

What We Did

The Hispanic population in Tama and Toledo is significantly higher than that of the state of Iowa, which is only 6.3%. In Tama and Toledo, 34.6% and 14.2%, respectively, of the populations are Hispanic.¹ The Tama and Toledo visioning committees recognized the importance of engaging with this substantial group of residents. To capture the transportation behaviors, needs, and desires of this demographic group, the ISU research team conducted an interview with two members of the Hispanic community, one from Tama and the other from Toledo. The interview was conducted via Zoom, and, like with the focus groups, the team annotated interviewees' comments on an aerial map.

Emerging Themes

Desirable Qualities and Features

Members of the Hispanic community walk and bike for recreation. Safety is the primary factor affecting their choice of walking and biking routes. Hispanic residents like Toledo Heights Park because there is no traffic, the drive is paved, and the park layout allows parents to keep an eye on their kids. Interviewees also identified Cherry Lake and the South Tama Recreation Trail as both safe and scenic places to go. Tama and Toledo focus-group participants and survey respondents also value these recreation venues for similar reasons.

Undesirable Qualities and Features

The absence of sidewalks and designated pedestrian crossings throughout Tama and Toledo is the most significant barrier to Hispanic residents in the two communities. Specifically, interviewees cited the Highway 63 corridor, from which people access Fareway and Dollar General in Toledo and the elementary and high schools in Tama, as particularly hazardous for pedestrians. One interviewee shared that they had seen parents pushing a stroller through the grass, trying to manage kids, and carrying groceries along Highway 63. Interviewees also talked about frequent car accidents at the entrance to the high school. Focus-group participants in both Tama and Toledo share this view, particularly parents and older adults.

Desired Improvements

Hispanic residents would benefit most from additional sidewalks and controlled pedestrian crossings, according to interviewees. Specifically, they would like sidewalks along the Highway 63 corridor to provide better pedestrian access to the Toledo business district and the elementary and high schools in Tama. Interviewees also suggested several stoplights, primarily to make it safer for kids walking to school, including at the entrance to the high school, at 12th and Harding Street, 9th and State Street, and 5th and State Street. These suggestions are consistent with the priorities expressed by survey respondents, which include creating safer routes to school.

Interviewees said that a bus or taxi service would be beneficial to Hispanic residents, many of whom do not drive. Older-adult focus-group participants would also like some sort of public transportation.

Finally, Hispanic residents would like the South Tama Recreation Trail to be paved, a view expressed by participants in the Toledo parents and actives focus groups.

What They Said

"...I would love to have...a little bus that can take people places all around town...to Fareway, to Hy-Vee, all around town...It will facilitate people's transportation. We have a lot of Hispanic families that do not drive, especially women with little kids, and it would be great."

"...my youngest [child] likes to ride bikes, so I can see him riding his bike all along the trail [in Toledo Heights Park]...it's just one big circle so I can see exactly where he's at and it's just safer."

"I see a lot of people, especially ladies, they have to carry their kids in their strollers, so can you imagine...taking your kid on the stroller over the grass [because there are no sidewalks] and then coming back with some groceries from the store? Really hard."

"...we have a lot of kids [who] are coming from [the east] to go to high school, elementary school, and the same way from the [west] side [of Highway 63] crossing to go to the Partnership Center, so we really need a couple of stoplights by the high school and probably another one by...12th and Harding [Highway 63]."

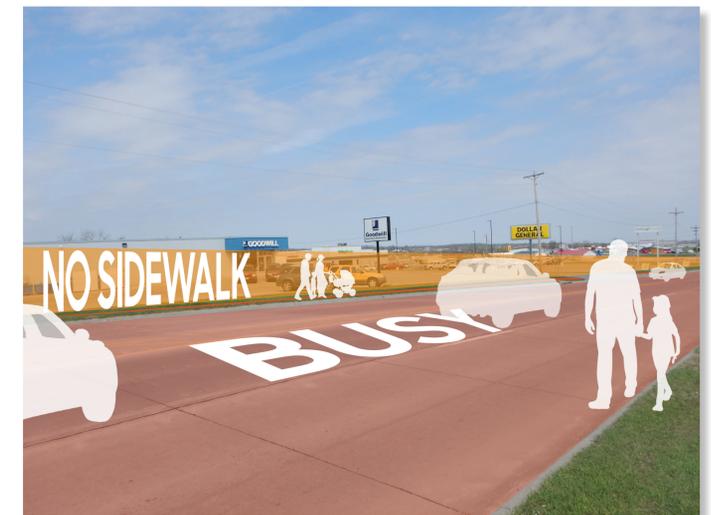
"If you want to do some...safe walking, you have to go all the way to Cherry Lake or the bike trail. Otherwise, you will be walking on the middle of the street or going on some people's grass or in their yards."



"I [like] the scenery [at Cherry Lake]. I love to see the lake and the birds and trees and all of that."



Hispanic residents like to walk on the trail around Cherry Lake because it is safe and they enjoy the natural scenery.



Because many Hispanic residents do not drive, they have to walk to basic services, many of which are located along Highway 63.

¹ "American Community Survey (ACS)," accessed May 21, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>.

Interview with Hispanic Residents

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