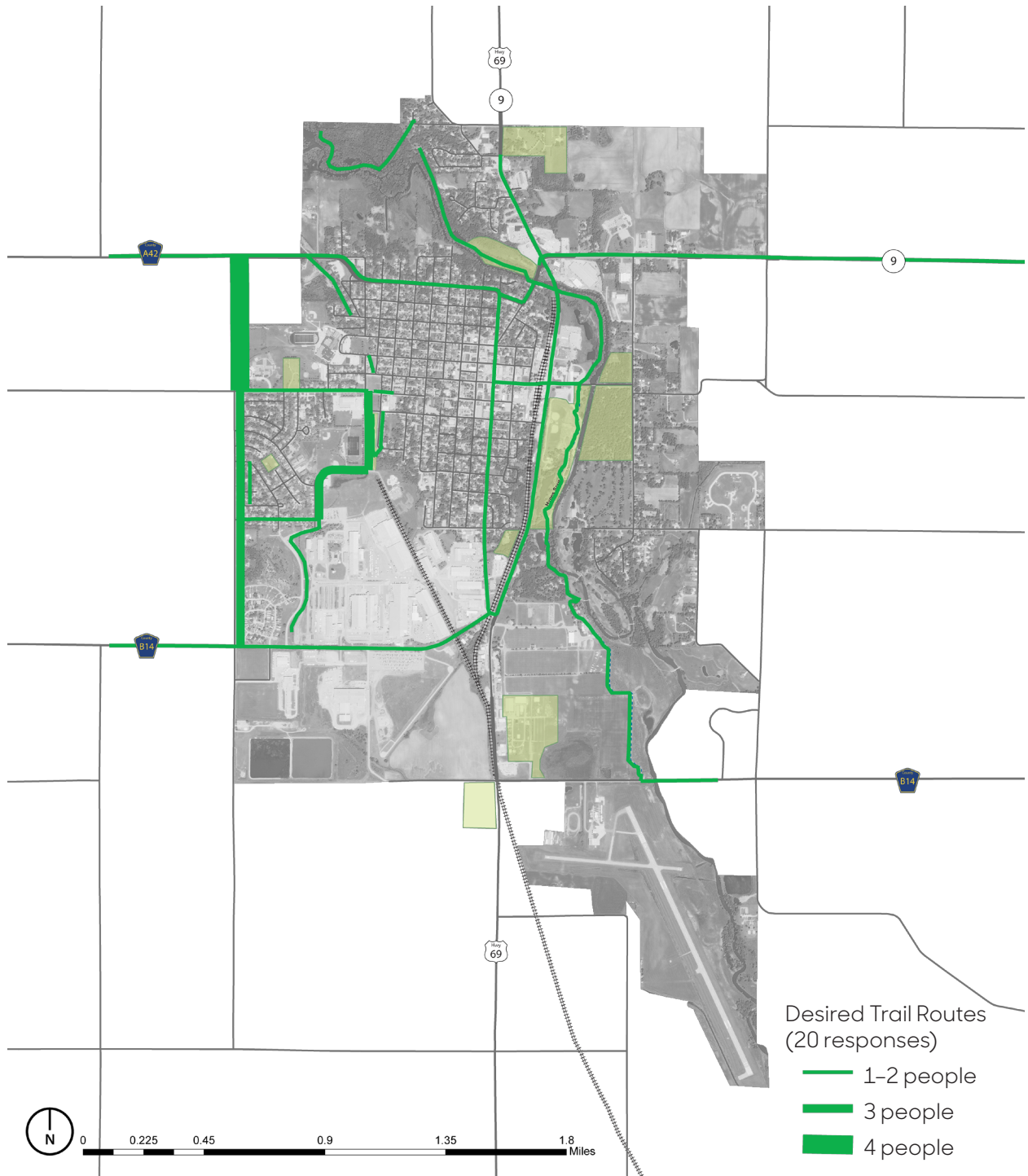
Where People Bike

This map shows the biking routes identified by 17 survey respondents. The frequency that the routes are used is depicted by their thickness, with most frequently used routes being the thickest. Like walkers, bikers prefer to ride on Hynes Trail. A few people bike in Clarks Woods Park and the cemetery, and others bike the streets on the periphery of town. Some people also bike on roads outside city limits, including Highway 9.

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 Forest City participants, connections (mean value of 3.7) are more important than and conditions/elements (mean value of 3.2). In terms of connections, access to trails is most important with a mean value of 4.2. The most important element to bikers is other, which is less gravel (4.7). Well-kept surroundings (3.9) and stop signs/traffic control (3.7) are also significant factors.

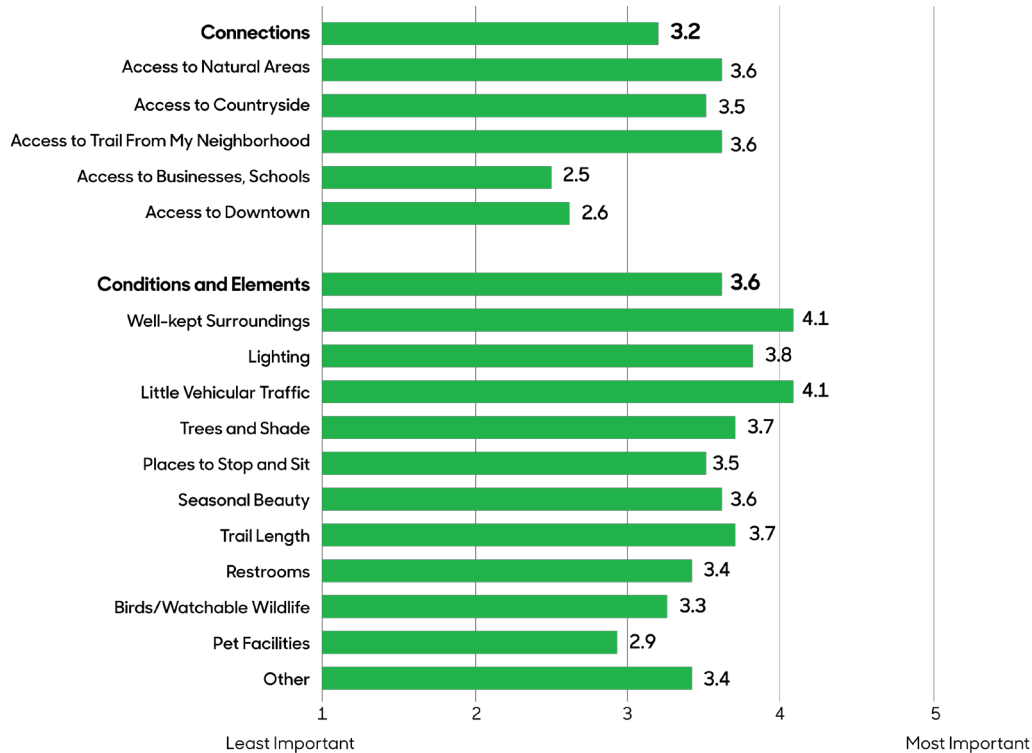


Map Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, "Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems Library," <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislib/>.

Where People Want Trails

This map shows the desired trail routes identified by 20 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 location for a trail among survey respondents is along 160th Avenue between County Road A42 and West I Street. Other suggestions include connecting County Roads A42 and B14 with a trail down 160th Avenue, and adding a trail along John K. Hanson Drive.

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 Forest City participants, conditions/elements (mean value of 3.6) are more important than connections (mean value of 3.2). In terms of connections, access to natural areas and access to the trail from my neighborhood are most important with mean values of 3.6 each. Well-kept surroundings and little vehicular traffic are the most important elements (4.1 each), followed by lighting (3.8).

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Iowa State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a US veteran. Inquiries can be directed to the Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, 3210 Beardshear Hall, (515) 294-7612.