



Vinton's downtown is welcoming because of its streetscape amenities, safety features, green spaces, and ample parking.



Pedestrians don't feel comfortable walking along or crossing HWY 218 because of fast traffic and absence of sidewalks.



People enjoy the Nathan's Miles Glow Trail for its peaceful setting, distance, and minimal traffic. The surface is wide and well maintained and offers a fun experience at night when it glows.



The confusing geometry and fast traffic at the intersection of 13th St. and C Ave. creates challenging crossing conditions for pedestrians.



The well-maintained, wide sidewalk on 13th Street, along with a beautiful green space, provides a pleasant experience for walking.



The obstructed view, fast traffic, and undefined crosswalk make pedestrians uneasy to cross HWY 150 to get to Celebration Park.

## What Factors Affect Transportation in Vinton?

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 Vinton, 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 Vinton'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 Vinton residents with different transportation needs to participate in focus groups. A total of 46 residents attended Vinton's workshop. Participants were separated into five user groups and the Vinton steering committee.



**(13 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.



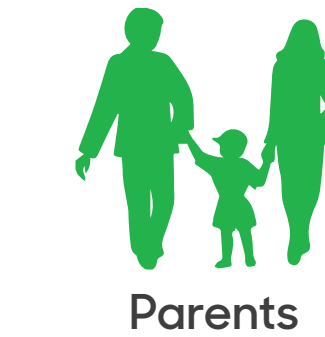
**(2 participants):** This user group is directly affected by accessibility barriers such as high curbing and uneven sidewalks that make it difficult to operate mobility-aiding equipment effectively. Handicapped parking, curb ramps, and smooth surfaces are critical transportation features.



**(11 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.



**(10 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.




**(4 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.



**(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.





**Actives**


"...[the] only option for us to run in is the streets. There's no sidewalk where [we] could run side by side...a lot of the sidewalks in general are very narrow, so it's hard to just even walk."

"A lot of [the] time, people are speeding [on 1st Ave near 3rd St] because they're heading out of town [on Highway] 150..."

"...[The Old Creamery Trail] is very hard to see. There're people that go by it all the time [on Hwy 218] and don't realize that's where the trail is. And to me, it's unsafe, because...it's pretty busy right there."

"I love the idea of connecting the Old Creamery [Trail] to the Glow Trail..."

"One thing we appreciate where we have it is shelter from the wind...certain parts of the Creamery Trail are nicely sheltered."



**Youth**


"A few days ago when I was coming home from school...there [were] two women and then a baby in a stroller. They had to run across [the intersection of US 218 and W 16th St because]...there's really not a good way for them to safely get across."

"I usually [bike] on the sidewalk [on 6th Ave] but there [are] a lot of curbs [without ramps] when I'm crossing the streets...I have to stop for a few seconds and actually pick my bike up."

"I feel like [The Creamery] Trail doesn't get as much use because...[not] as many people know about it..."

"...[the] Glow Trail...[is] really cool...[It's] two miles...it's one big loop...and there [are] benches scattered [along it]"

"I walk home from the middle school every day, and I have to walk in the road because we don't have any sidewalks [on W 15th St]."



**Parents**


"Riverside Dr is a one lane-road...so it's hard if you're walking; you have to...get real close to the edge. If you have a dog or kids or if you're riding a bike, it can be rather cumbersome to keep everything safe..."

"I would like...[a] biking path for kids to be able to ride their bikes on for a significant amount of time and be safe the entire time..."

"I think there should streetlights on the Glow Trail...it should be well lit at night...It's a little scary...[but] you might lose your glow..."

"[When] I moved here, I [thought], 'Oh, this is how they wrote the book *Where the Sidewalk Ends*,' because you'd be walking...on the sidewalk, and then...it just ends."

"...there's no sidewalk on [the Highway] 218...bridge [over Hinkle Creek]...it's very, very narrow... that becomes a safety hazard."



**Older Adults**


"We need an overpass over [US] 218 so the school kids on [the west] side don't have to walk across a busy highway."

"I think 2nd Avenue needs attention because [of] the high school and the whole Anderson addition. There's going to be increasing traffic on that street... the street is going to have to be wider, and it needs sidewalks on one or both sides."

"[Walking] used to be more enjoyable just from an aesthetic point of view before the derecho. We used to have beautiful maple trees."

"...it's nice that it's a Glow Trail, but there's no [other] lighting at night. I'm not sure how safe people feel that walk it at night."

"[The] sidewalks are horrible...all over...That's why a lot of people walk in the street...That's the only place you can walk."



**Mobility Challenged**

"The downtown sidewalks are...nice and wide [but] they're slanted...they did that for water issues...because... my [spouse] was in a wheelchair... we were very aware of that."

"When [the city] redid downtown and added more gutters...that made a tremendous difference for [reducing flooding in] the downtown area."

"A lot of people don't like the [angled] parking downtown, but [we] do...it allows you much better access to the businesses..."

"...the sidewalks... to downtown are terrible; they're just old and they haven't been updated."

"...Benton County Transportation... provide[s] bus and van services...mostly for the elderly and disabled, but...a lot of families use their service to get their children to preschool or to school."



**Steering Committee**

"There's a bridge [on Hwy 218], but there [are] no sidewalks... people [are] walking in the bridge as people are driving over it. I've almost hit people there."

"I don't let my kids walk to school... because they have to...walk in the streets...I would love it if they could walk to school...to the park... to the library, but it's not safe for them to do so..."

"...getting to the Old Creamery Trailhead] is a real mess...You have to jog across [Highway 218]...[because] the trailhead parking is on the east [side] of the street. The trail itself is on the west [side] of the street."

"I walk on streets with mature trees. [The] A Ave, 1st Ave, 2nd Ave neighborhood from 13th to downtown...is a really old neighborhood. They have big old shady trees..."

"When I walk my dog, I... [take Riverside Dr into the park]...You feel like you're not necessarily in town when you walk back there. You do get some traffic, but not a whole lot."

# Vinton

## What People Said

**Transportation Assets and Barriers Analysis**  
 Julia Badenhop, Sandra Oberbroeckling, Britney Markhardt  
 Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation





|  | Destinations and Activities |          |             | Valued Qualities and Features |                                      |               | Undesirable Qualities and Features |  |                                    |                                 |                          | Most Desired Improvements and Activities |                             |                                    |                          |
|--|-----------------------------|----------|-------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
|  | Nathan's Miles Glow Trail   | Downtown | Local Parks | Scenic Views & Natural Areas  | Accessibility for Walkers & Cyclists | Trees & Shade | Flooding & Drainage Problems       | Difficult Pedestrian/Cyclist Crossings | Inadequate Sidewalk Infrastructure | Deteriorated Roadway Conditions | Heavy & Speeding Traffic | Complete, ADA-Compliant Sidewalks        | Enhanced Trail Connectivity | Pedestrian/Cyclist Safety Features | Traffic Control Measures |
|  | ●                           | ●        | ●           | ●                             | ●                                    | ●             | ●                                  | ●                                      | ●                                  | ●                               | ●                        | ●  | ●                           | ●                                  | ●                        |
|  | ●                           | ●        |             |                               | ●                                    |               | ●                                  |  |                                    |                                 | ●                        |  |                             | ●                                  | ●                        |
|  | ●                           | ●        | ●           | ●                             | ●                                    | ●             |                                    | ●                                      | ●                                  | ●                               | ●                        | ●  | ●                           | ●                                  | ●                        |
|  | ●                           | ●        | ●           | ●                             | ●                                    |               | ●                                  | ●                                      | ●                                  |                                 |                          |  |                             |                                    | ●                        |
|  | ●                           | ●        | ●           | ●                             | ●                                    | ●             | ●                                  | ●                                      | ●                                  | ●                               | ●                        | ●  | ●                           | ●                                  |                          |
|  | ●                           | ●        | ●           | ●                             | ●                                    | ●             | ●                                  | ●                                      | ●                                  | ●                               | ●                        | ●  | ●                           | ●                                  | ●                        |

Actives walk, bike, run, and go horseback riding for recreation and/or exercise. They also drive or call dial-a-ride. This group enjoys walking the paths at the cemetery. Actives would like more trees at Kiwanis Park and believe that the community would benefit from overall beautification.

Mobility-challenged individuals walk, bike, and drive cars and golf carts. They also utilize the Benton County Transportation Service. They pointed out that the tactile pavement strips at intersections are not effective in winter when ice and snow builds up, and that better technology is needed to help the visually impaired.

Older adults walk, bike, and drive cars and golf carts. This group likes walking the Old Creamery Trail because it has benches, trees, a shelter, and nice surfaces. They would like 25th Avenue to be paved to reduce the amount of dust on the Glow Trail. They also want dark-sky lighting all over town.

Youth walk and bike to get around town. Older youth also drive cars and four-wheelers. They would like to have a crossing guard on A Avenue after school. Youth said that while everyone knows what the Glow Trail is, people are less familiar with the Old Creamery Trail, and they suggested that the city do something to promote it.

Parents walk, bike, drive, and ride scooters. This group is concerned about the safety of their children and would like safe bike paths for kids where they can ride a good distance away from traffic. Parents think that the uncontrolled intersections in town are confusing because drivers aren't sure who has the right-of-way.

Steering committee members walk, bike, and drive to get from place to place. Amenities such as access to water, trash receptacles, and lighting factor into this group's choices of walking and biking routes. A concern of the committee is how difficult it is for walkers and bikers to cross Highway 218 to get to the Old Creamery Trailhead.

Nathan's Miles Glow Trail is a popular venue among all user types. People enjoy walking, biking, and running the trail because it is wide, flat, and is separated from vehicular traffic. The actives group described the trail as "unique, because it glows." Spacious sidewalks, intersections with curb ramps and comfortable for pedestrians and cyclists. Residents appreciate access to businesses, ample parking, and the green space that downtown has to offer. Both adults and youth take pleasure in visiting the local Area, Riverside Park for its trails, access to nature and the river, and flat terrain. Celebration Park also has trails and river access and hosts the farmers market. People also enjoy the aesthetics of older neighborhoods. Anderson Parks host many outdoor activities. Scenic views and natural areas are a principal part of residents' outdoor experience. Dudgeon State Wildlife Area, Riverside and Celebration Parks, and the wooded trails near Riverside Park are well-liked natural settings. People also enjoy the aesthetics of older neighborhoods. Participants in every focus group stressed the importance of wide, level, well-maintained surfaces for pedestrians and cyclists. They cited several examples such as the downtown streetscape, 13th Street from 2nd Avenue to 10th Avenue, W 15th Street, and the Glow Trail. Adults value trees and shade in the community and mentioned that 4th, 1st, and 2nd Avenues as having an abundance of trees. Older adults lamented the loss of the maple trees caused by the derecho. Several focus groups raised the issue of flooding and drainage problems. The trails in Riverside Park and Dudgeon State Wildlife Area flood when the river level rises. The Glow Trail often has standing water because of its low elevation. Some flooding also occurs on city streets. Residents identified areas where it is difficult for people to cross because of missing crosswalks, misaligned ramps at intersections, and the lack of sidewalks. Broken, narrow, and missing sidewalks are vexing to all demographic groups. The inconsistency of curb ramps at intersections makes it hard for kids to bike on bridge is a major safety concern. Road conditions in general leave much to be desired among residents. Examples of deteriorated roadways cited include portions of 3rd, 4th, and 6th Avenues, Riverside Drive and the west side of Highway 218. Heavy and speeding traffic was a common complaint from adults. Highway 150 through town carries a lot of traffic, and because there are few controlled intersections, people drive at higher speeds. The hospital and the schools create high traffic on 4th, 8th, 9th, and 21st Streets. Residents would like improvements to the sidewalk system, including wide, accessible sidewalks to key destinations such as the schools, parks, the grocery stores, and the library are also desired. More trail connections are a priority to several user groups. People would like to connect the Old Creamery Trail locally to the Glow Trail and regionally to the Cedar Valley Nature Trail. Parents want a trail loop around the Pedestrian/Cyclist safety is critical to adult users. Suggestions made include a pedestrian bridge over Highway 218, a pedestrian bridge along Highway 218 over Hinckle Creek, crosswalks through town, mid-block crosswalks downtown, and safer railroad crossings. Some focus group participants want additional traffic controls to slow vehicular traffic, such as stoplights by the pool, the hospital, and at C Avenue and 13th Street, and more stop signs. Some people would like traffic safety signage along Highway 150 north of 2nd Avenue.

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## Emerging Themes

### Transportation Assets and Barriers Analysis

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