



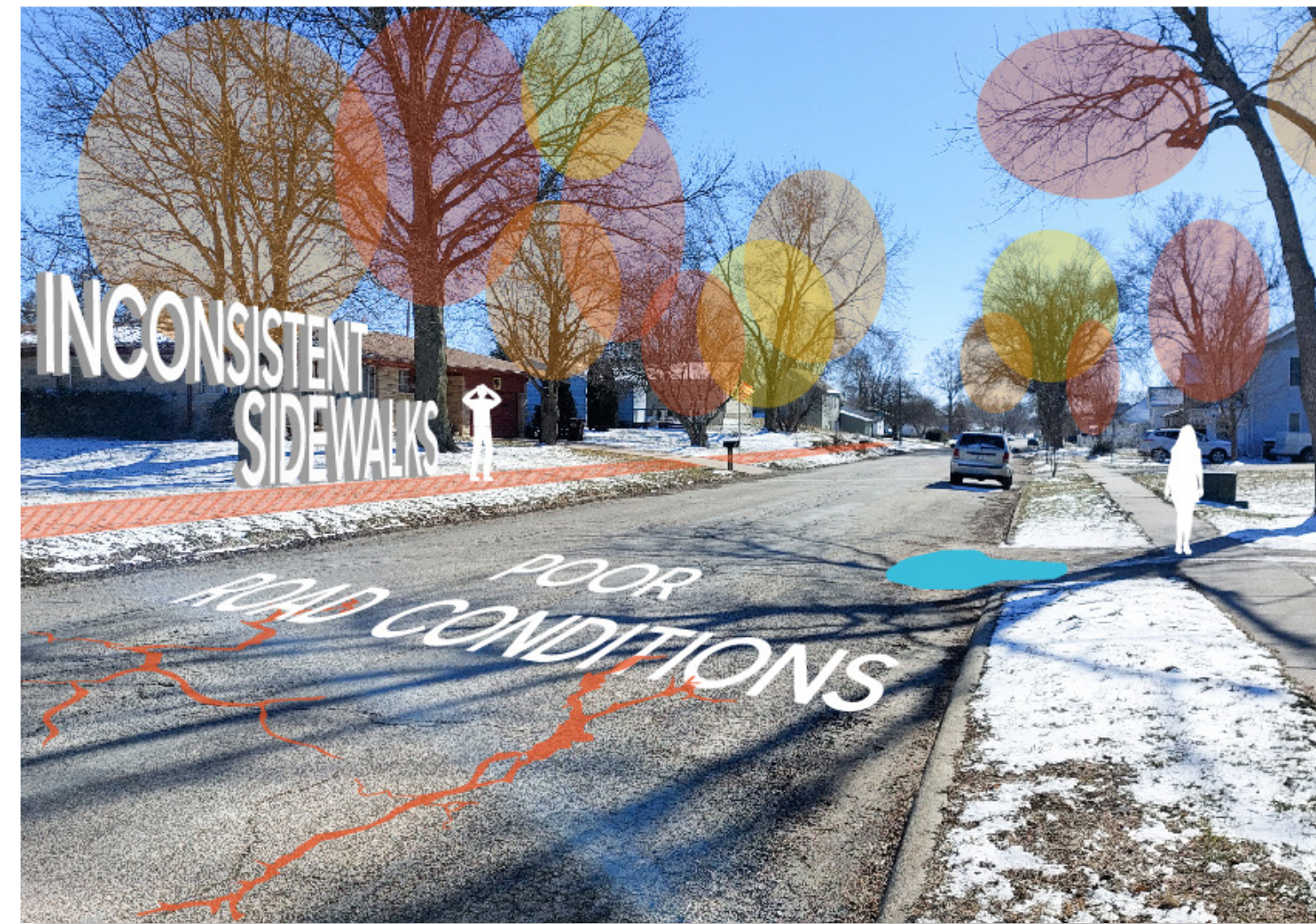
City Park features wide and smooth pedestrian paths used by bikers and walkers. The bridge in the park enhances connectivity.



The sidewalks at the intersection of Metcalf and 5th Streets are disconnected. Speeding traffic on 5th Street makes it difficult to cross without a crossing light.



Wide, paved paths; a well-kept tree canopy; and scenic views make the Heart of Iowa Trail enjoyable for walkers, runners, and bikers.



Potholes and ponding on Baldwin Street deter drivers from using this route, and inconsistent sidewalks inhibit pedestrian use.



Downtown Main Street is a comfortable space for residents because it has a well-maintained roadway, level and accessible sidewalks, and good lighting.



People walk and bike on the shoulder of Highway 210 to Dollar General because there is no sidewalk or trail connection.

What Factors Affect Transportation in Maxwell?

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 Maxwell, 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 Maxwell'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 Maxwell residents with different transportation needs to participate in focus groups. A total of 48 residents attended Maxwell's workshop. Participants were separated into five user groups and the Maxwell steering committee.



Actives

(13 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

(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.



Youth

(13 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

(9 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

(7 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.



"I do some bicycle commuting, and...Army Post Road is a hazard for cyclists... And then to get back on the trail [from the switchback] is very rocky, and unless you have a mountain bike it's a hazard as well."

"I like to use the trail for the kids because they can ride their bike. I don't have to worry about cars or anything like that... and it's shaded...It's beautiful."

Actives

"[Having a] sidewalk along 210 to Dollar General...for children's safety, that has to be a top concern. From Dollar General [coming into town], the kids walk [on] the highway."

"Baldwin [has] been the complaint [because of potholes]. I've lived here [many] years, and it's been a complaint from everybody forever."

"I see people [walking the high school track]... [because] it's well lit and [has a] soft surface... [and] no dogs."

"...it would be really nice to have brand new sidewalks, so...kids...[don't have to walk] in the road, because when I'm driving around, I don't want to accidentally hit them."

"When I'm riding my bike, I really like to see all of nature. Sometimes we [stop]... There's some kind of berry we love to pick off the trees and eat."

"...you have to go through really soft gravel [so] it's kind of hard to get up to the trails [from Legion Park on a bike]."

"We go on [Baldwin St] so much and [it's] so... bumpy...It makes my stomach feel weird."



Youth

"I would like to see...a sidewalk to Dollar General...It's on the outskirts, and the kids have to cross a gravel road essentially, but people are speeding through...There is no sidewalk...coming into town on 210—so it's around a curve—you're supposed to be slowing down, but I don't think people really do...my kids will want to bike up there, and it always makes me a little antsy."

"So Main Street has wide sidewalks, which is nice, but in the summer...it's really hot because there [are] no trees, so we avoid Main Street...it's like a concrete jungle."



Parents

"...it's hard for kids to get home from school because there are not sidewalks for them to walk on... There [are] kids in the road. ...As soon as they're off the bus, they're in the road because there [are] not sidewalks."

"I think the Heart of Iowa Trail's nice to walk when the weather's nice; it's shaded, and it's wide."

"Baldwin Street is awful, and I think everybody can agree with that...It's awful to walk on too. The sidewalks are cracked...the street's terrible."

"There's no sidewalk included at all [from Dollar General] to get...anywhere... [people] might have to walk. They might have a cart that they're pulling to haul their purchases back, and so [it's] just a concern of safety."

"...there's an entrance on Indian Creek [in City Park]... it's an open area...with all sand bars. [It] is really a nice spot. And a lot of [people] just go everywhere—including me—because [there] is good fishing down there...a sidewalk would be nice...to get access there."

"...when you drive [Baldwin St north of North St] at night I can't even tell you the number of times it scared the daylights out of you because somebody's walking, and there's nowhere for them to walk."

"I think there are more stop signs per block in this town than anywhere I've ever been, so traffic is not really an issue when you're out walking because [cars are] always stopped every block."

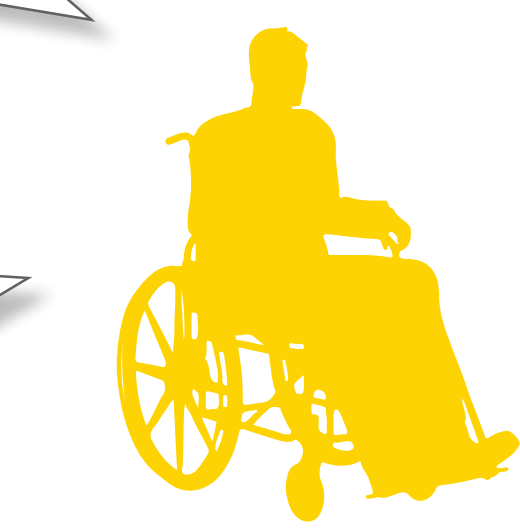


Older Adults

"I enjoy walking by the soccer field, but... you use the street... It's peaceful down there...it's a big area... It [has] trees."

"I know the road down through [City Park] has really big gravel, and it's really hard to walk. It's really uneven."

"[There needs to be signage along the trail] to draw people further into town."



Mobility Challenged

"...there's no caution [light at either Hwy 210 and Maxwell St or Hwy 210 and Metcalf St warning] that kids are going to be crossing that highway to get to the school."

"...a lot of older people walk [on Woodlawn St] and there's no place really for them to walk other than the middle of the street."

"...you cannot [easily push a wheelchair] around the school...There are so many bumps [in the sidewalks]."

"[Driving on Baldwin St] can be a real hazard, because as you're trying to dodge all the potholes, the cars coming at you are trying to dodge potholes...And the cars parked...And people walking."

"I think right around the Maxwell City Park's pretty good... you can go even inside the park...and still feel safe enough to walk in there."



Steering Committee

"Unfortunately there's a complete lack of sidewalks outside of the Main Street corridor, so the issue becomes that everybody walks on the streets once you get off Main Street."

"We don't have curb and gutter on any street, except for Baldwin and Main... we have lots of puddles on the edge of the road since there is no drainage, so parking is a problem almost everywhere."

"I would like to see a Safe Route to School plan...On each quarter of the town, the kids would have a way to get to the school on sidewalks...that create a contiguous path."

Maxwell

What People Said

User Types



Actives



Mobility Challenged



Older Adults



Youth



Parents



Steering Committee

User Types	Valued Destinations, Activities, and Qualities					Undesirable Qualities and Features					Most Desired Improvements and Activities				
	Heart of Iowa Trail	Maxwell City Park	Main Street Downtown Streetscape	Legion/Scout Park	Good Lighting	Inadequate Sidewalk Infrastructure	Inferior Roadway Conditions	Flooding/ Drainage Issues	High-speed Traffic	Visibility Problems	Trail Enhancements	Contiguous Sidewalk Network	Roadway Infrastructure Improvements	Pedestrian/ Cyclist Safety Features	Additional Outdoor Recreation
Actives	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mobility Challenged				●			●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Older Adults	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Youth	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Parents	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Steering Committee	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Actives walk, bike, and run for recreation/exercise and drive, walk, and bike to destinations. They suggested expanding the disc golf course so it can be used for national competitions. This group would like something to be done to mitigate Indian Creek flooding and improve walking conditions in City Park.

Mobility-challenged individuals drive, walk, and use wheelchairs to get around town. They appreciate the handicapped-accessible ramps to the post office and the vet clinic, but find it difficult to push a wheelchair on Main Street south of Broad Street and the streets around the school.

Older adults drive, walk, bike, jog, and use four-wheelers. They are concerned that rerouting the Heart of Iowa Trail along the railbed between Army Post Road and the switchback will create a buffer between trail users and the town. This group would like lighting and trails in the Indian Creek area.

Youth walk, bike, run, ride scooters and skateboard, and ride with parents around town. Older youth also drive. They want more places to bike that are flat and not gravel and suggested that Maxwell have a bike park. Youth also would like a bus service to take them places when their parents are busy.

Parents drive and walk. They are primarily concerned for the safety of their children and would like speed cameras in town. This group lamented the fact that walking on Main Street during the summer is hot because there are no trees. Parents would like the ball diamonds relocated to an area that doesn't flood.

Steering committee members drive, walk, and bike. They consider having safe corridors for people to walk, bike, and run a priority and want to create a Safe Routes to School plan. People in this group said they like stargazing at night by the ball fields because it is a dark area.

Scenic views, natural areas, shade, and a connection to neighboring towns are just some of the benefits the Heart of Iowa Trail has to offer. Parents and youth use the trail because they feel safe and like the paved surface. Adults like the beautiful bridge over Rock Creek and the fall color. Maxwell City Park is a popular destination that provides a variety of recreation and leisure activities including disc golf, gaga ball, a dog park, and the farmers market. People access Indian Creek for fishing and kayaking from the park. Both adults and kids walk and bike on the road there. Both adults and youth like the Main Street streetscape in the downtown area because it is well lit, and the sidewalks are wide, level, and have curb ramps. Parents feel safe walking there, even when there is traffic. Older adults said that traffic flows well on the wide roadway. Legion/Scout Park accommodates users of all ages and abilities. The ball diamond and soccer fields host sports events and school practices. Mobility-challenged individuals like to walk there because it is peaceful and has a lot of trees. People take their kids sledding there in winter. Participants in several focus groups mentioned good lighting as an important safety feature. City Park, Main Street, and around the school, Baldwin Street north of Hwy 210, and the intersections of 1st Street to the trailer park, and Main Street to Dollar General. Inferior roadway conditions create problems for drivers, walkers, cyclists, and wheelchair users. One person said Baldwin Street is the worst road in Story County - a view largely shared across groups. Other streets cited were Army Post Road, 2nd Street, and the road in the cemetery. Its location between Indian and Rock Creeks makes for all groups. East-west traffic on Hwy 210 and CPR S27 is an issue for North-south traffic on Hwy 210. However, residents concern for kids crossing 5th Street on Hwy 210 is a safety issue. High-speed traffic on Hwy 210 and CPR S27 is an issue for all groups. East-west traffic on Hwy 210 is a safety issue because of the hill and road side trees. Cars parked on Main Street and at the school hinder visibility at intersections. Residents would like a variety of enhancements to the Heart of Iowa Trail including a trailhead with bike racks, way-finding signage to bring trail users into town, fruit trees, geocaching, a butterfly garden, and a bird-watching area. Some people would like the trail to be paved. Pedestrian connections, especially to Dollar General and the trailer park, are a high priority among all user types. Fixing existing sidewalks throughout town and adding sidewalks in residential areas, in the vicinity of the school, and along Hwy 210 were frequent suggestions. Adults would like more safety features for walkers and cyclists throughout town but especially along Hwy 210. Older adults suggested updating existing pedestrian lights and crossing signs. Parents want safe crossings along 5th Street for their kids going to and from school. Residents desire access to more outdoor activities such as a skateboard park and a splash pad in Legion/Scout Park and expanded disc golf in City Park. The actives and steering committee groups want a new park near the water tower with adult exercise equipment and a playground for kids.

Maxwell

Emerging Themes

Transportation Assets and Barriers Analysis
 Julia Badenhop, Sandra Oberbroeckling, Britney Markhardt
 Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation

