

Asset: Kids Sled behind St. Columbkille Catholic Church and the Parish Hall



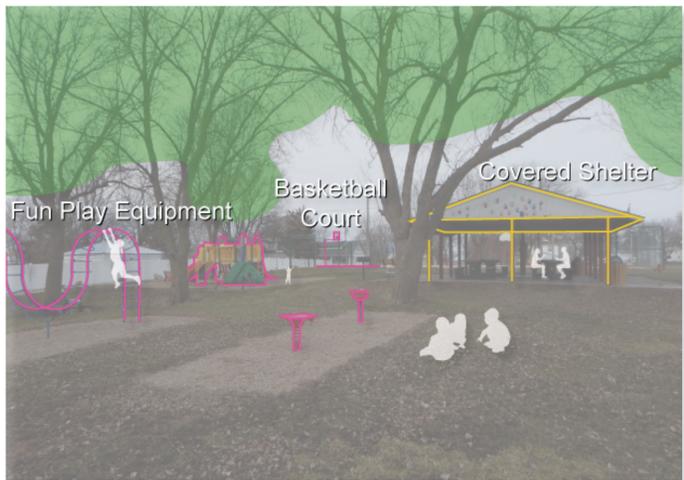
Barrier: Bad Sidewalks on Main Street



Asset: Library is a Popular Spot in Town



Barrier: No Sidewalks or Bike Lanes on County Road C-49



Asset: City Park is Widely Used



Barrier: Poor Drainage from the Lawn on Main Street

What Factors Affect Transportation in Varina?

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 Varina 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 Varina's transportation system works, we use focused, small-group conversations, mapping, and photos of the best and worst places taken by residents to understand local transportation.

Different Users = Different Needs

To capture insights about transportation from a variety of perspectives, we invited Varina residents with different transportation needs to participate in focus groups. A total of 28 residents attended Varina's workshop. Participants were separated into four user groups and the Varina steering committee.



Actives

(6 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.



Older Adults

(7 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

(4 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

(5 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

(6 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.