

UPTOWN ANKENY: WALKABILITY ASSESSMENT REPORT



POWERED BY Wellmark

FOREWORD

Thank you to all the participants who took part in the walking audit workshop. Healthy HometownSM Powered by Wellmark was invited by the City of Ankeny to assist in identifying opportunities for enhancing walkability and bikeability.

Healthy Hometown is a way to make your community an even better place to live, work and play by using proven tools and techniques that help make the healthy choice the easy choice. Healthy Hometown provides evidence-based built environment and behavioral economics principles that result in desired action along with policy modifications to help communities make sustainable changes that will improve the overall well-being of residents. Implementing ways to make it safer for pedestrians and bicyclists is one primary way to achieve sustainable change.

The walking audit that was performed in Uptown Ankeny was designed to help community members identify and visualize ways to provide a better environment to walk and bike. The walking audit is also designed to stimulate conversation within the community regarding actions that can be taken.

What follows is an identification of community members who participated in the walking audit, recommendations based on the walking audit and a summary of the conversation. Some recommendations are low cost and could be easy to implement, while others may be large expenses that could take years of planning and work. We hope these recommendations will provide a framework for your community to make Uptown Ankeny more pedestrian- and bike-friendly.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Date of walking audit:
Nov. 7, 2017

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Your hometown is the place you live, learn, work and play.
Make it a healthier place to live.

SUMMARY

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ESTABLISHING A SENSE OF PLACE

- Construct a landscaped gateway feature on the High Trestle Trail as it crosses Southwest Cherry Street
- Construct landscaped street gateways at the entrance points to Uptown
- Work with local businesses to install parklets in Uptown



GETTING AROUND

- Invest in Central Iowa Trails branded wayfinding signage for the High Trestle Trail
- Install a business directory kiosk with a map of Uptown where the High Trestle Trail crosses Southwest 3rd Street
- Paint continental style crosswalks with high-visibility markings at all intersections within Uptown
- Establish a routine maintenance plan for re-striping crosswalks
- Install additional bike racks and benches throughout Uptown
- Inventory and repair damaged sidewalk sections in Uptown
- Establish an annual sidewalk inspection and repair program
- Update ADA curb ramps at intersections

ESTABLISHING A SENSE OF PLACE

With the new extension of the High Trestle Trail, Uptown is in a unique position to implement some placemaking and complete street concepts. This report will identify some of those concepts that could be implemented in Uptown.

Trail Gateways

The entrance to your community creates a first impression that helps define it. These gateways are a good way to communicate that your community embraces an active lifestyle when they are appealing for not only vehicles but also walkers and bicyclists. Sprucing up some of the main entrance points to Uptown would provide a sense of arrival that seems to be a missing element today.

- Construct a landscaped gateway feature on the High Trestle Trail as it crosses Southwest Cherry Street



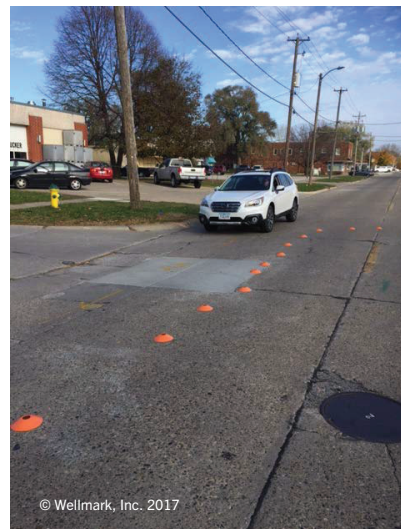
Before and potential after rendering of an eastern gateway to Uptown along the High Trestle Trail as it crosses Southwest Cherry Street.

ESTABLISHING A SENSE OF PLACE

Street Gateways

In addition to the High Trestle Trail, Uptown has several entrance points on streets that could benefit from some form of enhancement. These well-defined points of arrival will form the entrances and boundaries of the Uptown district.

To demonstrate how one of these gateway elements would function on a neighborhood street, participants used traffic cones to build a median on Southwest 3rd Street, just west of the intersection with Scott Street.



Vehicles, including a DART bus, noticeably slowed down as they approached and drove beside the temporary median. This exercise demonstrated the potential traffic calming effects a gateway median could provide for Uptown.

ESTABLISHING A SENSE OF PLACE

Street Gateways

With a width of 30 feet from curb to curb for two lanes of traffic and no parking allowed on either side of the street, there was adequate room in the middle of the street for a ten foot wide median.

These types of gateway features are an important aspect of establishing Uptown's identity, as they communicate to visitors that they are arriving somewhere different, special and unique within the City of Ankeny.

- Construct landscaped street gateways at the entrance points to Uptown



Before and potential after rendering of a western gateway to Uptown at the intersection of Southwest 3rd Street and Scott Street.

ESTABLISHING A SENSE OF PLACE

Parklets

One way to draw attention to businesses would be through the use of parklets. Parklets may serve as social gathering spaces for community members by providing a relaxing space to sit and talk. They also provide opportunities to capitalize on increased revenues with the addition of outdoor dining space for local restaurants.²

Sometimes business owners and residents can react negatively to the loss of a parking space or two, but it's important to remember that cars don't spend money — people do.

- Work with local businesses to install parklets in Uptown

² <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/interim-design-strategies/parklets/#footnotes>



This parklet was installed by a local restaurant in Windsor Heights, Iowa.

Participants suggested several local businesses in Uptown that may be interested in a parklet.



GETTING AROUND

Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding on local and regional trails can be an important way to help people navigate around your city. Visitors find wayfinding signage and mapping kiosks particularly useful as they are looking for places to explore in an area that is not familiar to them. Wayfinding signage can be used to spark business by directing people to community destinations like shops, restaurants, grocery stores, libraries and other local landmarks.

- Invest in Central Iowa Trails branded wayfinding signage for the High Trestle Trail
- Install a business directory kiosk with a map of Uptown where the High Trestle Trail crosses Southwest 3rd Street



Examples of branded wayfinding signage along regional trails in central Iowa.

GETTING AROUND

Crosswalks

Some crosswalks are not currently marked or visible, due to faded or missing paint. In places where there are currently no crosswalks in place, striping new crosswalks will help make motorists more aware that people are likely to be crossing the street.

Striping crosswalks that are prominently visible to motorists is an important aspect of making streets safer for pedestrians.

- Paint continental style crosswalks with high-visibility markings at all intersections within Uptown
- Establish a routine maintenance plan for re-striping crosswalks

today



Source: Google Maps

The intersection at Southwest 3rd Street and Southwest Cherry Street could benefit from the addition of striped crosswalks.

example



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Using continental style striping (pictured above) helps improve the visibility of painted crosswalks when compared to the standard style with only two stripes.

GETTING AROUND

Bike Racks & Benches

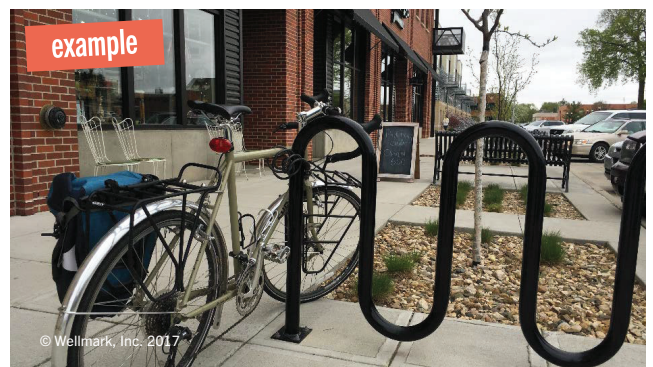
The High Trestle Trail is a great amenity that Uptown businesses should seek to capitalize on. As the city continues to see increased bicycle traffic from the regional trail network, it will be important to not forget about bike parking.

Taking an inventory of available bike parking within Uptown could quickly identify areas where more racks may be needed today. In addition to bike racks, places for people to sit down and rest while walking around Uptown are important. The Uptown Ankeny Association recently purchased a number of new benches and bike racks that have been installed throughout Uptown. These are a great addition to the streetscape and work should continue to bring even more of them to Uptown.

- Install additional bike racks and benches throughout Uptown



Making sure visitors know where they are able to securely park their bike is important for local businesses.



Example of bike parking located next to a landscaped planting bed in downtown Cedar Falls, Iowa.



Existing bike rack located at the intersection of Southwest 3rd Street and Southwest Maple Street.

GETTING AROUND

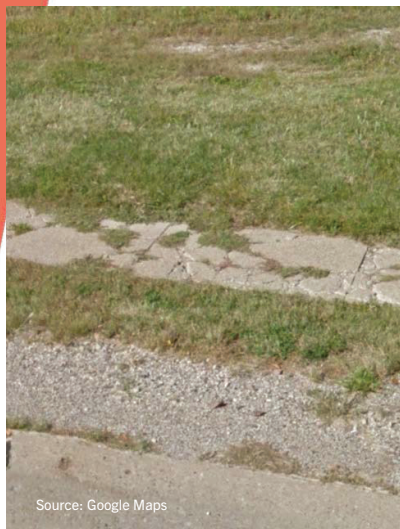
Sidewalk Repair

Once sidewalks have been installed, ensuring that they are adequately maintained is another challenge that must be addressed.

Keeping sidewalks in good repair can be accomplished through the establishment of a sidewalk maintenance program and policies requiring sidewalks with new development or street construction.

In addition to the sidewalks, ensuring that all of the curb ramps located at intersection crosswalks are updated to be ADA compliant should be another area of focus.

- Inventory and repair damaged sidewalk sections in Uptown
- Establish an annual sidewalk inspection and repair program
- Update ADA curb ramps at intersections



Cracked and uneven sidewalks can present dangerous tripping hazards for people walking.



Deteriorating sidewalk sections could be routinely replaced with a sidewalk inspection and repair program.

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

The Uptown Ankeny Association and the City of Ankeny should continue to work together to accomplish several of the recommendations contained within this report.

Some recommendations may already be in progress, such as wayfinding signage for the High Trestle Trail. Other recommendations, like constructing gateway features, may be projects that need to start from scratch and will take significantly more time and effort to bring to fruition.

Start out by implementing some of the recommendations that may be easier to accomplish than others, such as painting crosswalks at intersections in Uptown. Then begin working towards some of the more involved recommendations, like designing a business directory kiosk with a map of Uptown, installing parklets and applying for grant funding to purchase more benches and bike racks.

Healthy Hometown staff would be happy to assist with the prioritization and action planning of any recommendation that the community would like to pursue.



AFTERWORD

At Wellmark, we work to continuously improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. We envision a future in which every generation experiences greater quality of health and improved quality of life. Many experts agree where we live is more impactful on our overall health than our own genetics. Our surroundings and environment prompt us to make decisions impacting our health without even realizing it. We created Healthy Hometown to provide evidence-based (proven) solutions that help communities structure their environment to nudge citizens toward healthy behaviors. When we engage in healthy behaviors, we have the opportunity to live our best life – and hopefully avoid serious illnesses. Making the healthy choice the easy choice is the best answer to keeping Iowans healthy.

eat well

move more

feel better

Important: This report, and the recommendations contained within, are provided by Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield (Wellmark) as suggestions about how walkability, bikeability and social interactions may be enhanced in your community. These are simply suggestions that your community can choose to implement at its own discretion. Wellmark bears no responsibility for any implemented suggestions and provides no guarantee of any particular results.

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