

“I would like to see the town expand all of our trails.”

Walkable Community

“There are several different trails in town but they are disconnected and some just don’t lead anywhere” was an observation by one workshop participant. “We need more connectivity.” Other residents expressed a need to replace deteriorating, narrow sidewalks in older neighborhoods.

Mount Vernon residents are avid walkers, despite the shortcomings of their off-road trail system and broken sidewalks. When one listens to them it is easy to see why. It is a small, compact community with an abundance of interconnected, beautiful neighborhoods to explore. One can get to just about anywhere on foot and do so while enjoying well maintained, historic architecture on tree-lined streets with sidewalks. Mount Vernon has many of the urban qualities being replicated in some progressive new developments around the country.

Several residents enjoy the experience of walking the picturesque countryside made famous by Grant Wood. A trail runs alongside the old Lincoln Highway between Mount Vernon and Lisbon. Popular loop routes are located on county roads northwest of town.

“It’s amazing how many people use the trail by the gazebo. It will be so nice when that finally connects to Nature Park.”

“I would love to see further development of community bike trails. We have a lot of trails in town but they do not connect to each other.”

Walkable Community

Mount Vernon, Iowa

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Trees Forever

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A current sewer project is helping to accomplish one objective by clearing a corridor that will allow the nature trail to be extended to Nature Park, completing an off-road trail that runs from Elliott Park to Nature Park. Nature Park features an abandoned limestone quarry lake. Residents enjoy the rugged, natural setting and the trail that extends around the lake.

Sidewalk conditions should steadily improve with the enactment of a recent sidewalk ordinance.

Workshop participants expressed interest in developing rural trails that connect to regional systems or destinations. Previous attempts to do this have failed, such as the proposed route to Lisbon on the old abandoned interurban rail line, which failed in part because residents adjacent to it objected. Many residents would also like an off-road trail to Palisades-Kepler State Park about four miles away. Geographically, the abandoned interurban line going west out of town could be part of that trail alignment.

US Highway 30 creates some safety issues that concern residents. It is hoped that improvements to the highway, such as a roud-a-bout at the Highway 1 intersection, that will help to address these concerns.

“I wish there was a trail to Palisades[-Kepler State] Park.”

“I like the walking scale of the older part of town. I’ve walked for 20 years and always feel like I’m seeing new things. You can always turn a different corner. There are just so many walking choices.”

“And by bike trails, I don’t mean putting up signs that say, ‘share the road’.”

“[It would] be great to have trail access to Abbe Creek School.”

“I would like to see additional trails along Nature Park that don’t take away from its beauty but enhance it.”

“I especially love the path behind the old middle school when phlox are in bloom. It is just so beautiful.”

