



Pikes Peak State Park offers scenic views of natural features, trail signage, and hiking opportunities for people of all abilities.



Trains frequently block traffic to and from riverfront destinations, creating a sense of disconnect.



Turner Park is conveniently located for school kids, who use the facilities regularly for sports and recreation.



Falling trees and rocks create hazards along Highway 76 and can block traffic.



The historical downtown has an inviting, walkable streetscape and a variety of shops.



Narrow streets and limited parking cause congestion on Main Street. The lack of pedestrian crossings is frustrating to residents.

What Factors Affect Transportation in McGregor?

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 McGregor, 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 McGregor’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 McGregor residents with different transportation needs to participate in focus groups. A total of 53 residents attended McGregor’s workshop. Participants were separated into five user groups and the McGregor steering committee.



Actives

(8 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

(9 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

(6 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

(15 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

(8 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.



Actives


"...Center Street [is] a 15%-graded street, so getting on a bike and going downtown does have some limitations."

"One of the things we'd like to see... is better signage [for the McGregor entrance to Pikes Peak.] There's a sign down there...with [a] map and there [are] two trailheads. But... nobody knows...[you can access the park.] Everyone goes to the main entrance to Pikes Peak..."

"[I would] make the train go away, [so] it doesn't ever block the marina. It can be [blocked for] hours and hours—up to four hours."

"...a tremendous thing to achieve [would be] a very nice trail between McGregor and Marquette..."

"...We have wonderful Indian mounds around [McGregor]...They are visible from city streets...If you drive up to McGregor Heights, you can look out your window and see two big, beautiful mounds."



Youth


"...sometimes rocks fall on [the Great River Road]...there [are] a lot of potholes on [the roadway]...so then you have to dodge them, [and the] rocks...and cars coming in the opposite direction."

"When you're on your bike [on Main Street], people get mad at you for being in the road, but you're also not allowed to be on the sidewalk either."

"[The train goes by] the boat landing...and people can get stuck [at the marina] or stuck [outside of it], and that sucks."

"They just put random signs for crosswalks [on Main Street], but there's no actual...crosswalk."

"[Cemetery Road] is terrifying...it's a bunch of hairpin turns, and you can't see [around] the corners at all."



Parents

"It's nice that we have the Main Street, because then you don't have all the tourists...flying up our back streets to where our kids tend to play."

"I would love [a walking path] all the way along the river...one all the way to Marquette would be great."

"The kids walking home from school will take Ann Street a lot because there is less traffic... [but] they don't have a sidewalk to walk on."

"[Speeding on] Buell is bad. [The speed limit on] Buell is supposed to be 15 [mph], and I can guarantee [that] people go 45[mph]."

"I think bike lanes would be nice, because our family likes riding bikes, but...I don't even know where we would safely go with kids. There's no safe way to get out of town."



Older Adults

"[On] Prospect Street... there are crumbling retaining walls...holding up [the] street. So it's pretty serious...that whole street could go."

"[In front of the library]...there's a handicapped place, but there is no railing...to get you up on the sidewalk [from the street]...in the wintertime... there's an accumulation of ice and slush and it is difficult...to get down from that curbing without [a] railing...I almost fell one day...we really need a railing there."

"Because it's quiet up on the Heights, we have lots and lots of walkers. And it's just joyful to have folks walking up there."

"I [drive to Determination Park] so I can have a level walking place."

"...backing out [onto Main Street] with the grain trucks, at certain times... you wait for several minutes to get out of the driveway."



Mobility Challenged

"That corner [of 1st and Main Streets] is really hard, because there [are] usually cars parked along the street and on both sides...if you're trying to come out [from 1st Street], you can't see anything."

"...I think the Mississippi River is the greatest asset we have, and we could do lots more there to improve recreational [opportunities]."

"There [are] a lot of senior citizens [who] walk up [at Turner Park] and... it's nice and flat, so you can just take your time."

"...we get so many tourists, and then there's no place for them to park [on Main Street] and they say, 'Forget it. Let's go.' It's always been a problem."



Steering Committee

"I have seen people...crawl over and under [a parked train]...to get to the other side of the [tracks]...[train cars] bump into each other and everything moves all of a sudden. I'm afraid we're going to lose somebody someday."

"Main Street] gets congested...[and] the railings through downtown... especially get challenging if there [are] a lot of people walking around down there."

"Center Street...[has] a flash flood problem. Everything runs down from the hills onto the street and then it runs down the street...a lot of [the runoff] goes down that drain [at the bottom, but it doesn't all make it."

"[The view to the north] looking down over the field of wildflowers down to the river and the bridge [from Determination Park] is beautiful. You can see for miles up there."

"I would like to see an overpass—at least a foot bridge—across the tracks so that you can get in and out of [the riverfront area] if a train is there."

McGregor

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



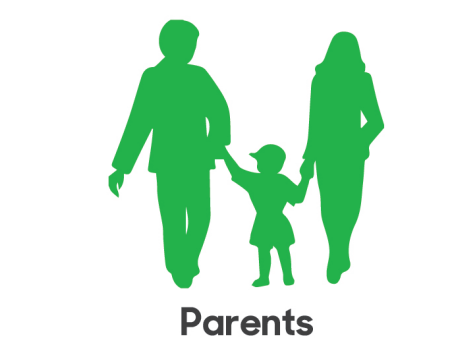
Mobility Challenged



Older Adults



Youth



Parents



Steering Committee

User Types	Destinations and Activities			Valued Qualities and Features			Undesirable Qualities and Features					Most Desired Improvements and Activities			
	Turner Park	Historic Downtown District	McGregor Heights	Connection to Nature	Access to Outdoor Recreation	Pedestrian Amenities	Limited Downtown Parking	Disconnect Created by Train Traffic	Inadequate Sidewalk Infrastructure	Deteriorated Roadway Conditions	Flooding & Drainage Problems	Additional Downtown Parking	Vehicular & Trail Connections	Railroad Bypass	Pedestrian Safety Features & Amenities
Actives	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mobility Challenged	●			●	●		●					●			
Older Adults	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●		●
Youth	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Parents	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Steering Committee	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Actives walk and bike for recreation and/or exercise and walk and drive to destinations. This group would like better biking routes to Marquette and Guttenberg and think that public transportation to Prairie du Chien is needed. Actives appreciate the good mountain-biking network at Pikes Peak.

Mobility-challenged individuals drive, walk, and use the Coulee Cab service to get around. This group would like more recreational opportunities at Riverfront Park. They think the grain elevator should either be restored or torn down. Like the active group, they mentioned the need for some type of public transportation to Prairie du Chien.

Older adults primarily drive and walk. They enjoy walking the evacuation route between McGregor and Marquette. This group would like railings downtown to help people get from the street to the sidewalk. Older adults find it especially difficult to get from sidewalk to the street when snow is piled against the curb.

Youth walk, bike, and ride the school bus. Older youth also drive. This group also enjoys fishing on the river year-round and cross-country skiing in winter. They don't like driving on Cemetery Road because of blind corners and hairpin turns. Youth want a public fishing and swimming dock.

Parents drive cars and UTVs, walk, and bike to reach local destinations, and enjoy boating. They are primarily concerned with the safety of their children. The absence of curb ramps in some areas is an issue for this group. Parents would like more lighting and a wider sidewalk in Turner Park, as well as stroller-friendly trails.

Steering committee members drive and walk to local places and walk and bike for recreation. Committee members would like an elevated trail from McGregor to Pikes Peak. This group pointed out that the call number to report trains parked on the railroad tracks should be posted on both sides of the railroad tracks.

Turner Park is a popular among all user groups for its trees, shelter, seating, ample parking, and the nice flat walking path. Kids enjoy the ball field, splash pad, and play equipment. Older adults and mobility-challenged people appreciate the handicapped-accessible swings and tables. Residents value the downtown district because it is very walkable. The area's historic quality, stores, restaurants, and parks attract many tourists. Parents like the shade, quiet streets and in Determination Park, and some walkers like the exercise they get going up the hill to the Heights. People in every focus group commented on the spectacular natural beauty in the area and the many opportunities they have to connect to natural vegetation in the river, Pikes Peak, and Effigy Mounds. User groups of all ages value the outdoor recreation amenities in town. People swim and fish along Main Street, in the parks, and at the marina. Older adults like the streetlights and railings on Main Street. Parents appreciate dog-waste and trash receptacles in the parks. Limited downtown parking is considered a nuisance and a potential hazard. Vehicles parked on both sides of the street make the road narrow for two-way traffic and virtually impassable for cyclists. Shoppers and tourists have to compete with downtown residents for parking. Trains parked across the riverfront entrance from the riverfront literally trap people trying to get into town and vice versa. The situation is both inconvenient and hazardous, because people crawl under or through the train cars. Broken uneven, and missing sidewalks are a bone of contention among all users. For example, the sidewalks on Ann Street are started and overgrown, and some sections have steps. Other streets cited include Buell Avenue, A Street, C Street, Center Street, Prospect Street, and River Road. Both adults and youth take issue with the conditions of some roadways in and around McGregor. Falling rocks and trees and/or mudslides along the Great River Road, River Street, and Ash Street are a serious concern. These streets and a number of others are also rough and uneven. Focus-group participants raised the issue of flooding and drainage issues in certain areas. Heavy rains can cause flash flooding on Center Street created by runoff from the hills. Riverfront Park and the lower portion of Main Street sometimes flood because of the antiquated drainage system. More downtown parking, including handicapped-accessible spaces, is a priority among people of all ages. Participants suggested building a public parking ramp, converting empty lots into parking areas, and creating parking in the grassy area by the grain elevators. Vehicular and trail connectivity is important to residents. They want trail links to Marquette, Pikes Peak, and Effigy Mounds; a river walk to Marquette; and a trail to Destination Park. Road connections to The Bench, from Summit Drive to Eagle Drive, and from Center Street to Buell Avenue are wanted. People in several focus groups think that bypassing the railroad tracks with some type of overpass or underpass to allow people to freely move between riverfront, McGregor, and Marquette would be a significant improvement in terms of safety and convenience. Residents talked about enhancing walkers' experiences by fixing sidewalks and adding safety features such as crossing lights and traffic controls, painted crosswalks, more lighting. They also want more amenities such as dog-waste and trash receptacles, benches, and public restrooms.

McGregor

Emerging Themes

Transportation Assets and Barriers Analysis

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