

Annual Report

2019 Annual Report



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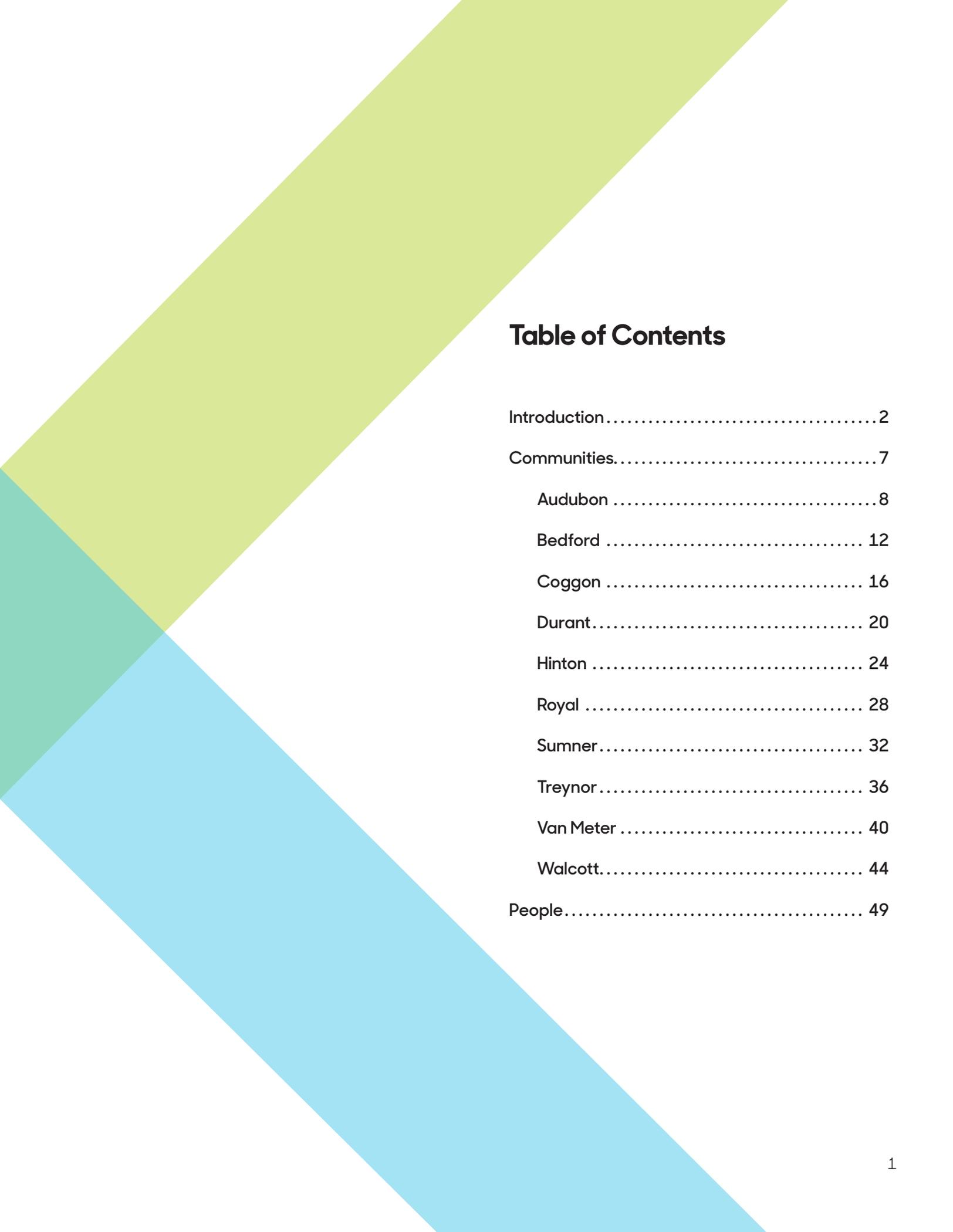


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Introduction

The Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program was born of an effort to provide design services to small Iowa communities. The program is a collaboration involving the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT), the Living Roadway Trust Fund (LRTF), Iowa State University (ISU), and Trees Forever.

The Community Visioning Program integrates landscape planning and design with sustainable action to assist community leaders and volunteers in making sound and meaningful decisions about their local landscape. The program empowers local leaders through a planning process that results in a transportation enhancement plan reflecting the values and identity of the community.

A committee of local residents participates in a series of steps toward creating a conceptual plan, including:

- Identifying issues
- Investigating the physical and cultural dimensions of landscape issues

- Setting goals for change
- Developing strategies to meet those goals
- Creating an implementation plan

Throughout the process, the committee receives support from the technical experts at Trees Forever, a professional landscape architecture firm, and the Iowa State University Department of Landscape Architecture.

The sustainability and success of the program is evident by the number of communities with which it has collaborated. Since Iowa's Living Roadways was created in 1996, 241 communities have participated in Community Visioning, more than a dozen of which have gone through the process more than once.

The results of ongoing evaluation show how the program has impacted Iowa communities (see impacts below). Furthermore, our case studies of successful visioning communities support our belief that engaging local residents generates the knowledge necessary to make changes that the community as a whole will embrace.



ABOUT 98% of visioning communities complete at least one project.



NEARLY 50% of visioning communities complete four or more projects.



NEARLY 75% of communities funded projects through local volunteers.



NEARLY 85% of visioning steering committees are still active in some way.



Representatives FROM 63% of communities reported that the program had a positive impact on their town.



MORE THAN 60% of those communities reported that the program positively affected aesthetics and the economy.



OF THOSE COMMUNITIES, 100% identified improved quality of life as a positive impact.

In addition to offering assistance to Iowa's small towns, the Community Visioning Program gives landscape architecture students the opportunity to work for a professional landscape architecture firm and to interact with real clients through our internship program. Since 1996, 239 students have interned with the program, and a number of them have gone on to work with the program as practitioners.

"This was a unique opportunity to live in another location in Iowa as well as experience the professional lifestyle of a landscape architect."

—Intern

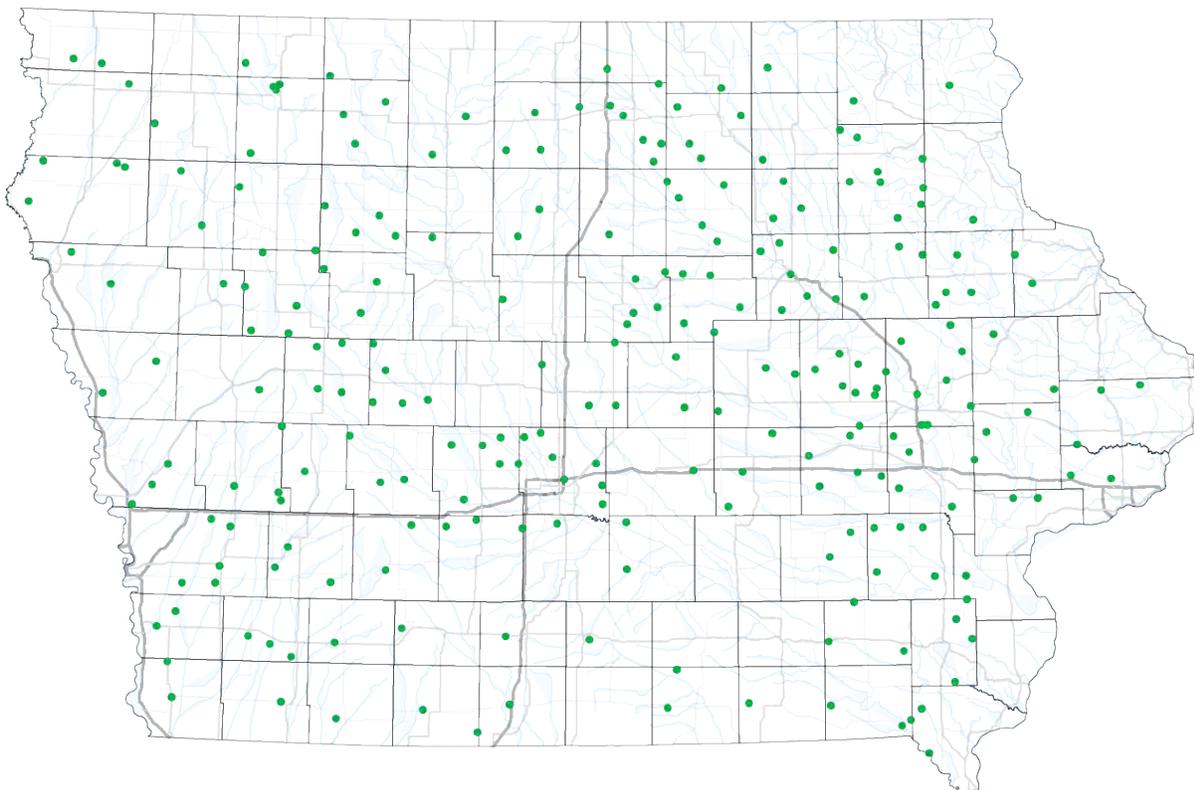


The internship program also introduces practicing landscape architects to the best and brightest future practitioners, whom they spend a summer mentoring. Firms have often hired their interns as full-time designers once they have graduated because of the experience interns gain through the visioning program.

"It feels like it's a nice way to give back. I learn as much from the interns as they learn from me. I wish I had an opportunity to be a part of a process like this when I went to school."

—Practitioner

Iowa's Living Roadways Visioning Communities, 1996–2019



2019 Community Visioning Program

The 2019 visioning communities are Audubon, Bedford, Coggon, Durant, Hinton, Royal, Sumner, Treynor, Van Meter, and Walcott.

The annual report summarizes the essence of the year-long Community Visioning process and the main ideas developed by the design team for each town. In each community summary, we present images from the concept plan, as well as data collected from focus groups as part of the transportation assets and barriers assessment. For two communities – Durant and Van Meter – we also provide selected results from random-sample surveys.

Focus Groups

We invited residents with different transportation needs to participate in focus groups. In most communities, participants were separated into five user groups and the steering committee, which are defined below.

Each user group identified and mapped assets and barriers, as well as desired improvements. The ISU research team analyzed the focus-group maps and transcripts, giving the steering committees insight into how residents perceive the local transportation system.

Survey

With assistance from Iowa State University's Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology, ISU visioning program staff conducted surveys to better understand the transportation patterns, behaviors, needs, and desires of residents in the communities of Durant and Van Meter. These towns were selected for surveys because of their population and/or unique transportation issues and needs.

Surveys were mailed to 300 randomly selected residents living in and around each town. Response rates were 55.6% in Durant and 49.4% in Van Meter. (A response rate of 20% is considered valid.)

Transportation User Types



Actives: 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 Impaired: 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: 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.



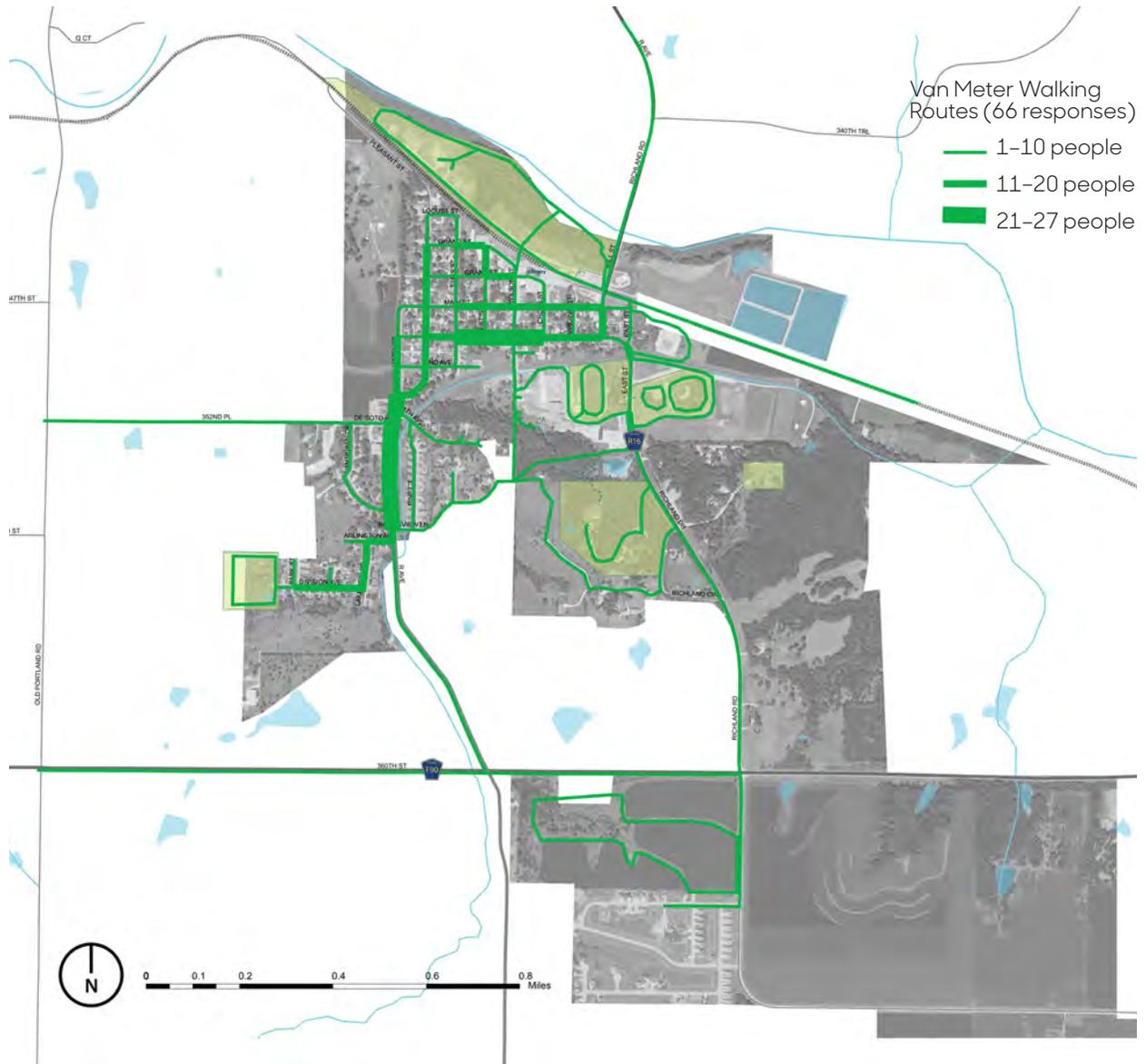
Youth: This group uses primarily non-motorized modes of transportation, so pedestrian- and bike-friendly streets and sidewalks are important. These users value the ability to get to destinations on foot or via bicycle and having goods and services within walking distance.



Parents: 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: 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.



The survey gives the visioning steering committee objective, representative information about residents' transportation behaviors and needs, such as the preferred walking routes for Van Meter shown above. In addition to their preferred routes, respondents also provided information on what qualities and features of routes and trails are important to them. The quantitative data collected from survey responses complements the qualitative information gathered from the focus groups at the transportation assets and barriers workshop.

Design Proposals

Based on information gathered from the focus groups, a transportation inventory, an assessment of the local bioregion, and survey results (in two communities), the steering committees in each community identified and prioritized goals. The design team for each community developed a range of design proposals to address these goals.

Together the design proposals work to highlight important community features, establish or strengthen city identity, and elevate aesthetics. The projects also aim to improve local transportation systems for all user types.





Communities

Audubon

Audubon (population 1,937) is the county seat of Audubon County and is located 16 miles north of I-80 on Highway 71. Home to the world's largest bull, the community has a variety of amenities, including a number of parks, shops, and the T-Bone Trail that runs 21 miles along Highway 71. The highway brings a lot of traffic through town, but the streetscape doesn't attract visitors to all the community has to offer.

Community Assessments

Focus-group participants share a love for the T-Bone Trail that connects parks and surrounding towns. Residents also value the great school system, the rec center, Albert the Bull Park, and the downtown area, which make Audubon a great place for families. However, participants also identified barriers in town, most notably Highway 71, because of the fast-moving vehicles, poor visibility, lack of sidewalks, and low-quality aesthetic appeal. Lack of pedestrian connections and way-finding to important destinations in town is also an issue.

Planning and Design Summary

Based on information obtained through the community assessments, the visioning committee identified four priority areas:

- Connectivity and Corridor Improvements – Develop a connected sidewalk system, convert Highway 71 to three lanes, and improve access to local culture and recreation.
- Safety Improvements – Enhance pedestrian and trail crossings, incorporate traffic-calming features and bump-outs at intersections.
- Identity and Aesthetics – Install weathering steel monuments and streetscape plantings, improve the community brand.
- Ecology – Implement stormwater best management practices, increase wildlife habitat and biodiversity.



Trees Forever Facilitators: *Leslie Berckes and Brad Riphagen*

Landscape Architects: *Dylan Jones, Genus Landscape Architects*

Intern: *Paola Monllor Torres*



Design workshop

Steering Committee:

Tina Andersen

Tina Blackburn

Liz Brittain

Genelle Deist

Alex Foran

Kristin Foran

Laurie Gilbert

Linda Irlmeier

Gail Richardson

Grace Slater

Sara Slater

Nick Weihs

1

"...the sidewalks are so bad...a lot of people walk in the street."



2

"[Highway 71] is like the concrete jungle."



3

"...[the bridge off Highway 71 to Albert the Bull Campground] is not walker or biker friendly. It's a very unsafe bridge to cross."



1

"There could be more sidewalks because in some places we have to go on the curb."

4

"That whole north part of town is not easily traveled—unless you're in a car."

- 1** Missing sidewalks and sidewalks in poor condition impede pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair users, and parents trying to push their children in strollers. This image edit shows the addition of designated bike lanes, sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian-scale lighting to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists.



- 2** All focus-group demographics perceive Highway 71 as a barrier because it is difficult for both motorized and non-motorized traffic to cross and there are few sidewalks along it. In addition to adding sidewalks and crosswalks at intersections, the design team proposed converting the four-lane roadway to three lanes.



Hwy. 71 Section | Existing



Hwy. 71 Section | Proposed

- 3 Audubon residents expressed interest in a pedestrian bridge to connect the T-Bone Trail with Albert the Bull Park. The proposed truss bridge is comprised of a concrete deck and a weathering steel railing and has pedestrian-scale lighting at each end.



- 4 Accessing amenities and businesses, such as Dollar General, along the Highway 71 corridor is difficult for pedestrians because the sidewalk system is incomplete. The design team proposal would make the highway more pedestrian friendly.



Bedford

Bedford (population 1,398), the county seat of Taylor County in southwest Iowa, is situated at the intersection of State Highways 2 and 148. The beautiful red brick pavers that cover the downtown streets are a staple of its rich history. However, the historic district has many downfalls, including aging infrastructure, expensive street upkeep, and the loss of many historic buildings.

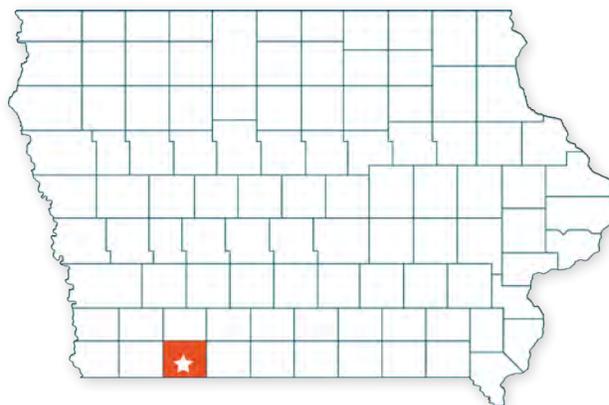
Community Assessments

The assessment process revealed that residents value the town's recreation areas, including Lake of Three Fires and Bibbins Park. Unfortunately, the effects of aging have taken their toll on some of these areas. The brick streets downtown are also valued because they reflect Bedford's history and add character to the area. However, street maintenance takes funding away from sidewalk upkeep. Many other roads in town are in poor condition and lack sidewalks. The community hopes to address these concerns to make Bedford a safe and beautiful place to call home.

Planning and Design Summary

The Bedford steering committee set priorities that addressed the concerns of residents and the design team developed a concept plan consisting of the following components:

- Pedestrian Connectivity – Create continuous, accessible sidewalks throughout the community; improve existing trails; and add a pedestrian bridge at the ball fields.
- Improved Visibility – Add/enhance crosswalks and traffic signage, employ traffic-calming methods such as street trees, and install bump-outs at intersections to reduce crossing lengths and improve visibility.
- Way-finding and Identity – Create a family of way-finding signage that incorporates elements that reflect Bedford's identity and add site furnishings and streetscape plantings.



Trees Forever Facilitator: *Brad Riphagen*

Landscape Architects: *Dylan Jones, Genus Landscape Architects*

Intern: *Paola Monllor Torres*



Community tour during the design workshop

Steering Committee:

Jason Bucher

Angela Demott

Janel Irvin

Nicki Lock

Joe Lucas

Christy Saylor

Erica Saylor

Sandy Schubert

Jodi Still

Glenda Stockwell

Patty Weese

1

"There are quite a few [people at Northside Apartments] who would probably walk if they had the ability to get [to the grocery store] on a sidewalk without walking on the highway."

2

"[The high curb] makes it really hard for older people to get from their car up onto the sidewalk."



3

"And not all of [the sidewalks] are handicapped accessible; sometimes you [have] to go all the way out and around into the street."

1

"We need more sidewalks because my mom doesn't let us walk to school even though it's a block away because there are no sidewalks on the side."

4

"You can't find anything in this town, coming from a person who moved here. I didn't know where the football field was, I didn't know where the baseball fields were, unless I drive by them. There's really nothing to direct you."

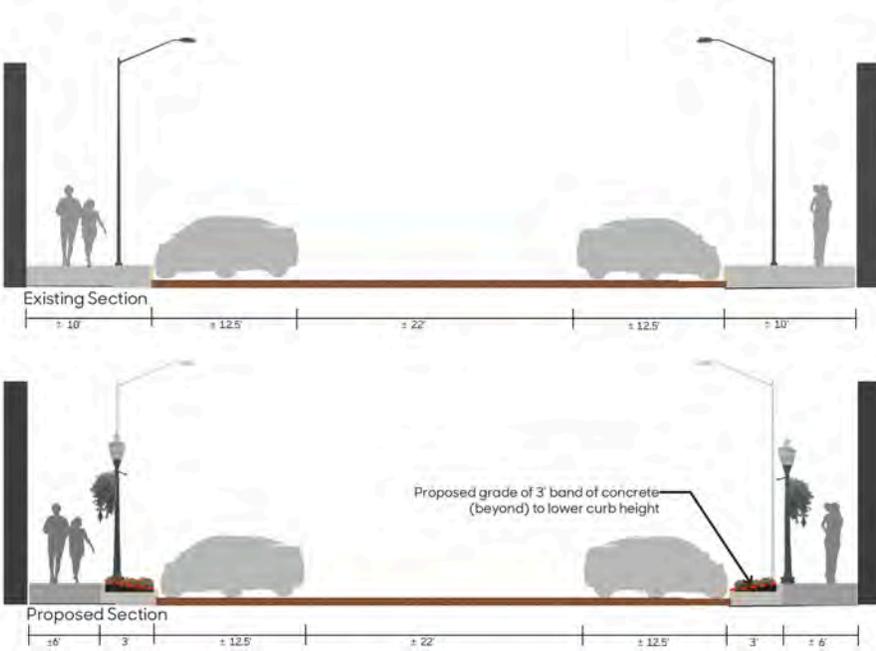
1

Both adults and youth identified the lack of adequate pedestrian/cyclist access to destinations such as Hy-Vee, the school, and the ball fields as a barrier. The image below shows a new sidewalk connection from Madison Street to the highway and Hy-Vee, one of several pedestrian connections proposed in the concept plan.

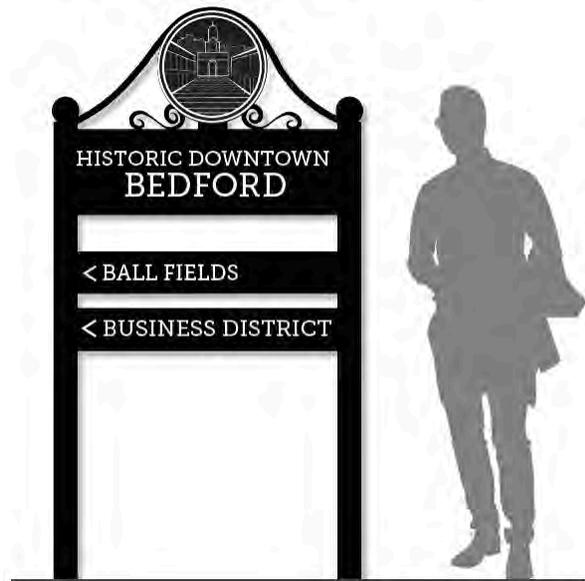


2

The high curbs downtown make it difficult for people to get from their cars to the curb and sometimes even make opening the car door difficult. To alleviate this problem, the design team proposed designating approximately six feet of the right-of-way as sidewalk, and adjusting the approximately three feet of concrete closest to the curb where necessary to lower curb heights. Three-foot-wide planting bands would mitigate slopes and add more green space.



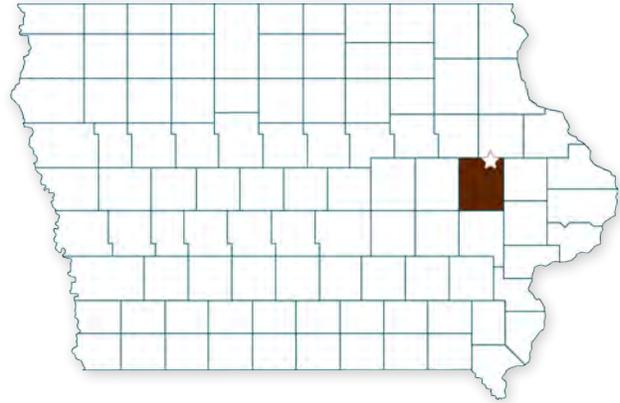
3 The design team incorporated curb extensions and accessible curb ramps into the downtown streetscape plan, addressing the needs of those with mobility issues. The plan also strengthens Bedford's identity and features pedestrian amenities such as benches, planters, and street trees.



4 Way-finding was identified as a problem in Bedford, particularly by newer residents. The proposed way-finding signage features a series of markers that highlight some of the historic architectural and recreational amenities that can be found throughout the city. The imagery shown on these sign markers is inspired by views around town, including those of the Courthouse, the Lenox Round Barn, the multi-use loop trail, and the recreation area.

Coggon

Coggon (population 656) is located along the banks of the Buffalo Creek and Highway 13 in northeastern Linn County. The town is situated between two beautiful parks—Savage Park to the east and Buffalo Creek Park to the west. The decline in population has led to a loss of businesses and funding for the upkeep of amenities that are needed to sustain an accessible community.



Community Assessments

The results of focus groups showed the need for more sidewalks and a trail system that connects the main parks in town. Highway 13 is a heavily trafficked entrance to town that is perceived as unsafe. The D62 underpass is also considered unsafe for pedestrians. While these barriers cause serious problems for the town, there are plenty of assets the community wishes to expand, such as the trails and greenery at Buffalo Creek Park, accessible sidewalks on D62, the historic school building, and City Park.

Planning and Design Summary

Resident input played an important role in the goal-setting process, through which the Coggon visioning committee identified the following projects:

- Trails – Connect Savage and Buffalo Creek Parks, create a pedestrian/cyclist circuit through town that connects destinations, and incorporate native plantings.
- River – Promote the river as a water trail and important community feature.
- Natural Areas – Create a new park near Mill Street; vegetate trails, entrances, and circulation routes; and promote parks and natural areas.
- Safety – Improve and add sidewalks and street crossings, replace pedestrian bridge to Savage Park, improve ADA access, and more strictly enforce sidewalk ordinances.
- Identity – Promote community identity through branded entrance signage, Main Street streetscape improvements, downtown murals and art, and way-finding signage.

Trees Forever Facilitator: *Patty Reisinger*

Landscape Architects: *Steve Ford, Steve Ford Landscape Architecture, and Michael LeClere, Martin Gardner Architecture*

Interns: *Peiming Chen*



Design workshop

Steering Committee:

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Mary Anderson</i> | <i>Michelle Manternach</i> |
| <i>Jenni Archibald</i> | <i>Darcy Metcalfe</i> |
| <i>Raymond Archibald</i> | <i>Jim Price</i> |
| <i>Douglas Gudenkauf</i> | <i>Sharon Price</i> |
| <i>Dannette Hankins</i> | <i>Earlene Ricker</i> |
| <i>Dean Hankins</i> | <i>JoAnn Woods</i> |
| <i>Deb Hinton</i> | |
| <i>Doris Hoskins</i> | |
| <i>Dick Isaacson</i> | |
| <i>Jordan LeClere</i> | |
| <i>Eric Manternach</i> | |

1

"I've always wanted to see the Savage Park connected with the Buffalo Creek Park. That'd be a trail."

2

"There's several times... when my wife and I are walking, we would rather walk in the street because the sidewalks are very rough..."

1

"It would be pretty nice to have a trail connection through Savage Park through town and out to Buffalo Creek Park."



3

"I just really want the bike trail. I think that would help a lot to get people down here more, especially if we do it near the camping grounds. That'll hopefully bring in more people."

4

"...I would like to be able to have a safe way to walk to and from places because there aren't sidewalks on every street, and so I tend to use the middle of the road, which isn't a good decision on my part."

1 Making pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly connections to local destinations is important to Coggon residents. Specifically, focus-group participants would like to connect Savage and Buffalo Creek Parks. The proposed trail system shown here (as orange dots) connects those two parks, as well as downtown, the proposed Mill Street park, and the water tower and cemeteries.



2 During the community assessments, participants pointed out that sidewalks are either in poor condition or missing altogether, so people tend to walk in the streets. The design team proposed adding sidewalks, plantings, lighting, and other amenities along Coggon's streets to make them more pedestrian friendly.



3

To address residents' desire for bike trails, the design team proposed both shared-road and off-street trails. The proposed pedestrian/bicycle trail to the water tower features way-finding signage and a map, and connects 2nd Street and South Railroad Street.



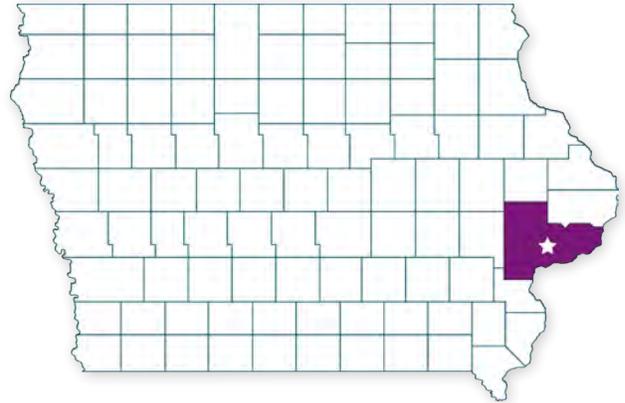
4

The addition of sidewalks and plantings along 2nd Street provides a more pedestrian-friendly environment for walkers, who indicated that they are uncomfortable walking in the roadway.



Durant

Durant (population 1,833) is located just two miles from Interstate 80 between the Quad Cities and Iowa City, making it an ideal place to raise a family with the ability to commute to work. The community has a number of parks and a great school system, but struggles with connecting the north and south sides of town, which are divided by the railroad and historic Highway 6.



Community Assessments

Both focus-group and survey participants identified poor accessibility and lack of sidewalks as barriers. The high curb and uneven sidewalks on Main Street are especially concerning. Residents would like a safer route to school, as well as a trail system. The Durant Cemetery has great trails, and the parks provide shelters, playgrounds, sports facilities, and trails. At the same time, the parks need sidewalk repair to make them more accessible.

Planning and Design Summary

Based on assessment results and the visioning committee's identified goals, the design team proposed concepts focused on several key themes:

- Accessibility and Connectivity – Widen sidewalks, install curb ramps at intersections, and develop a looped trail system.
- Lighting – Install decorative vehicular and pedestrian lighting along business and primary corridors and decorative pedestrian lighting along secondary corridors.
- Traffic Calming – Add street trees, bump-outs, crosswalks, and pedestrian-scale lighting along business, primary, and secondary corridors.
- Way-finding – Create a family of way-finding signage that defines and reinforces community identity.
- Trails and Parks – Create a looped trail system in and around the community and add passive and active recreation opportunities at Feldhan and Pythian Sisters Parks.

Trees Forever Facilitator: *Emily Swihart*

Landscape Architect: *Meg Flenker, Flenker Land Architecture Consultants*

Interns: *Haoyue (Karma) Yang and Jue Jue (JJ) Wai Hin Thaw*



Transportation assets and barriers focus group

Steering Committee:

Barbara Asselbergs

Wendy Bullard

Deana Cavin

Harvey Dittmer

Mike Hein

Brooke Lerma

Kevin Mundt

Jack Pearlman

Tim Reimers

Lynn Stender

Monica Wolf

1

"For a number of years, I've had a vision of having a walking path all the way around town."



2

"You could be going down one street and then the sidewalk ends, you know, and you have to switch to the other side. It's all over."



2

"There[re] some older sidewalks in town... that are heaved up, uneven, so you've really got to watch your step on them."



3

"It's just a little curb. It's not very big, but when you don't have balance and you don't have a railing, it's a big deal."



4

"In the mornings, before and after school...on 7th Street there are no sidewalks. Buses go through, and kids are trying to walk to school on the road."



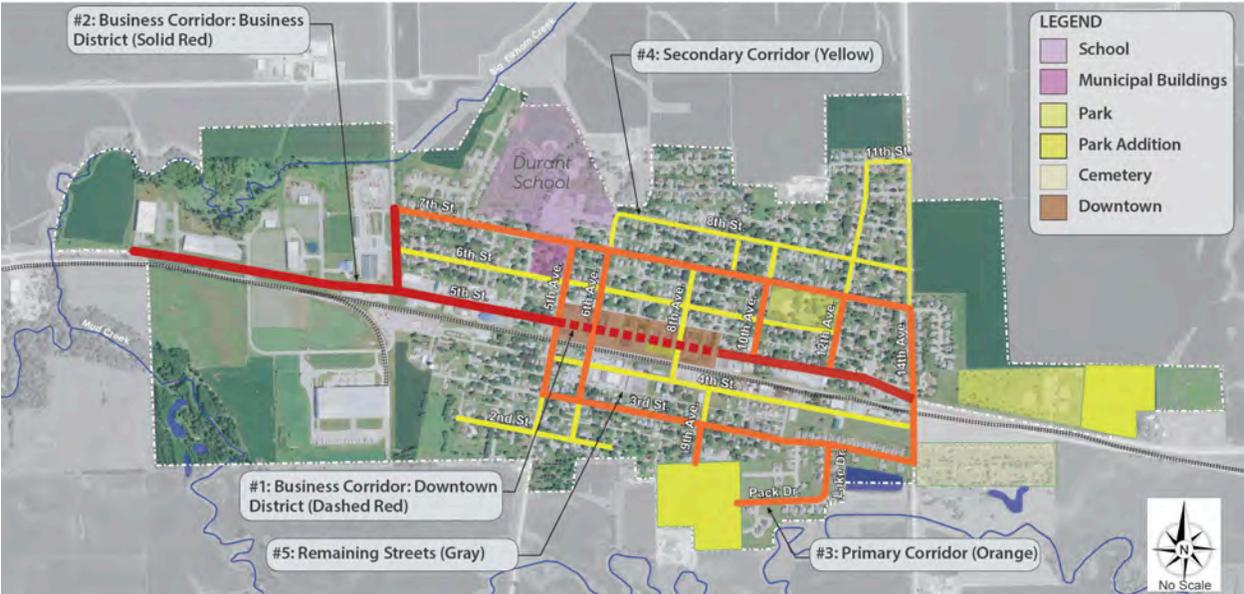
1

The survey and focus groups revealed that Durant residents want a walking/biking trail. The design team developed a trail system for Durant that includes separate trail segments, bike lanes, sharrows, and bike routes. The section shown here depicts a separate trail.



2

Survey respondents identified lighting as an desired feature, and both survey and focus-group participants indicated that broken and missing sidewalks impede walkability. In response to these concerns, the design team developed a sidewalk and lighting master plan that prioritizes sidewalk and lighting improvements in the following order: business corridor—downtown, business corridor—business district, primary corridors, secondary corridors, and remaining streets.



3

High curbs and the absence of handrails make it difficult for those with mobility issues to access downtown businesses. This complete street design includes steps with handrails to improve accessibility from the street to businesses. The plan also adds bump-outs at intersections, designated bike lanes, and vegetation to make pedestrians and cyclists more comfortable.



4

Both focus-group participants and survey respondents consider creating safe routes to school a priority. They specifically noted that kids have to walk in the street to get to school because there is no sidewalk. The concept plan proposes sidewalks on both sides of 7th Street, as well as painted crosswalks.



Hinton

Hinton (population 1,008) is a bedroom community along Highway 75 between Le Mars and Sioux City. The western portion of the town is built on the sharp Loess Hills that border the Floyd River floodplain. The community has a trail that connects the school with the newer housing development. However, connectivity, especially for pedestrians, is an issue because of the railroad tracks, Highway 75, and an incomplete sidewalk system. Residents would like the trail to link to the regional Plywood Trail that connects Le Mars and Sioux City.

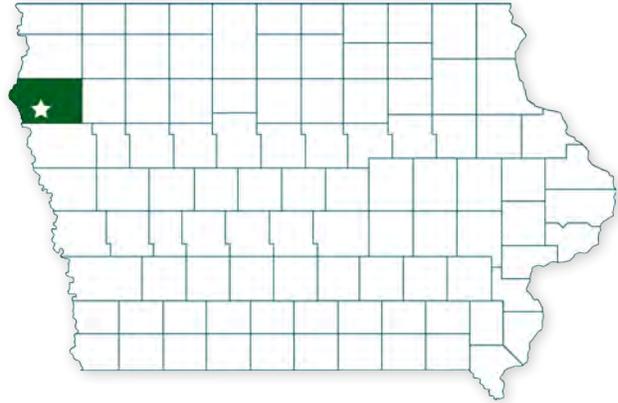
Community Assessments

During the community focus groups, residents emphasized the need for increased connectivity throughout the town. All demographic groups want the railroad crossings to be repaired. Participants also hope to bring a cohesive identity to the town in order to draw people into town from Highway 75. They appreciate the existing walking trail but would like to expand it throughout town, connecting sports facilities, downtown, and the natural treasure of the Loess Hills.

Planning and Design Summary

After the Hinton visioning committee identified goals, the design team led a workshop, during which preliminary concepts were created with help from residents. The concepts explored during the workshop included the following:

- Developing streetscape improvements along the Main Street corridor to reduce traffic speeds and create a more welcoming and connected Main Street.
- Creating a safer and more accessible crossing at Highway 75 and Main Street.
- Increasing community identity through new signage and artful infrastructure updates to complement the streetscape amenities.
- Establishing a trail and sidewalk plan to increase accessibility and active transportation opportunities throughout the community. Determine a route through the community that will serve as Hinton's link to the proposed Plywood Trail.



Trees Forever Facilitator: *Jeff Jensen*

Landscape Architects: *Carl Rogers and Chad Hunter, Community Design Lab, Iowa State University*

Interns: *Riley Dunn and Laura Schwartz*



Design workshop

Steering Committee:

Stephanie Bass

Joel Jauer

Mike Koopmans

Kelly Kreber

Kelly Nashleanas

Beth Riley

Paul Schlotman

Brooke Smith

Ryan Weber

1

"There's a lot of traffic [on Highway 75] and I have walked it, but it's really nasty to get across the highway, and then across the railroad tracks."



1

"When we take the kids over to the ballpark, we mainly drive them instead of walking them."



3

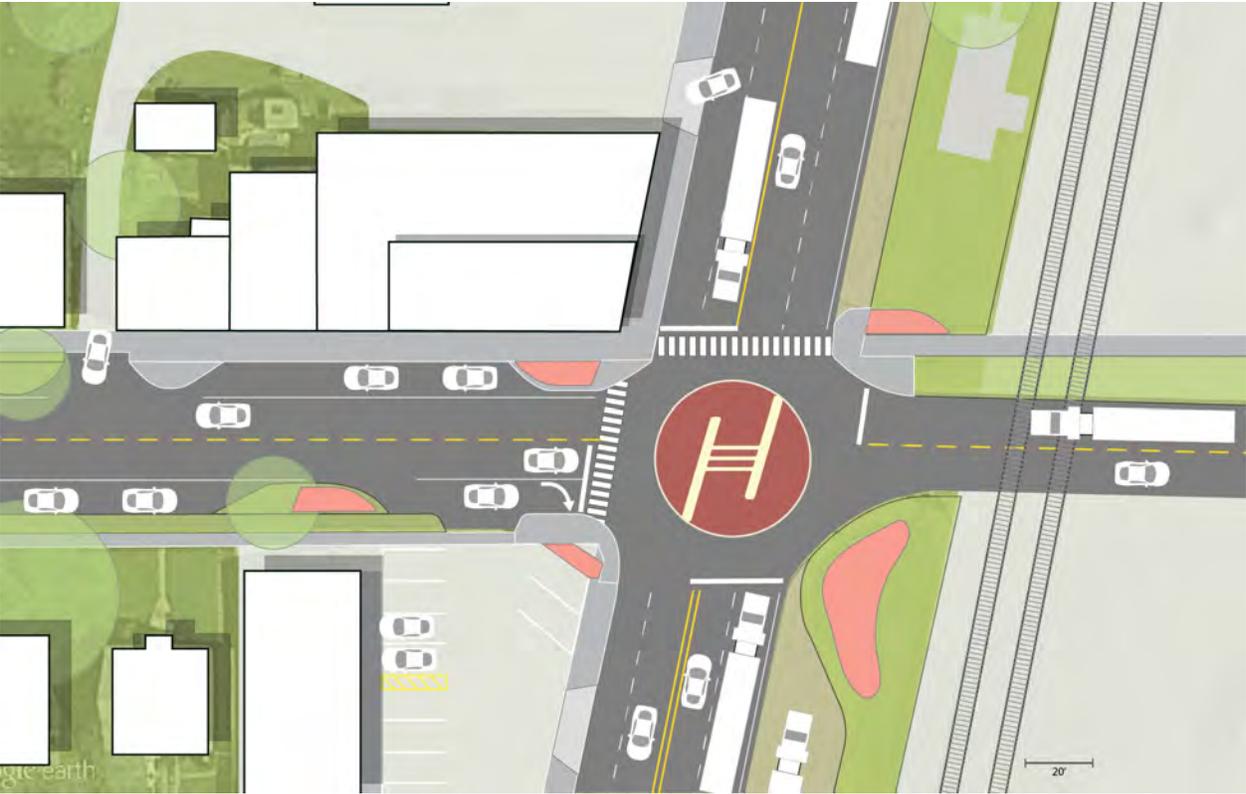
"Speaking from the perspective of someone who has a disability, but someone [who's] active, I really think there should be a trail, that that trail should be widened...it has tons of rocks on it. How do you expect someone with a disability...to be safe on that?"

2

"Signage would be great...to make people realize that they are actually in the town of Hinton..."

1

Crossing Highway 75, which is necessary to access the ball fields, was identified as a problem during community focus groups. To make the intersection of Highway 75 and Main Street more pedestrian friendly, the design team proposed reconstructing existing sidewalks on the west side of the highway, adding bump-outs and crosswalks at the intersection, and planting vegetation.



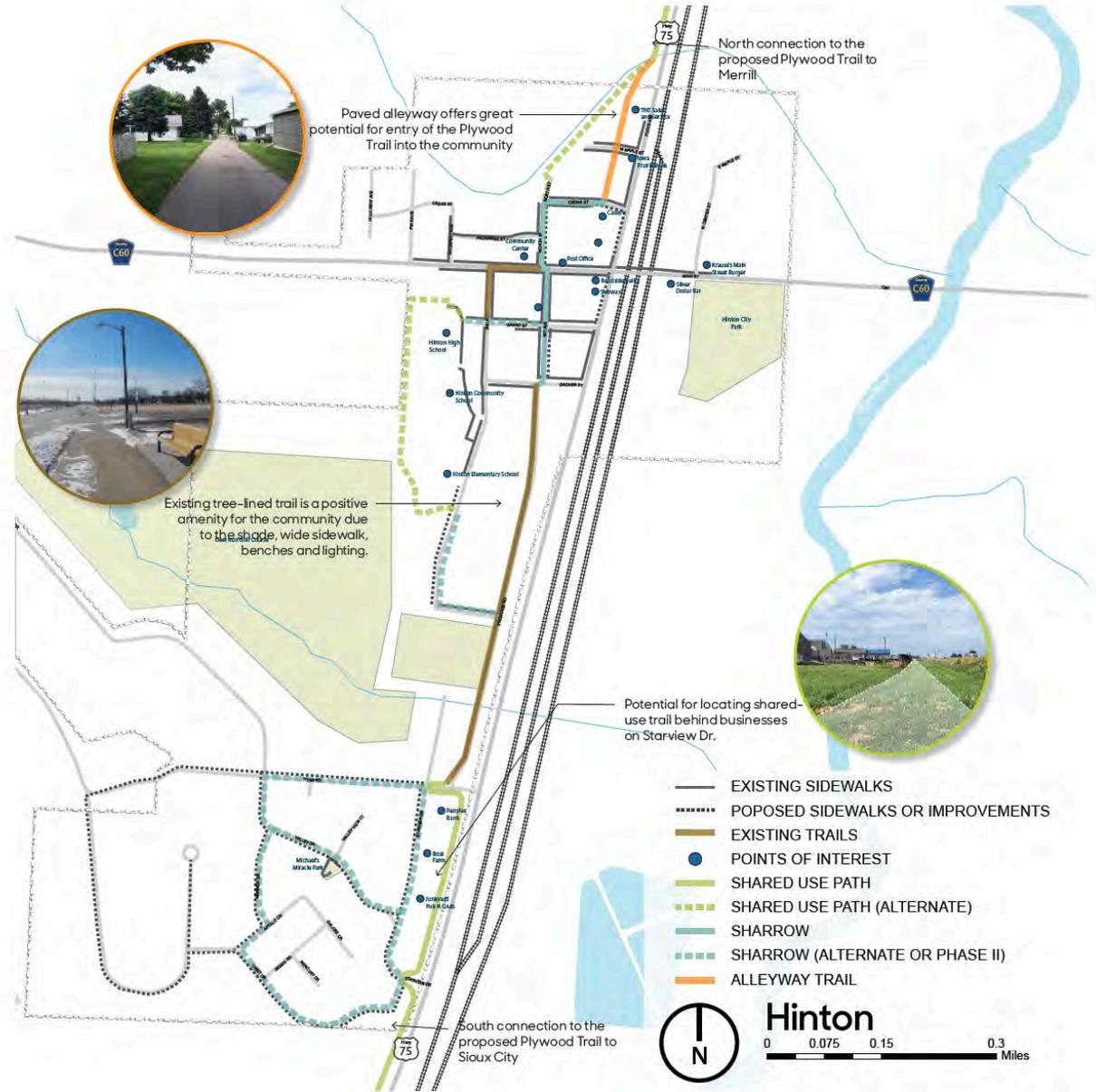
2

The Hinton steering committee decided that establishing a strong community identity through signage is a priority. The proposed sign design would be a large limestone slab situated on a mounded landscape representative of the Loess Hills landscape that is part of the community's identity.



3

Focus-group participants said that they would like more accessible places to walk. Multiple trail typologies are proposed for increasing accessibility throughout Hinton. Each length of trail route attempts to make the best use of existing infrastructure and limit the need for new, while connecting people to important amenities in the community.



Royal

Royal (population 446) is situated along County Road B40 and M36 and is surrounded by productive farmland. The active downtown has a grocery store, bank, post office, café, and other useful amenities. Although the farm cooperative is a boon to the local economy, it brings heavy truck traffic, as well as other farm vehicles into town. In addition, the co-op cuts off one of the town's most popular destinations—Memorial Park—from the rest of the community.

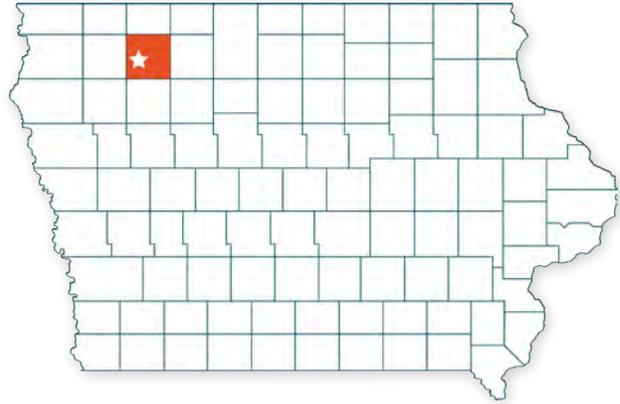
Community Assessments

The community assessment process demonstrated that residents are proud of the town's amenities. However, these important destinations are lacking connectivity. Participants in all focus-group demographics noted the disconnect between Memorial Park and the rest of town, and that there is only one access road to the Royalty Addition. Residents aspire to create connections not just within the town, but also to larger neighboring towns such as Spencer.

Planning and Design Summary

Resident input played an important role in the goal-setting process, through which the Royal visioning committee identified the following projects:

- Improve pedestrian connectivity and accessibility to local destinations.
- Design a trail through Triangle Park and Memorial Park and develop additional recreational amenities in Memorial Park.
- Create a secondary access point into the Royalty Addition to increase accessibility and safety for motorists and pedestrians.
- Designate formal truck routes to reduce conflict areas between pedestrians and motorists.
- Develop a family of signage to strengthen community brand and assist visitors with way-finding.



Trees Forever Facilitator: *Jeff Jensen*

Landscape Architects: *Josh Shields and Nate Schlorholtz, Bolton & Menk*

Intern: *Fan Lan*



Preliminary design review

Steering Committee:

Cara Elbert

Barb Fletcher

Anne Hagedorn

Fluff Ihry

Jeff Jensen

Kent Means

Sherman Nielsen

Alice Roghair

Dan Swanson

Ilesha Toft

Josh Toft

Jeff Van Westen

1

"There's a lot of sidewalk where it's so uneven or crumbling that I'd rather go out in the street.."

2

"The traffic—getting the kids safely—I think there should be [a designated route] from the addition to the park, from the school to the park, and from Main Street to the park."

3

"[The elevator] really kind of cuts us off from a wonderful facility here, so it would be wonderful if we could find a way to make it safe for children to get to [the park]."



3

"Yeah, so if we want to walk to the park, we have to walk on the highway."

1

"You walk on the streets in Royal because some of the sidewalks are not in good shape."

1

Focus-group participants identified missing and broken sidewalks as barriers to walking and biking in the community. The design team developed a concept plan that incorporates replacing existing sidewalks with new, accessible sidewalks, and adding sidewalks in areas such as the Royal Addition.



2

Parents expressed concern about the lack of designated routes to the park, downtown, and the school. The proposed sidewalks/trails plan addresses this issue with a combination of trails and sidewalks that connect important local destinations.





3

Both adults and children noted that Memorial Park can only be accessed via County Road M36, which carries a lot of truck traffic to and from the elevator. The design team proposed developing a trail that connects Memorial Park to Main Street via Triangle Park.



Sumner

Sumner (population 2,100) is located along Highway 93 within the Cedar Falls/Waterloo Metropolitan area. Residents pride themselves on their safe, family-friendly environment, including a library, school, parks, pool, grocery store, and newly constructed hospital.

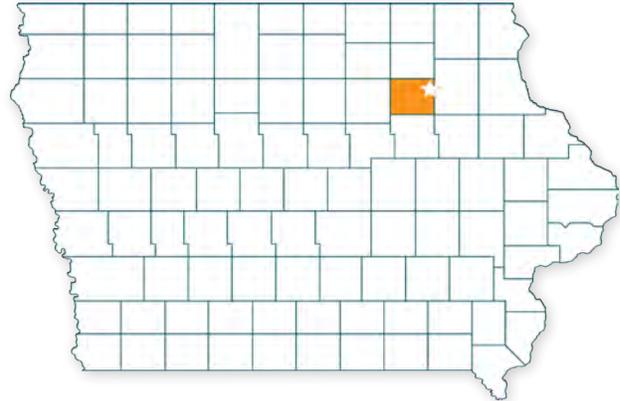
Community Assessments

During the community assessment process, townspeople showed their appreciation of City Park, especially its trail system. They hope for better connectivity between the park and other amenities within town, focusing specifically on the upkeep of bridges. Frequent flooding in low lying areas often disconnects the community. Despite this problem, areas of the town, especially the aquatic center, are already easily accessible for all users.

Planning and Design Summary

The concept plan for Sumner is based on priorities identified by residents, as well as guidance from the visioning steering committee, and includes the following proposals:

- Highway 93/1st Street Improvements – Add bump-outs at major intersections to calm traffic and shorten pedestrian crossing distance, and add amenities such as street trees, plants, and benches.
- Trails – Develop a trail loop around town, create trail connections between parks, establish trailheads, and connect to trails outside the community.
- River – Promote the river as a water trail and important community feature and revise park programming to accommodate recurrent flooding.
- Natural Areas – Connect new City Park to existing destinations, address floodplain issues on city's south side, and promote parks and natural areas.
- Identity – Establish trailhead/way-finding signage, create safe school routes for bicycles and pedestrians, improve streets and signage, extend N Walnut Street to 13th Street and location for new ballparks.



Trees Forever Facilitator: *Patty Reisinger*

Landscape Architects: *Steve Ford, Steve Ford Landscape Architecture, and Michael LeClere, Martin Gardner Architecture*

Interns: *Peiming Chen*



Review of assessments

Steering Committee:

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Mary Burgart

Jim Cross

Ron Lenth

Sophia Marvets

Bob Meyers

Trey Myers

Jackie Schlatter

Susan Scott

Brandon Tieskoetter

Lindsay Tieskoetter

Chris Wehling

Bev Weidemann

Joan Wood

1

"...[if] there were some kind of bike path or improved sidewalks on Main Street, that would be helpful for people in the senior apartments on Union Street."

2

"You can't walk across Main Street without cars dodging you, and they will not put up a flashing light because it's a highway... and they won't make it a four-way stop."



2

"We don't usually ride on Main Street; we just cross over it real quick and ride the back streets..."

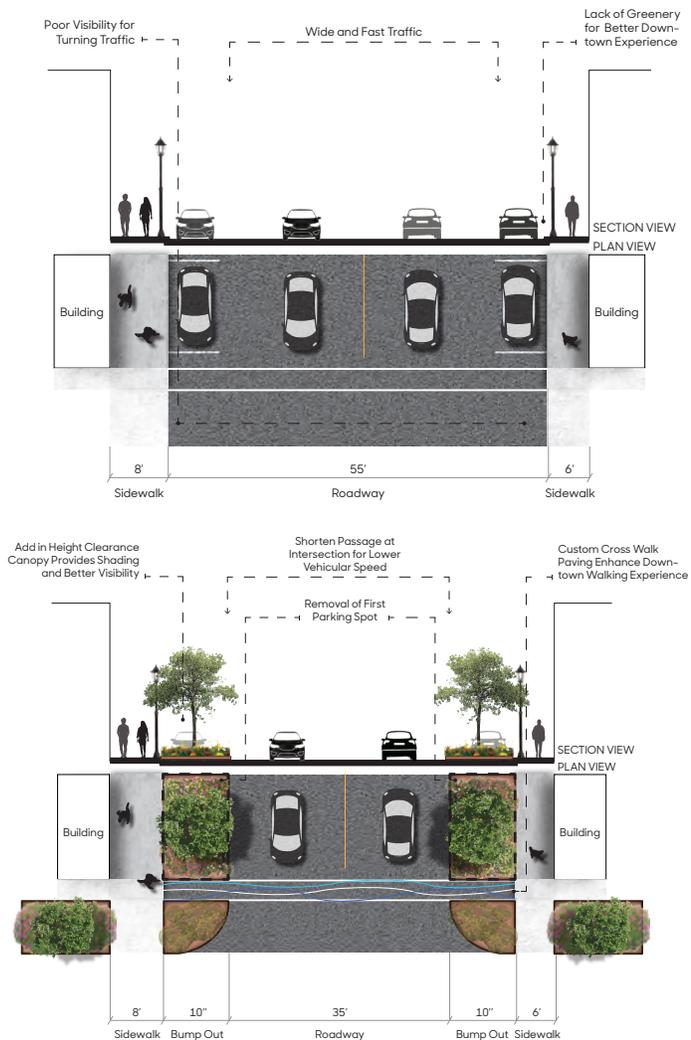
3

"I think we've got a really good start on some of the trails that are going through and around our park area. I'd certainly like to see more and throughout the rest of town, maybe connecting the high school, connecting to the pool, future development, even the businesses."

1 To address residents' desire for a better pedestrian environment, the design team proposed adding vegetated bump-outs with curb ramps to reduce crossing distance, colored crosswalks, and amenities such as street trees and lighting.



2 Crossing Main Street (1st Street/Highway 93) was identified as problematic for both youth and adults. The top section and plan view illustrates the existing situation on Main Street, which consists of a wide expanse of concrete with no vegetation. The section and plan view below shows the proposed traffic-calming elements incorporated into the streetscape, including bump-outs at intersections to narrow the roadway and vegetation, which both slows traffic and improves the pedestrian experience downtown.



3

Adults in all focus-group demographics said that they want more trails in Sumner. The design team proposed a number of trail connections, including a trail to the aquatic center and a trail at South Maple Street.



Treynor

Treynor (population 950) is located along Highway 92 within commuting distance of Omaha and Council Bluffs. Many residents work in the cities, but love raising their families in Treynor's small-town atmosphere. Traffic flow through town is problematic because Highway 92 is the only east-west road through town and Eyeberg Street is the only through north-south road.

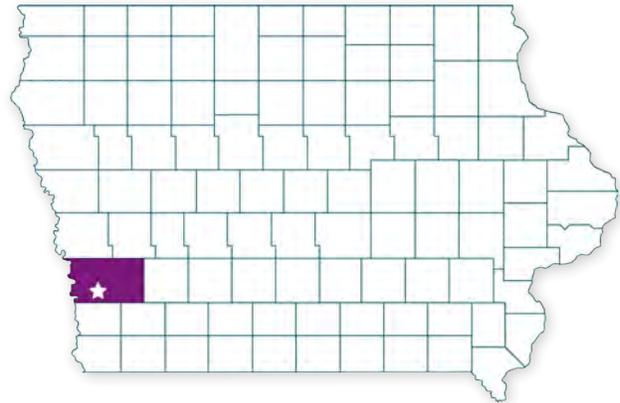
Community Assessments

Focus-group participants revealed that residents take pride in East Park with its updated lighting and shaded play place. Although an important throughway in town, Highway 92 is perceived as a barrier because of heavy traffic. Congestion at school dropoff and pickup times exacerbates the problem. The lack of continuous sidewalks, heavy traffic on Highway 92, and few crosswalks create difficulty walking and biking throughout town. Residents desire a safe and accessible trail and sidewalk system.

Planning and Design Summary

Based on the assessments and the Treynor visioning committee's identified goals, the design team proposed the following projects:

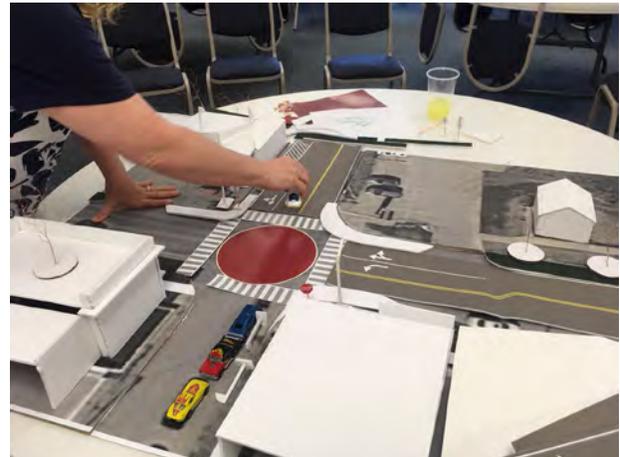
- Highway 92 Reconfiguration – Implement bump-outs and extend the curb along the wide shoulders currently utilized for on-street parking to reduce the perception of the roadway from a wide open four-lane highway to a slower two-lane community scale street.
- "The Four Corners" – Incorporate pedestrian-scale streetlights, banners, and landscape updates to establish an identity for the downtown district.
- Green Infrastructure – Incorporate bioswales, rain gardens, and permeable pavement into the streetscape. Where current stormwater inlets exist, add bump-outs formed to direct stormwater from the roadway to the existing drain.
- Sidewalk Updates – Replace and install sidewalks in three phases, starting with locations identified by residents; and add crosswalks along Highway 92.



Trees Forever Facilitator: *Brad Riphagen*

Landscape Architects: *Carl Rogers and Chad Hunter, Community Design Lab, Iowa State University*

Collaborators: *Brian Leaders and Payton Schafers, National Park Service RTCA*



Design workshop

Steering Committee:

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Lance Brisbois</i> | <i>Kolene Moore</i> |
| <i>Gary Funkhouser</i> | <i>Mark Moore</i> |
| <i>Kelly Groskurth</i> | <i>Alisha Rath</i> |
| <i>Mick Gutttau</i> | <i>Austin Rath</i> |
| <i>Jacob Hrasky</i> | <i>Diane Rath</i> |
| <i>Jacob Keay</i> | <i>Jacob Reelfs</i> |
| <i>John Klein</i> | <i>Doug Wehring</i> |
| <i>Kenneth Koehler</i> | <i>Lisa White</i> |
| <i>Shirley Koehler</i> | <i>Emily Whitehouse</i> |
| <i>Tom Lewis</i> | |

1

"There [are] a lot of sidewalks in town that need to be improved."



2

"I would change the Autobahn [Highway 92] that runs through the middle of town."



1

"The sidewalks are terrible...I was out walking...I wasn't paying attention. I was looking around. I nearly fell."

3

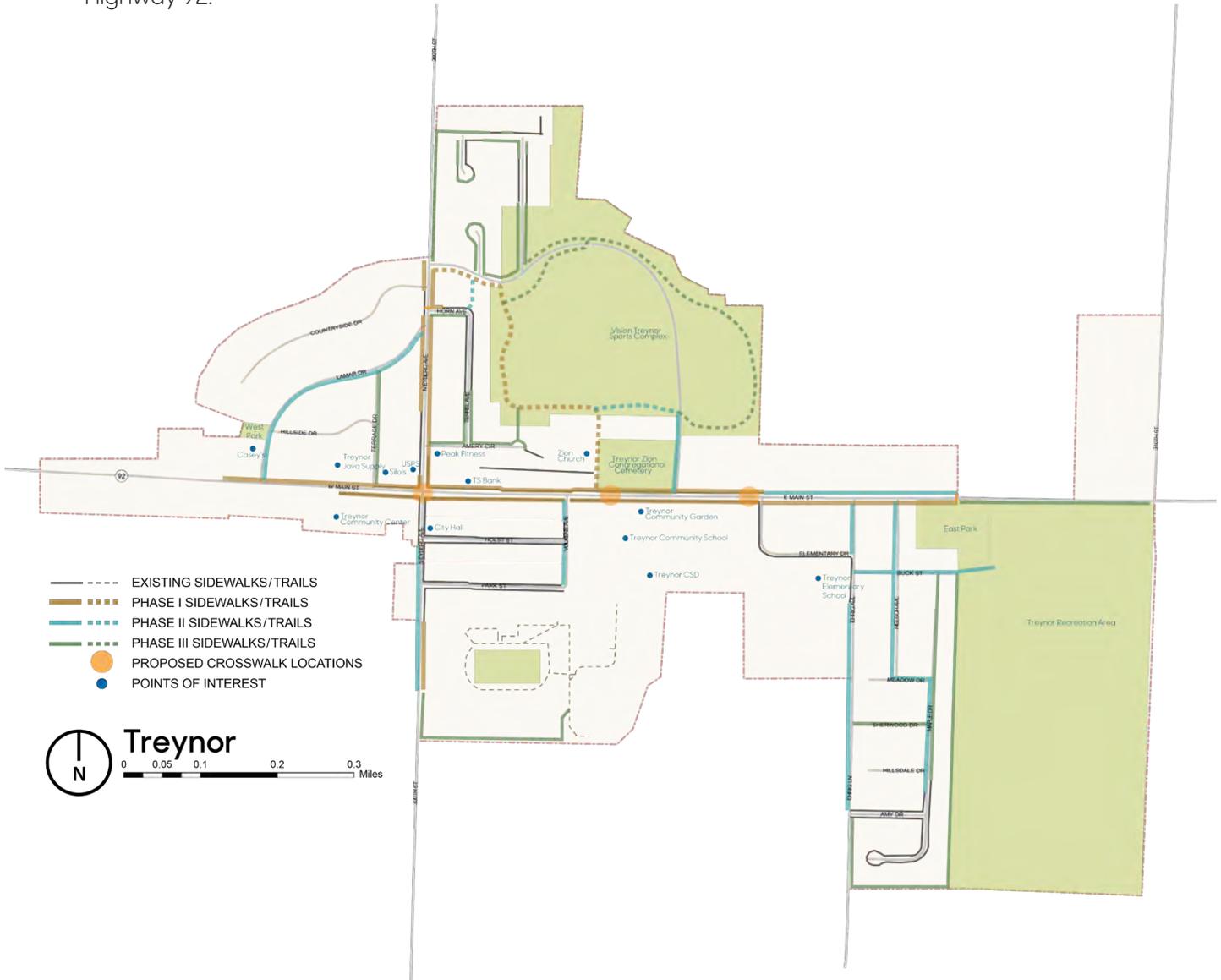
"In the school drive, [pooling water] can get pretty bad if it's raining."

3

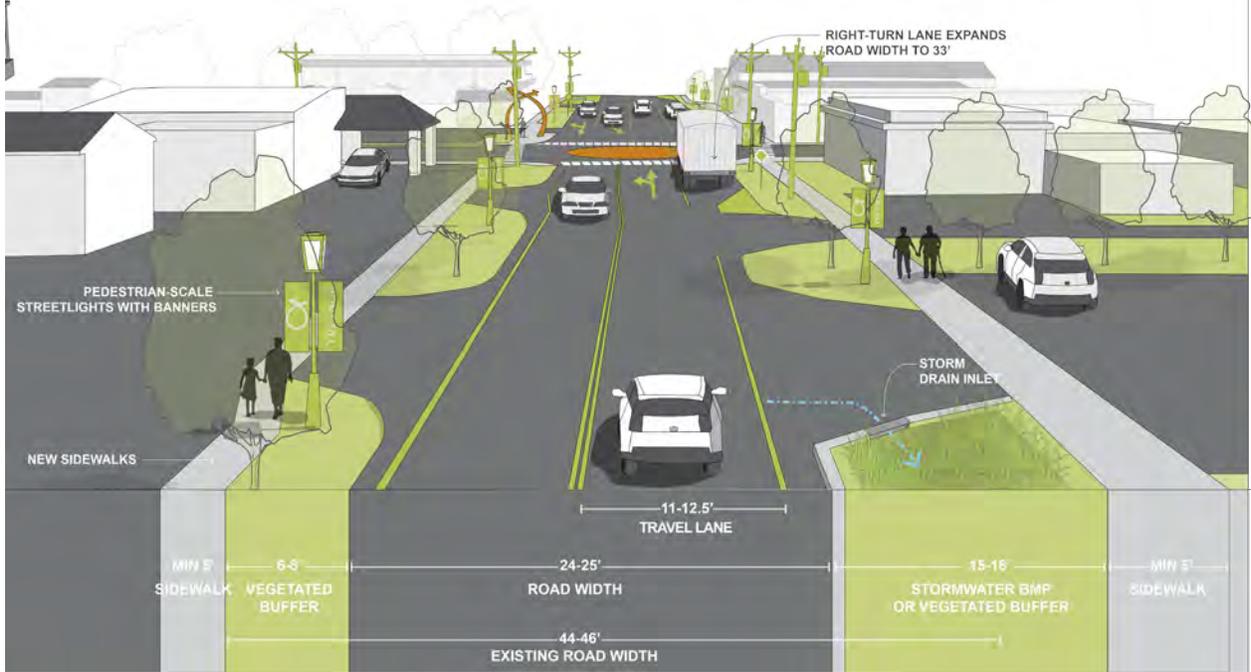
"I would say drifting snow seems to be in this area. Highway 92 drifts over and then the whole north side is—I mean, it was seven or eight feet tall this winter."

1

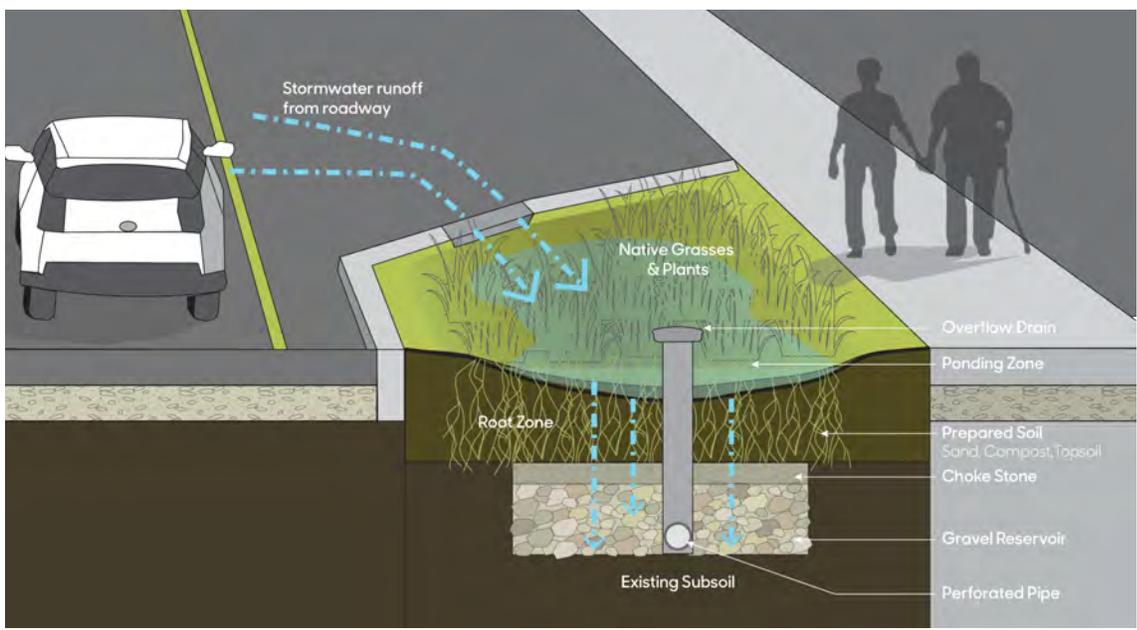
Focus-group participants from all demographic types identified missing sidewalks and sidewalks in poor condition as barriers. Crossing Highway 92 is also a problem. The design team proposed a phased sidewalk improvement plan, with phasing based on locations/routes identified by residents at the design workshop. The plan also includes the addition of crosswalks at three locations along Highway 92.



2 Highway 92 is considered a barrier because of fast-moving, heavy traffic. This concept proposes creating three-lane road configurations at the primary intersection, allowing for right-turn lanes that will help to ease traffic at this location. Coming into town from the west, bump-outs would be implemented along both shoulders. This will allow for managing stormwater issues within this area, and providing sidewalk access on the north side of Highway 2 where there currently is none.

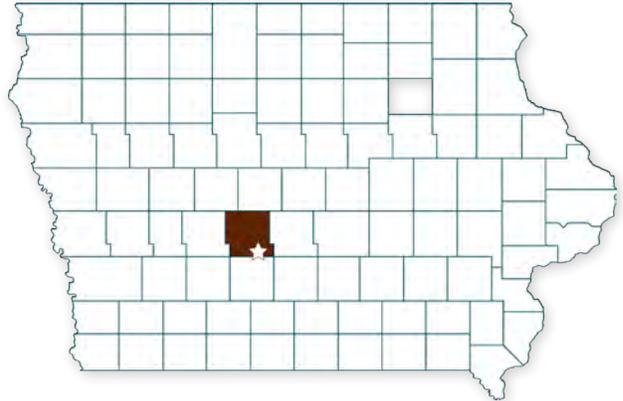


3 Much of Treynor exists on a plateau within the Loess Hills. For the most part, stormwater sheds easily downhill and into storm drains. However there are small-scale topography changes within the infrastructure that can lead to poor drainage and ponding. Four main locations along Highway 92 were noted for ponding after rain events. The design team proposed green infrastructure such as the bioretention cell shown below.



Van Meter

Van Meter (population 1,133) is located 10 miles west of West Des Moines. As Des Moines and its suburbs continue to sprawl, Van Meter offers a small-town setting within close proximity of all the amenities and events the city of Des Moines has to offer. Because the railroad and a county highway run through town, connectivity is an issue, especially for pedestrians.



Community Assessments

Survey respondents and focus-group participants would like improved accessibility in town through a better sidewalk system and trails. The lack of pedestrian and cyclist access from the Crestview development to the rest of town was specifically mentioned. Residents expressed their desire for more opportunities for physical activity, such as participating in river recreation. However, accessing the Raccoon River is difficult despite its close proximity to town.

Planning and Design Summary

Based on the assessments and the Van Meter visioning committee's identified goals, the design team proposed concepts focused on several key themes:

- Accessibility and Connectivity – Make the recreational complex accessible by trail and provide a pedestrian route from Crestview to the school campus.
- Main Street – Repair and widen sidewalks, add site furnishings and plantings, and improve lighting.
- Beautification – Enhance the north entry corridor and downtown with plantings, and add entry signage at west and east entrances.
- Community Amenities – Use the open space at the southwest corner of Grant and West Streets for community events.
- Intersections – Improve pedestrian crossing at the railroad and R16 intersection, alleviate congestion at the school entrance/exit with R-16, add crosswalks at the F-90 and R-16 intersection, coordinate with County DOT to include pedestrian crossings with future intersection improvements.

Trees Forever Facilitator: Aaron Brewer
Landscape Architects: Josh Shields and Nate Schlorholtz, Bolton & Menk
Intern: Fan Lan



Preliminary design review

Steering Committee:

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Allan Adams | Patrick Junker |
| Joel Akers | Lani Lonning |
| Toni Baldwin | Lyn Lyon |
| Austin Cox | Kyle Michel |
| Deron Durlinger | AJ Skogerson |
| Brenda Golwitzer | Erin Weitl |
| Joe Herman | Nate Weitl |
| Dee House | Cindy Winchell |
| Anne Iles | Jarin Young |

1

"I would love to see Crestview be a part of the rest of [Van Meter]. Let us join the rest of the town and [be] able to bike there."

2

"Every time I want to do a [long] bike or a run, I have to load up and go somewhere."



3

"If you're not mobility impaired, you're fine and you can navigate it, but if you have anything that is impaired [Van Meter] is not accessible."

3

"Around the downtown there [are] a lot of sidewalks that suddenly go up, they're uneven. Hazardous conditions [for biking]."

4

"[I would] like artworks and things like that to enhance the community...creating unity throughout the community."

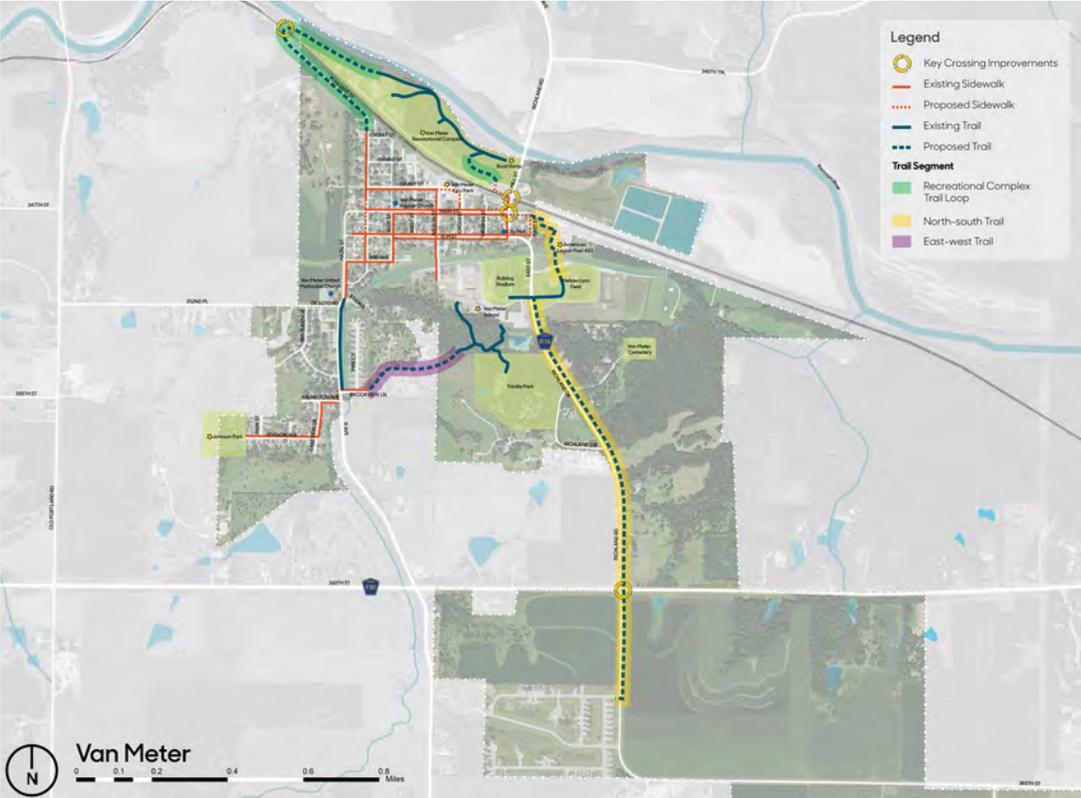
1

Focus-group participants mentioned that the Crestview residents are isolated from the rest of the community because there is no sidewalk or trail to the development. To improve connectivity, the design team proposed realigning the intersection of County Roads R16 and F90, adding a 10-foot-wide trail with a crosswalk over F90, and installing additional lighting and street trees along the corridor.



2

Having a trail system is important to both survey respondents and focus-group participants. The proposed trail system consists of existing sidewalks and trails, as well as new trails at the recreation complex, to the Crestview development, and connecting Brookview Lane to Trindle Park.



3

Through the focus groups and survey, residents expressed the importance of smooth, accessible sidewalks to pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed entrance corridor plan incorporates new sidewalks to improve accessibility. With pedestrian-scale lighting, banners, and street trees, the plan also cues drivers that they are entering Van Meter.



4

Community assessments and surveys confirmed a desire to enhance the downtown streetscape, add supportive features for pedestrians, and improve walkability. Updating the streetscape to include bump-outs allows the space for amenities such as street trees, planting beds, pavers, benches, and lighting while maintaining the majority of the existing parallel parking spaces. The concept plan also considers eventual growth and redevelopment of key downtown areas. These downtown enhancements will help create a more functional and enjoyable experience for both pedestrians and motorists.



Walcott

Walcott (population 1,629) is known nationwide as home to I-80 Truck Stop, the world's largest truck stop. However, it is so much more than a truck stop. The small-town quality of life is emphasized by the great community, quality parks and trails, and an elementary school. The Heritage Recreational Trail links neighborhoods to the town and provides a safe pedestrian path with a nature park, native plantings, and a fishing pond.

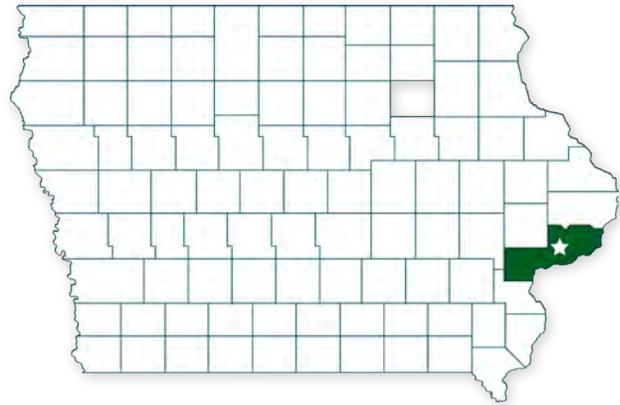
Community Assessments

Focus-group participants said that Prairie View Park is a great place for walking, running, and biking, but could use improved lighting and restrooms. Flooding often renders the soccer fields unplayable and certain sidewalks need repair or are nonexistent. People love the Heritage Recreational Trail, but would like it expanded throughout town with public restrooms, better lighting, and bike racks.

Planning and Design Summary

Using the results of the community assessments, the design team has generated projects that serve to improve the following concepts:

- Accessibility and Connectivity – Complete ADA-compliant sidewalk system, way-finding signage at end of I-80 Exit 284 ramps.
- Site Amenities and Lighting – Decorative lighting along corridors; and site amenities along trails, in downtown, and along heavily traveled pedestrian routes.
- Traffic Calming and Circulation – Raised intersection and raised crosswalks, enhanced school circulation plan, and visible and well-marked crosswalks.
- Way-finding – Uniform way-finding elements throughout the city, along the trail, and along Hwy. 6, 60th Avenue, and primary corridors.
- Trails and Parks – Looped trail system, and additional passive and active recreational opportunities, restrooms, ADA-accessible picnic tables, and park signage at Victory and Water Tower Parks.



Trees Forever Facilitator: *Emily Swihart*

Landscape Architect: *Meg Flenker, Flenker Land Architecture Consultants*

Interns: *Haoyue (Karma) Yang and Jue Jue (JJ) Wai Hin Thaw*



Transportation assets and barriers workshop

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Brent Arp

Bernie Brus

Austin Burt

Chad Burt

Karla Burt

Josie Dietz

Lisa Hagen

Reed Hagen

Jason Holdorf

Larry Koberg

Joe Quick

Kelly Quick

Brent Puck

Paul Stagg

1

"The school needs to look at a new dropoff/pickup."

2

"I think it's scary to walk on James, because our house is right there [on James Street] and people fly. People go so fast."

3

"I would like to see a bike path that is more around the town so you don't have to go through every single street."



4

"Along Main Street, I've noticed, because the traffic coming in from the highway, that it's [difficult to bike]."

3

"I would love to see an extension of the rec trail, ease of access to the other end of town, that kind of thing, instead of just being a loop."

1

Residents, especially parents, are concerned about traffic congestion at the school during pickup and dropoff times, as well as the narrow sidewalks and poor lighting. The proposed school circulation plan improves pedestrian and vehicle circulation by better delineating the bus lanes from the waiting area with a vegetated landscape bed, and adding crosswalks and shelters for students.



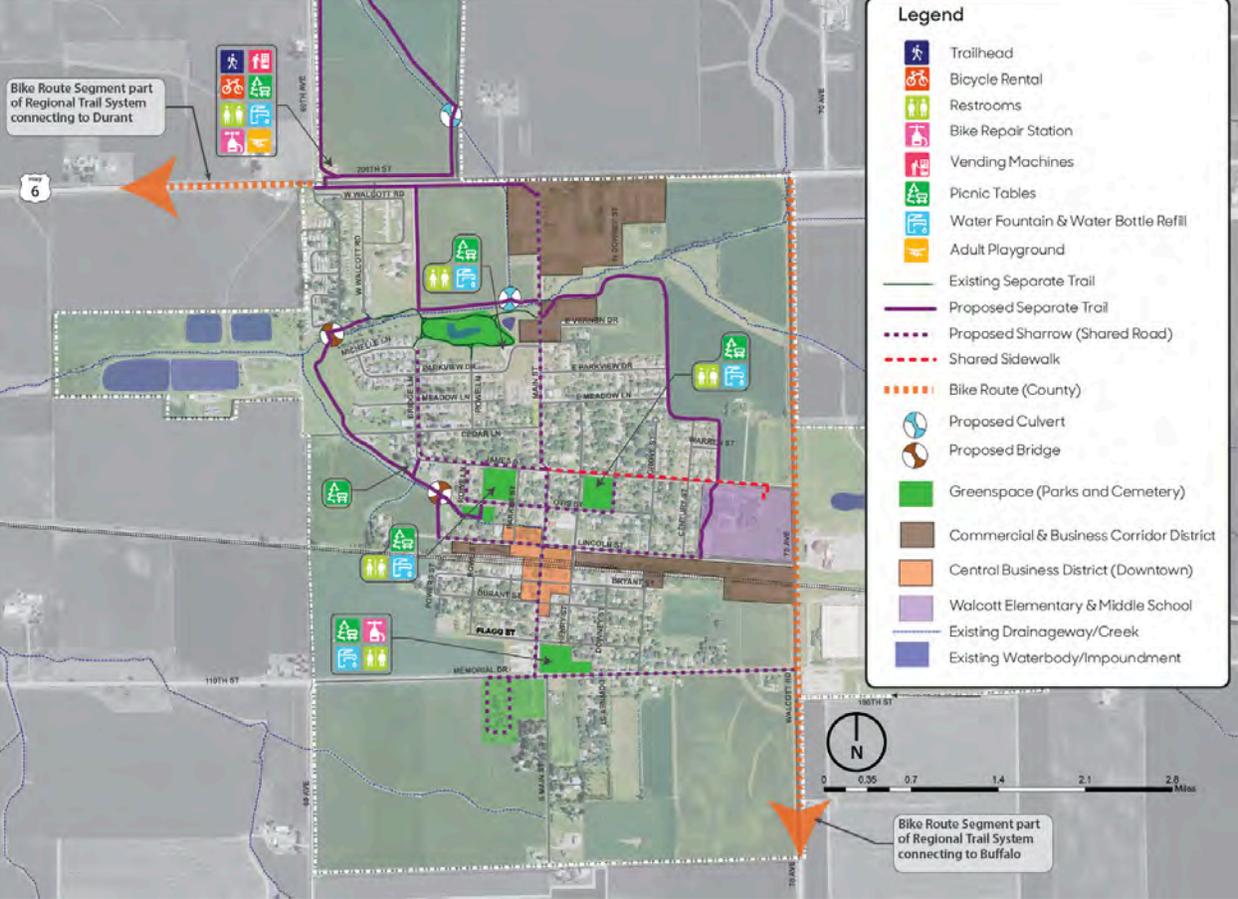
2

Speeding traffic in certain areas of town, specifically along James Street, was identified as problematic during the focus groups. The traffic calming elements incorporated into the design team's plan are a raised intersection with colored crosswalks, pedestrian-scale lighting with baskets and banners, vehicular lighting, way-finding signage, bollard lighting, and sharrowes.



3

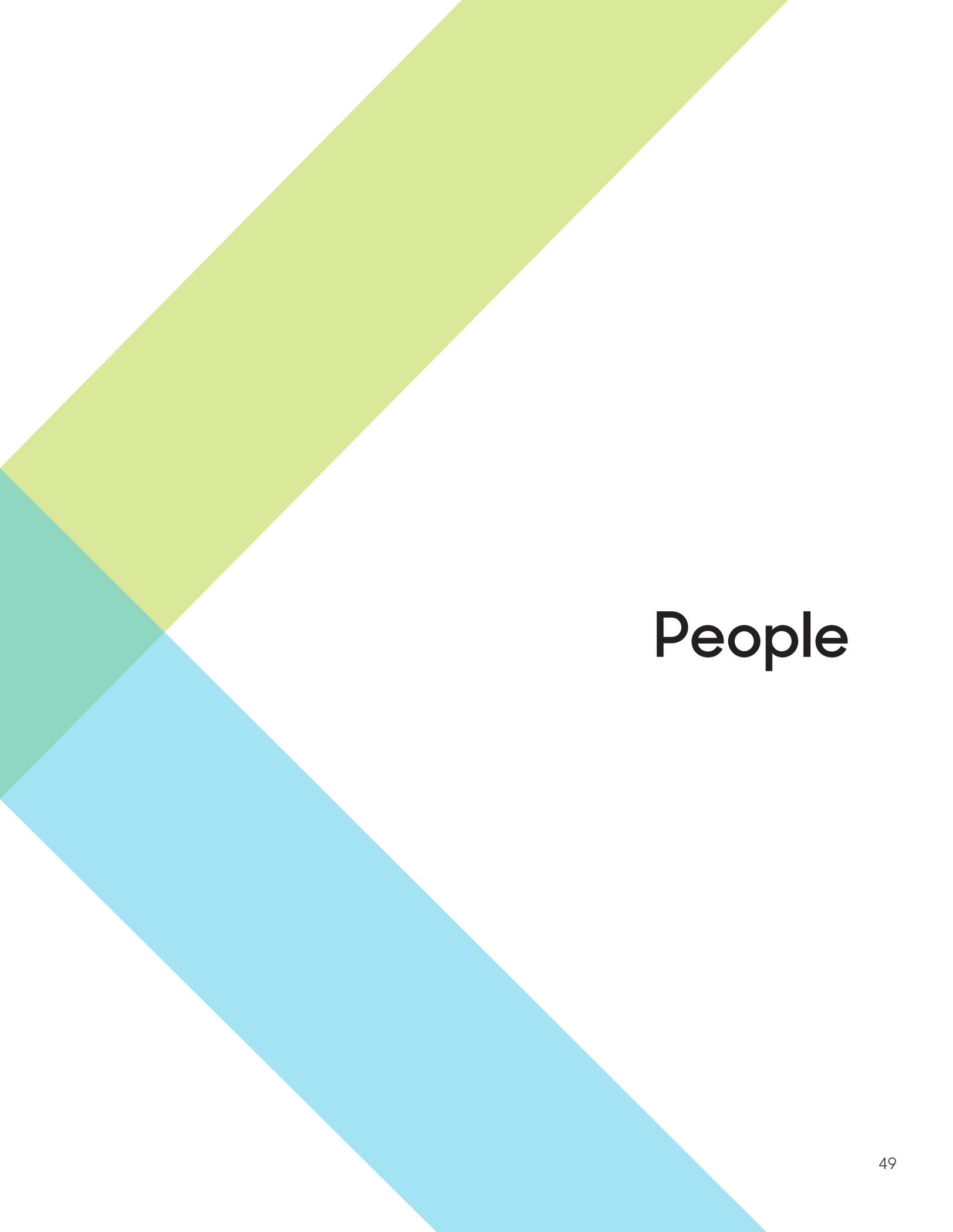
Walcott residents appreciate the existing trail; however, they would like a longer trail that loops around town. The proposed trail master plan connects to the school, parks, the existing trail, downtown, and the commercial and business corridor districts, as well to future regional trail systems.



4

The focus groups revealed that pedestrians and cyclists don't always feel comfortable on Main Street. The design team proposed updates to Main Street and downtown, including bump-outs to shorten crossing distances, vegetation, pedestrian-scale lighting with banners, and sharrows.





People

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- Iowa Department of Transportation
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- Living Roadway Trust Fund
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