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MEMORANDUM

Date: November 10, 2025
To: Todd Nickleski
Organization: City of River Falls
From: Mitch Coffman, Harry Graham, Uy Nguyen
Project: River Falls Safety Action Plan

Re: Summer 2025 Public Engagement Summary Memo

Summary

More than 300 River Falls community members participated in various activities across multiple engagement events for the River Falls Safety Action Plan (herein after referred to as the "Plan") in the Summer of 2025. Thematic findings about the overall transportation system and specific areas of concern in River Falls are outlined in this Memo. These findings will be used to identify locations for interventions as well as systematic changes to the transportation system to enhance safety and accessibility for people of all ages and abilities, no matter the mode of travel chosen.

Engagement Process Overview

This section summarizes the methods used to engage the public and stakeholders during the summer of 2025. The intent of this engagement was to get feedback on overall transportation safety, specific safety concerns and locations, and citywide issues of concern.

Methods Used to Engage

The project team used a range of engagement techniques intended to reach a wide variety of River Falls community members including an online survey, online interactive mapping exercise, and in-person outreach at River Falls Days.

Survey

The project team administered a survey that was hosted on the project website and served as the primary virtual engagement option for the public to provide broad feedback on transportation safety in River Falls. The survey was open to the public from July 12 – September 22, 2025. Feedback was provided by 334 individuals through participation in all, or portions of, the survey. Those who completed the survey were presented with a link to the online mapping exercise, outlined below.

Online Mapping Exercise

The project team also administered an interactive online map exercise. This was hosted on the project website and served as the primary method for community members to tell the project team specific locations of interest or concern. The online map was open to the public from July 12 – September 22, 2024. Feedback was provided by 144 individuals who collectively drew 290 features on the map and left 36 text comments.

In-Person Outreach

City staff conducted in-person outreach by setting up a booth at River Falls Days on July 12. This booth highlighted multiple City efforts, including the Plan and the Kinni Corridor Project. Participants had the option to take the survey and/or note areas of interest or concern on a large paper map. Community members left approximately 15 detailed comments on the map, in addition to numerous stickers indicating specific locations. Staff also noted other issues that participants brought up.

Figure 1. Project Booth and Map at River Falls Days. Credit: City of River Falls.

Promotion

Engagement opportunities were promoted primarily via the City's website and social media channels, in-person outreach at River Falls Days, the project website, and word of mouth.

The survey and website were first promoted on Facebook on August 26th. The post received 45 likes, 81 comments, and 16 shares. Comments on the post were mixed. Several people mentioned the need for lighting downtown, while others took issue with bicycles and scooters being ridden on sidewalks. Many people commented that drivers speed and fail to yield. One person noted that sidewalk maintenance is needed, and another discussed people crossing midblock. This was cross posted to Instagram, where it received 14 likes and one comment.

The City's Facebook account re-shared the post on September 16th. This received 7 likes, 6 comments, and 3 shares. These comments were comprised of a discussion about apparent safety-focused intersection improvements and pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

Public Input

This section summarizes information obtained from the public from the survey, online mapping exercise, feedback at River Falls Days, and social media comments.

Summary of Systemic Opportunities

The following themes highlight the community's safety and non-motorized (active) transportation concerns, priorities, and areas of opportunity outlined by the public and stakeholders throughout the engagement process:

- **Establish a Culture of Transportation Safety**: The community greatly values transportation safety for users of all modes and is supportive of education and enforcement efforts to improve safety for users of all ages and abilities. Residents have expressed a willingness to change their behavior to reduce serious roadway injuries and fatalities.
- **Opportunities for More Mobility Options:** Residents recognize the need to develop pedestrian, bicyclist, and micromobility facilities to support people's ability to travel in a safe and accessible manner regardless of their chosen mode. The community is interested in walking, bicycling, and rolling more, but feels that these modes of transportation are not as safe or accessible as driving. They also believe that devices such as electric bicycles (e-bikes) can enhance the availability of mobility options, although there are concerns surrounding speeding and unsafe behavior of e-bike users.
- **Maintenance and Connectivity**: The community repeatedly stressed the need to improve non-motorized facilities and related infrastructure. They feel that wider sidewalks and trails, along with safer crossings, more lighting, and a more connected non-motorized network would make walking, bicycling, and rolling more accessible and safer. Residents also expressed that maintenance of these facilities is also a high-priority concern.

Survey Summary

Through public input and feedback, the project team was able to gather insight into common transportation issues, areas of concern in River Falls, and factors contributing to transportations safety issues/locations. Table 1 provides a summary of the feedback provided, which was primarily informed by the survey responses.

Table 1. Common Themes from Public Engagement

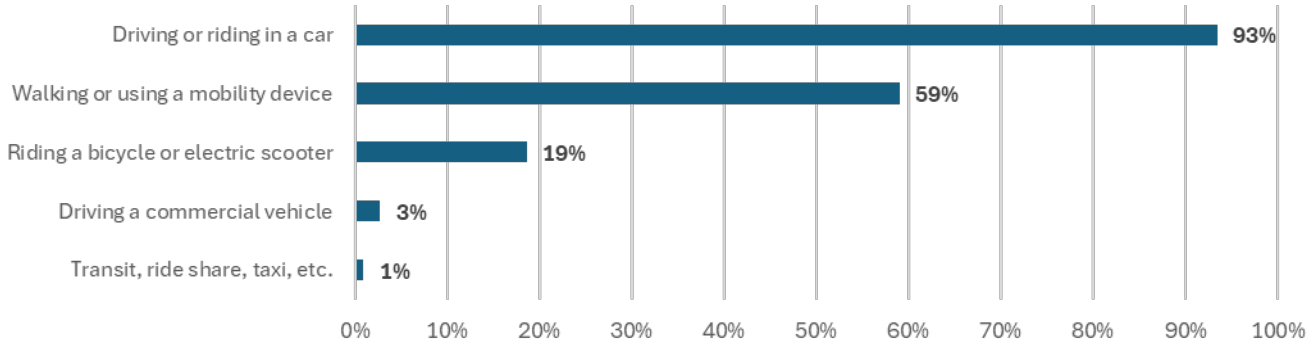
Category	Common Themes	Insight
Safety as a Priority for the Community	Most survey respondents agree that reducing serious crashes and fatalities should be prioritized over minimizing travel time and would change their behavior to do so. Most also agree that drivers should travel slower on their streets.	The community greatly values transportation safety and is supportive of measures to improve transportation safety in River Falls.

Category	Common Themes	Insight
Feeling of Safety and Accessibility	Most survey respondents feel that driving is a safe and accessible mode of transportation in River Falls. Most survey respondents also feel that walking is safe and accessible; however, many respondents also feel that walking is accessible but not safe. Most respondents feel neutral about wheelchair/mobility devices and electric scooters as safe and accessible transportation modes. Many respondents feel that bicycling is an accessible mode of transportation in River Falls but is not safe. Most respondents feel that they would walk, bike, roll, or take public transportation more if it were safer or more accessible to them.	Driving feels the safest in River Falls. Walking is also a safe and accessible mode of transportation. Bicycle safety and accessibility are a concern.
Transportation Freedom and Mobility Options	An overwhelming majority of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that people should be able to choose how they travel. Many people also agree that electric bicycles enhance mobility options.	The ability to choose a wide variety of modes is important to the community.
Transportation Safety Improvements	Survey respondents feel that the following strategies would make them feel much safer or more comfortable when traveling around River Falls: • More or wider sidewalks, trails, and safe spaces to ride a bicycle. • Improved intersections with better crosswalks and additional signs/signals. • Improved maintenance of roads, sidewalks, and trails. • Better lighting along infrastructure of all modes.	Infrastructure that supports safety and accessibility is an area for improvement in River Falls.
Concerns Regarding Electric Bicycles	Many survey respondents expressed concerns involving excessive speeding and unsafe behavior of younger bicyclists on electric bicycles. However, some people also have no concern regarding electric bicycles and feel that separate facilities would improve safety for these users.	Excessive speeding of electric bicycles is a concern for the community.

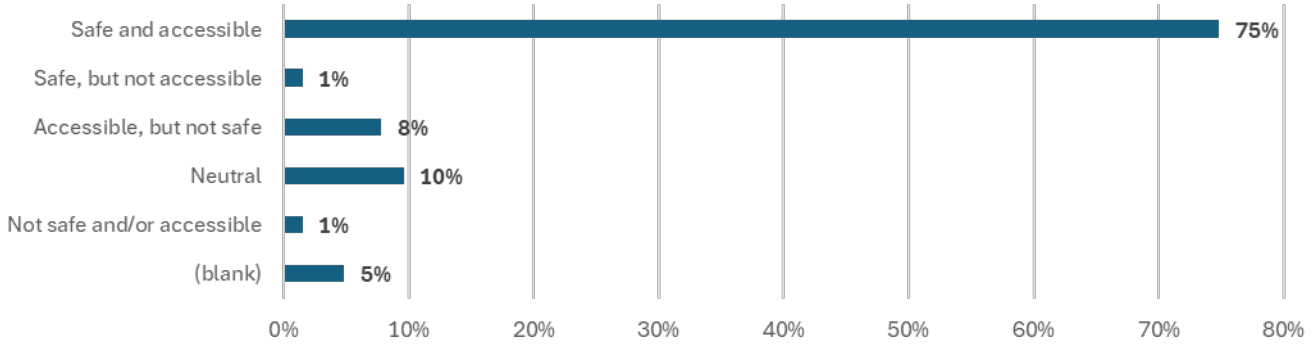
Category	Common Themes	Insight
Additional Comments	Maintenance and network connectivity of existing sidewalk/crossing infrastructure is a primary concern for survey respondents. Many respondents voiced support for the development of bicycling and micromobility facilities, but some also expressed a need for providing safety education for bicyclists and stronger enforcement of safety laws/speed limit.	People in River Falls feel that there are still significant gaps in the community's sidewalk efforts, and that improvements to crossings would greatly improve safety. The development of bicycling facilities needs to be supported with safety education and enforcement efforts.

Detailed Survey Results

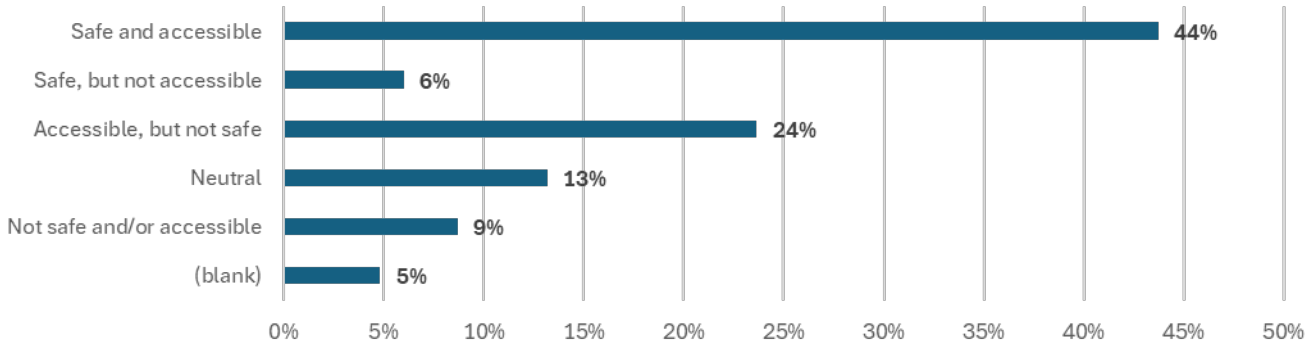
1. What are your top two ways of traveling around River Falls?



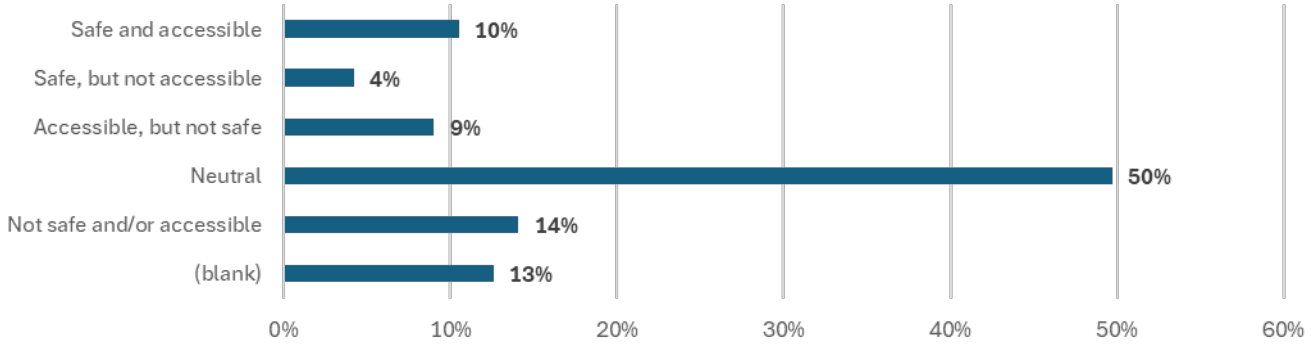
2. Generally, do you feel driving is safe and accessible to you in River Falls?



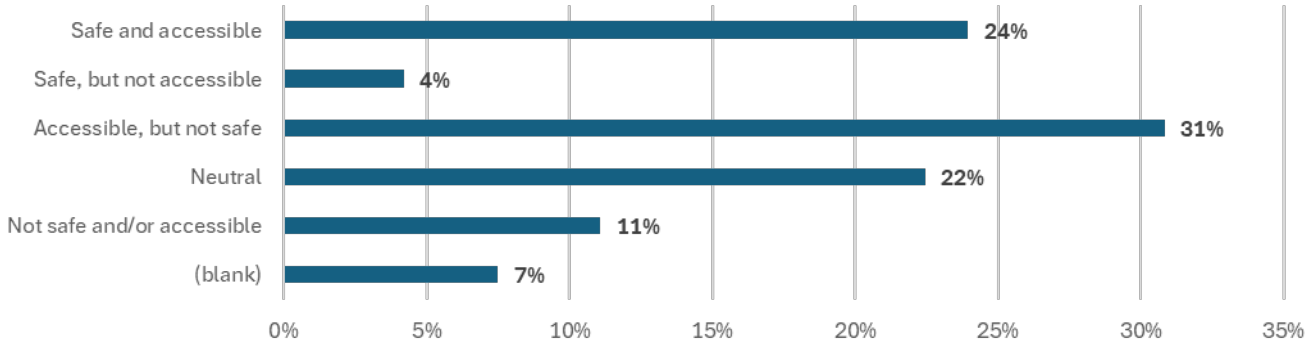
3. **Generally, do you feel walking is safe and accessible to you in River Falls?**



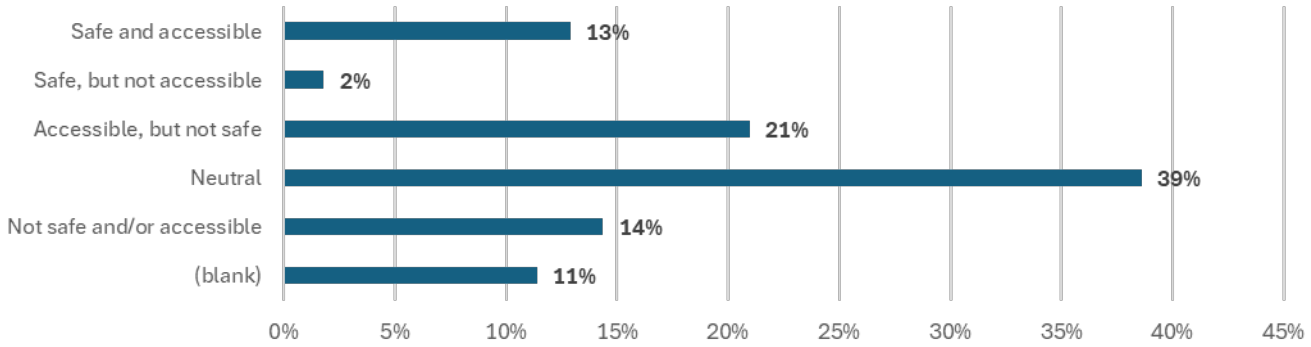
4. **Generally, do you feel using a wheelchair or mobility device is safe and accessible to you in River Falls?**



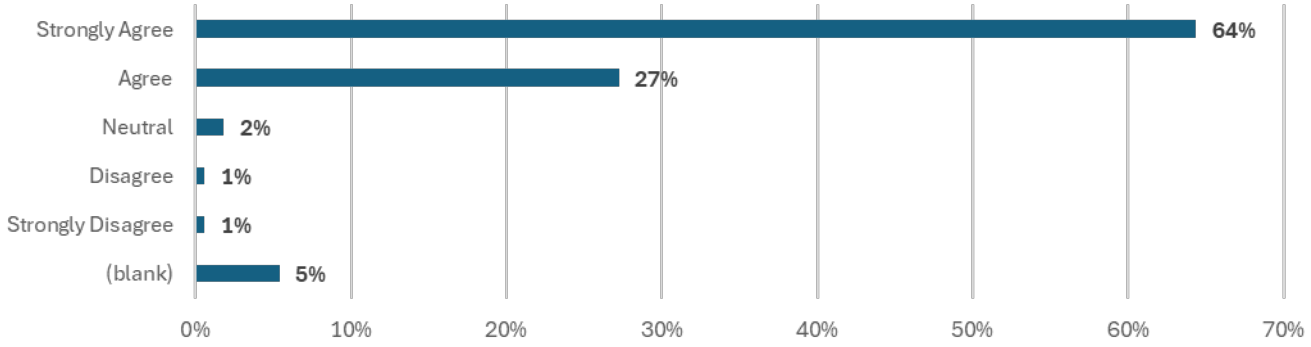
5. **Generally, do you feel riding a bicycle is safe and accessible to you in River Falls?**



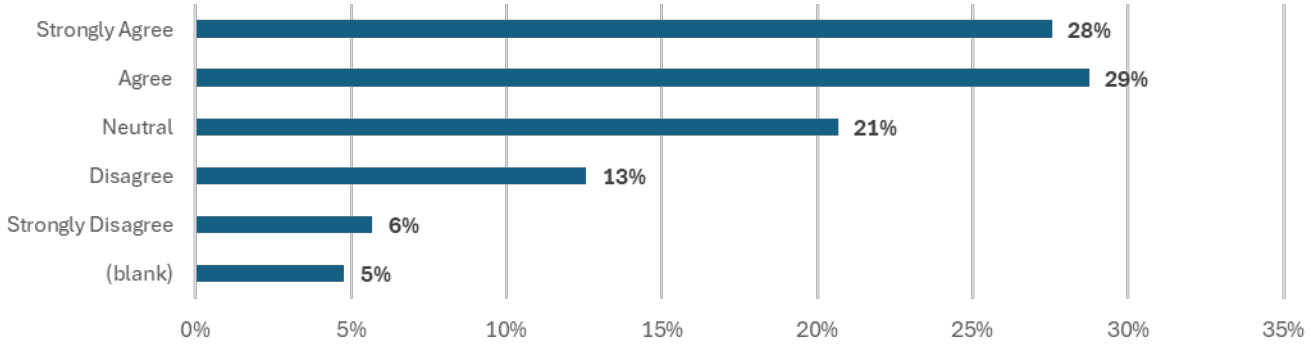
6. **Generally, do you feel <u>riding an electric scooter</u> is safe and accessible to you in River Falls?**



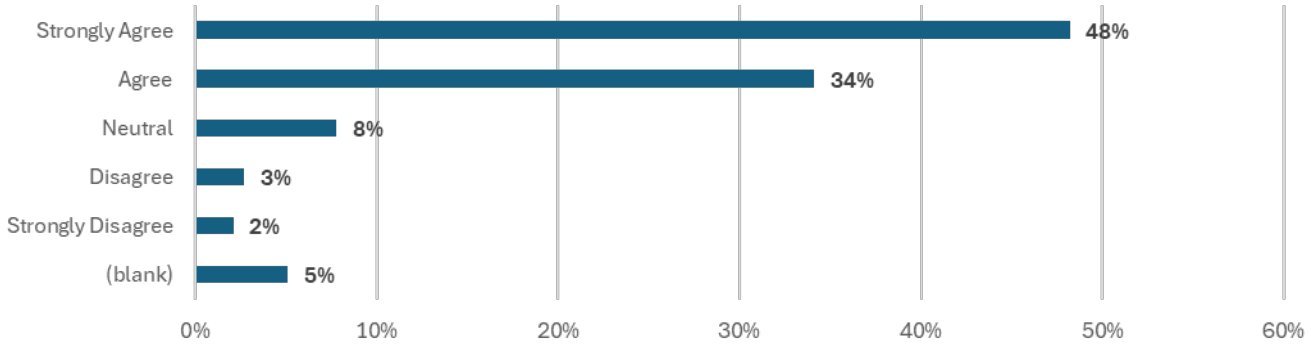
7. **People should be able to choose how they travel; by walking, rolling, cycling, riding, or driving. Select your level of agreement or disagreement.**



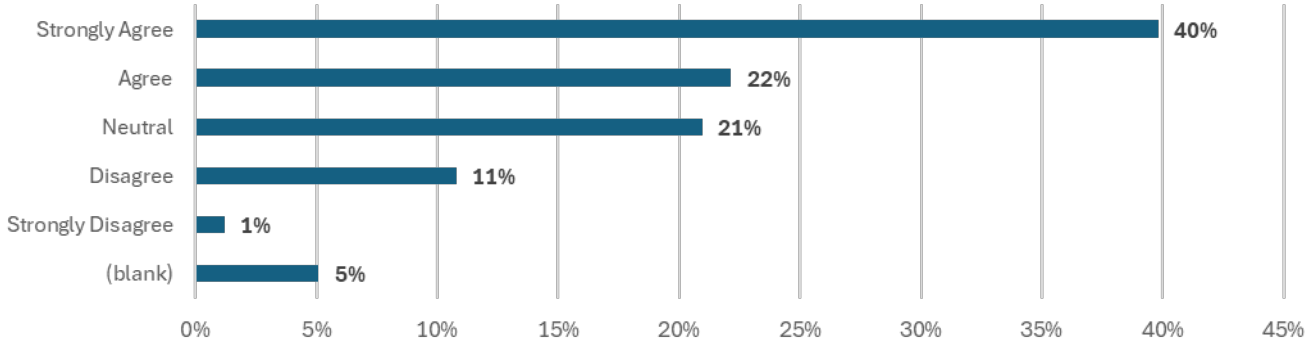
8. **I would walk, bike, roll, or take public transportation more if it were safer/more accessible to me. Select your level of agreement or disagreement.**



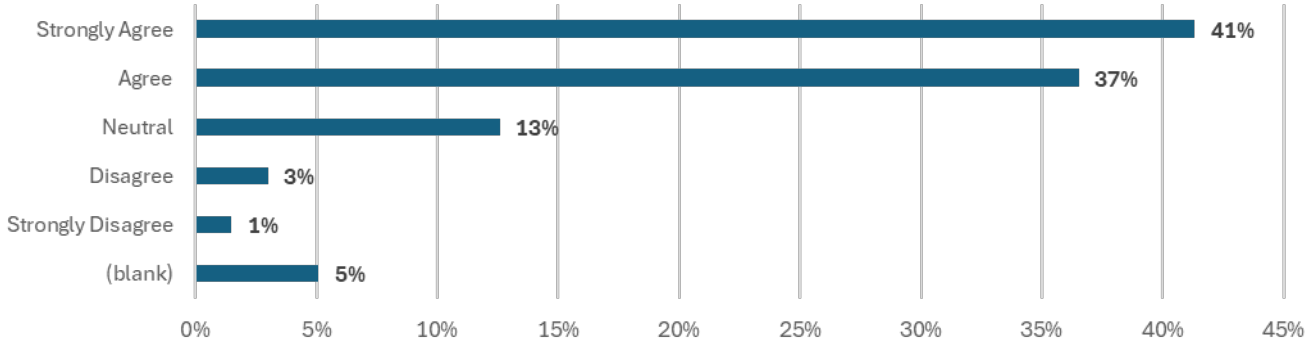
9. **Reducing the risk of serious and fatal crashes is more important than minimizing travel time. Select your level of agreement or disagreement.**



10. **Drivers should travel slower on my street. Select your level of agreement or disagreement.**

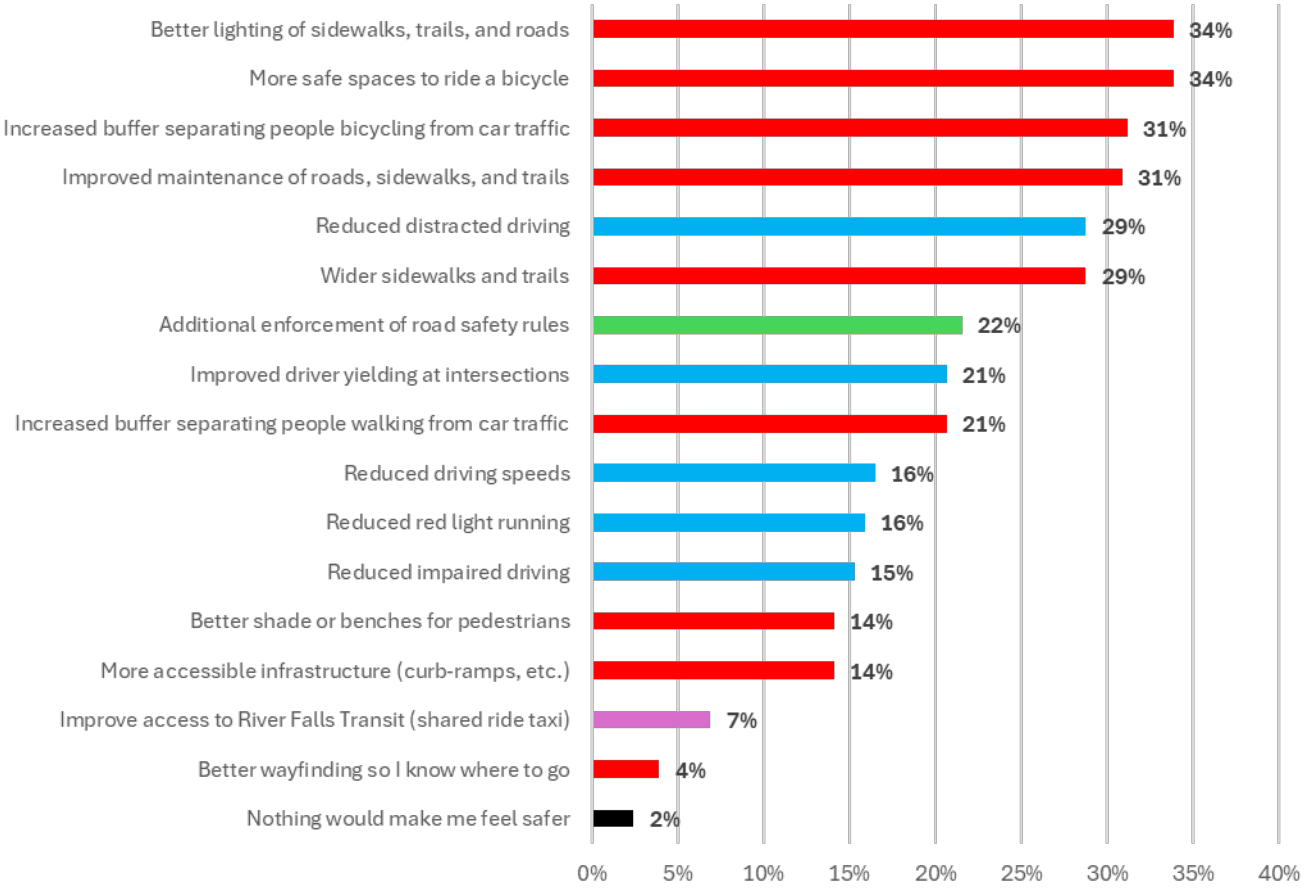


11. **I am willing to change my behavior to reduce serious crashes and improve safety. Select your level of agreement or disagreement.**



12. Select your top 5 choices that would make you feel much safer and/or more comfortable when traveling around River Falls.

The chart below shows the percent of respondents that selected each option in their top 5. The red bars show infrastructure or environmental changes, the blue bars show behavioral changes, the green bar shows enforcement changes, the purple bar shows service changes, and the black bar shows no changes.

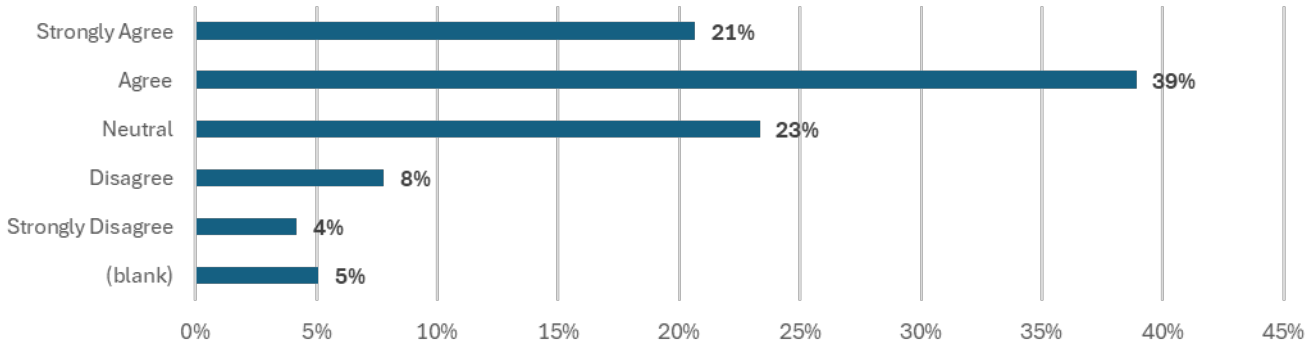


13. Is there anything else that would make you feel safer and more comfortable moving around River Falls?

Write-in responses were provided by 195 survey respondents. The most common issues raised include:

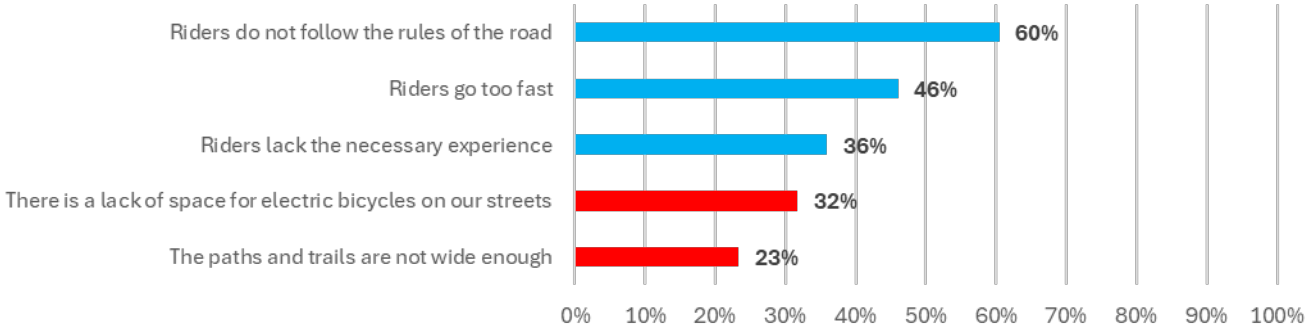
- Enhanced pedestrian connections and safety were mentioned 100 times. Specific issues included more sidewalks, crosswalk visibility, drivers not yielding, lack of ADA accessibility, and concerns about pedestrian safety downtown, at roundabouts, and near parked cars.
- Improved intersection and pedestrian crossing safety was mentioned 73 times. Specific issues included poor visibility due to vegetation, confusing signage, unclear who has right-of-way, and need for controlled pedestrian crossings.
- Better child safety and safety around schools were mentioned 49 times. Specific issues included unsafe conditions around schools for children walking and biking, lack of school zone enforcement, speeding and reckless driving near schools, and insufficient walking and biking infrastructure near schools.
- Improved signage and markings were mentioned 36 times. Specific issues included faced or missing signs and pavement markings, poorly timed signals, unclear signage at major intersections, and a desire for more stop signs and controlled pedestrian crossings.
- Enhanced bicycle connections and safety were mentioned 31 times. Specific issues included a lack of safe bike routes across the city, riders sharing space with cars on narrow streets, poor e-bike rider behavior, and a desire for better lighting and education for riders.
- More enforcement was mentioned 28 times. Specific issues included a desire for more visible presence of law enforcement, enforcement of failure to stop/yield, and enforcement of speed limits.
- Poor driver behavior was mentioned 24 times. Specific issues included distracted driving, falure to yield for pedestrians, failure to stop at stop signs, and excessive speeding, especially on residential streets.
- Poor infrastructure condition or lack of mainenence was mentioned 8 times. Specific issues included damaged sidewalks, trip hazards on sidewalks, and poor winter mainteance.

14. Electric bicycles enhance mobility options. Select your level of agreement or disagreement.

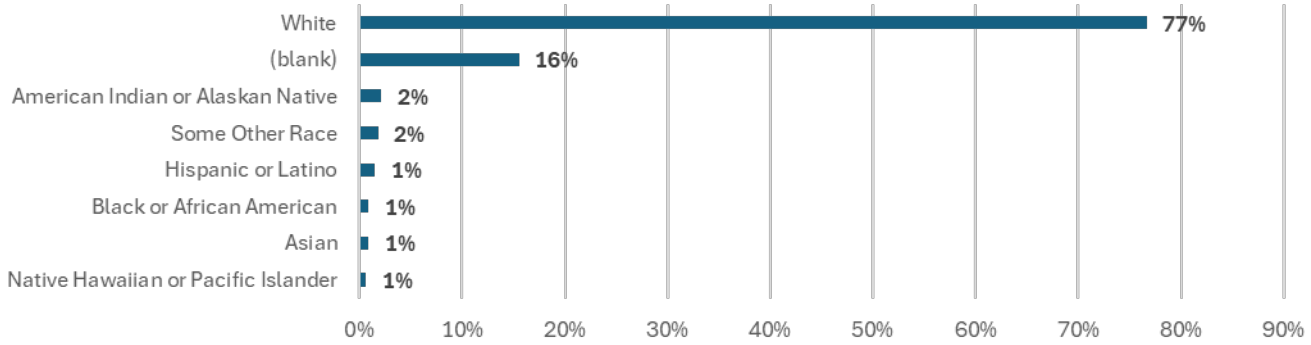


15. What are your concerns about electric bicycles in River Falls? Select all that apply.

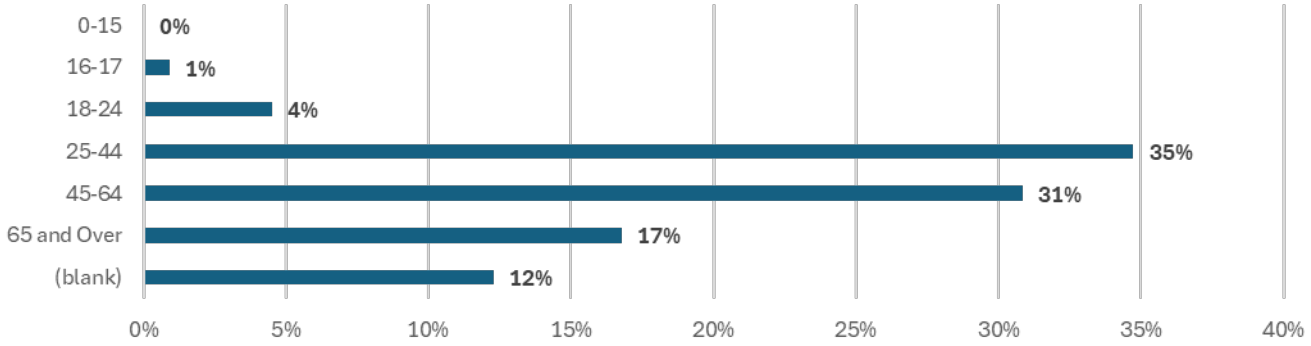
The chart below shows behavioral concerns in blue and infrastructure concerns in red. Respondents were able to write in responses in addition to select the options. Common concerns in the write-in responses included youth are riding motorized bicycles or motorcycles, riders do not have sufficient experience, lack of trail etiquette around pedestrians and other cyclists, sidewalk riding, and some have no concerns.



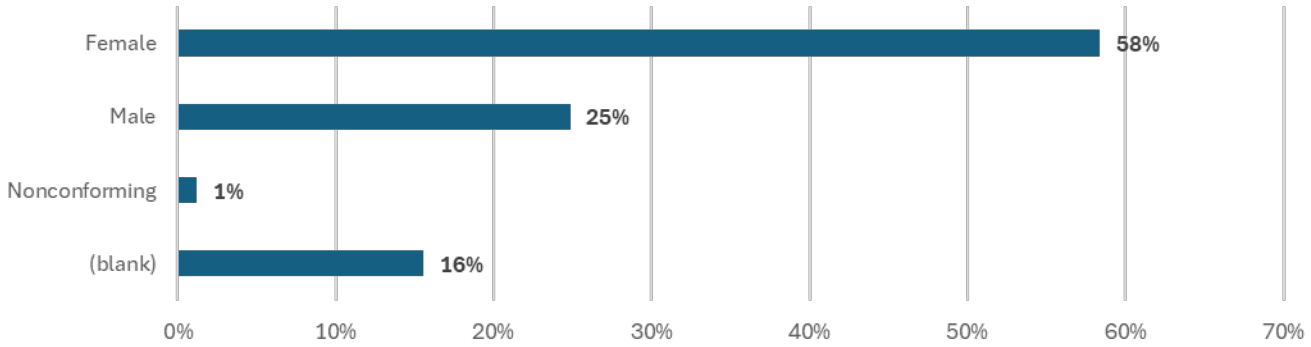
16. What race / ethnicity best describes you?



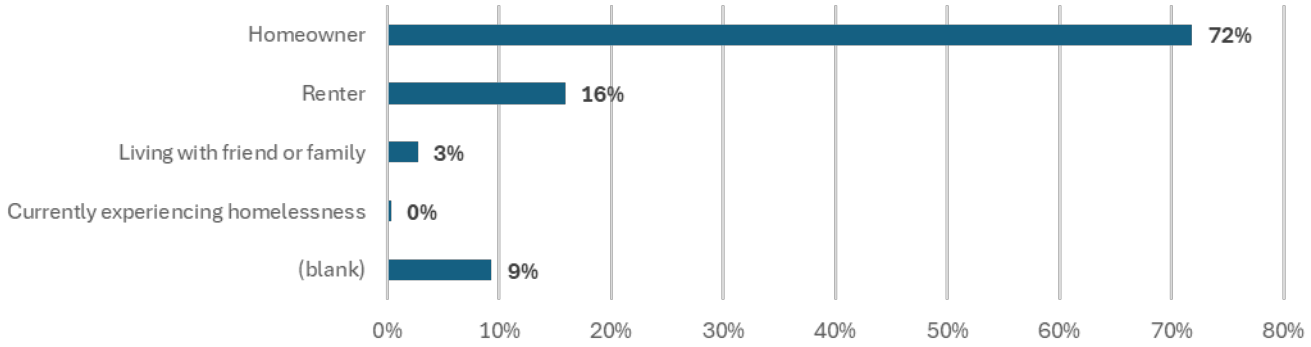
17. How old are you?



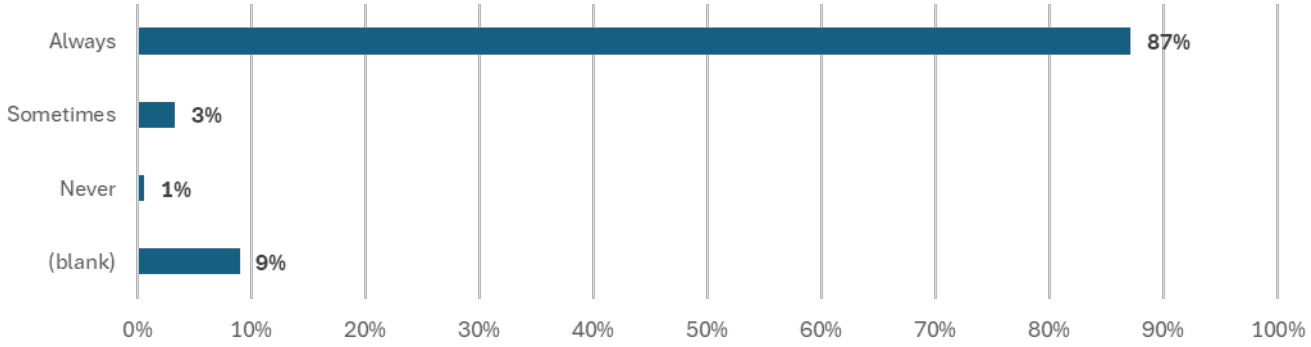
18. What best describes your gender?



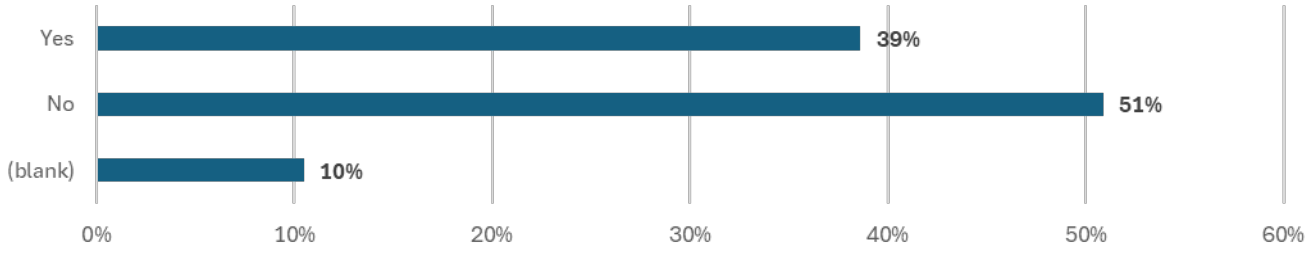
19. Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?



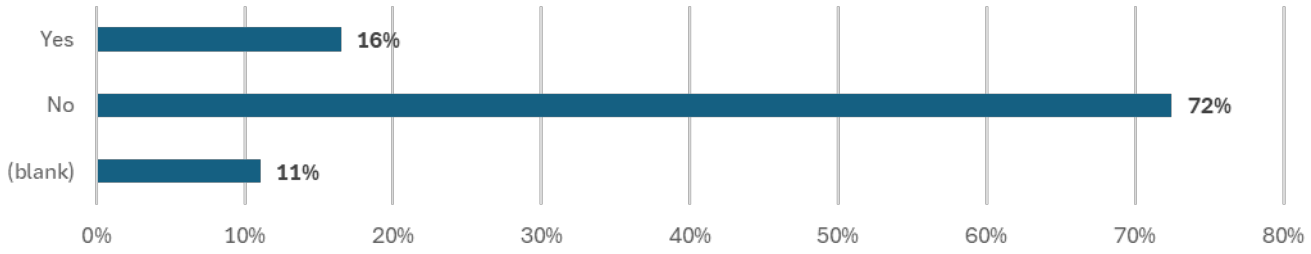
20. Do you have access to a vehicle?



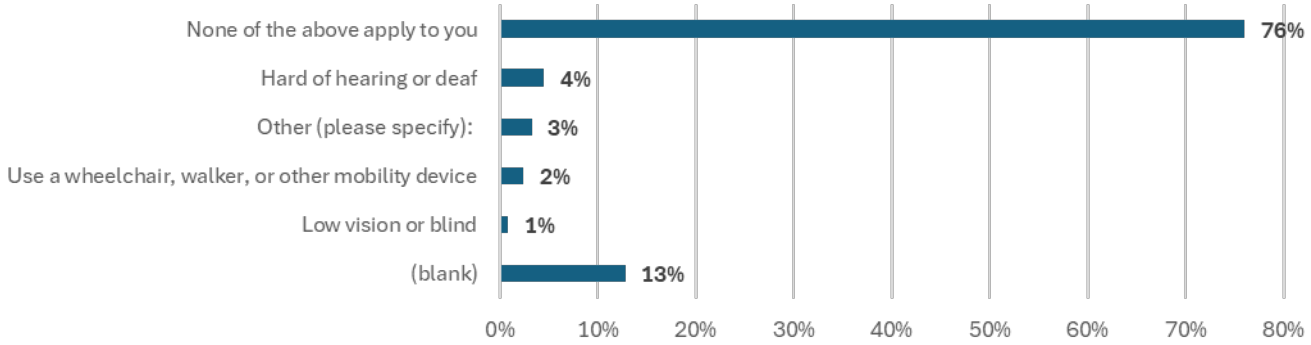
21. Are you regularly responsible for or do you live with any school-age children?



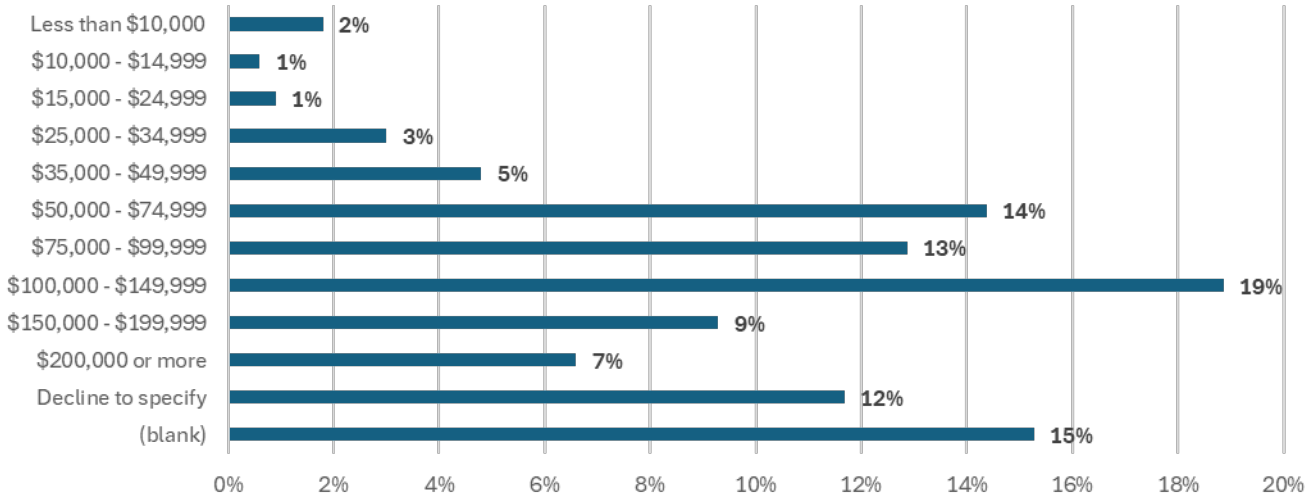
22. Do you live with anyone who is 65 years old or older?



23. Do any of the followign physical limitations apply to you?



24. What is your household income range?



Locations and Areas of Opportunity

The online and in-person engagement methods provided the public with the opportunity to identify safe (Figure 3) and unsafe (Figure 4) locations around River Falls as well as locations where individuals were nearly in a crash (Figure 5). Participants were able to elaborate on what is impacting their feeling of safety at specific locations and provide suggestions for improvement. The list below highlights common locations identified by the public and stakeholders through the engagement process. Community members provided insight into the factors influencing transportation safety at these locations, which were used to identify the opportunities listed below.

- Division St and North Main St.
  - Safe attributes
    - There are safe crossings and sidewalks.
    - There is adequate separation between people walking and driving.
    - A small number of people also reported that drivers do not speed and do not yield.
  - Unsafe attributes
    - Drivers drive too quickly, do not consistently yield, and are often distracted.
    - Several people avoid this location because of safety issues, although some reported being unable to.
    - There is a gap in the sidewalk just to the south.
    - Four people reported near crashes here.
  - Opportunities
    - Consider traffic calming measures to reduce speeding and promote attentive driving.
    - Fill gaps in the sidewalk network.
    - Provide safe crossings at intersections. This may include shortening crossing distances.
- North Main St between Division St and WI-35
  - Safe attributes
    - Some sections include safer crossings, such as at Union St.
  - Unsafe attributes
    - There are high volumes of cars, drivers drive too quickly, do not consistently yield or follow signs/signals, and are often distracted.
    - Some harassment was reported, including verbal harassment by drivers.
    - Intersections and driveways accessing popular destinations, particularly left turns, were mentioned as dangerous.
    - Several people reported being unable to avoid this location.
    - There are no bikeways or intermittent sidewalks.
    - Seven people reported near crashes here.
  - Opportunities
    - Improve safety at intersections with streets and commercial driveways.
    - Provide safer pedestrian crossing opportunities like the one at Union St.
    - Fill gaps in the sidewalk network.
    - Provide bike connections to the Paulson Rd sidepath.
    - Improve the gateway into Downtown River Falls.
- North 2nd St.
  - Safe attributes
    - None were mentioned.
  - Unsafe attributes

        - There are sidewalk gaps. There is a busy pedestrian crossing near a church and preschool that is unmarked.
        - Drivers drive too quickly. One person linked this to a relative lack of traffic controls for drivers.
        - Two people reported a near crash, and several people reported being unable to avoid this location.
    - Opportunities
        - Consider traffic calming measures, especially in areas with low or inconsistent use of on-street parking.
        - Provide safer crossings at targeted intersections, such as East Walnut St.
        - Fill gaps in the sidewalk network.
- N Wasson Ln, North 9th St, North 8th St, and Hazel St around Greenwood Elementary and Meyer Middle.
    - Safe attributes
        - None were mentioned.
    - Unsafe attributes
        - People reported that N Wasson Ln sees a lot of driver traffic and that drivers speed. This street also has missing sidewalks and no bikeways. Parking on both sides of this street, especially during sports and other events, narrows the street.
        - School drop-off and pick-up traffic contributes to congestion, and these drivers often speed.
        - The lack of sidewalks, except for parts of North 8th St and North 9th St, gives pedestrian little separation from cars.
        - Three people reported crashes at these locations.
    - Opportunities
        - Consider traffic calming measures that coordinate with SRTS recommendations, particularly on North Wasson Ln.
        - Fill gaps in the sidewalk network.
        - Provide safer crossings both to the school campus and to parks.
        - Consider daylighting intersections to improve pedestrian visibility, especially during highly attended events when on-street parking is heavily used.
- North Grove St, West Maple St, and nearby streets around Westside High School.
    - Safe attributes
        - None were mentioned here specifically, but one person voiced their appreciation for the Kinnickinnic Pathway.
    - Unsafe attributes
        - Drivers drive too quickly, especially on West Maple St.
        - There is poor visibility at the intersection with South Apollo Rd.
        - Much of West Maple St lacks sidewalks, and there is no marked crossing along the south end of the school.
    - Opportunities
        - Consider traffic calming measures that coordinate with SRTS recommendations, particularly on West Maple St.
        - Improve safety along curves on West Maple St.
        - Fill gaps in the sidewalk network.
        - Expand connections to the Kinnickinnic Pathway.

Figure 2. Locations Marked as Safe by Online Mapping Exercise Respondents

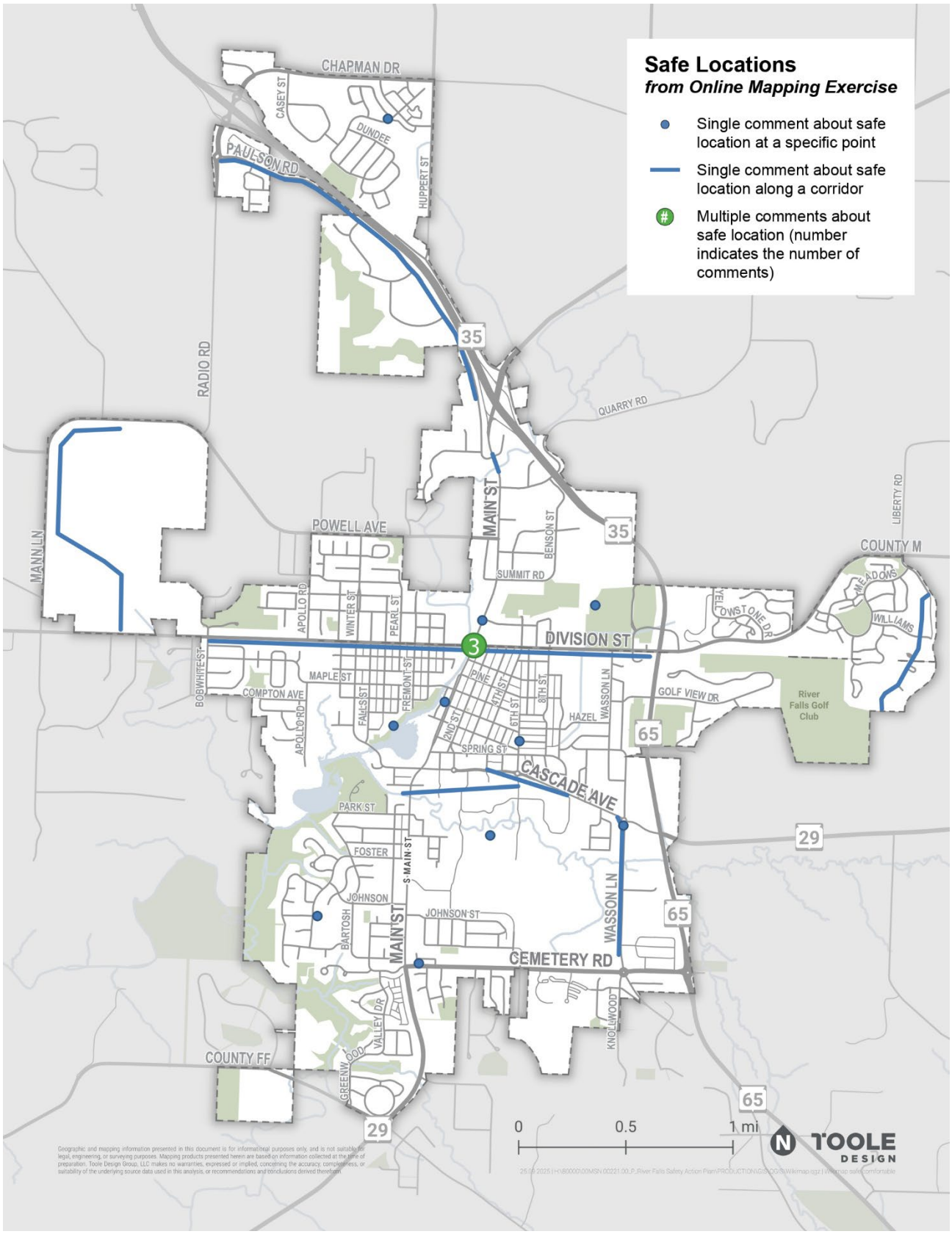


Figure 3. Locations Marked as Unsafe by Online Mapping Exercise Respondents

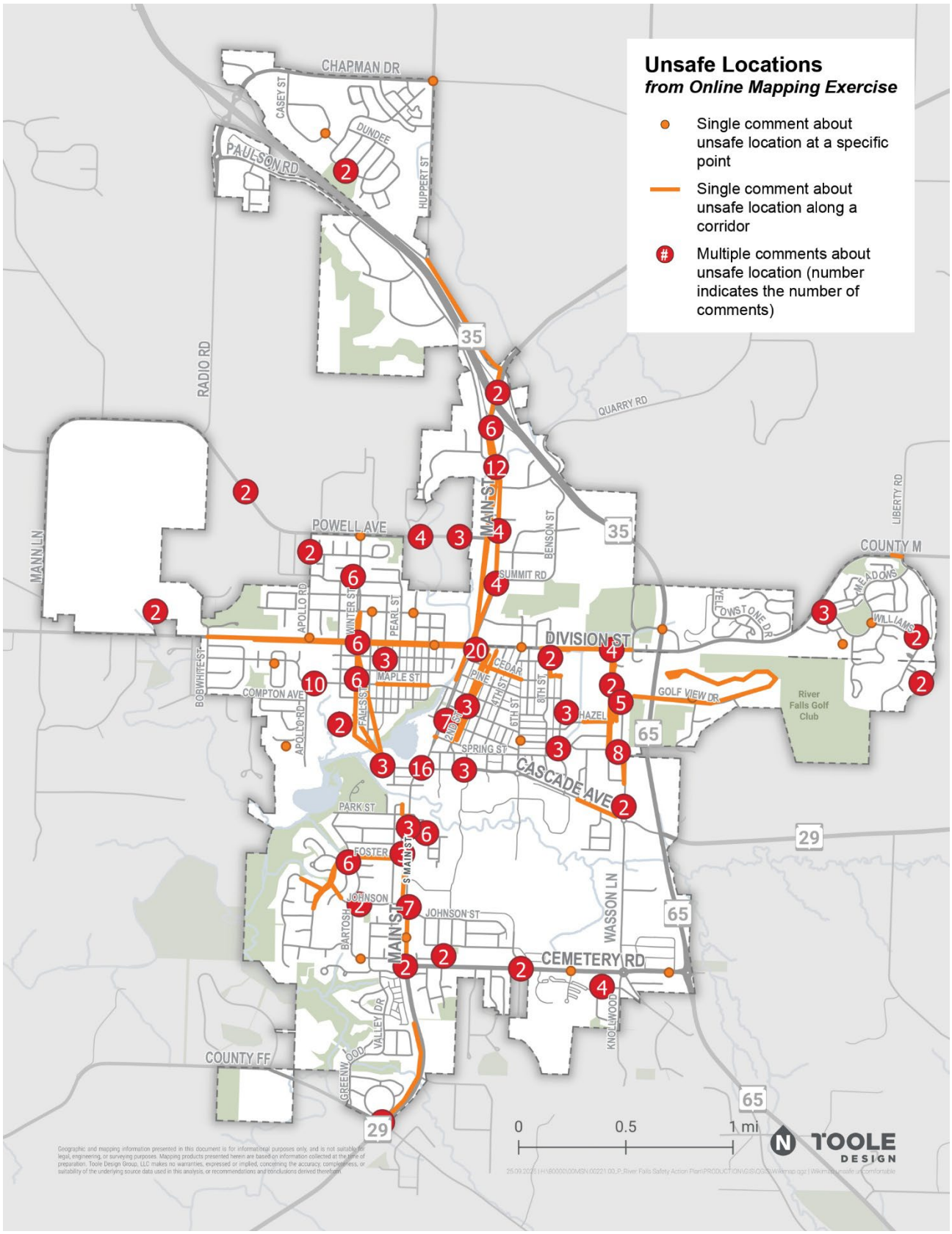
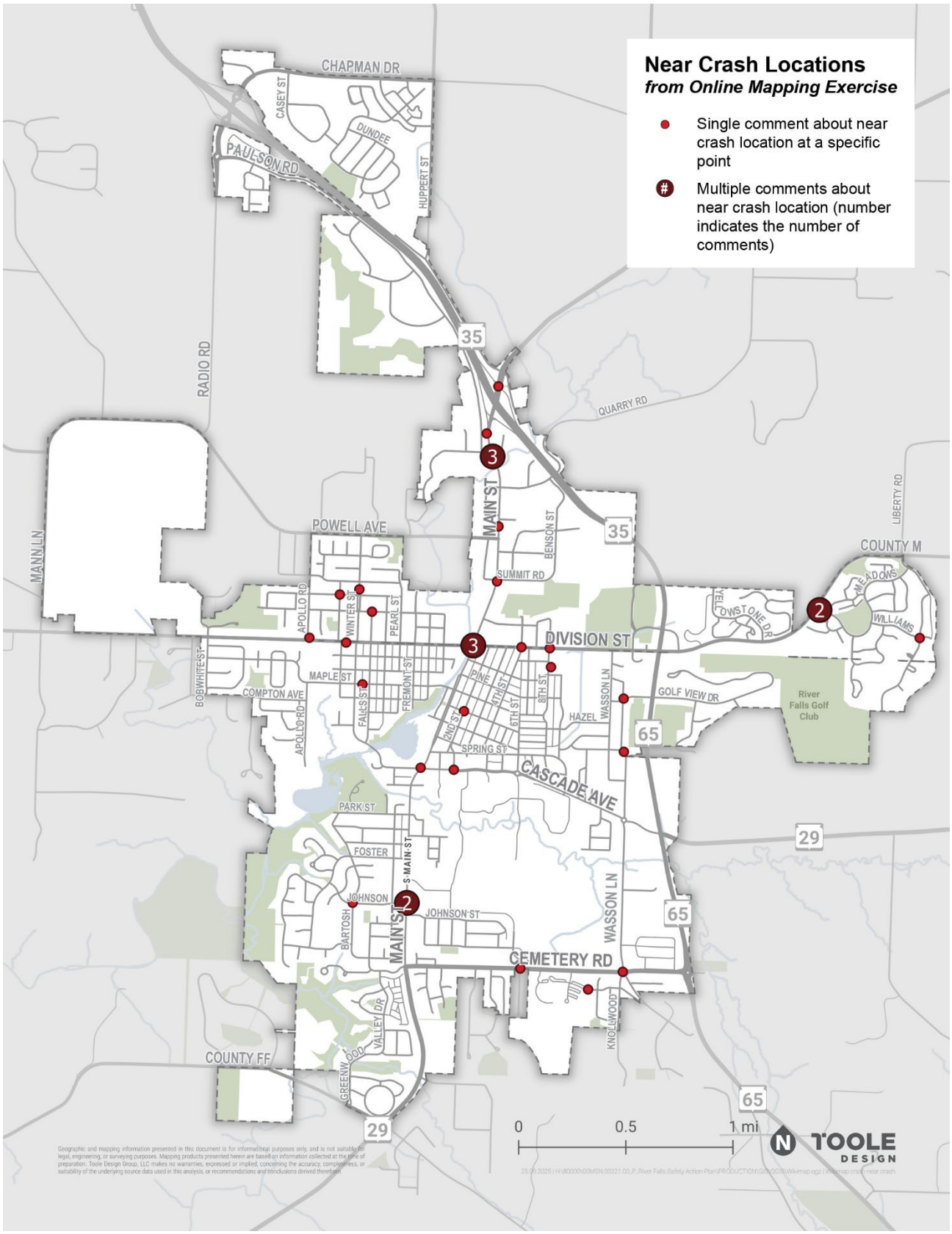



Figure 4. Location of Near Crashes Identified by Online Mapping Exercise Respondents