



The downtown area is a popular walking destination. The wide, open sidewalks with curb cuts are well-maintained.



North of I-80, S. Division Street has limited visibility, busy traffic, and no sidewalks. Pedestrians walk on the side of the road to access businesses.



The Stuart Sports Complex is a popular area for walking and biking. Pedestrians often come here to enjoy the views and smooth asphalt trails.



The intersection of CR 925 and N. Adair Street has no sidewalks; children walk on the road and it is difficult for them to cross the road due to traffic.



The new sidewalks along NE 2nd Street are well maintained. The new paths with curb cuts offer safe routes to school for K-12 students in Stuart.



The truck traffic and lack of sidewalks along S. Western Avenue is a perceived safety issue for local children who walk to the aquatic center.

What Factors Affect Transportation in Stuart?

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 Stuart, 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 Stuart'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 Stuart residents with different transportation needs to participate in focus groups. A total of 26 residents attended Stuart's workshop. Participants were separated into four user groups and the Stuart steering committee.



(7 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.



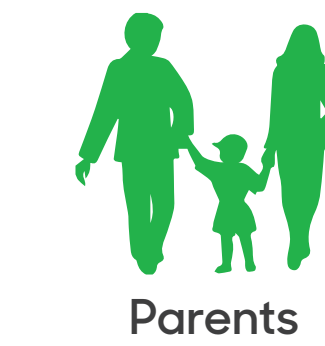
(6 participants): This user group is directly affected by accessibility barriers such as high curbing and uneven sidewalks that make it difficult to operate mobility-aiding equipment effectively. Handicapped parking, curb ramps, and smooth surfaces are critical transportation features.



(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.




(0 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.



(2 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.



(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


"...a bike/walkway over [or under] the interstate to go to the southern part of town [would be helpful]...[there is] housing [south of I-80]...Now you're going to get a new Kwik Star...How [else] are you going to get [walkers and bikers safely] back and forth over the bridge with the traffic?"

"I walk at 6:15 [in the morning]...[and] the only place you'll find [an adequate number of] streetlights is on Division [St]."

"...my...big suggestion... [is] a bike trail...right along White Pole Road...we could [even] go [further] east... and link up somehow with Redfield...[which] ties into Waukee [and] Perry..."

"[The] downtown district...has the handicapped-accessible [curb cuts]. It has nice and wide sidewalks...and it's a popular walking area...it [also] has nice streetlights..."


"...a lot of people don't know you can walk... in the [South Oak Grove] Cemetery, but [it's] perfect because it's paved and...in the winter, they [even] plow the snow..."



Mobility Challenged

"None of [the access roads or driveways on S Division St] line up with each other... [so] trying to merge and blend...[coming] off [I-80 is complicated]...you [have] got a real puzzler out... there [with] how to [safely] control that traffic..."

"...all of downtown has...maybe one...[or] two handicapped parking spots...and that's it... We appreciate that they're livening up downtown...it's just unfortunate that we don't get to use it the way that everybody else gets to..."



Parents

"The high school...kids...shoot south right out of the high school [onto Victor Ave], and there's a [railroad] crossing right there that [doesn't have]...signals or anything. I've always worried about that [spot], because... [those] kids...just fly through there."

"...[we could] have a path... through town and...incorporate [Stuart International Speedway, South Oak Grove Cemetery, the Stuart Sports Complex, and the Catholic Cemetery]...If we could link all those together [with a trail, that would be great]..."

"...the safe routes to school [sidewalk from the elementary school to the high school on 2nd St]...[is] all brand new concrete. I mean, it's a beautiful sidewalk..."

"...there was talk about a pedestrian bridge over the interstate to link up the south part of town...I think that people would walk [south of I-80] if it was a little bit safer to get there."

"...the bump-outs that we have around [the] corner [of Division St and White Pole Road]...[are] very difficult [for semis]... [they] have to stay...in the middle lane to make [a left turn]..."



Older Adults

"...there [are] so many kids [who] walk...to the pool...[it's] a concern, having [them] walk along [White Pole Rd]...Especially [because]...we have lots of semi-truck traffic..."

"A truck route around town would be great for various reasons...[it] would make a huge difference [in road conditions]...[White Pole Rd] had to be all redone because...the ruts were so severe...[it] would be amazing [to reduce truck traffic through town]."

"...I really like the new sidewalk [on 2nd St]. [Nice] sidewalks make a huge difference."

"...[We could] hook up to the [Raccoon River Valley Trail]...[right now people] have to walk, [bike, or run] along the road [on White Pole Rd]. But if...we could hook up to [that] bike trail...that's a biggie... [it] would be fantastic."

"...the area [near the I-80 exit on Division St] with all the driveways and intersections is a problem. I'm surprised there aren't more accidents. And I have seen a couple."



Steering Committee

"...[On 2nd St the] new sidewalk...[was] built... about four feet from the side of the street. So when the snowplow goes by, it covers up the sidewalk."

"...[the Stuart Sport Complex] walking trail is a little over half a mile and it's wide and asphalt so it's a nice walking trail..."

"...[We] really like...our [new] safe routes to school [walking trail on Second St]...[that idea came from the]...last time we [went through Community Visioning]..."

"...I would love to have a bike trail going north up to Panora and...east...to Redfield...[to] connect to the [Raccoon River Valley Trail]...Right now, if anybody wants to get on one of those bike trails, you [have] to drive..."

"That intersection [of Division St and White Pole Rd]...is not designed for semi traffic... [but] it's a farm-to-market route... [trucks] have to swing into oncoming traffic... [and when] another vehicle pulls up to the stop sign...[the] truck...can't move."

"...the biggest [barrier] is [I-80]...People [living] on the south side [of the interstate] suffer...because nobody can really safely walk [on the bridge over I-80]...it's just so narrow. It's literally wide enough for two trucks."






"...[the service roads and driveways on Division St are] weird [and offset]... [which makes it] hard to [see in] all the different directions...I've had some near misses on that [road]."

Stuart

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 | Valued Destinations, Activities, and Qualities | | | | Undesirable Qualities and Features | | | | | | | Most Desired Improvements and Activities | | | | |
|--|--|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| | Stuart Sports Complex | Safe Route to School | Downtown Streetscape & Amenities | Accessible, Safe, Places to Walk | Inadequate Sidewalk Infrastructure | Flooding/ Drainage Issues | Winter Weather Challenges | Intersection of Division St & White Pole Rd | Pedestrian/ Cyclist Safety Issues | Heavy, High-speed Traffic | Inferior Roadway Conditions | Continuous Sidewalk System | Walking & Biking Trail | Controlled Pedestrian Crossings | I-80 Over- or Underpass | |
|  Actives | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | Active walk, bike, and drive automobiles, side-by-sides and four wheelers. They consider the North and South Oak Grove Cemeteries the safest place to walk because there is more natural light and fewer trip hazards. This group thinks the city needs more streetlights on each block to improve visibility. |
|  Mobility Challenged | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | | ● | | Mobility-challenged individuals drive, walk, and ride the Southwest Transit (Shuttle Service) to commute for work. This group finds it difficult to get from parking spaces to the sidewalk because of missing curb ramps, and would like more and wider handicapped parking spaces near businesses. |
|  Older Adults | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | Older adults drive, bike, and walk in town. This group suggested creating a truck route to the ethanol plant that directs traffic around Stuart to reduce traffic through town. They would also like N 10th Street to be paved instead of gravel to improve connectivity. |
|  Parents | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | Parents walk and drive. They are primarily concerned with the safety of their children. They proposed that students be able to use the Wambold Development service road so they can get to the high school without going on the highway. |
|  Steering Committee | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | Steering committee members walk, bike, run, and drive automobiles, motorcycles, and ATVs. This group wants more trees at the walking trails of the Sports Complex and expressed interest in a pedestrian underpass on Madison St at the railroad tracks. |
| <p>Residents of all ages and abilities take advantage of the Stuart Sports Complex. People take pleasure in walking along the wide, well-lit walking path. Parents and actives are enthusiastic about the heavily used elementary and high schools and the soccer field. Focus group participants praised the new Safe Route to School on the north side of NE 2nd St. The wide, smooth sidewalk provides a safe connection between the downtown and high schools and allows students to get to school safely, giving their parents peace of mind. Wide sidewalks, ample lighting, intersections with curbs ramps, and intersection bump-outs make convenient access for all users. Residents appreciate South Oak Grove Cemeteries and enjoy the enjoyable walking experience for all demographic types. All groups experience challenges walking in town because of broken, uneven, and in the North and South Oak Grove Cemeteries—create a safe and sidewalks are especially frustrating for all demographic types. Stuart is plagued with widespread drainage issues that cause flooding and standing water, particularly on Front St between Harlan and N Madison Sts, at the high school driveway, and the intersection of N Main and N 5th Sts. In addition, some puddling occurs along parts of White Pole Rd. Residents described how winter weather impedes both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, particularly on Front St because of its proximity to the high school. Schools are often covered with snow by the snowplow, and the downtown area is not well cleared after a snow event. Bump-outs make the intersection of Division St and White Pole Rd too narrow to accommodate bikers and truck traffic. As a result, semis use the middle lane, and have to wait for other vehicles to pass, which poses safety concerns for other drivers. Uncontrolled traffic, coupled with the lack of sidewalks on S Division St, creates a sense of unease among bikers and walkers. Parents worry about the absence of marked pedestrian crossings on S Division St, S Western Ave at the railroad crossing, and at Victor Ave and Division St. Heavy, high-speed traffic is vexing to most user types. They reported that speeding is common, especially by trucks from S Division St to White Pole Rd. Traffic congestion near the I-80 interchange is also a problem. People take issue with the condition of some streets, such as N 7th St, N 10th St, and the Madison St crossing, which are completely gravel. Actives said that the roads south of I-80 don't have curb and gutter. Truck traffic was blamed for "destroying" White Pole Rd and Division St. Residents emphasized the need for well-maintained, continuous sidewalks throughout town. They would like existing sidewalks to be repaired and widened, and all intersections to be ADA-compliant to accommodate wheelchair users. The community of Stuart is excited about the prospect of new trails. They envision a perimeter trail connecting the south part of town to destinations north of I-80. Older adults and steering committee members also want a regional trail to Redfield and the Raccoon River Valley Trail. Multiple groups advocated for installing stoplights and pavement markings on S Division St to allow pedestrians to cross safely. Parents would like to see a crossing at N Main St and the Sports Complex for kids to use. A safe way for non-vehicular traffic to cross between the north and south sides of town is a priority that some focus group participants believe would best be addressed with a pedestrian overpass or underpass at I-80.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Stuart

Emerging Themes

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