



Halland Avenue Walk Audit

Stanton, Iowa

About Iowa Safe Routes to School

Iowa Safe Routes to School is a Iowa Department of Transportation and Iowa Bicycle Coalition funded program that is focused on helping Iowa's kids walk and bike safely to school. We do this by working with organizations, schools and community partners throughout the state. We provide technical assistance, education, and help host events that promote youth walking and biking. Over the past decade Iowa Safe Routes to School has worked in hundreds of Iowa communities and educated thousands of Iowa's children on biking and walking safety.



Purpose

The purpose of a walk audit is to walk a study area and see and feel the experience of the walk through the eyes of a pedestrian. All too often we are driving and the experience of a driver is much different than that of someone walking. Because this is youth focused the walk audit is specific to what a child might encounter while walking. For the walk audit was used AARP's walk audit guide and the answers of the participants were collected and used to write the document.

Route

On May 18, 2021 at 10am Iowa Safe Routes to School and Stanton residents. Walk from the Stanton Community School District participants walked on the east side of the road at the corner of Elliot street and Haaland avenue to Anderson Park. Rain was in the forecast all morning.

Existing Conditions

In this section we will discuss what was observed while traveling the route. This includes both good and negative observations. The observations are about the entire walking experience. Observations will be bulleted and presented on a block by block basis. Some blocks will have the same observations.

Elliot Street to Center Street

- **No crosswalk** at the intersection of Elliot Street. and Halland Avenue For kids walking to school this section means kids are walking in the street or in the ditch.
- A **loud barking dog** behind a fence may scare kids. While fenced the dog could scare younger kids or stop parents from letting their kids walk to school



- **No lower speed sign** noted when approaching the school area. There is a school zone sign but nothing telling drivers to slow down.

Center Street to Thorn Street

- **No curb cut** for kids to easily transition from sidewalk to crossing street. At the intersection of Thorn Street and Halland Avenue. The east/west side walk has a curb cut but the north/south along Halland does not.
- **Deteriorated sidewalk** in front of one home.



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Thorn Street to Frankfort Street

- **No curb cut** for kids to easily transition from sidewalk to crossing street. However, one the east-west side walk on Thorn did have a curb cut and tactile paving/detectable warning surface.
- **Good tree cover** provided by street trees.
- At the corner of Thorn and Center. a newer home did not have sidewalk either (Technically outside the walking route, but while standing on the corner it was obvious to the participants of this gap in the sidewalk network)



Frankfort Street to Anderson Park

- There is **only sidewalk at the intersection** of Frankfort street. and Halland avenue.
- The **bridge has a sidewalk** on it.

Potential Improvements

Based on the observations in the existing conditions this section will offer opportunities to improve the walkability of Halland avenue from the school to Anderson Park.

Elliot Street to Center Street

- **Lowering speed limits** around the school to 20 miles per hour. On Elliot street, in front of the school, there was one sign which did indicate a speed limit of twenty. However, there were no signs indicating a lower speed limit on Halland Ave. The benefit of lowering speed limits makes school areas safer for pedestrians. Lower speed limits also give more time for drivers to react but also reduces the potential for fatal crashes
- **Installing a cross walk on all four corners of Halland Ave. and Elliot St.** with push buttons and rapid flashing beacons



Center Street to Thorn Street

- **Installing curb cuts** for kids to easily transition from sidewalk to crossing street. At the intersection of Thorn street. and Halland avenue. The east/west side walk has a curb cut but the north/south along Halland does not. Curb cuts help kids on bikes, the blind, someone using a walker or pushing a stroller. Adding curb cuts is a great way to make the walk more user accessible for all ages and community members

Worth noting: In a conversation while visiting the local coffee shop a mother shared with us about the challenges she faced pushing a stroller on the sidewalks in certain parts of town. Her solution was sometimes pushing the stroller in the street.

- **Installing tactile paving/detectable warning devices** for the visually impaired. Since they are already being used in curb cuts along Halland avenue. it would be beneficial to have them along the entire route
- **Replace deteriorated sidewalk**

Thorn Street to Frankfort Street

- **Installing curb cuts** for kids to easily transition from sidewalk to crossing street

Frankfort Street to Anderson Park

- **Complete gaps** in the sidewalk network
- **Connect the trail in Anderson Park to the side walk** on Halland avenue

Worth noting: While walking the route it was great to see a class from the elementary school walking down to Anderson Park.

Overall Community Design Observations

- Stanton benefits from narrow streets created which lend to slower traffic speeds
 - Not having a state highway cut through town creates lower streets
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- Street trees are proven to lower traffic speed, provide shade to pedestrians and lower home heating and cooling costs
- The majority of Stanton has a grid design which creates different walks each trip
- Trail system is a great community asset
- Stanton has a better sidewalk system than most towns its size

The suggestions above will improve the walkability of Halland Avenue from Elliot Street to Anderson Park more pleasant for kids. While being an improvement residents of Stanton regardless of age.

Additional locations

While touring the community we also visited a couple more spots in the community. The first was Thorn Street between Eastern St. and Halland Ave. Repairing the north side of the sidewalk would be strongly recommended as it has deteriorated.

Another location was the sidewalk on the northside of Center street along the Little Tarkio River. The sidewalk is overgrown with grass and stops shy of the Viking Trail. Improving the existing sidewalk and creating a connection to the bridge and the trail would be a great improvement.



Elementary School Travel Tally

In an effort to see how many Stanton kids walked to school Jenna Ramsey was kind enough to coordinate with the elementary school to do a travel tally. A travel tally is simply asking each child how they got to school. The options on the travel tally were: walk, bike, bus, or car. However due to the potential for rain that day most kids were driven to school.

Iowa Safe Routes to School can help communities encourage youth walking and biking with a variety of programs such as walking school buses and bike safety clinics. As Stanton continues to improve it's sidewalk system along Halland Avenue and the trail system Iowa Safe Routes to School would be glad to help promote more walking and biking. Additionally this partnership could help promote healthier kids and help show a return on investing in Stanton's sidewalk system.

How to pay for improvements?

While this report is only an audit of the corridor someone will ask how to pay for improvements. In most communities residents have to pay for sidewalk maintenance. The result is often some section of the sidewalk being great and others being lackluster. Below are alternatives to making individual residents pay for improvements:

1. Create a sidewalk fund for improvements. Some people can't pay. The result is typically a subpar sidewalk system
2. Consider viewing sidewalks as public infrastructure just like streets and recreational trails. The result is everyone pays and everyone benefits.

Conclusion

Halland Avenue is a major walking route for school students and families going to school and recreating on the bike trail and at Anderson Park. While in most places the sidewalk is good it does not fully connect to the elementary school or the park. In order to create a great walking experience we suggest adding a crosswalk near the school, completing sidewalk gaps, adding curb cuts, and addressing deteriorated sidewalks where needed. Iowa Safe Routes to School is glad to help with continued education and events in the community and at school. Regarding who pays for sidewalks, perhaps viewing sidewalks as public infrastructure that is publicly funded similar to streets and recreational trails rather than individuals paying and resulting in a lack of uniformity. The result is everyone pays and everyone in Stanton benefits from quality sidewalk along Halland avenue and the rest of the community.