

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 Mount Pleasant Community High School in January 2020.

ISU design interns held focus groups with three 9th graders and three upperclassmen to understand the factors and conditions that affect transportation use among these unique users. 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 Mount Pleasant-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 drive, walk, bike, and take the bus to local destinations in town. Their concerns include the conditions of the sidewalks, rough railroad crossings, and rough and narrow roads. Difficulty walking to the high school and traffic congestion at school start and end times are also problematic for students. Focus-group participants suggested creating a second entrance to the high school to alleviate traffic problems. They also want more and better sidewalks and smoother railroad crossings. They enjoy the trails in town but think there should be more amenities such as trash cans, dog stations, and benches.

"...I do see people in the mornings walk to the high school...there's a trail on the other side of the road, but then, it's hard for them to get across because [vehicles] are coming in."

"[The] railroad tracks [on Lincoln Street] are very bad to drive on. The [crossing] right next to the middle school is awful. I feel like I'm going to break my car every time I drive over it."

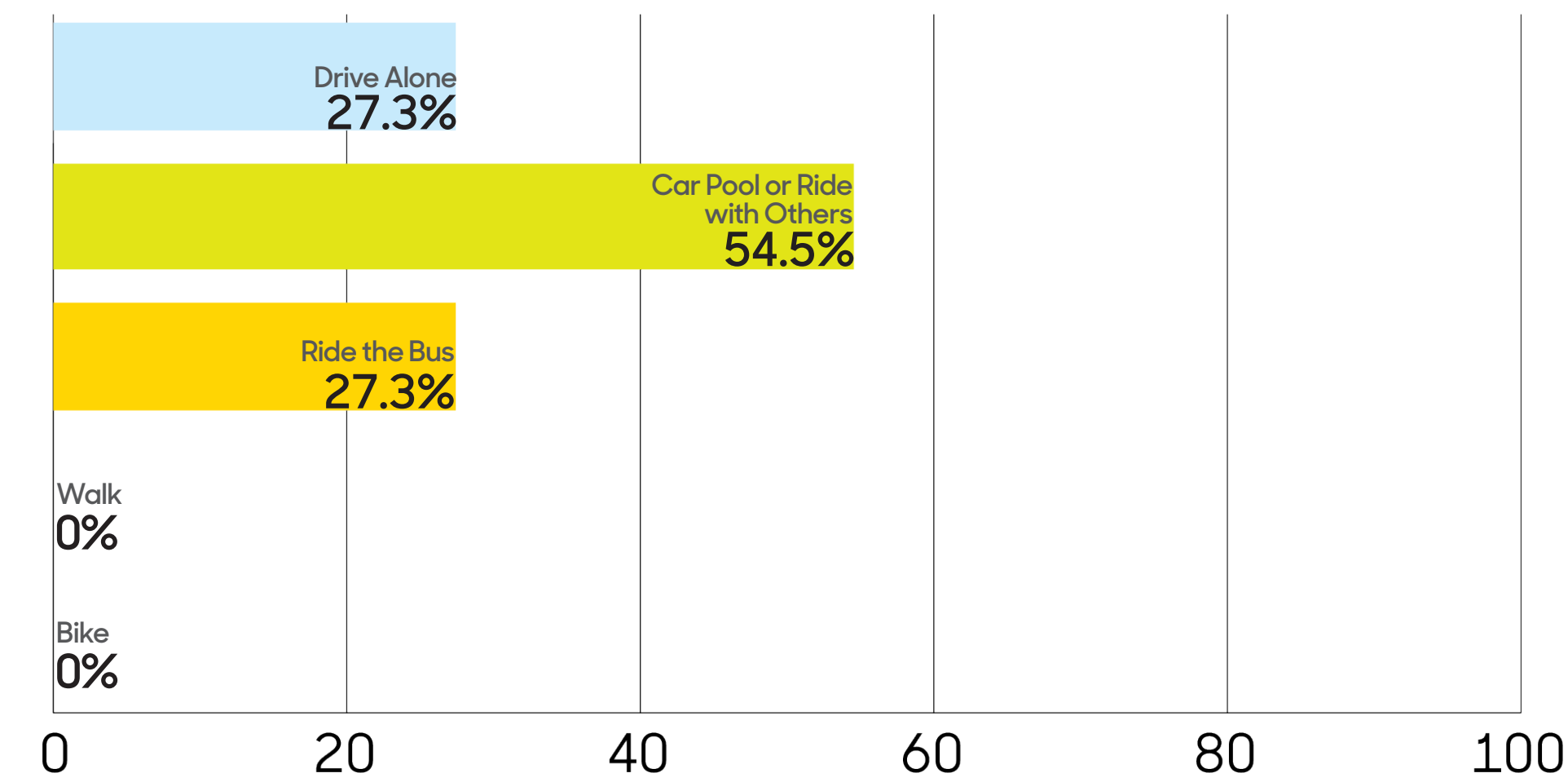
"I usually take my dog with me [when I walk], so...the best places... have the most grass. I'd like a clear path, no objects that are in my way or anything...an eight-by-eight area or something like that just for walking or running."

"... in town we do a...good job of having trees and stuff to look at, but...one thing for me is nature."

"Our [school] parking lot, if you want to leave, it takes you at least 30 minutes to go. I feel like there should be more than one exit."

How They Travel

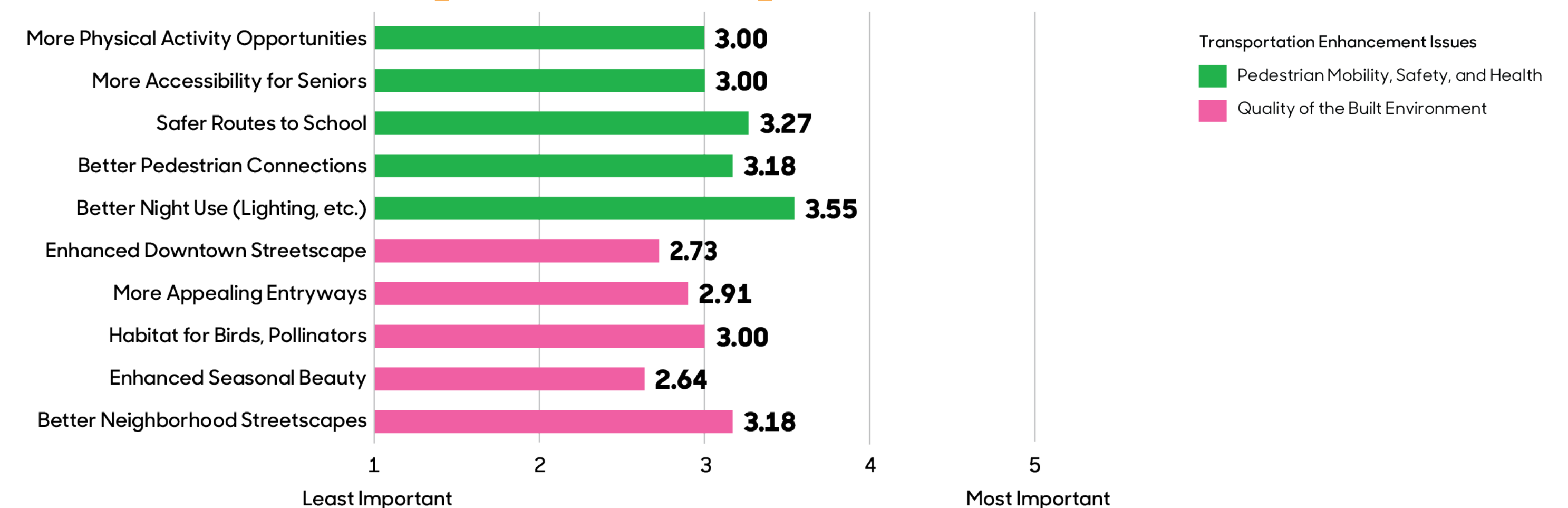
Most high school survey participants car pool or ride with others to local destinations (54.5%). An equal percentage of students drive alone or ride the bus (27.3%). None of the high school survey respondents walk or bike to destinations.



*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 (11 responses)

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, high school survey participants ranked providing better lighting for night use as most important, with a mean value of 3.55. Other types of transportation enhancements that address pedestrian mobility, health, and safety are also considered important, such as creating safer routes to school (3.27) and creating better pedestrian connections (3.18). In terms of quality of the built environment, survey respondents consider better neighborhood streetscapes as most important (3.18). Students' priorities are similar to those of adult survey respondents, although in general they assign less importance to each factor.

Mount Pleasant High School Study Overview

High School Transportation Survey and Focus Groups

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