



The hospital green space has a wide, paved path, ample seating, and shade. The site is a popular place to walk, bike, relax, and watch birds.



Mt. Pleasant Street is intimidating to both cyclists and pedestrians because the bike lane is too close to vehicular traffic and there is no sidewalk or trail.



Residents enjoy the Rec Plex for its wide, well-maintained trails and sports venues. Cyclists appreciate the bike repair station located there.



Pedestrians have trouble crossing at the intersection of Broadway Street and Agency Road because traffic is heavy and there is no crosswalk.



Beautiful plantings along the wide trail along Gear Ave provide great buffers from vehicular traffic on the side streets.



Pedestrians and cyclists find it difficult to access businesses and services along Agency Road, which has no sidewalk or developed shoulder.

## What Factors Affect Transportation in West Burlington?

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 West Burlington, 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 West Burlington’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 West Burlington residents with different transportation needs to participate in focus groups. A total of 56 residents attended West Burlington’s workshop. Participants were separated into five user groups and the West Burlington steering committee.



Actives

**(11 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.



Mobility Challenged

**(3 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.



Older Adults

**(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.



Youth

**(11 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

**(11 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

**(9 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.

# West Burlington Overview


## Transportation Assets and Barriers Analysis

Julia Badenhop, Sandra Oberbroeckling, Britney Markhardt

Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation







**Actives**


"[The trail at the Rec Plex is] peaceful. You just feel safe. You're separated from all the congestion of traffic. It's bright out there."

"[The walkway on the Hwy 34 overpass on S Gear Ave is] really unlevel. The ramp...going north and then even the ramp coming south [are] just difficult... It's definitely not wheelchair accessible. Bik[ing] is no fun on it."

"There's a bike [lane on Mount Pleasant Street], but it's not a safe bike [lane]...It's...one painted line away [from traffic]."

"In the wintertime, under the overpass [on W Burlington Avenue gets] icy... No one removes the snow from the sidewalks, so the people...[are] walking in the street or...walking on ice."

"There [are Southeastern Community College] students who don't have cars... They have to walk anywhere they go... There's no sidewalk [along Agency Road] from the college to anywhere."



**Youth**


"I don't think there is a crosswalk [at the intersection of Agency Road and Broadway Avenue]...It's just a four-way stop and it's busy... That probably is actually the busiest intersection in West Burlington."

"A lot of people don't follow the 20 miles per hour limit [around the schools], and they speed past it..."

"If we had [a trail] down [Agency Road]...It might be pretty easy to then connect over to the library [in Burlington]."

"Truthfully, they need to get a pedestrian bridge [across S Gear Avenue from the mall to Target]... [and] the bigger picture would be connecting to the bike path."

"Most of the neighborhood [across from Luers Park] has sidewalks, but they're on, like, only one side of the street...It makes it pretty hard to get around."



**Parents**

"[After school, kids run] across [Ramsey] in-between parked cars and...parked cars on both sides of the street, plus a line trying to turn into the [school] pickup/drop-off lane, plus random cars [try] to squeeze their way through."

"There is a sidewalk [on] Gear [Avenue on the Highway 34 overpass], but it's super narrow and it's really rough, and then it turns to all grass on the other side..."

"[On West Burlington Ave] by the pool, when kids are walking...there is hardly any [shade]... sometimes I see kids sitting underneath the [highway] overpass to take a break in the shade, and that's not really a great spot."

"If I want to go walk the trails over at the Rec Plex, I have to drive there because... there's no sidewalk accessibility, particularly across [Highway] 34 [on Gear Avenue]."

"...parents—or just everyday people—they want trails. They want pedestrian paths...a lot of people don't care for [the share-the-road] option. I, for one, don't like that with my kids."



**Older Adults**


"I would like to see some benches. People walk and they need a rest...one place would be by the mall, because that's going to be a trail through there."

"From the [community] college to [Kohl's], people walk in the road [along Agency Road because there's no sidewalk]... And I have many times just about hit [someone]...at night, it's horrible."

"[My wish] would be [for] walking and bicycling trails, because in town, you're either walking on the crooked sidewalks or in the street..."

"...on the south side of West Burlington... the traffic noise is so loud...[It's] just unreal [with] how bad the noise is. I don't know how [people living there] stand it."

"[The bike lane on Mt Pleasant Road is] scary. It needed to be wider... it's close to the traffic... [and] the traffic doesn't respect the bikes."



**Mobility Challenged**

"...a lot of older people [and]...people with disabilities [live at Western Pines]...they can't [get anywhere] because there's no sidewalk...They're... stuck there, because [Agency Road] is such a busy street. If anybody's in a wheelchair or [using] a walker, they're not getting across Agency."

"...during school [pickup or drop-off] time... if you're leaving the parking lot from the [elementary] school, you cannot [turn left to] go...north. You literally have to go to the south to get out..."

"It would be really cool to have...a sidewalk going down Broadway...that connects to [the Rec Plex and Gear Avenue to make] a big loop around town to walk."

"I walk with my grandma almost every single day. So a walking path...in Luers Park—that would be nice to go out there and enjoy being outside."

"There is a sidewalk and a little bridge [over the creek in Luers Park], but it's not accessible, really, because you have to walk up stairs..."



**Steering Committee**

"...once you cross...Gear Ave on your bike...there's no way of riding a bike up over the [Hwy 34] bridge over to the mall...there's a pedestrian crossing there, but it's poorly kept. It's narrow. You'd really have a tough time if you met a cyclist, met a walker."

"[The trail around the lake is] wide and well-kept and I don't have to worry about... cars running over my kids if they get further ahead of me...But the problem is we have to drive to get there."

"...in regard to transportation, I'm looking more for accessibility. I'm looking at the benches, the water fountain[s], some shade...an oasis along the way."

"We need more sidewalks. We need to fix sidewalks. We need to make sure they're all at least four-foot [wide]. There [are] two-foot [and] three-foot [sidewalks], and there [are] upheavals..."

"[On Broadway Avenue] there's a sidewalk on one side, but not on the other side...[so people] just traipse across the road..."

# West Burlington







## What People Said

**Transportation Assets and Barriers Analysis**  
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User Types	Destinations and Activities				Valued Features		Undesirable Qualities and Features					Most Desired Improvements and Activities			
	Hospital Green Space	Rec Plex	City Trail	Local Parks	Pedestrian Access & Connectivity	Trees & Shade	Inadequate Sidewalk Infrastructure	Disconnected Trails	Difficult Pedestrian/Cyclist Crossings	Heavy Traffic	School Traffic Congestion	Complete, ADA-Compliant Sidewalks	Trail Connections	Trail Amenities	More Trees
 <p><b>Actives</b></p>	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●
 <p><b>Mobility Challenged</b></p>	●		●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	●		●
 <p><b>Older Adults</b></p>	●		●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	●		●
 <p><b>Youth</b></p>	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
 <p><b>Parents</b></p>	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
 <p><b>Steering Committee</b></p>	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<p>The green space on the hospital campus is a popular destination among all user types. The wide, well-kept path around the lake, trees, seating, and the fountain create a welcoming environment. People walk, bike and run on the path and take pleasure in bird watching.</p> <p>Residents like going to the Rec Plex because they feel safe using the trails, which are wide and well-maintained. Youth appreciate the well-developed baseball fields, while actives value the bike repair station.</p> <p>The steering committee, mobility challenged older adults, and actives focus groups identified the city trail as a valuable asset for a variety of reasons, including its wide, smooth surface; the fact that it is multi-use; and the connections it makes to the Rec Plex and the hospital.</p> <p>People of all ages and abilities enjoy the local parks. Pat Klein Park has a nice path; Luers Park has dog-waste stations and well-maintained play equipment; and two driving boards, as well as two baseball fields.</p> <p>Pedestrian access and connectivity is important to focus-group participants. For parents pushing strollers and those with mobility challenges, intersections with curb ramps are critical to navigating city sidewalks. People are more comfortable walking on wide, smooth surfaces.</p> <p>Trees and shade make being outdoors more enjoyable for both adults and youth. Sites identified as having a barrier to older adults and youth include the green space at the old parts of town, the parks, and the one-narrow, and missing sidewalks are vexing to people. Although the city trail reaches the hospital, it doesn't link to the green-space path. The Rec Plex is hard to reach for walkers and bikers on the east side of town. Youth noted the absence of a trail to the groto.</p> <p>Participants in all groups identified areas where it is difficult for walkers and bikers to cross, such as S Gear Avenue at Target, where the walk signal is inadequate, Agency and S Gear Avenue and Huston Street and Broadway, and Division Streets, along with Agency Road, particularly busy and congested in areas.</p> <p>With all schools located on Ramsey Street congestion at pickup and drop-off times is a chronic problem, with vehicular traffic backed up onto other residential streets and kids walking in the street and between parked cars. According to parents, "the whole area is a hot mess."</p> <p>Residents would like improvements to the sidewalk system, including wide, handicapped-accessible sidewalks on both sides of the street throughout town. Specific pedestrian connections people want are to the mall, the Rec Plex, Walmart, and the cemetery.</p> <p>Trail connections, both within and outside West Burlington, are a priority to all groups. Trail users want to connect with trails in Burlington and the Flint River Trail. Within town, people suggested a loop around town, and links to Western Pines, SCC, and the hospital.</p> <p>Some groups talked about the need for amenities along the existing trail, as well as any new trails developed. The most popular elements are benches, water fountains, trash receptacles, shade, and bike repair stations.</p> <p>Adults appreciate how trees can enhance the outdoor experience by providing shade and beauty and serving as a windbreak. Adults would like more trees throughout town, but especially along West Burlington Avenue, Division Street, and at the mall.</p>															
<p>Actives walk, bike, and run regularly for exercise and/or recreation. This group prefers to use multi-use trails that are separated from traffic. They do not feel safe riding in the designated bike lane along Mt. Pleasant Street because vehicular traffic is too close.</p>															
<p>Mobility-challenged individuals walk and drive around town. Smooth, wide surfaces are important to this group. A more accessible, controlled crossing over West Burlington Avenue to the pool and a sidewalk or trail along Agency Road are two improvements this group desires.</p>															
<p>Older adults drive, walk, and bike. This group talked about the traffic noise from Highway 34 disturbing residents living on adjacent residential streets and the traffic bottleneck at the intersection of Broadway Street and Agency Road. Older adults would like more parking downtown.</p>															
<p>Youth walk, bike, and ride scooters or a Segway to get around town. Older youth also drive. Kids would like a bus route to the Rec Plex. They also want a longer crossing signal on S Gear Street near Target, more speed control around the school campus, and more shelters in the parks.</p>															
<p>Parents walk, run, and bike, as well as drive personal vehicles and side-by-sides. They also enjoy riding Hoverboards and Onewheels. This group is concerned about the safety of their children. They suggested building walkways over busier intersections to make it safer and easier for walkers and cyclists to cross.</p>															
<p>Steering committee members drive, walk, and bike. This group would like attractive welcome signs at community entrances, safe pedestrian crossings at intersections, and bump-outs and medians to give pedestrians a safe spot when crossing the street. Committee members suggested road diet for Agency Road, Mt. Pleasant Street, and Gear Avenue.</p>															

# West Burlington

## Emerging Themes

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