



Transportation Inventory and Analysis

Knowledge of the transportation systems in and around a community is critical for sustainable transportation enhancement planning. Transportation systems include paved and unpaved roadways, pedestrian and bike trails, waterways, railroad lines or railbeds from abandoned railroad lines and airports.

The Mount Vernon visioning design team met with Department of Transportation personnel and local officials to identify existing, past, and future transportation systems in the area and to discuss possible transportation related restraints and opportunities that could potentially affect project areas.

Existing Highway 30

Current traveling conditions of Highway 30 are less than desired, especially during peak traffic timeframes. Speeding traffic or moderate delays can be expected near the intersection of Highway 1 and Highway 30. The Mount Vernon Community School District also has its main connection to Highway 30 at 10th Street S. Long queuing of traffic can be expected along 10th Street at schools dismissals, due speeding traffic and heavy volumes of traffic along Highway 30. To remedy this problem, the community is undertaking a significant roadway improvement project from west of 10th Street to east of Highway 1. The improvement will include the construction of 2 roundabouts, one at each of the respective intersections. In addition to improving intersection safety at 10th Street, the roundabouts will serve as significant traffic calming elements to provide a natural deterrent to reduce speed levels through this short roadway segment. The safety of pedestrians crossing of Highway 30 will be greatly improved with the incorporation of the roundabouts. Raised medians within the entrance nodes into the roundabout will provide pedestrian refuge areas.

Highway 30 By-pass

With a Highway 30 by-pass being considered, the community needs to start planning efforts now. A corridor preservation zone has been identified to trigger notifications to the Iowa DOT if property is sold or a subdivision request is made on property within this zone. This notification process will allow the Iowa DOT to review and comment on any changes of properties within the corridor. This significant roadway project could create a barrier, especially as it relates to pedestrian

traffic connectivity to the south. An arterial street is slated for Mount Vernon's developing west side. A west-side at-grade connection to the by-pass is being explored. This creates limitations for pedestrian connectivity and safety. When the by-pass is constructed the current Highway 30 will be turned over to the community's jurisdiction.

Highway 1

Like Highway 30, Highway 1 creates a barrier within the community. Certain intersections as constructed created unsafe crossing conditions, as a result of faulty or deteriorated pedestrian ramps as well as crossing points with very low visibility due to topography within this hilly community. A possible remedy would be to discourage crossings at the poor visibility areas, while enhancing logically spaced crossings where visibility is not a problem. Streetscape enhancements would be slated for these designated crossings that would draw attention to them (i.e. enhanced crosswalks, landscaping, decorative light poles) so vehicular traffic would be on the look-out for pedestrians in the area.

Lincoln Highway

The community is located adjacent to Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway. The Lincoln Highway was the first hard-surfaced road that stretched almost 3400 miles from coast to coast, New York to San Francisco, over the shortest practical route. A special designation has been given to a segment of roadway just west of Mount Vernon. This segment, known as Seedling Mile was the first concrete paved segment of the roadway paved in Iowa.

Trails

Trail expansion is a high priority for the community. A loop or number of smaller loops of the community is desired. Connectivity to regional trails and Palisades-Kepler State Park is also within future plans. East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG) recently completed a 2011 Trails planning document for Linn County and the surrounding area. A number of regional trails have been identified. Plans for possible long-term connection are important for the community. A Mount Vernon to Palisades-Kepler State Park is not identified within the current 2011 ECICOG plan.



Traveling west on Highway 30. Source: Nicholas Gulick



Seedling Mile west of Mount Vernon. Source: Nicholas Gulick

Mount Vernon

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