

CLEAR LAKE:

2021 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 Clear Lake Healthy Hometown Steering Committee 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 Clear Lake 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 Clear Lake more pedestrian- and bike-friendly.

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IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

- Require **sidewalks** with new construction and redevelopment projects
- Construct **infill sidewalks** to connect gaps in the existing sidewalk network
- **Repair** damaged sections of **sidewalk**
- Establish and enforce an annual **sidewalk** inspection and **repair program**
- Establish a plan to install ADA-compliant **curb ramps** at all intersections
- Paint high-visibility, continental-style **crosswalk markings**
- Install an **enhanced pedestrian crossing** at the intersection of Highway 15 and 5th Street
- Install a **roundabout** at the intersection of Highway 15 and Highway 22



ENHANCING SENSE OF PLACE

- Construct **bumpouts** in downtown Clear Lake
- Construct **bumpouts** at intersections near the Deuel School District campus
- Work with local businesses to install **parklets** in downtown Clear Lake
- Create **pocket parks** using vacant spaces in the downtown area
- Install **bike racks** throughout the community
- Install **bike dismount zone signage** on sidewalks in downtown Clear Lake
- Design and install branded community **wayfinding** signage

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Date of walking audit:
August 24, 2021

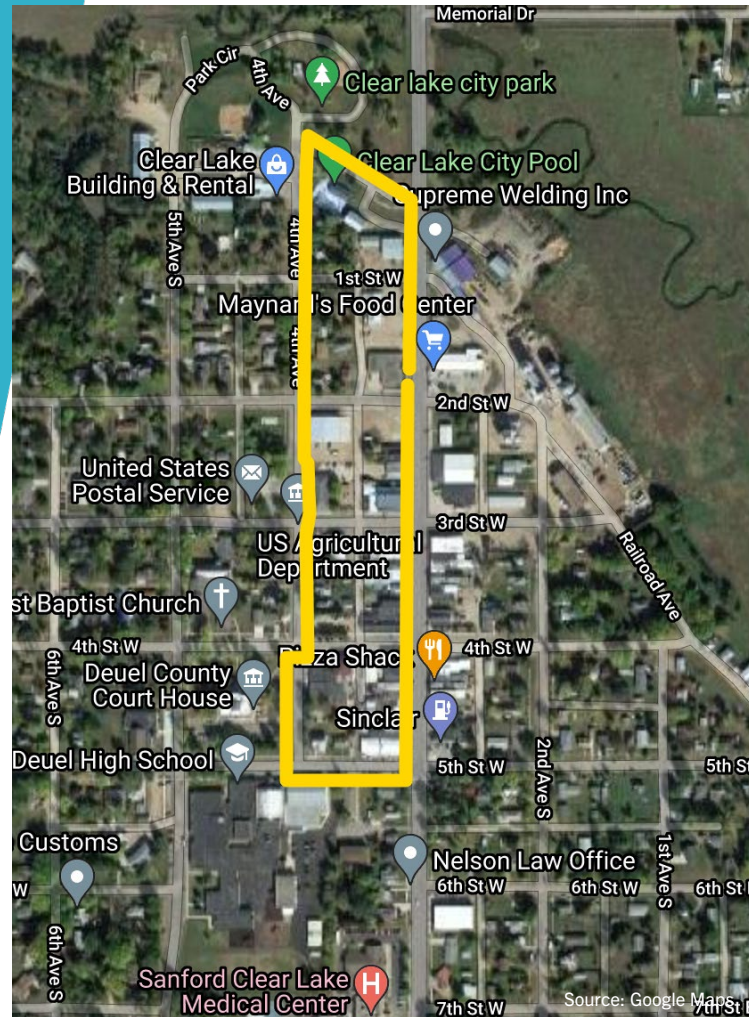
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CHRISTA BITTNER	City of Clear Lake
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TAMMY KREIN	Deuel Area Development
LISA LUNDBERG	City of Clear Lake
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Your hometown is the place you live, learn, work and play.
Make it a healthier place to live.

WALKING AUDIT ROUTE

Participants completed a walking audit along a 1-mile route beginning and ending at the Clear Lake Municipal Building.

This audit began with observations of walking conditions on 3rd Avenue to the city park and pool near 4th Avenue. Participants then continued along 4th Avenue to the Deuel County Courthouse and Deuel School District campus before returning to the Municipal Building via 3rd Avenue.



The map above depicts the route participants observed in Clear Lake.

IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

Connecting people to the places they want to go is an important part of your community's transportation network. It also enhances an individual's ability to incorporate walking and biking in their everyday life. This section of the report will outline some recommendations for improving those connections.

Sidewalks

Installing sidewalks in key areas where there are gaps can help improve the connectivity of your community's pedestrian network and promote physical activity. Future gaps can be prevented by adopting policies that require new development projects to install sidewalks as part of their construction plans.

- Require sidewalks with new construction and redevelopment projects
- Construct infill sidewalks to connect gaps in the existing sidewalk network



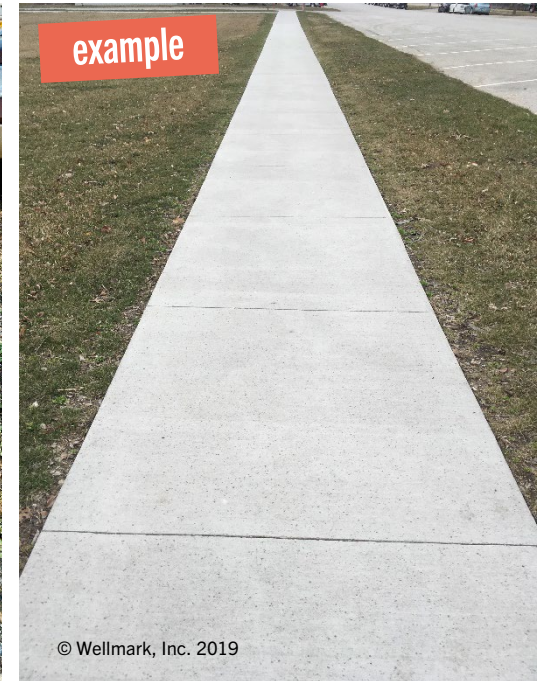
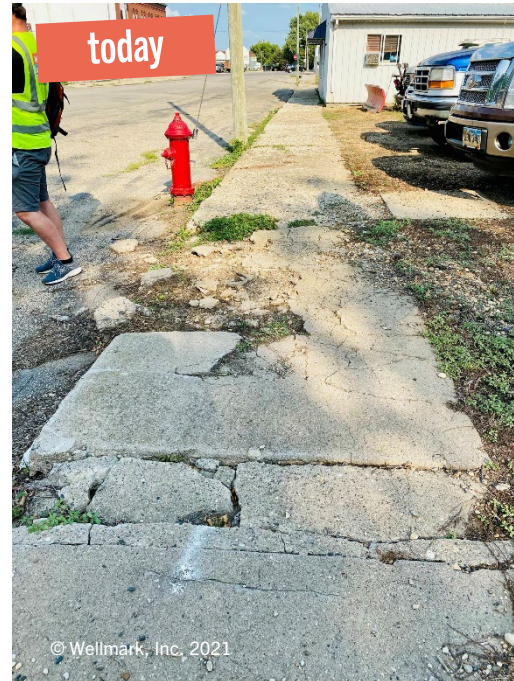
The map above shows an area of newer development on the western side of Clear Lake that was built without sidewalks. Areas like these could be good locations for infill sidewalk. Changing city policy could help ensure that all future developments include sidewalks during initial construction.

IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

Sidewalks (cont.)

As sidewalks age, it's important they are adequately maintained. Establishing a program that offers property owners a small financial incentive to voluntarily replace sections of sidewalk in need of repair is one way to boost repair efforts. In order to keep all sidewalks within the city well maintained, the city may also want to take a more proactive approach to replacement efforts by inspecting all sidewalks and notifying property owners who have sidewalks that are out of compliance.

- Repair damaged sections of sidewalk
- Establish and enforce an annual sidewalk inspection and repair program



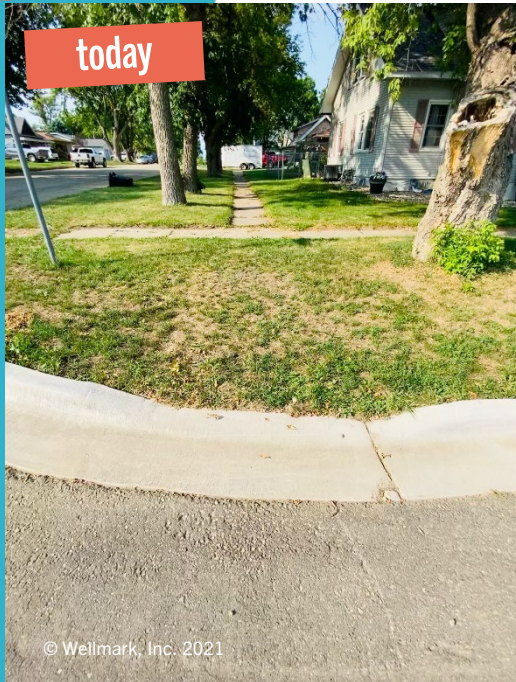
Many sections of sidewalk throughout Clear Lake need to be repaired or replaced.

IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

Curb Ramps

In addition to sidewalks, missing and outdated curb ramps also represent impediments to those navigating your community. These situations can be remedied by updating curb ramps to ensure they are ADA-compliant. At locations that do not have updated curb ramps, sidewalks can be difficult to navigate and pose significant challenges for parents pushing strollers and people using wheelchairs and other mobility devices. Establishing a plan to update a select number of curb ramps every year will remove these barriers over time.

- Establish a plan to install ADA-compliant curb ramps at all intersections



A few intersections in Clear Lake have updated curb ramps, but in many areas, participants noted that curb ramps are missing at intersections. The city has ensured that new curbs are designed to be prepared for future curb ramp installation, an excellent example of forward-thinking policy. An example of a recently updated ADA-compliant curb ramp is pictured above.

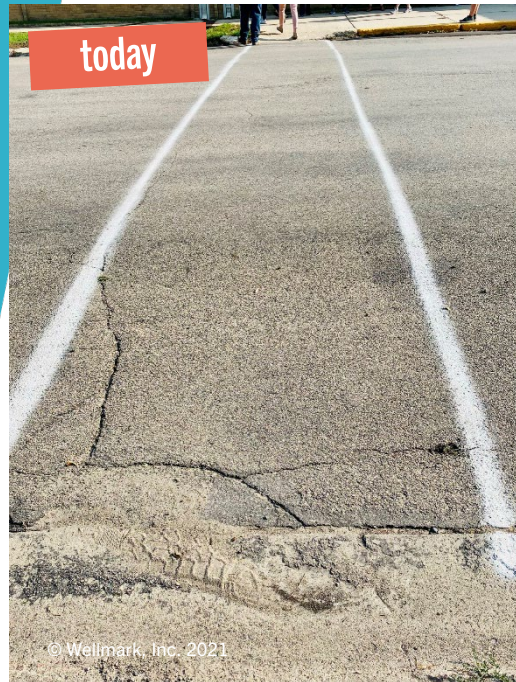
IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

Crosswalks

Installing safer crossing points for people walking and riding bikes is a key component of making Clear Lake a more walkable and accessible community. Marked crosswalks are one component of improving the safety for people crossing streets.

Today, Clear Lake has only a few intersections with marked crosswalks. Participants noted that many crosswalks in town were the single stripe style and much less noticeable due to faded paint. Repainting these crosswalks with high-visibility, continental-style striping on a routine basis and expanding the number of intersections with marked crosswalks will improve pedestrian safety.

- Paint high-visibility, continental-style crosswalk markings



Some crosswalks are striped using standard-style markings that are not very visible. Using continental-style striping would help improve the visibility of painted crosswalks.



Example of a continental-style crosswalk recently painted in Dell Rapids, South Dakota.

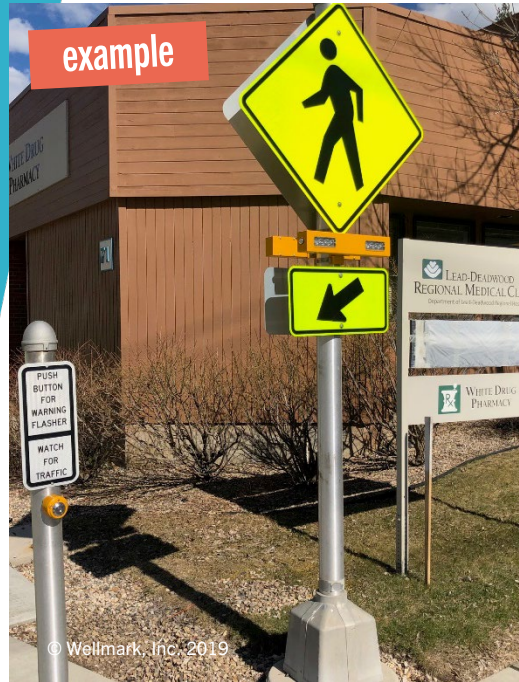
IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

Enhanced Pedestrian Crossings

In addition to well-marked crosswalks, the use of illuminated devices activated by a push button would improve safety for people crossing the street. These devices are known as Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs), and they are designed to increase visibility and compliance by motorists.

Participants indicated that the school crossing on Highway 15 near the Deuel School District buildings could benefit from the use of an enhanced pedestrian crossing.

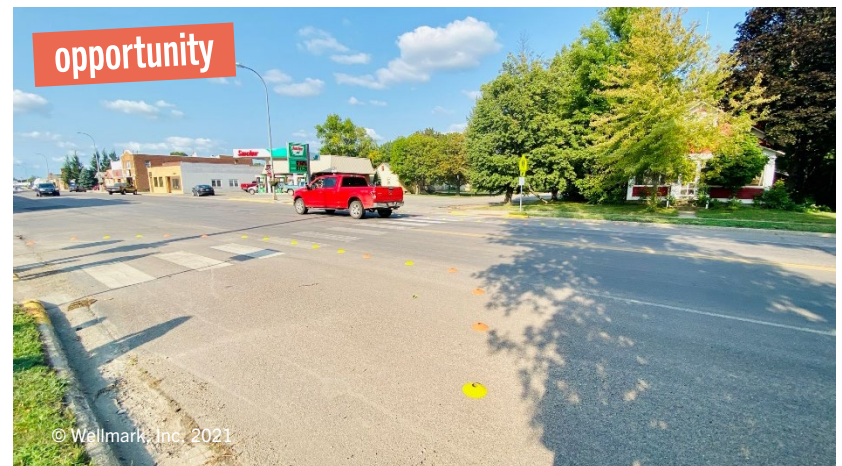
- Install an enhanced pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Highway 15 and 5th Street



Enhanced pedestrian crossing with RRFBs like this example from Lead, South Dakota.



Example of an enhanced pedestrian crossing with RRFBs from Deadwood, South Dakota.



The school crossing at the intersection of Highway 15 and 5th Street could benefit from the addition of RRFBs.

IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

Roundabouts

There are many benefits to using roundabouts at certain intersections in your community. The Federal Highway Administration has proven that roundabouts reduce crashes by eliminating vehicle conflict points and forcing traffic to slow down.¹ Studies have found that roundabouts can provide up to a 90 percent reduction in fatal crashes and up to a 76 percent reduction in crashes causing injury.

In addition to enhancing safety, roundabouts can:

- reduce ongoing maintenance and operating costs
- provide opportunities for landscaping and branding
- reduce traffic delays
- reduce construction costs
- reduce fuel consumption
- reduce air pollution

People walking and riding bikes also benefit from the use of roundabouts, as they are designed to improve safety for all users.² The intersection of Highway 15 and Highway 22 is a prime candidate for the installation of a roundabout.

- Install a roundabout at the intersection of Highway 15 and Highway 22

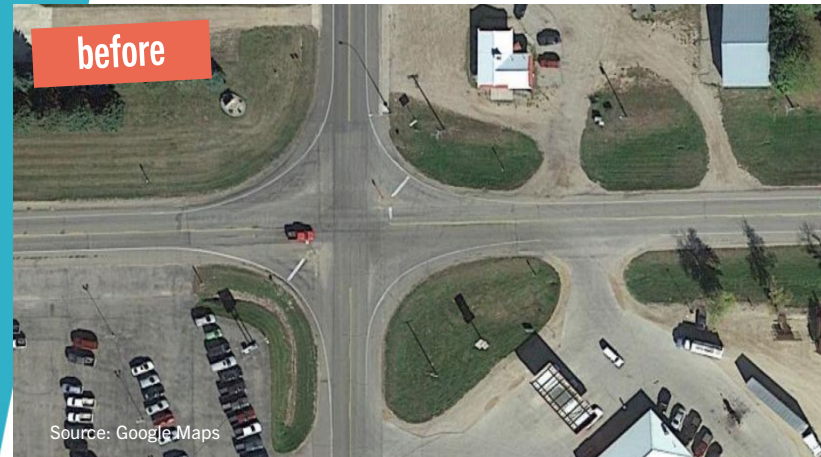


Illustration depicting a roundabout at the intersection of Highway 15 and Highway 22.

¹ <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersection/innovative/roundabouts/>

² <https://iowadot.gov/traffic/roundabouts/roundabout-home>

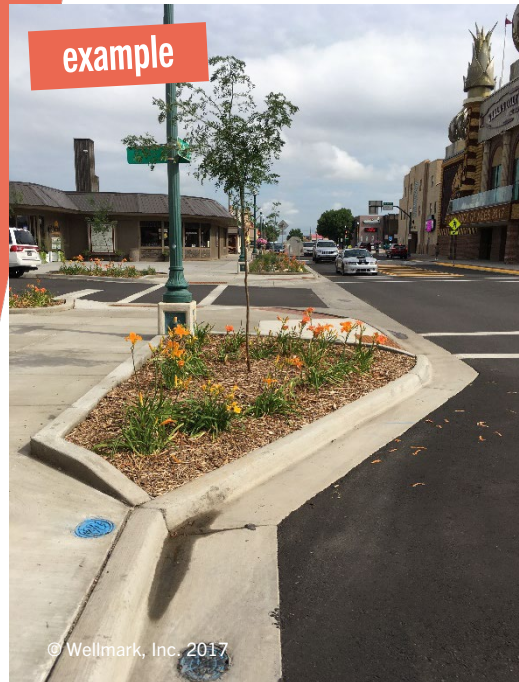
ENHANCING SENSE OF PLACE

Clear Lake has some unique opportunities to implement strategic placemaking concepts that would create more places for residents to connect socially and enhance community pride. This section of the report will identify some of those concepts that could be applied in Clear Lake.

Bumpouts

Bumpouts are extensions of the sidewalk that take up road space not needed for vehicular traffic. Bumpouts that include various landscaping elements help create an inviting and comfortable walking environment. They also shorten crossing distances for pedestrians at intersections, decrease turning vehicle speeds, and provide opportunities for street beautification.

- Construct bumpouts in downtown Clear Lake



Example of a bumpout that includes flowers and a street tree from Mitchell, South Dakota.



Illustration of a potential bumpout in downtown Clear Lake.

ENHANCING SENSE OF PLACE

Bumpouts (cont.)

In addition to the downtown area, some intersections around the Deuel School District campus are also wide enough to benefit from the use of bumpouts. Bumpouts would help shorten crossing distances for children and help make the intersections safer for them to walk or ride their bikes to school.

- Construct bumpouts at intersections near the Deuel School District campus



Downtown intersections in Clear Lake could be enhanced by constructing bumpouts like this example from Milbank, South Dakota.



Participants used cones to build a temporary bumpout at the intersection of 3rd Street and 4th Avenue near the post office.



Participants used cones to build temporary bumpouts at the intersection of Highway 15 and 5th Street.

ENHANCING SENSE OF PLACE

Parklets

In most communities, streets make up the majority of publically owned land. Taking some of that space away from cars and dedicating it to people can be accomplished through the creation of parklets.

Parklets are temporary or permanent structures built in place of existing parking spaces.³ Parklets may serve as social gathering spaces for community members by providing a relaxing space to sit and talk, enjoy a cup of morning coffee, or grab lunch with a friend. They also make a street more enjoyable and interesting to walk along. Parklets can be constructed out of a variety of materials including traditional lumber, pallets, tires, paint, and other unique decorations and furniture.

- Work with local businesses to install parklets in downtown Clear Lake



This parklet was installed next to a restaurant to provide outdoor dining space for customers.



A local restaurant in Mitchell, South Dakota constructed this parklet to provide outdoor seating and bike parking for their customers.



Example of a portable downtown parklet built for outdoor café dining in a former parallel parking space.

³ <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/interim-design-strategies/parklets>

ENHANCING SENSE OF PLACE

Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are a commonly-used form of placemaking. They involve the use of landscaping, seating, and lighting to create a park-like atmosphere on a smaller scale in empty spaces throughout a community.

Providing more outdoor opportunities and interesting things for people to see and do motivates them to get outside and explore their environments. This creates opportunities where they can connect socially and be more physically active.

- Create pocket parks using vacant spaces in the downtown area



Example of a pocket park that includes a walking path and garden space from Britton, South Dakota.



Participants noted a couple of potential locations on 3rd Avenue for a pocket park. One of the spaces near the Municipal Building is large enough to serve as a community garden space with raised beds like this example from Fort Pierre, South Dakota.

ENHANCING SENSE OF PLACE

Bike Parking

Another form of active transportation is riding bicycles. A simple way to encourage more people to ride their bikes is by providing abundant and convenient parking for them. Participants noted that they did not see many bike racks along the walking audit route. Good locations for adding bike racks might include the downtown area, the school district campus, and the city park.

- Install bike racks throughout the community



During the walking audit, participants noted that there were not many bike racks in the community. Clear Lake could benefit from the addition of a few secure, permanent bike racks. Pictured above are some examples of bike parking that could work well in downtown Clear Lake.

ENHANCING SENSE OF PLACE

Bike Dismount Zones

In many communities, there is a desire to keep people from riding bicycles on the sidewalks in downtown business districts. This often results in signage that states, “no bikes allowed” or “bikes prohibited,” leading people to believe that bikes are not wanted nor welcome in the community.

A better alternative is to establish bike dismount zones on sidewalks in your business district. This is best accomplished with pavement markings painted on the sidewalk indicating that people should dismount their bikes and walk them on the sidewalk.

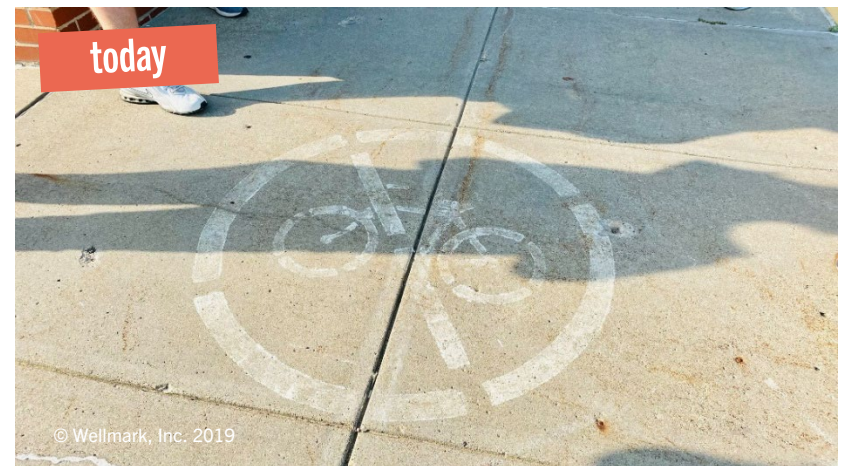
- Install bike dismount zone signage on sidewalks in downtown Clear Lake



Example of dismount zone sidewalk signage from Custer, South Dakota.



Example of a multi-colored pedestrian zone pavement marking.



The pavement markings on sidewalks in downtown Clear Lake today do not provide a welcoming message for people riding bikes.

ENHANCING SENSE OF PLACE

Wayfinding

Wayfinding signs can be an important way to help people navigate around your city. Visitors find wayfinding signage and mapping kiosks particularly useful as it helps them become more familiar with the area's attractions.

Community members can be further encouraged to walk around town by using signage that includes information such as walking distances and times to community destinations like shops, restaurants, parks, libraries, and other local landmarks.

- Design and install branded community wayfinding signage

example



example



example



Examples of branded wayfinding signage from various communities.

PARTICIPANT DISCUSSION/NEXT STEPS

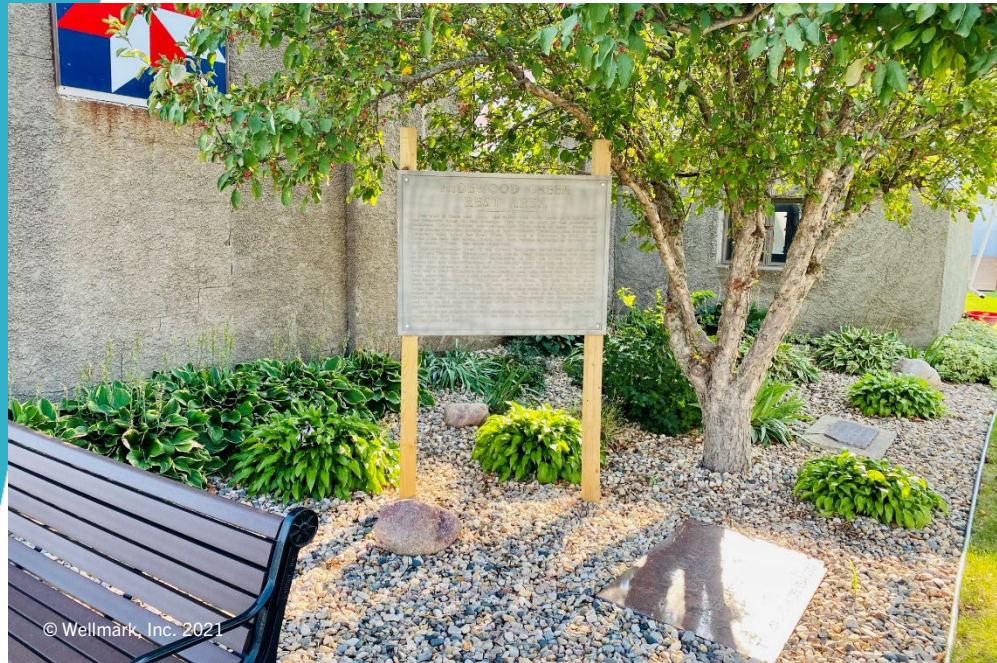
Following the walking audit, participants talked about their observations from the walk. Participants noted several elements that they felt made walking more comfortable, as well as many elements that made getting around more difficult or less safe.

The recommendations included in this report have been assembled to serve as a guide for your community to improve upon some of those elements and prioritize which ones are most important to pursue.

This report can be used as a tool to help build support from community leaders, elected officials, and the community at large to create a plan of action.

Citizen engagement is the best way to address many of the recommendations outlined in this report. All the walking audit participants are encouraged to stay involved with ongoing efforts to improve walkability in Clear Lake.

Working collaboratively will ensure that Clear Lake continues the path of becoming a vibrant, active, and healthy community.



AFTERWORD

At Wellmark, our vision is 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 South Dakotans 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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