

Visioning & Issues Identification Public Engagement Summary

The Grand Island Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (GIAMPO) hosted a series of Focus Groups and a Public Visioning Workshop as part of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update. The goal of these public engagement activities was to solicit feedback from Grand Island area residents with regard to transportation safety and operational issues, opportunities for increased and/or improved street, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian connectivity, and ideas for transportation projects they would like to see implemented.

Focus Groups

Three focus group meetings were held on February 4, 2020 at the Grand Island City Hall Community Meeting Room. Attendees of the focus groups represented a diverse range of transportation stakeholders and elected officials and provided GIAMPO staff and the planning team valuable feedback on the existing transportation system and potential areas for improvement. **Table 1** summarizes the three focus groups and includes the number of attendees at each meeting.

Table 1. Focus Group Attendees

Focus Group	Focus Group Description	Number of Attendees
Schools and Transportation	Public and post-secondary institutions, non-profit groups, human services groups, emergency responders, and others operating in the GIAMPO region	18
Major Employers and Economic Development	Area chambers of commerce, economic development corporations, and large employers	8
Elected Officials and Public Agencies	City of Grand Island and City of Wood River public officials	5

Attendees at the Focus Group meetings were given a brief presentation providing an overview of the MPO and the LRTP update, and their role in providing input. Next, they were asked to participate in three activities:

- **Map Your Issue:** Attendees marked their transportation issues and ideas on a map of the GIAMPO area.
- **Future Public Transit Service Brainstorm:** Attendees provided their ideas for public transit issues and potential opportunities.
- **Transportation Priorities:** Attendees selected their top three priorities from a list of eight topics for the future of GIAMPO transportation. Priority areas were:
 - Safety
 - Economic
 - Efficiency and Reliability
 - Innovation
 - Accessibility
 - Resiliency
 - Placemaking
 - Preservation

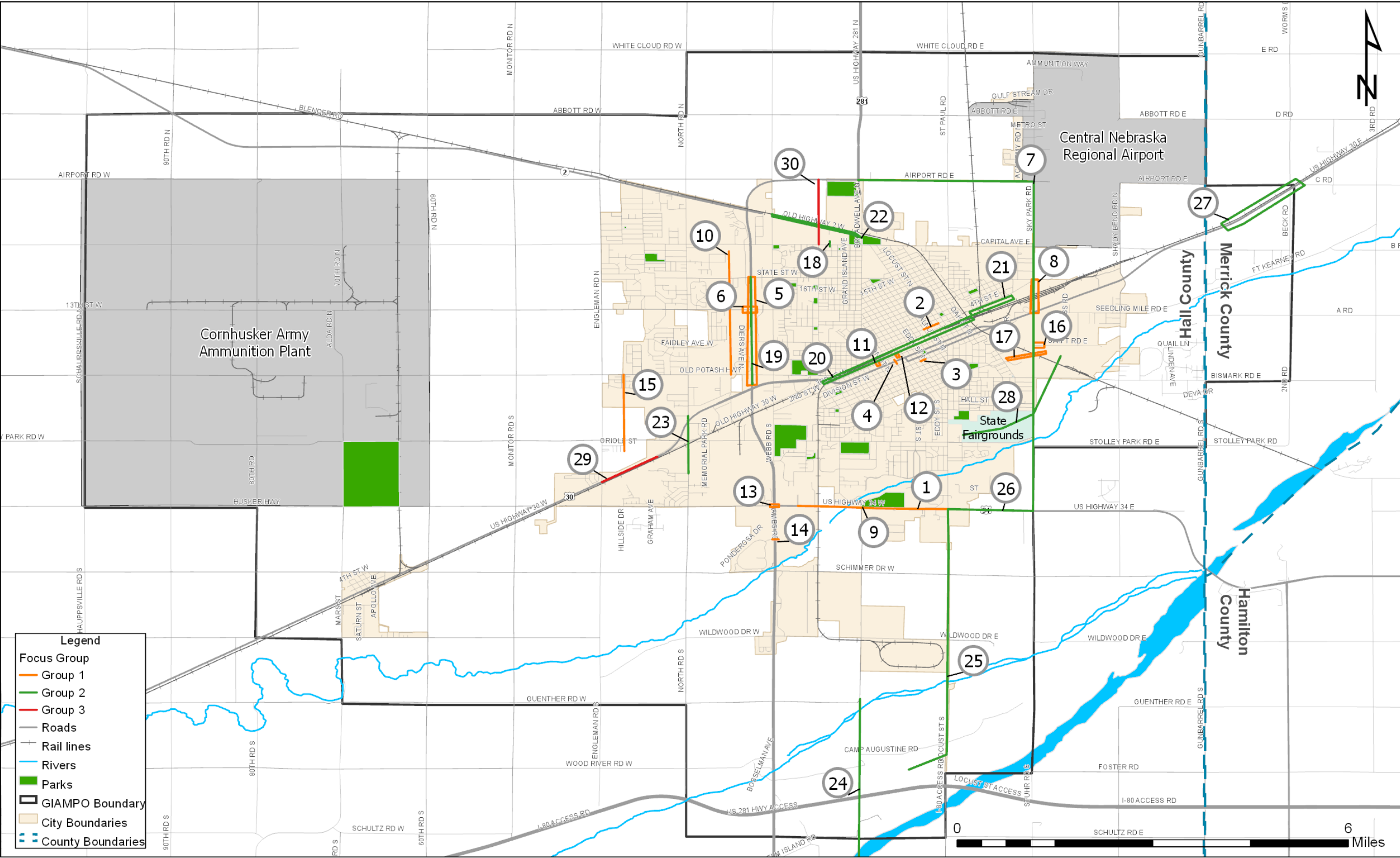
Results of Focus Group Activities

Results from the focus group activities highlighted a range of issues and opportunities for the GIAMPO transportation system. The map in **Figure 1** presents the results of the Map Your Issue Activity, with descriptions of each numbered map item described in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Focus Group Map Issues / Opportunities Map Comments

Focus Group	Comment	
	Map Number	Comment Provided
Group 1	1	Connect apartments to college with pedestrian infrastructure
	2	Trains cause left turning traffic to delay all traffic
	3	On-street parking blocks drivers sight lines
	4	Provide safe pedestrian crossing to library
	5	Improve US 281 pedestrian infrastructure
	6	Close 13th St signals at Diers and US 281 confuse drivers
	7	Improved ring route / designate as US 281
	8	Railroad overpass
	9	Longer turn lane from US 34 to college
	10	Extend Claude Road
	11	Need pedestrian / bicycle crossing
	12	Safer pedestrian crossing of railroad
	13	Improve pedestrian crossing between college and hospital
	14	Consider grade separated crossing
	15	Extend Trail
	16	Truck congestion from JBS Plant
	17	Create bike / pedestrian connection from JBS to rest of city
Group 2	18	Improve midblock crossing
	19	Lack of safe midblock pedestrian crossings
	20	Need more pedestrian crossings of railroad
	21	Gateway to Airport - improve appearance
	22	Plan for future vehicular / pedestrian crossing
	23	Plan for future vehicular / pedestrian crossing
	24	Rail to trail opportunity to Hastings
	25	New trail connection
	26	Improved ring route - designate as US 281
	27	Improved US 30 to Columbus
	28	Extend trail
Group 3	29	Short term safety improvements until US 30 is moved north
	30	Extend Custer Ave

Figure 1. Results of Focus Group's Map Your Issue Activity



The results of the Future Public Transit Service Brainstorm activity indicate the desire of residents and transportation stakeholders for a fixed route transit system, and for greater transit accessibility for all residents, especially those with alternative work schedules and/or children.

Table 3 contains all the transit ideas from the focus groups.

Table 3. Focus Group Transit Service Brainstorm Activity Comments

Comment
Fixed route bus system
Economically-viable, accessible system to all. Consider alternative work schedules
Vouchers for low-income
Bus access for children
Inter-city system (Lincoln, Omaha) (Kearney, Hastings)
Later bus schedule (weekend/holidays)
CRANE 24-hour notice too much, not always enough staff for users
Need more traction (not discussion)

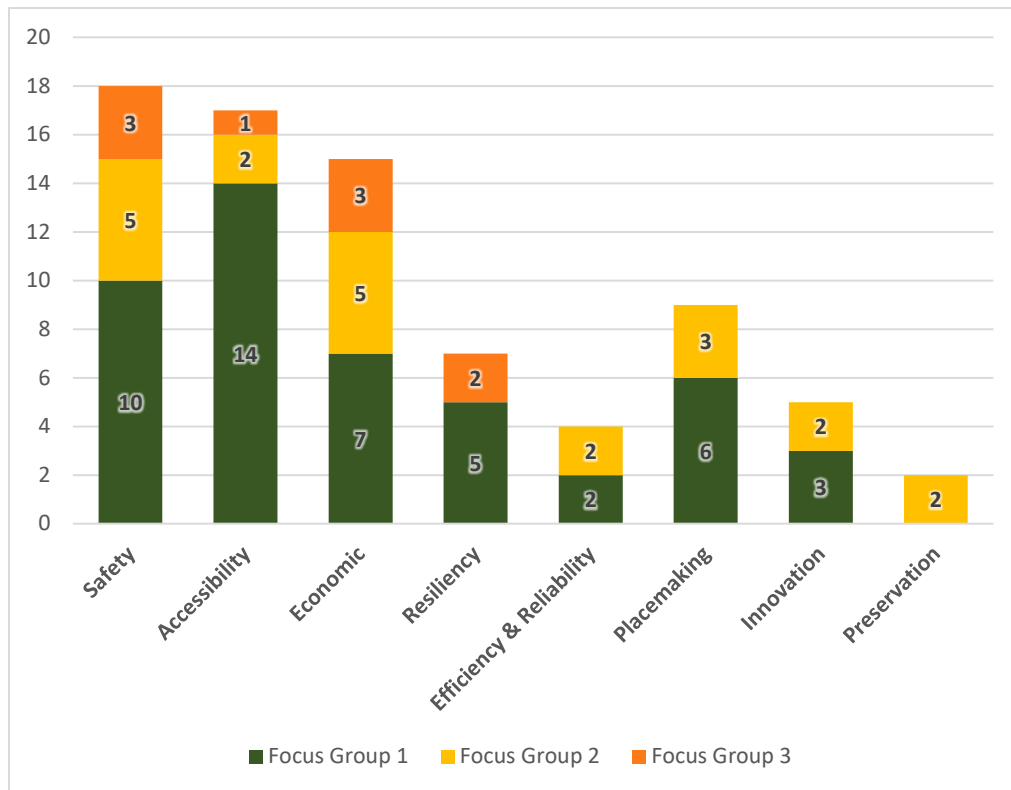
The final focus group activity was about transportation priorities, and asked attendees to place a sticker on the top three areas that should be prioritized in future transportation decisions.

Attendees could choose from the following eight topics:

- **Safety:** Reducing the risk of harm to the users of the Grand Island transportation system.
- **Economic:** Focus on transportation as a means of supporting and promoting the economic vitality of the Grand Island area.
- **Efficiency and Reliability:** Provide for the efficient and reliable movement of people, services, and goods.
- **Innovation:** Incorporate emerging trends and technologies into the transportation system.
- **Accessibility:** The ease of connecting people to goods and services in the Grand Island area, as well as providing choices for different modes of transportation (car, bike, bus, etc.).
- **Resiliency:** The ability of the transportation system to be adaptable and continue providing service when significant impactful events occur.
- **Placemaking:** Integrating the transportation system with land use to provide transportation facilities that fit in with their surrounding neighborhoods and development, and create well-designed places and complete communities.
- **Preservation:** Maintain the existing transportation system in a state of good repair, and plan for a system that can be sustained into the future with reasonably-expected funding sources.

The top three priority areas identified by the focus group were Safety, Accessibility, and Economic. **Figure 2** shows the breakdown of stickers by focus group.

Figure 2. Input Results for Transportation Priorities by Focus Group



Public Visioning Workshop

A Public Visioning Workshop was held the evening of February 4, 2020 at the Grand Island Public Library. The purpose of the workshop was to allow for Grand Island area residents to provide their ideas for the future transportation system and voice issues concerning the existing system in an open house format. When attendees entered the Workshop, the goal was to provide self-guided information to orient them to the plan. There were a series of large, informational boards that encompassed two categories of information:

- **MPO Overview:** The first set of boards welcomed the attendees and described the role and duties of GIAMPO.
- **LRTP Overview:** The next several boards provided an overview of the LRTP update process.

Attendees then made their way through four activities located at different stations across the room:

- **Bicycle and Pedestrian System Mapping:** Attendees reviewed large boards that mapped the existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian system, and then were able to use markers on a large, plotted study area map to record their comments related to safety issues, opportunities for new bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and barriers that exist to bicyclists and pedestrians.
- **Roadway Mapping:** Attendees reviewed large boards that mapped the roadway high-crash intersections and locations crash hot-spots for the years 2014-2018, and a congestion map showing the different areas of Grand Island that currently exhibit lower traffic Levels of Service (LOS). After reviewing these information boards, residents were able to use markers on a large, plotted study area map to record their comments related to roadway safety, congestion, and connectivity issues.
- **Future Public Transit Service Brainstorm:** Attendees were provided markers and a large “brainstorming” sheet of white paper to provide their ideas for future public transit service in the GIAMPO region.
- **Transportation Priorities:** Attendees were provided three stickers to select their top priorities across eight different transportation priority areas, placing stickers on the three they felt the MPO should focus on in future decision-making. The stickers were recorded on a large board with definition of each of the priority areas.

Approximately 35 individuals attended the Public Visioning Workshop.

Results of the Public Visioning Workshop Activities

The Bicycle and Pedestrian System Mapping activity identified several potential areas for future bicycle and pedestrian trail extensions. **Figure 3** presents the input for the bicycle and pedestrian system mapping, with descriptions of each numbered bicycle and pedestrian map item described in **Table 4**.

Figure 4 presents the input for the roadway vehicular system mapping received from the public during the Visioning Workshop, with descriptions of each numbered roadway vehicular map item described in **Table 5**.

Figure 3. Public Input from the Bicycle and Pedestrian System Mapping Activity

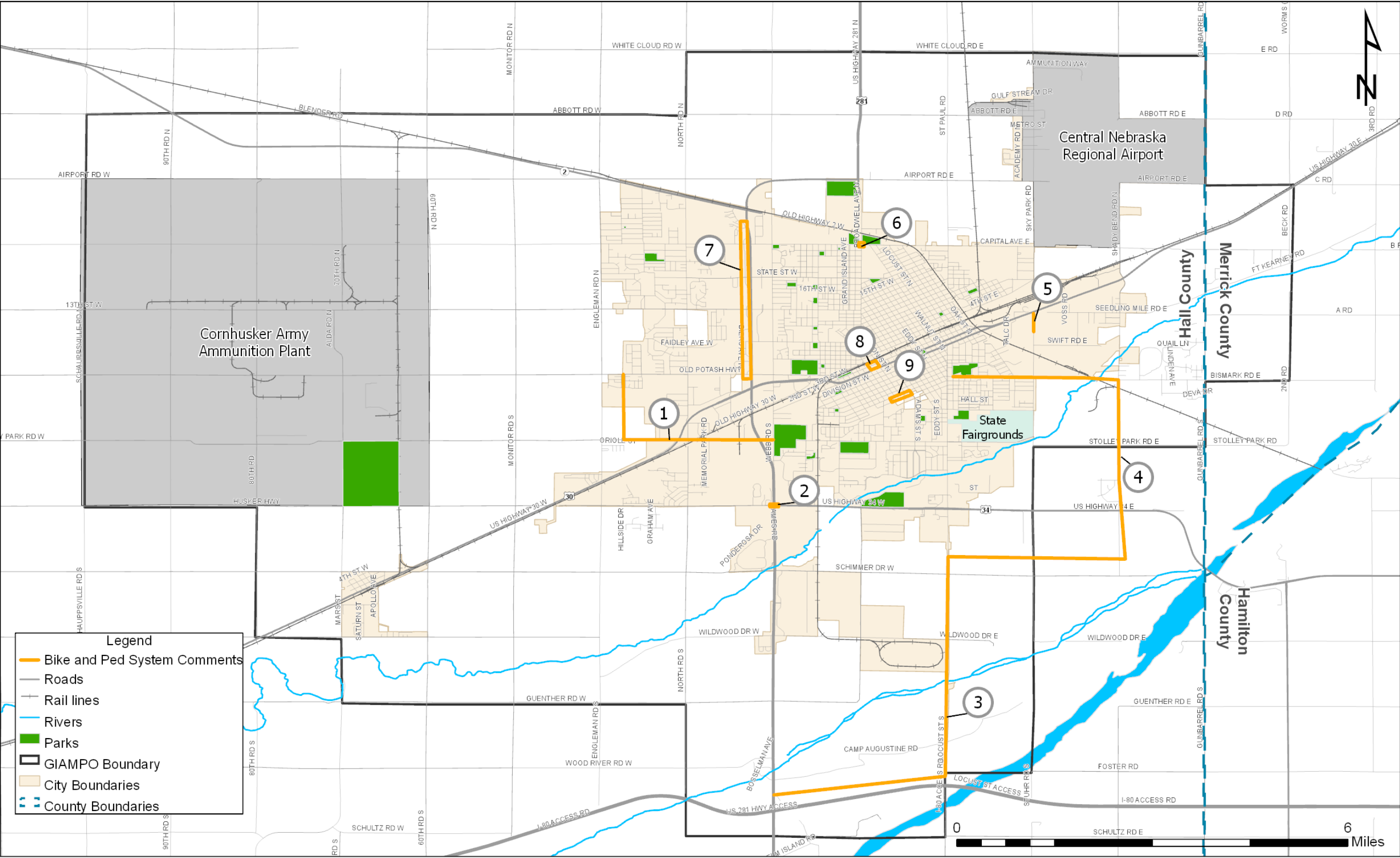


Figure 4. Public Input from the Roadway Vehicular Mapping Activity

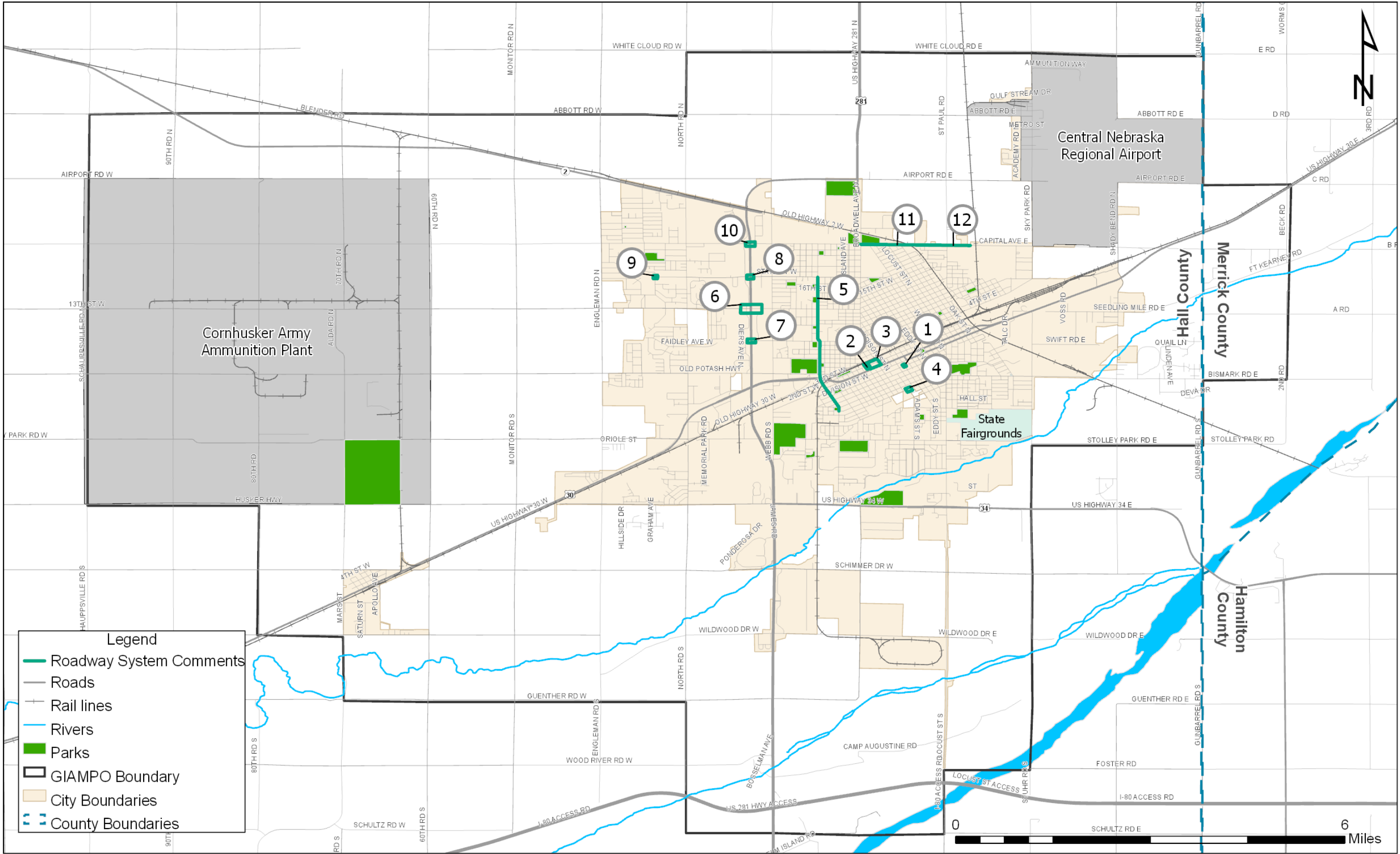


Table 4. Public Workshop Bike and Pedestrian Issues / Opportunities Map Comments

Comment Map Number	Comment Provided
1	Connect Trails
2	Improve pedestrian crossing
3	New trail connection to Mormon Island
4	Extend trail
5	Need sidewalks
6	Work with railroad (UP) on extending trail
7	Improve US 281 pedestrian infrastructure

Table 5. Public Workshop Roadway Vehicular Issues / Opportunities Map Comments

Comment Map Number	Comment Provided
1	Pedestrian crossing
2	Need pedestrian / bicycle crossing
3	Build overpass and implement quiet zones
4	Hard to cross - Adams/Anna needs traffic signal
5	Desire for added lane
6	Long delay for E/W traffic
7	Need traffic signal at Faidley / Diers
8	No southbound and northbound lefts
9	Consider a roundabout
10	Longer left turn arrow
11	Congested - consider widening with more lanes
12	Congested - consider widening with more lanes

Attendees of the Public Visioning Workshop shared their ideas for the future public transit system in a similar brainstorming activity the Focus Groups participated in. The results of this activity for the Public Visioning Workshop uncovered some of the same issues discussed in that morning's Focus Groups. **Table 6** summarizes the comments made during the public transit brainstorming activity at the Public Visioning Workshop.

Table 6. Public Visioning Workshop Future Public Transit Service Brainstorm Activity Comments

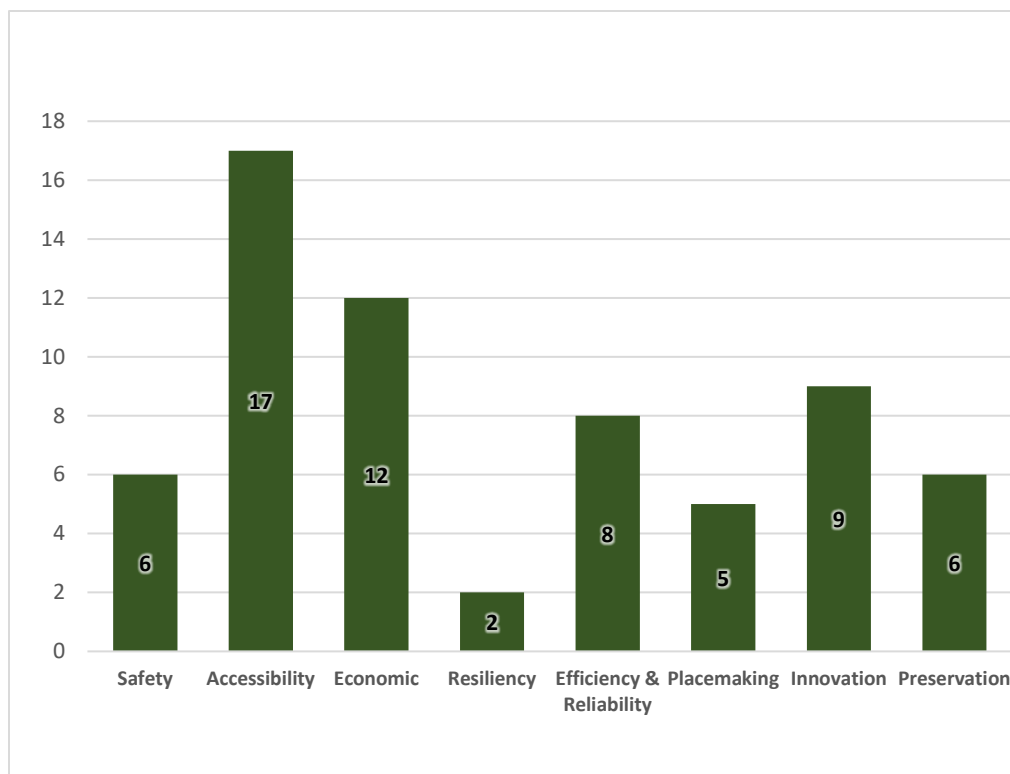
Comment
Flexible fixed routes
Extended hours of service
Same day service for paratransit
Provide on-going, social media marketing
Late evening/early morning service to factories

The top three priority areas in the final Transportation Priorities activity were:

- Accessibility (17 stickers)
- Economic (12 stickers)
- Innovation (9 stickers)

Figure 5 presents the total breakdown of Transportation Priorities input.

Figure 5. Input Results for Public Visioning Workshop Transportation Priorities



Community Youth Council Meeting

A third opportunity to solicit feedback from Grand Island area residents came at the Grand Island Community Youth Council (CYC) meeting held on Monday, February 10, 2020 at the Grand Island City Hall Community Meeting Room. The CYC members are sophomores, juniors, and seniors from area high schools. During this meeting, a member of the 2045 LRTP planning team gave a brief presentation outlining an overview of transportation planning, the role of GIAMPO, the LRTP process, and initial technical analysis results. After the presentation, members of the CYC were invited to provide their insight into the issues and opportunities facing the GIAMPO transportation system, similar to the activities held during the focus group meetings.

Based on the feedback from the CYC group, the main challenges of the existing transportation system are:

- Safer pedestrian crossings, especially for students of Grand Island Senior High School crossing State Street.
- Traffic queues on US 281 and Diers Avenue that build up due to close spacing of signalized intersections.
- Lack of sidewalks for students, especially along North Road and adjacent schools.

Some opportunities for the existing transportation system that were voiced by the CYC group were:

- The implementation of innovative traffic control measures to calm traffic in busier parts of the City of Grand Island.
- Widening of Sturh Road to accommodate freight truck traffic, particularly near the JBS plant.