



People feel safe walking and biking on the High Trestle Trail and enjoy scenic views and bird watching along the trail.



The crosswalks at Highway 210 and Linn Street are not well defined, and the four-way stop creates traffic congestion.



Residents take pride in the downtown area because it is well maintained. The wide sidewalks, curb ramps, and lighting make it comfortable for pedestrians.



Highway 210 does not have a sidewalk and the steep ditches make it a difficult route for pedestrians.



Earl Grimm Park is a popular community hub that features shelters, benches, restrooms, and a pool, and provides direct access to the High Trestle Trail.



Pedestrians and cyclists using the High Trestle Trail don't feel safe crossing Highway 210 because of high-speed traffic. Vegetation on the south side of the highway obstructs the view on both the High Trestle and Sievers Trails.

What Factors Affect Transportation in Slater?

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 Slater, 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 Slater'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 Slater residents with different transportation needs to participate in focus groups. A total of 40 residents attended Slater's workshop. Participants were separated into five user groups and the Slater steering committee.



Actives

(3 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

(5 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

(8 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

(8 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


"We will walk [to Nite Hawk] in the summer...there needs to be a better way to get there from over [Highway 210]."

"Nelson Park usually has kids playing; moms and dads [are] there with their kids. It's a pretty active park and there [are] benches... There's water [and] a porta-potty."

"...when people are walking... there [are] couples—two or three people—so quite honestly, the town is small enough and quiet enough that they walk in the street...There's not enough room on the sidewalk anyway."

"I prefer walking in the street with my dog... There's more space... It's safer."

"...when bicyclists come into town, they'll try to get to Casey's...on [Highway] 210, and there's no shoulder for them to be on."



Youth


"[At the intersection of the High Trestle Trail and Highway 210], when you cross, it's blindsided...and you can't always see the cars."

"I like to ride my bike on the [High Trestle] Trail."

"[Sievers] Trail is nice... because the creek is right there and...the condition is good. The access is good. [There are] not as [many] cracks, and you're not right next to a curb."

"There should be a sidewalk [on the south end of Marshall St], because there's not really a sidewalk."

"There's a four-way stop [at Highway 210 and Linn St]...it's really busy...always."



Parents


"Sievers Trail is a...good asset to our community because it does join up a lot of different parks and it's off the High Trestle...It's paved...it's easy for our kids. I feel safe for them to be on it."

"I love the trails and the trees. I want more trails, more trees."

"We stroller a lot with littles...[in the older part of town]...[where] there's not a sidewalk...we'll go on the street. And then if there [are] cars parked, you're essentially in the middle of the road. Or [there are] sidewalks that don't have a...ramp to get to the road. Or there is a sidewalk, but it's broken..."

"We don't let our kids cross [Highway] 210 without an adult... because it's that [unsafe]. I had the stroller one time and I about got hit and I was looking both ways. That's how fast they go."

"...all these kiddos are wanting to go to [the] pool during the summer, [to the park]... [and] walking home from school; that just seems like it's going to be unsafe [crossing Highway 210 at Carroll St]."



Older Adults


"There aren't sidewalks all over town...Some [sidewalks] are rough, especially for [the] elderly. And we've seen people...it's more mobility impaired...have difficulty on the sidewalk [on Linn Street] and where to cross to get to the bank."

"North of [Highway] 210 in the older part of Slater...every block probably has a bad sidewalk or no sidewalk."

"For [the] elderly, the trails are wonderful, but by the time I get to an entry point to the trail, I'm ready to quit walking. So I walk in town on the sidewalk, basically."

"But once [cyclists] get to Slater, there's no way for them to really branch off to get around town very easily...there aren't any designated routes other than the trail."

"...I would like to see the [Heart of Iowa] trailhead developed because that is something really cool about Slater. And whether it's artwork or...more parking, more signage, to develop that into a hub."



Mobility Challenged

"...when I come off [the sidewalk] from the museum to cross Main Street...you can't see around the [parked cars]. You have to get halfway into the intersection before you can see if anybody is coming. I've had some close calls."

"[Earl Grimm Park] has some benches because it's newer, and there aren't as many trees. You don't get as many birds, but you can go down to the trail a little ways."

"I wish there was some way you could safely cross [Highway] 210...[at Marshall St]."

"All along Main Street...[the sidewalks]...are brand-new."

"I'd like to see is more [curb cuts]...for sidewalks...There [are] a lot of [sidewalks without curb cuts]... [for] somebody...in a wheelchair...it's a little hard to maneuver around."



Steering Committee

"A lot of visibility issues I see are on Main Street... the diagonal parking makes visibility tough... you have to creep out into the intersection...just to see if you can cross...or make the turn safely."

"We talked about...doing a city loop and we completed it to a certain point...we essentially have to extend the trail...system we already have [from 10th Ave and up Linn St] to go from the south side to the north side."

"...it's pretty dark in town...we could use streetlights everywhere."

"I see an opportunity for our community to...use the Heart of Iowa as an entrance point north of the school and improve the parking lot park area. We could improve [the entire trailhead] and have a grand kind of entrance."

"...Main Street is an asphalt street [so it's not built for heavy truck traffic, but] you get a lot of [that] here. There's not a single stop sign on this entire stretch. You stop when you approach [County Road] R38."

Slater

What People Said

Transportation Assets and Barriers Analysis

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User Types



Actives



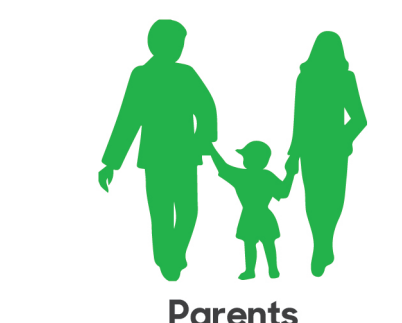
Mobility Challenged



Older Adults



Youth



Parents



Steering Committee

User Types	Destinations and Activities			Desirable Qualities and Features			Undesirable Qualities and Features					Most Desired Improvements and Activities			
	City Parks	Downtown	Area Trails	Pedestrian & Cyclist Amenities	Pedestrian Accessibility	Connection to Nature	Inadequate Sidewalk Infrastructure	Drainage Issues	Walking/Biking Conditions Along Hwy 210	Traffic Concerns	Inferior Roadway Conditions	Trail Amenities	Pedestrian/Cyclist Safety Features	Better Infrastructure Connectivity	Traffic Controls
Actives	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			
Mobility Challenged	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●			●	●	●	
Older Adults	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Youth	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●				●	●	●
Parents	●		●			●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Steering Committee	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●			●	●	●	●

Actives walk and run for exercise and recreation. This group would appreciate pet waste receptacles on along the trails and around town to make it more convenient to walk their dogs. They appreciate the brick sidewalks in the older neighborhoods as long as they are well maintained.

Mobility-challenged individuals walk and drive vehicles and golf carts. Wide, smooth surfaces are important to this group. They appreciate the curb ramps downtown. This group would like an affordable transportation service.

Older adults walk, bike, and drive vehicles, golf carts, and UTVs to get around town. They also enjoy snowmobiling. Like the mobility challenged group, they think a transportation service is needed. This group is also interested in a elder-friendly play area.

Youth walk, bike, and ride the bus to get around town. Older kids also drive vehicles and golf carts. They enjoy biking to the pool. This group doesn't feel safe at the bus stop on Four Mile Drive and when biking on Sievers Trail because drivers sometimes disregard the yield signs.

Parents walk, bike, rollerblade, and drive vehicles, golf carts, and scooter. They are most concerned for the safety of their children, particularly when it comes to crossing Highway 210. This group suggested a pedestrian overpass or underpass to help kids safely cross this busy highway.

Steering committee members walk, bike, and drive vehicles and golf carts. They suggested revamping the Heart of Iowa trailhead to create a "grand entrance" into town. This group also sees an opportunity for a more pleasing entrance at the intersection of Highway 210 and Linn Street.

All user groups enjoy Slater's parks. People like to walk at Earl Grimm Park, which has good parking and many amenities including a playground, the pool and ball fields. Adults favor bird watching at Nelson Park. Southside Park is conveniently located for families living south of Highway 210. Downtown is a popular destination for both adults and youth. Older adults commented on the "beautiful streetscape" with its wide sidewalks and lighting. Trail users enjoy shopping, visiting the library, and watching the parades. Residents feel fortunate to have access to the Heart of Iowa and High Treestle Trails, which link them with local and regional destinations while bringing many visitors to town. The trails also connect people with nature. Trail users like Sievers Trail because it is well maintained year-round. Amenities such as benches, water fountains, shelters, restrooms, and lighting are important to residents. Youth enjoy the wide surface of the High Treestle Trail and steering committee members appreciate the Trail finding signs where the two trails intersect. Participants in all focus groups prefer walking on well-maintained, wide, and continuous sidewalks, shelters, ramps, They noted the sidewalks downtown, in Nelson and Earl Grimm Parks, and in the new development south of town as examples. Adults take pleasure in experiencing nature in the parks and along the trails, including watching birds and taking in the changing seasons. Older adults, parents, and mobility-challenged individuals like looking at the trees, and identified areas in the older neighborhoods Highway 210, and segments of Linn Street as problematic. Residents talked about drainage issues that create standing water, flooding, and icy spots during winter. Several locations, including Main and Carroll Streets, at the intersection of Linn and Highway 210, and along the trails, moving along Highway 210, and along the trails, are particularly intimidating when crossing the highway because of the heavy, speeding traffic, congestion, and a lack of traffic controls are vexing for all user types, whether they are traveling in a vehicle, on a bike, or on foot. Cited areas of concern include R38, Highway 210, north-south streets, and trail intersections with R38 and Highway 210. Residents of all ages take issue with road conditions in town. Participants pointed out Linn Street as particularly rough; parents and youth mentioned the potholes on 10th Avenue and active described crossing the intersection of Linn and Highway 210 as feeling "like you're on a washboard." The need for additional trail amenities was a common theme among adult participants. They would like way-vegetation, benches, better parking facilities, drinking fountains, and pet stations to enhance their trail experience. Several groups would like safety features for walkers and cyclists such as signage at trail crossings, trees and crosswalks, and crossing lights at the intersections of Main and Highway 210, and a flashing light on the stop signs at the school intersection on Linn Street. Better connectivity for all modes of travel is a priority among all user types. Suggestions made include upgrading and completing the sidewalk system, creating another entry into the new development at the Heart of Iowa Trail to the north side of town, and Some focus-group participants want additional traffic controls in town to slow vehicular traffic, such as more stop signs, lower speed limits, speed bumps, increased police presence, signs notifying drivers how fast they are going, and a stoplight at the intersection of Linn and Highway 210.