



Because of its central location in the community, residents have great access to the many recreation amenities and places to rest at City Park.



Walkers, cyclists, and runners enjoy the smooth, even surface and the views of the school grounds and surrounding landscape along SE 4th Street.



The newly paved trail in Sunset Park winds through the mature trees and connects adjacent open spaces that support a variety of activities.



Old, broken, and uneven sidewalks along Gilmore Street impede access for many users in the downtown.



The intersection of Gilmore Street and Hwy 3 is prone to heavy traffic and accidents. Residents want signage alerting drivers that highway traffic does not stop. Pedestrian access is challenging due to no crosswalks.



Dips in the roadway and degraded surface conditions make for a rough railroad crossing on Gilmore Street. Pedestrians do not have dedicated access along this route or for crossing the tracks.

What Factors Affect Transportation in Gilmore City?

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 Gilmore City, 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 Gilmore City'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 Gilmore City residents with different transportation needs to participate in focus groups. A total of 34 residents attended Gilmore City's workshop. Participants were separated into five user groups and the Gilmore City steering committee.



Actives

(2 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

(2 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

(5 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

(9 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

(12 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.



Actives


"Pretty much all on [Gilmore Street] and right around that area, [the sidewalks are] just terrible...They're old, they're cracked, they're uneven, there [are] parts of it missing."

"I won't run on Quarry Road anymore, because the trucks don't pay attention, and there's nothing out there. So, let's say you did get hit and that trucker doesn't stop. You're at the mercy of whoever comes along next."

"...a lot of times when it's hot, we go to Moore Recreation [Area] because there [are] good trees and shade."

"Every summer, we have had somebody who didn't realize that the cross-traffic on Highway 3 doesn't stop [at the intersection with Gilmore Street], and they... get T-boned."

"If there was a trail, we would ride our bikes. We would walk. I would run. But...I [would] feel safest if it was a separate trail...not just a shoulder."



Youth


"[Along SE E Avenue] by the school, the sidewalks are...right by the road."

"There's a spot [where railroad crosses SE C Avenue] that's always full of water when it rains...When I go to the park, I have to just walk around it."

"City Park...[is] pretty easy to get to...from anywhere you live..."

"My mom and dad have to walk on the road [while we walk] on the sidewalk...if [the sidewalks] are bad or...really tiny."

"By the city park...I think there should be crosswalks...because kids are [on the other side of the road], and they can't really get to [the park]."



Parents


"A trail would be nice to get out to the quarry area too. [If] we had an underpass [so] you could somehow cross Highway 3... that would be nice...you could... expand it to the Three Rivers Trail and go all the way north..."

"...sometimes [the crown of] the road...slants so much...Kids...can't use bikes with training wheels."

"When you [have] school kids and you're walking from the school to the library...you can't get there safely any way you go [because sometimes you have to walk in the road]."

"[Once] you get off Main Street, [lighting is] very sporadic...I used to walk and... some places are really creepy and dark, and you can't see anything."

"...there should be sidewalks for the kids to get to the bus stop."



Older Adults

"I like to walk, but I don't like to walk in our town, because...our streets are crowned. So [I] can't walk on the side of the street, because it really hurts my ankles and knees... [and] I don't like walking in the middle of the road either."

"I want to walk with my dog [but] that's like trolling for loose dogs...I would love to have no loose dogs in town."

"I would like to see a bike trail and a walking trail beside [the roads]...where we don't have to walk or ride with the traffic."

"I leave early in the morning and...it just makes you feel safer. Because [Gilmore Street is] lit up."

"We don't have many sidewalks...They're hit and miss. A lot of people are taking them out...Some of them aren't good."



Mobility Challenged

"The railroad [crossing on SW B Avenue is challenging] because they're at such a sharp incline, you have to go up the hill. And with the ice, you have a tendency to roll backwards whether you're in a vehicle or wheelchair."

"[There are] really bad sidewalks or no sidewalks...there'll be a sidewalk and then it just stops...so you have to drive [your wheelchair] through grass to get where you need to go."

"Those ramps to get up onto the sidewalk will kill you because they're so steep. I've almost fallen out of my wheelchair several times."

"They have updated some of the corners where instead of having [the curb] high, it's a ramp. And it's nicely done."

"They just recently built a path [in Sunset Park], but it goes nowhere and it's under water."



Steering Committee

"[Moore Recreation Area] is a nice, quiet...a little bit more scenic...they mow a trail around it, and it's just a nice area to take...the dog or go for a little quieter walk."

"Everybody wants a trail. That's our main priority...I think the goal is to get up to the Three Rivers Trail..."

"...they have a mowed path... around the quarry and you can take the dog and run around out there. But the obstacle...is all the truck traffic."

"...we have some gravel [roads] in town, so if it's muddy out, I try to avoid those ones."

"...I know there [are] plans to continue to develop... [Sunset Park]... if you have more amenities there, it would be more popular if the trail was there too."

Gilmore City

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



Actives



Mobility Challenged



Older Adults



Youth



Parents



Steering Committee

| User Types | Destinations and Activities | | | Desirable Qualities and Features | | | Undesirable Qualities and Features | | | | | Most Desired Improvements and Activities | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| | School Grounds | Parks & Natural Areas | Walking | Accessibility for Walkers & Cyclists | Scenic Views | Tranquil Settings | Inadequate Sidewalk Infrastructure | Heavy Traffic | Inferior Road Conditions | Drainage Problems | Insufficient Lighting | Trail Connections | Complete, ADA-Compliant Sidewalks | Outdoor Recreation Amenities | Additional Lighting |
| Actives | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● | | ● | |
| Mobility Challenged | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Older Adults | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● |
| Youth | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | |
| Parents | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Steering Committee | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

Actives walk, bike, and run regularly for recreation and/or exercise. Their activity is hindered by the absence of a safe pedestrian/cyclist connection to Moore Recreation Area. This group would like distance markers, trees, and benches along any trails developed.

Mobility-challenged individuals drive, walk, and use a wheelchair to get around town. This group is frustrated by the fact that public parking is not defined and there are virtually no handicapped parking spots. The handicapped parking that does exist is not wide enough. Steep ramps also cause problems for wheelchair users.

Older adults walk, bike, and drive cars and side-by-sides. This group would like new, more level streets throughout town. They like to visit the school grounds to enjoy the scenery and "sit back and reflect the good old days from high school."

Youth walk and bike in town and ride the bus to school. Older youth drive cars, side-by-sides, golf carts, and four-wheelers. This group thinks that Sunset Park lacks opportunities for activities and want to see the trail finished. Youth like to go fishing and swimming at the quarry.

Parents walk, bike, and drive cars, side-by-sides, and golf carts. This group is concerned about the safety of their children. They do not feel safe crossing Highway 3 with kids on foot or by bike, and would like a pedestrian overpass or underpass across this busy road.

Steering committee members walk, bike, and drive cars, golf carts, and side-by-sides. This group would like all the streets in town to be redone. Committee members suggested creating a public recreation venue in the vacant lot next to the new bank on SE C Avenue.

The playgrounds, park garden, and ball fields make the school grounds a major attraction to all user types. Parents feel safe taking their kids there to play. The older adult and mobility-challenged groups like the soft, foam surfaces and nice equipment at the two playgrounds.

Both adults and youth enjoy the parks in the area. People appreciate the convenience of and amenities provided at City Park and the walking trail at Sunset Park. The Moore Recreation Area provides a safe, scenic place to walk.

Walking is a recreational activity that all user types have in common, whether it involves taking the kids, visiting with friends, or enjoying the scenery. Popular walking routes include the perimeter of town, the Moore Recreation Area, and around the school grounds.

Participants in every focus group stressed the importance of wide level, well-maintained surfaces for pedestrians and cyclists. Curb ramps at intersections in wheelchairs to navigate through town.

People take pleasure in the views in and around town. The school grounds offer a panorama of kids playing, a garden, and agricultural fields. Residents also delight in seeing nature and wildlife at Moore Recreation Area. Participants identified Moore Recreation Area and the school grounds as destinations that meet those criteria.

Broken missing and narrow sidewalks throughout town make it difficult for users of all ages and abilities to get from place to place. Double curbs and steep ramps downtown hinder heavy traffic and loose dogs, especially for older adults and people with mobility issues.

Heavy traffic, especially trucks traveling to and from the quarry, creates challenges for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. Highway 3 traffic does not stop, so people don't feel safe trying to cross, even when driving. Traffic near the school increases at pickup and drop-off times.

Road conditions in general leave much to be desired among residents. Participants were particularly vocal about the steeply crowned streets, which impede walking and biking, as well as snow removal. The gravel streets are hard to bike and get muddy from rain and snowmelt.

Focus-group discussions revealed several places in town that experience chronic drainage issues, including the intersection of SW C Avenue and SW 1st Street near the railroad crossing, SW 3rd Street south of Highway 3, and older adults said that they don't feel safe going out early in the morning or at night because it is too dark.

Trail connections are a priority among all user groups. In town, residents want the trail in Sunset Park to connect to City Park, and at City Park, Parents Area, the quarry, and Three Rivers Trail.

Residents would like improvements to the sidewalk system, including uniform curb heights, curb ramps at all intersections, six-foot-wide sidewalks on both sides of a dog park, and more activities for both youth and adults.

The desire for more outdoor recreation amenities was a common theme among all user groups. Suggestions include ADA-accessible play equipment, restrooms, trash cans, and a water fountain at City Park. Some focus-group participants want additional lighting in town to improve safety. Locations mentioned include at City and Sunset Parks, at intersections, in high-traffic areas, and along any new trails.

Gilmore City

Emerging Themes

Transportation Assets and Barriers Analysis

Julia Badenhop, Sandra Oberbroeckling, Britney Markhardt

Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation

