

Why Do A Survey?

The survey provides the visioning steering committee with objective, representative information for the goal-setting phase of community visioning. The quantitative data collected from survey responses complements the qualitative information gathered from the focus groups at the transportation assets and barriers workshop.

The modes of transportation that residents use and the routes they take suggest suitable types of transportation enhancements in these areas. Having a sense for people's willingness to help either financially or with their time is important because many transportation enhancements are funded from multiple sources, including grants, private donations, in-kind contributions, and volunteers. Understanding what types of improvements are important to residents gives the committee insight into how to prioritize projects.

How Is It Done?

With assistance from Iowa State University's Survey Research Services staff in the Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology (CSSM-SRS), ISU visioning program staff conducted a survey to better understand the transportation patterns, behaviors, needs, and desires of Stuart residents. Surveys were mailed to 250 randomly selected residents living in Stuart and the surrounding area. To increase the response rate, the study was publicized through the local media and follow-up packets were mailed to nonrespondents. With adjustments for ineligible respondents (e.g., incorrect addresses, no longer living in the community), the final sample size was 242. A total of 69 people returned surveys, for a response rate of 28.3%. (A response rate of 20% is considered valid.)

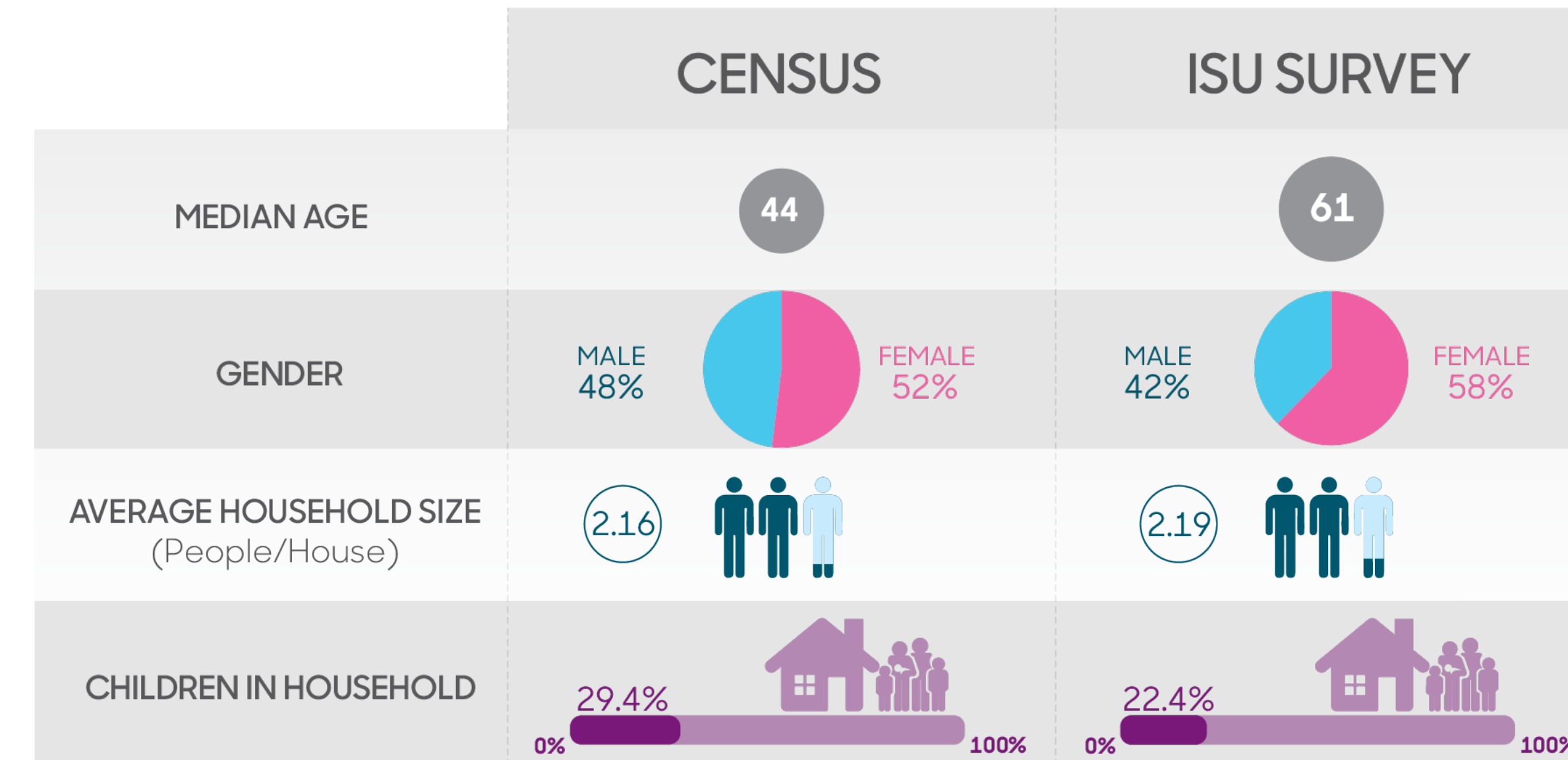
What Did We Find Out?

We asked survey recipients what routes they use most often for going to work, walking, and biking. In addition, we asked what qualities and features are important to trail users. We also discovered what residents think is most important in terms of transportation enhancements that address issues such as accessibility, mobility, and safety. Finally, we learned whether or not residents are willing to contribute their time or their financial resources to making enhancements to Stuart. This series of boards summarizes the results of the survey as follows:

- Willingness to Help
- Enhancement Priorities
- Commuting Routes
- Walking Routes
- Biking Routes
- Desired Trail Features

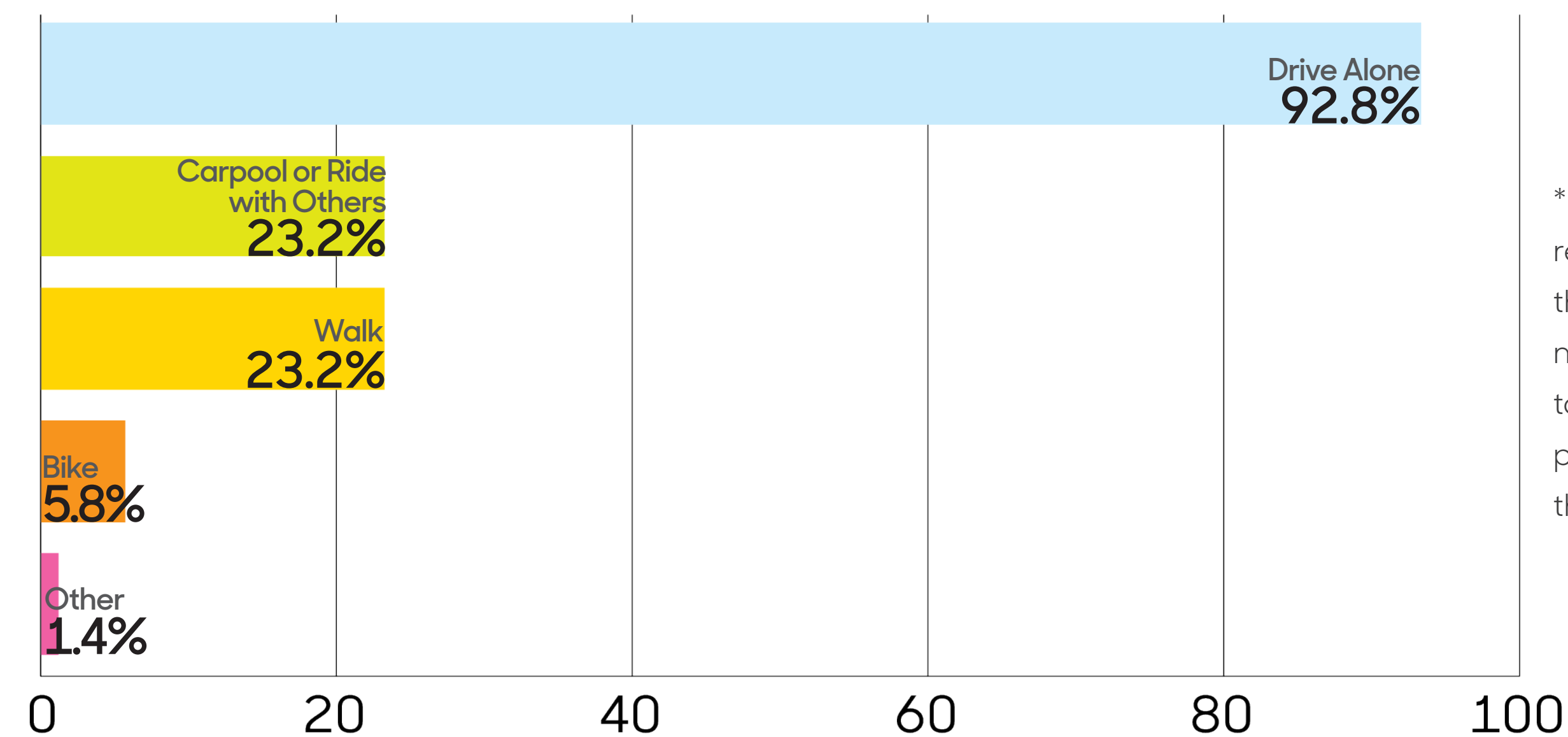
How Did We Do?

The demographics of the respondents are somewhat different from those obtained from the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS). For example, the survey respondents median age of 61 is significantly older than the ACS estimated average age for TOWN NAME residents of 44. In terms of gender, the ratio of males to females among respondents is differs somewhat from that of 2022 ACS estimates, with males underrepresented and females overrepresented by 6 percentage points. Average household size among survey respondents is similar to the 2022 ACS estimate, and the percentage of households with children among survey responses is somewhat lower.



How Do Stuart Residents Travel?

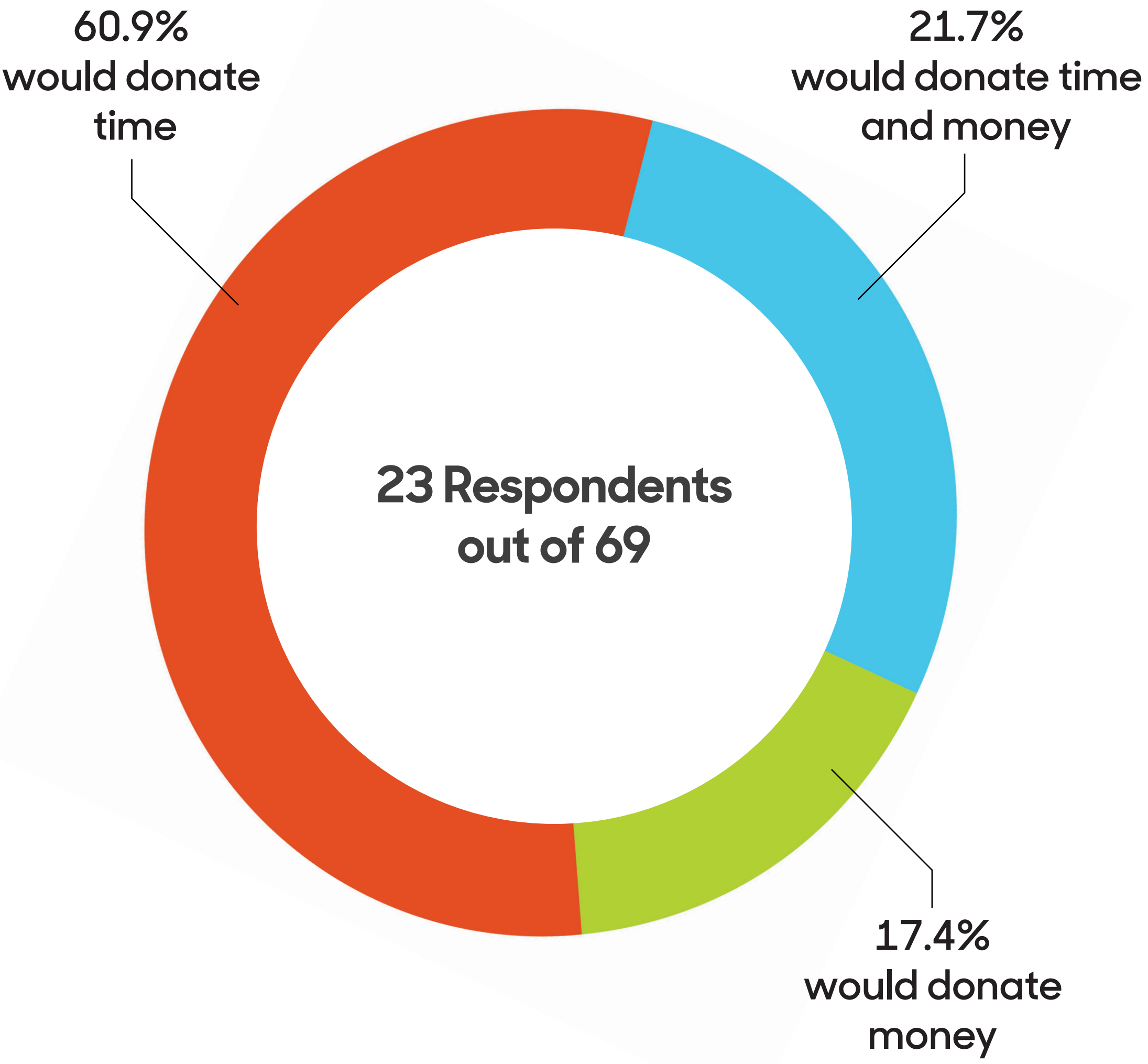
Most survey respondents drive to important destinations such as the convenience store, the post office, school, and church (92.8%). More than 23% car pool or ride with someone else. Some people indicated that they walk (23.2%) and/or bike (5.8%), but the primary mode of transportation in Stuart is by vehicle.



*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%.

ARE PEOPLE WILLING TO HELP?

More than 33% said YES!



Willingness to implement change
 Most survey participants who answered "Yes" to this question are willing to contribute their time to community improvements (60.9%), while 21.7% would help financially and contribute their time. More than 16% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to contribute financially.

Compared to other small towns in Iowa, Stuart residents are less willing to become involved in improving their community. In 2014, on average, 43% of residents in small, rural towns volunteered to help with a community project.¹ The percentage of Stuart residents willing to be involved is 10% lower than this average.

¹ Sigma: A Profile of Iowa Small Towns 1994 to 2014 (Ames, IA: Iowa State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, 2015).

WHAT DID PEOPLE SAY?

Survey Participants Said...



"I am still able to drive, but I know some people would like to be able to call a taxi or someone to take them to the store or pharmacy or even to the movie theater."



"The new sidewalk connecting [the] Wambold Addition to Main Street and the elementary school is much appreciated. I feel more at ease [walking] with my kids now."



"I like [to use] the trail at the sports complex during daylight [hours]."

HOW DO YOU GET PEOPLE TO HELP?

Ask, Show, and Advertise Opportunities

In 2014, the most common reason residents in small-town Iowa said they didn't become involved in community projects is that no one asked them (34%). Twenty-eight percent on average said that they don't have time, which is significantly lower than the 2004 average of 59%. Sixteen percent indicated that they didn't know how to become involved, and 7% said that no community project needed volunteers.¹ These results indicate that the best ways to get people involved in community projects is to simply ask, along with advertising opportunities through traditional and social media outlets.

² Sigma: A Profile of Iowa Small Towns 1994 to 2014 (Ames, IA: Iowa State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, 2015).

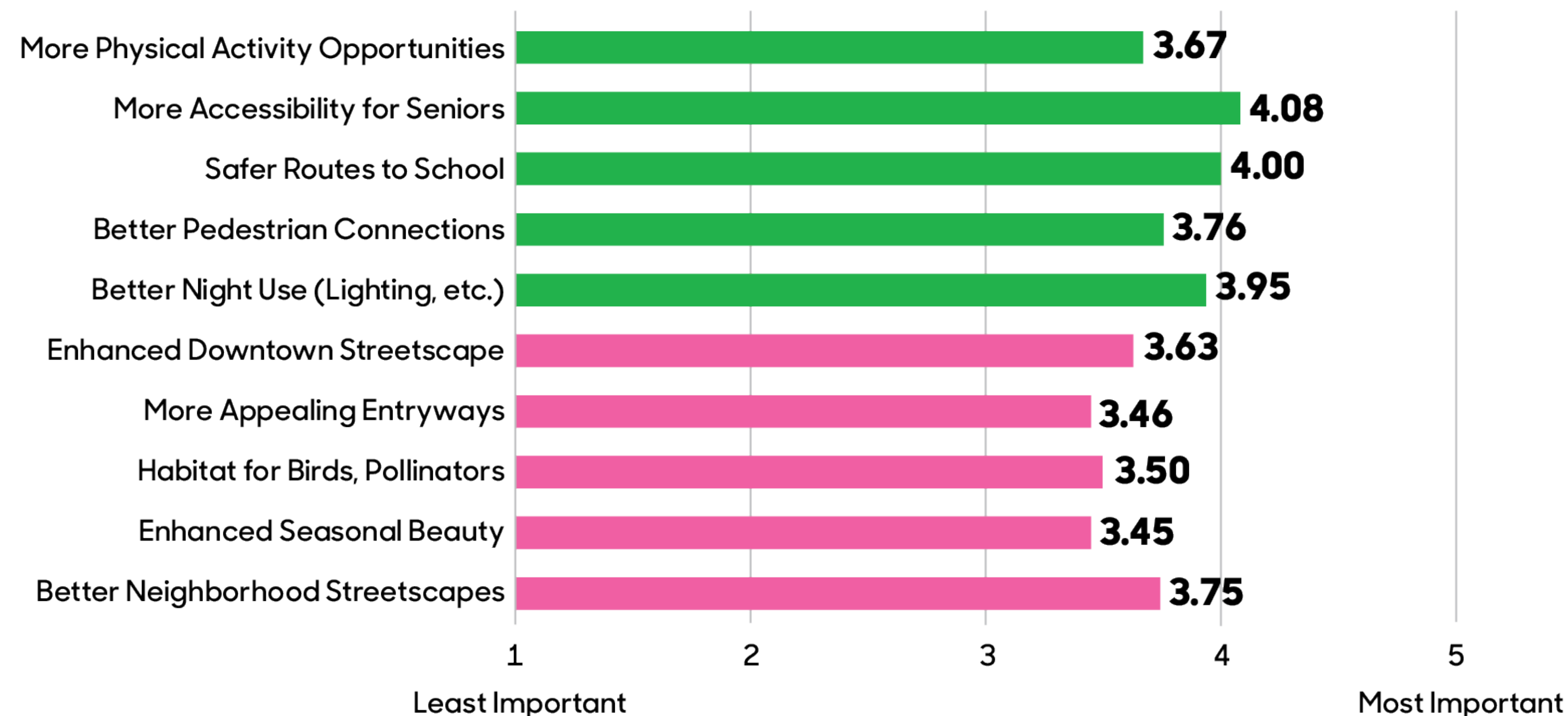
WHAT TYPES OF ENHANCEMENTS ARE IMPORTANT?

Mobility, Safety, and Health!

Transportation Enhancement Issues

■ Pedestrian Mobility, Safety, and Health

■ Quality of the Built Environment



Importance of transportation enhancement by type (60 responses)

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, participants in Stuart ranked providing more accessibility for seniors as most important, with a mean value of 4.08. Other types of transportation enhancements that address pedestrian mobility, health, and safety are also considered important, such as developing safer routes to school (4.00), improving night use (3.95), and creating better pedestrian connections (3.76). In terms of quality of the built environment, survey respondents consider improving neighborhood streetscapes as most important (3.75), followed by enhancing the downtown streetscape (3.63) and creating habitat for birds and pollinators (3.50). These findings are consistent with the views expressed by focus group participants during the Transportation Assets and Barriers workshop held in February 2024.

WHAT DID THEY SAY?

Survey Participants Said...



"Stoplights would be a nice addition around the Casey's and Kum & Go area. The congestion in that area can be nerve-racking most of the time."

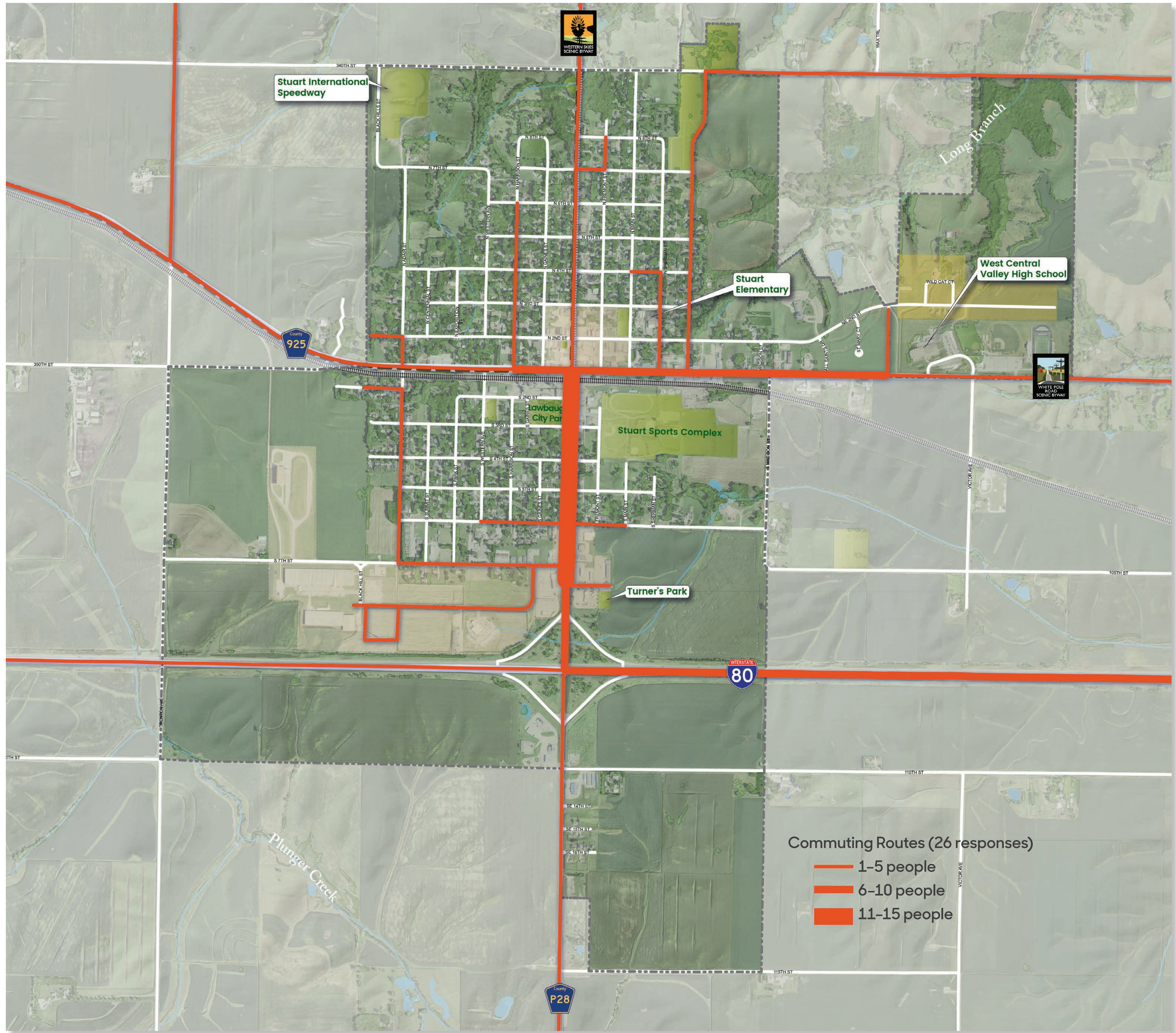
"[Intersections should have] cut-out curbs [wide enough] for power wheelchairs...there is nowhere for [wheelchair users to go]."



"[The city should] make stores and walkways more accommodating to strollers and [the] elderly, [and there should be] more sidewalk access east of town from City Hall to the high school."

"...there is one small trail in town. The sidewalks are broken so [it's] hard to bike with a child trailer."





Map Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, "Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems Library," <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislib/>.

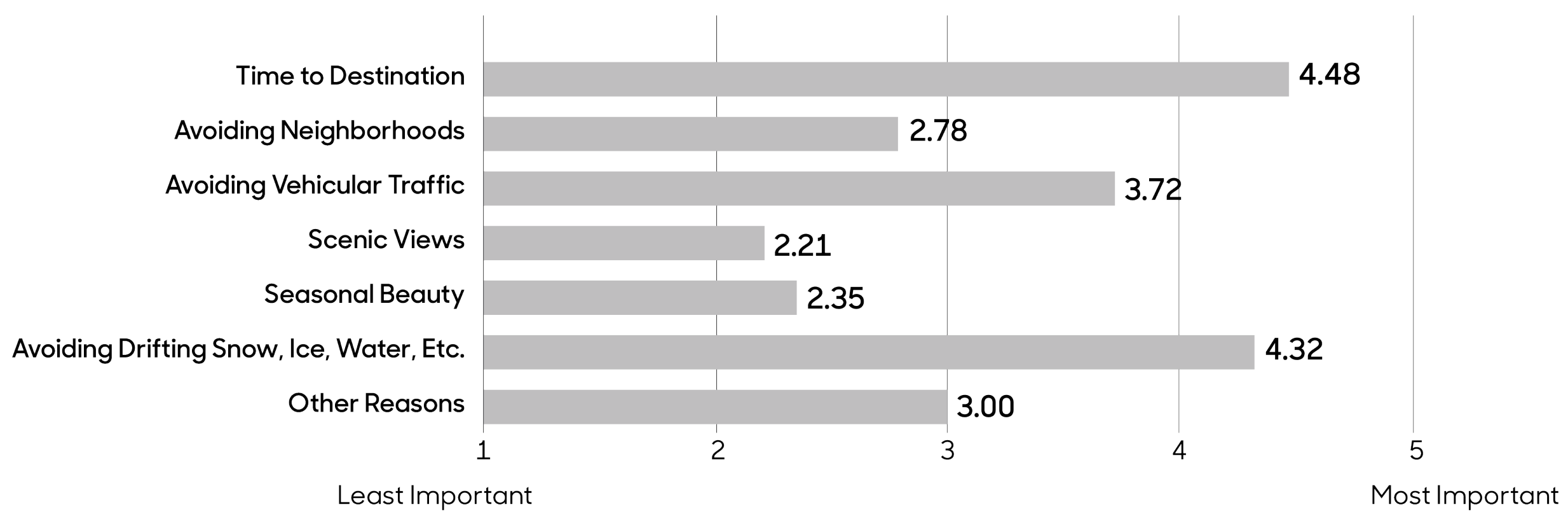
How They Get There

This map shows the commuting routes identified by 26 survey respondents. The frequency that the routes are used is depicted by their width, with the routes used most often being the thickest. The primary commuting corridors into and out of Stuart is Interstate 80, with most people heading east. The White Pole Road (County Road 925) is another east-west commuting route, and County Road P28 is the main north-south route into town. The most heavily used corridors in town are S Division Street and White Pole Road.

The circulation patterns that emerge when routes for biking, walking, and commuting are overlaid suggest suitable types of transportation enhancements. For example, where pedestrian and vehicular traffic intersect, such improvements could include creating better visibility, defining crossing points, or improving signage.

Why They Go That Way

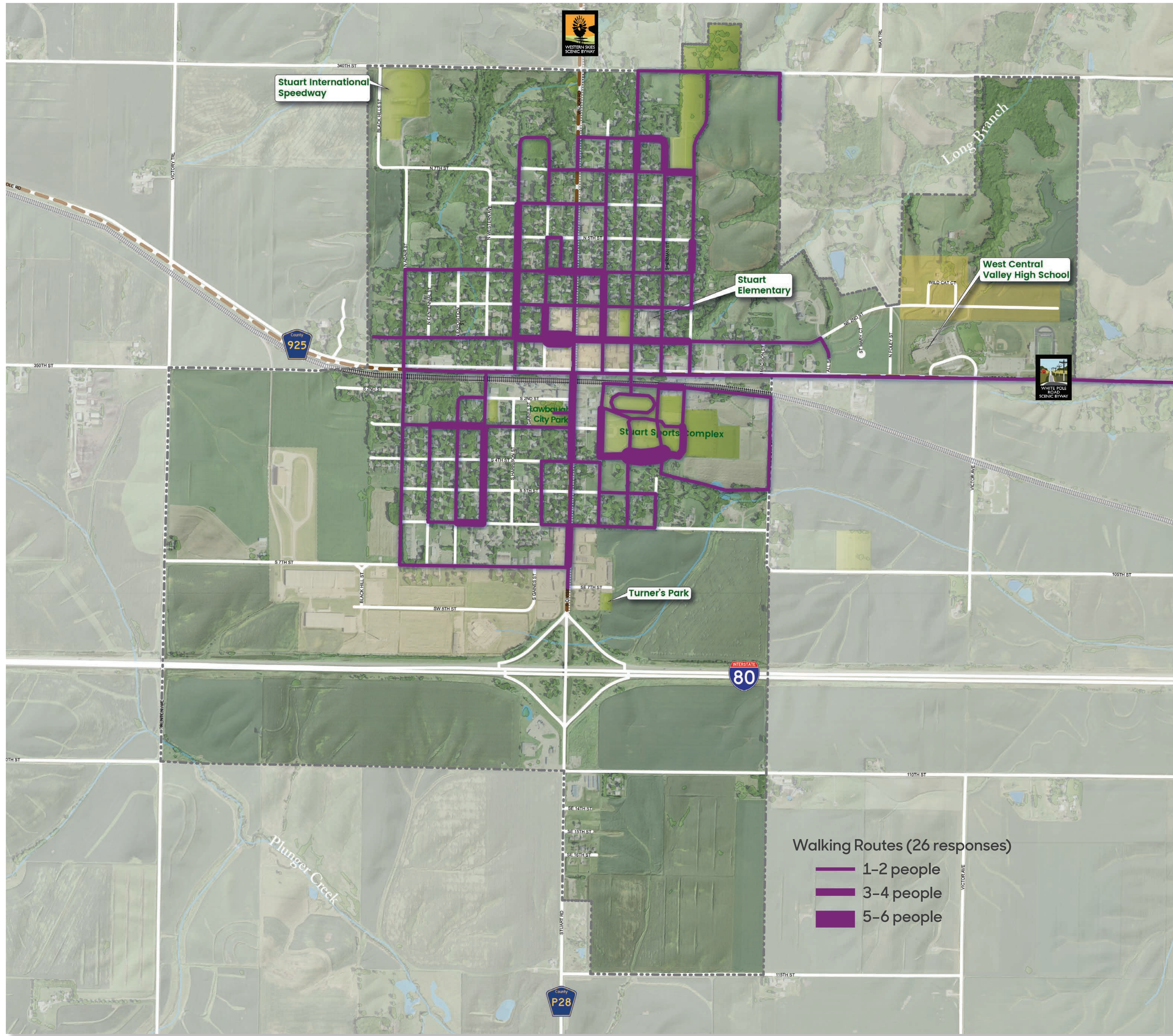
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, survey participants ranked the characteristics and features that factored into their choice of commuting route. Among Stuart participants, time to destination is the most important factor in determining commuting routes, with a mean value of 4.48. Avoiding weather-related issues such as snow and ice is also a significant factor (4.32), followed avoiding vehicular traffic (3.72). Scenic views, seasonal beauty, and avoiding neighborhoods are not critical factors in determining commuting routes.



Stuart Commuting Routes

Transportation Behavior and Needs Survey
Julia Badenhop, Sandra Oberbroeckling, Britney Markhardt, Chad Hunter
Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation





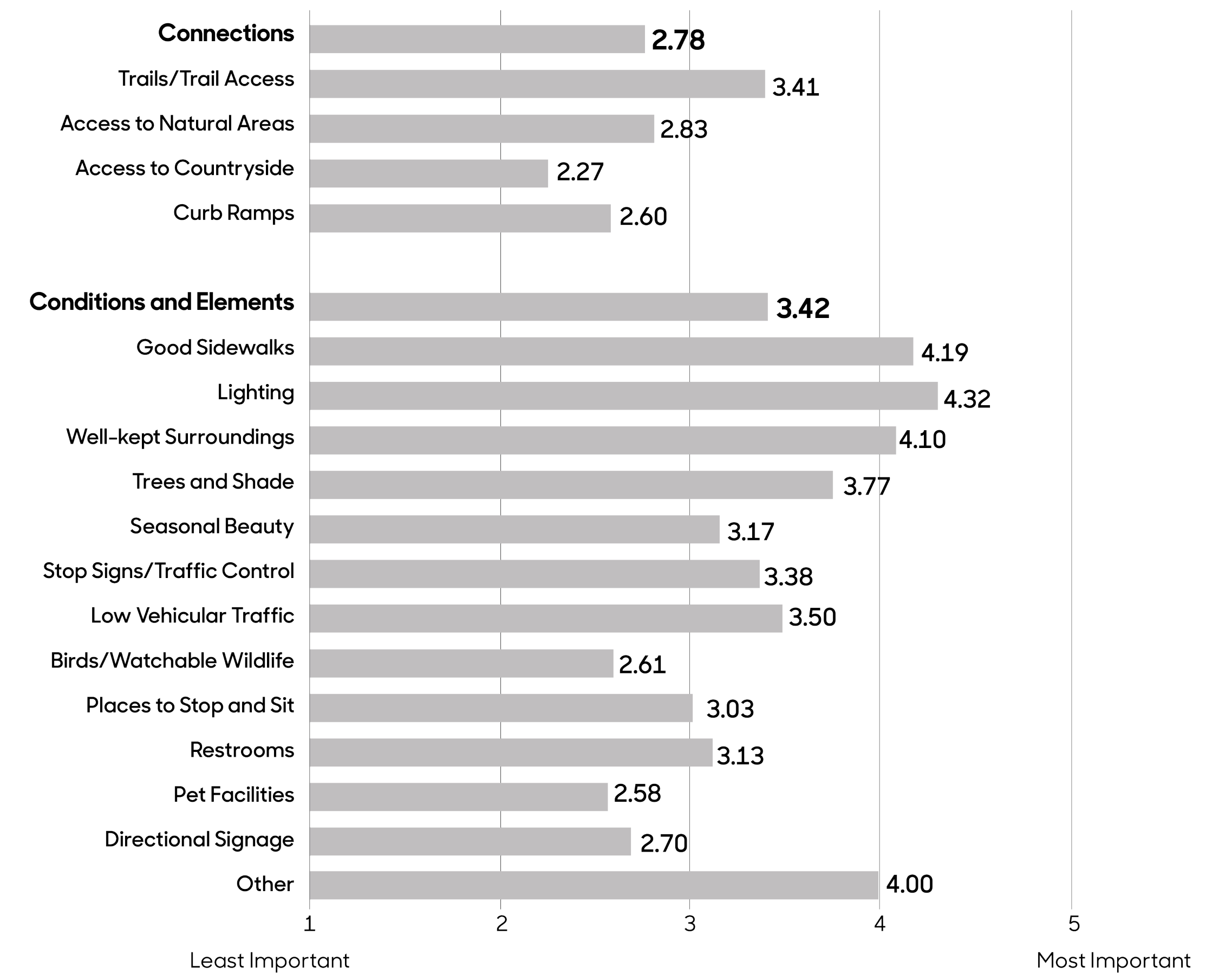
Map Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, "Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems Library," <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislib/>.

Where They Walk

This map shows the walking routes identified by 26 survey respondents. The frequency that the routes are used is depicted by their width, with the routes used most often being the thickest. The Stuart Sports Complex is the most popular place to walk among survey respondents. People also walk along city streets; 2nd Street is the most heavily traveled, especially the block between N Division and Gaines Streets. Walkers also use portions of S Western, SW 3rd, and N Harrison Streets, as well as the streets adjacent to the cemetery and to the sports complex.

Why They Go That Way

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, survey participants ranked the characteristics and features that made their walking experience better. These features are categorized as either "connections" or "conditions and elements." Stuart participants consider conditions/elements to be more important than connections, with mean values of 3.42 and 2.78, respectively. In terms of connections, access to trails is most important with a mean value of 3.41. Lighting (4.32) is the most important condition/element to walkers, followed by good sidewalks (4.19), well-kept surroundings (4.10) and other reasons such as avoiding loose dogs (4.00).



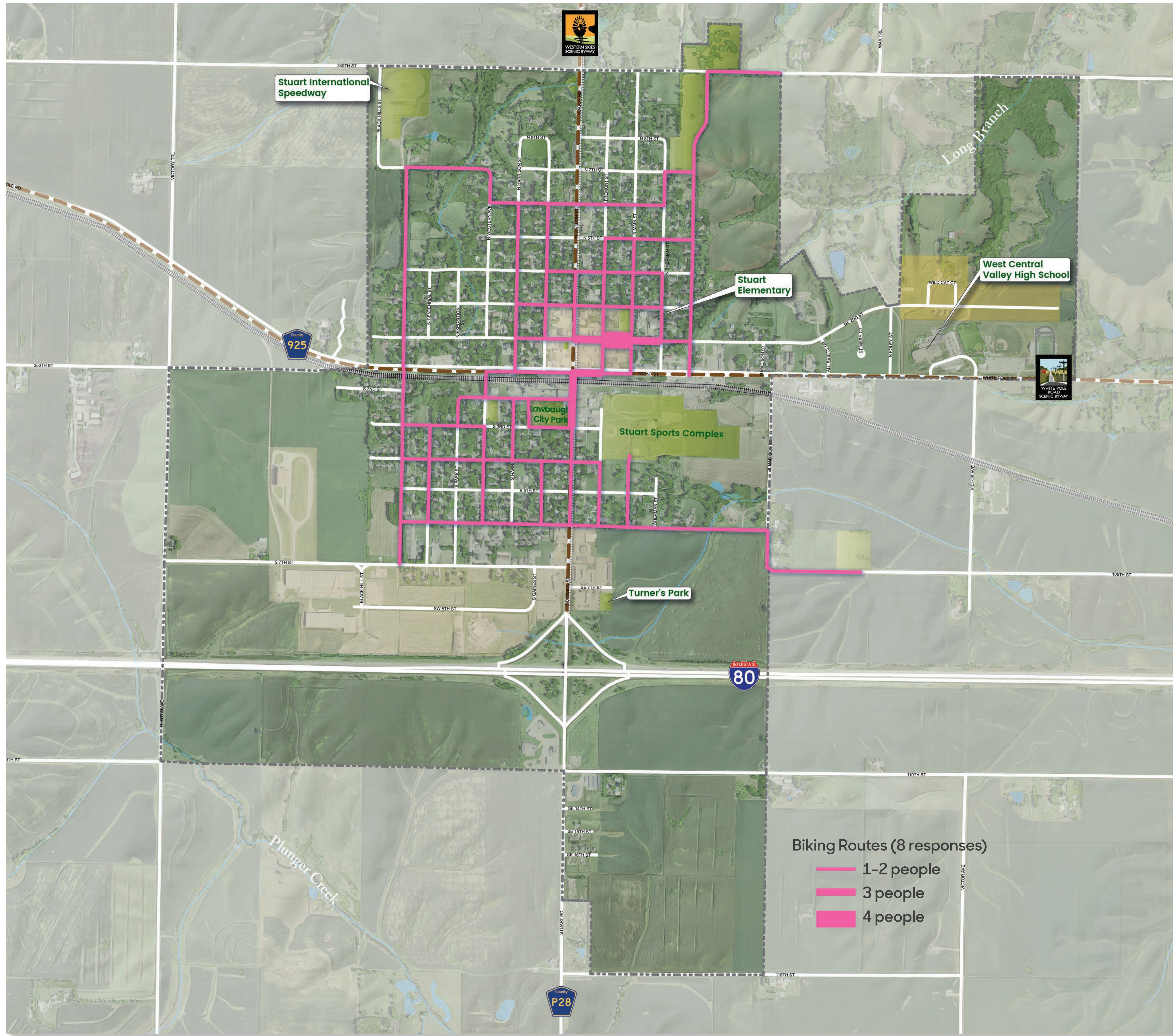
Stuart Walking Routes

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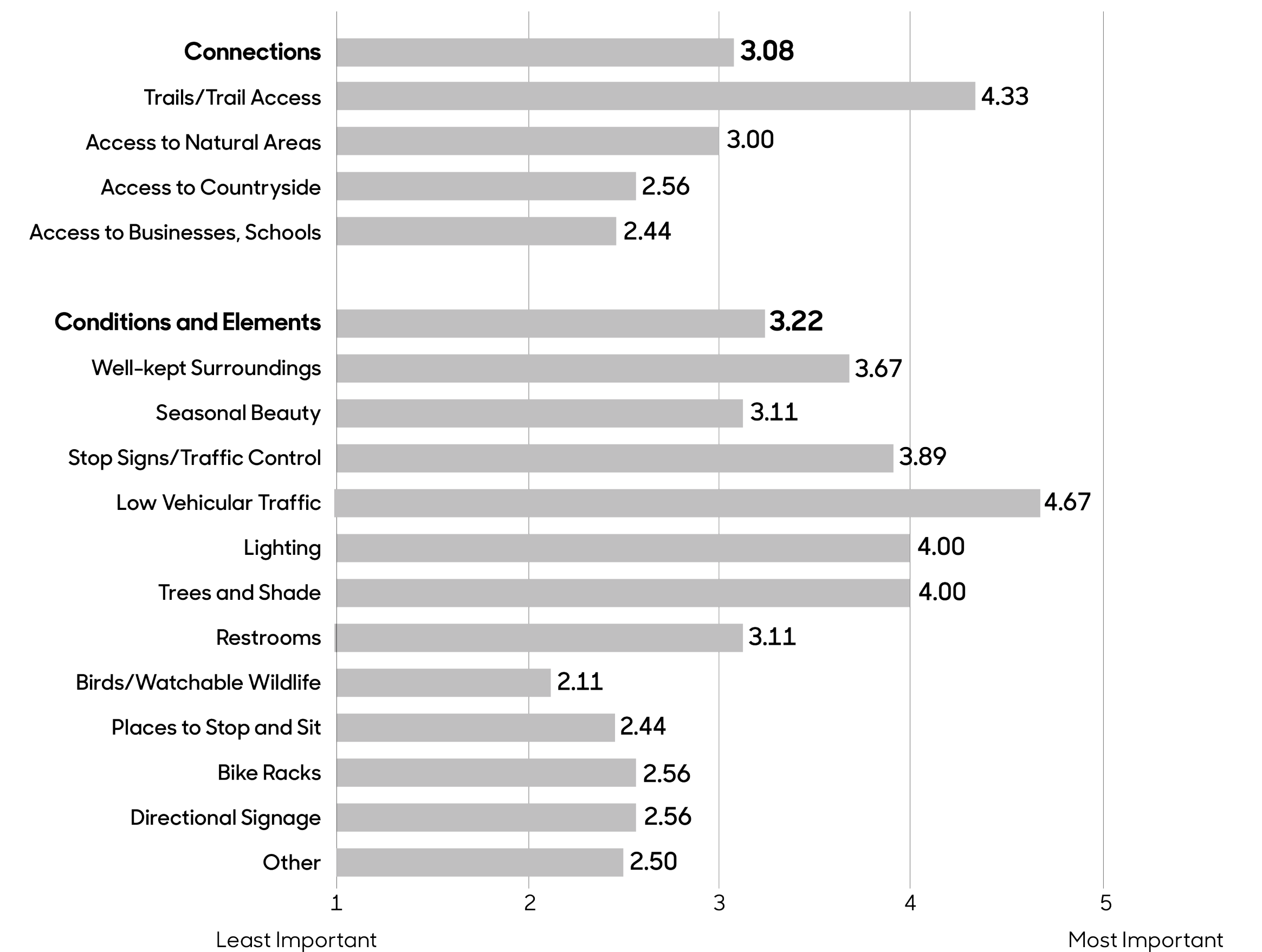
Map Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, "Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems Library," <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislib/>.

Where They Bike

This map shows the biking routes identified by 8 survey respondents. The frequency that the routes are used is depicted by their width, with the routes used most often being the thickest. People bike on most of the city streets, especially 2nd Street in the downtown area and portions of Division Street.

Why They Go That Way

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, survey participants ranked the characteristics and features that made their biking experience better. These features are categorized as either "connections" or "conditions and elements." Stuart participants consider connections more important than conditions/elements, with mean values of 3.22 and 3.08, respectively. Access to trails is the most important connection to survey respondents with a mean value of 4.33. In terms of conditions/elements, low vehicular traffic is most important, with a mean value of 4.67. Lighting and trees and shade (4.00 each), stop signs/traffic control (3.89), and well-kept surroundings (3.67) are also of significance.



Stuart

Biking Routes

Transportation Behavior and Needs Survey

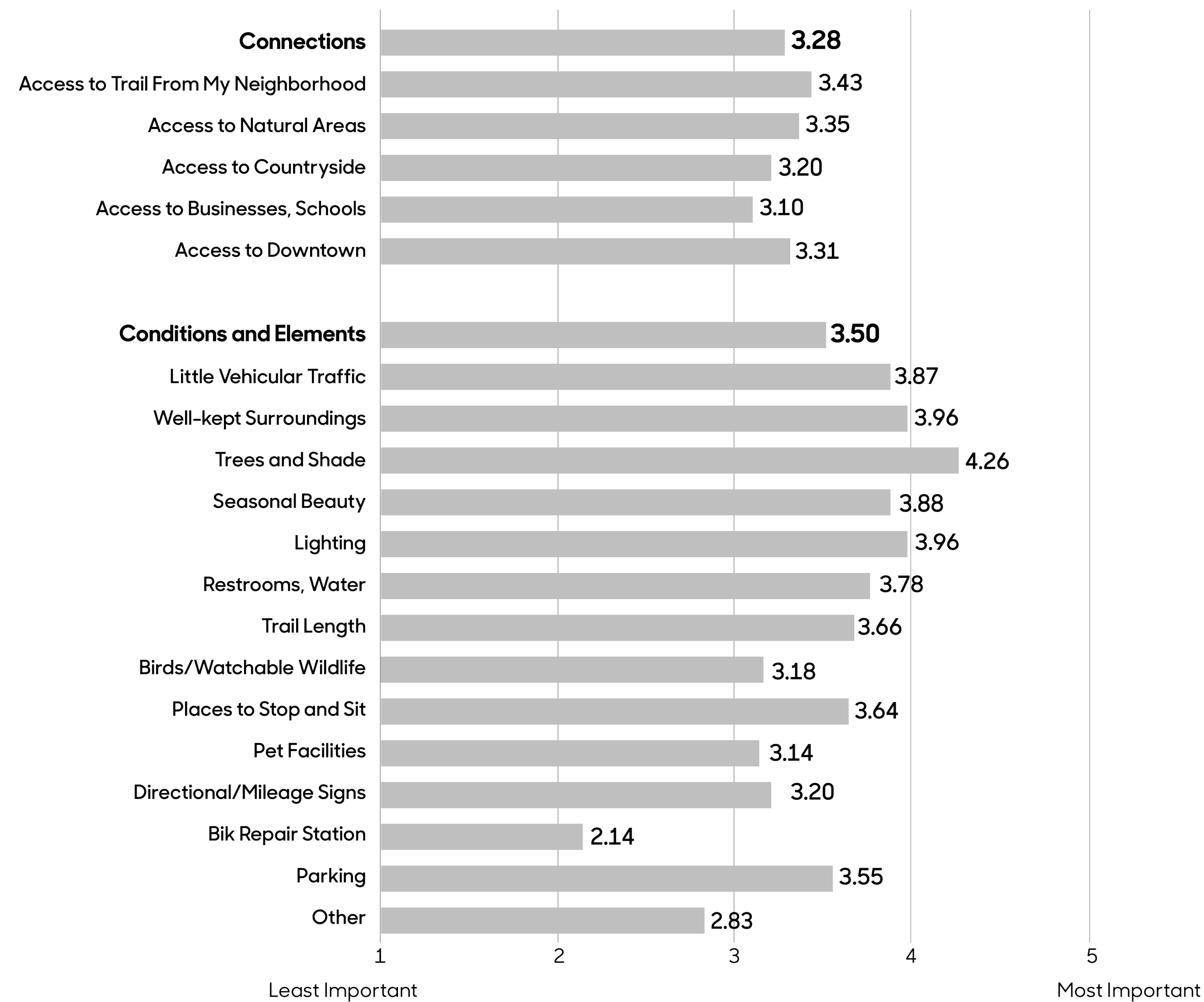
Julia Badenhop, Sandra Oberbroeckling, Britney Markhardt, Chad Hunter

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Desired Trail Features

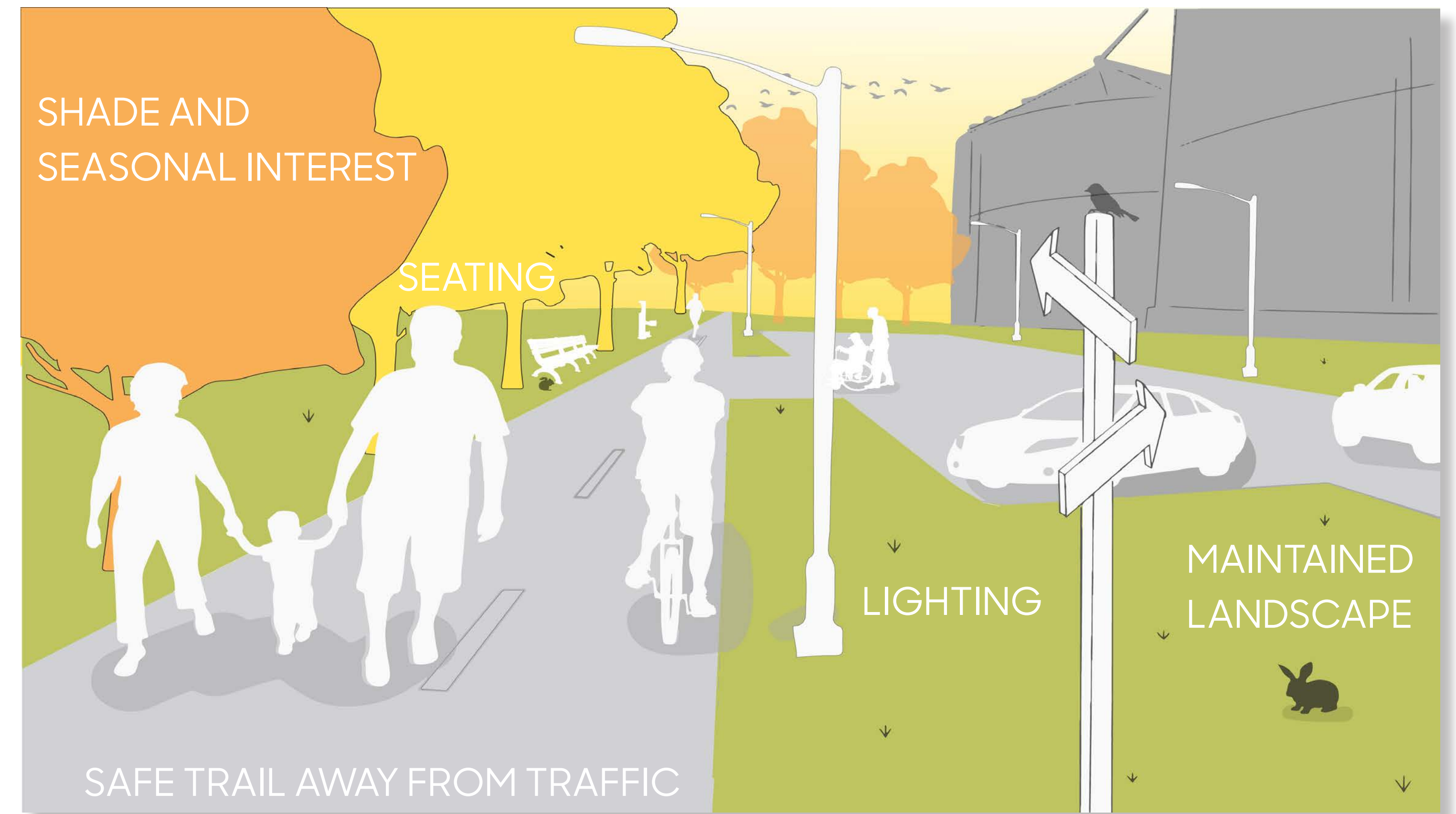
Trails are off-street paths that are paved or unpaved and can be used by pedestrians and cyclists. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, survey participants ranked the characteristics and features that made their trail experience better. Like the bike route features, they are categorized as either "connections" or "conditions and elements." Conditions/elements are more important to Stuart trail users than connections, with mean values of 3.50 and 3.28, respectively. Access to trails from one's neighborhood is the most important connection among trail users, with a mean value of 3.43. In terms of conditions/elements, trees and shade are considered most important (4.26), followed by well-kept surroundings and lighting (3.96 each). Seasonal beauty (3.88), low vehicular traffic levels (3.87), access to restrooms/water (3.78), trail length (3.66), and places to stop and sit (3.64) are also valued by trail users.



"[I] would enjoy walking trails in and outside of Stuart. Madison County's trail system is amazing and well-kept and would be a great model..."



"A bike trail would be a nice feature and we would use [it] on an ongoing basis."



Stuart Desired Trail Features