

CATS

Partners in Progress Meeting

Results for Austin Chamber of Commerce
Chicago, Illinois

October, 2005



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Public Outreach Report

Austin Chamber of Commerce Chicago, Illinois

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On June 29, 2005, staff from the Chicago Area Transportation Study took part in a “Lunch & Learn” meeting for the Austin Chamber of Commerce at Loretto Hospital, 645 Central Avenue, just steps away from the busy Eisenhower Expressway.

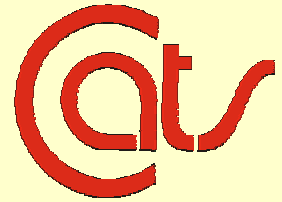
CATS held the meeting to educate and involve Austin area businesses, entrepreneurs, elected officials and residents in the transportation planning and decision-making process. By increasing their level of awareness on how the process operates, we sought to demonstrate the impact each community can have in shaping the future of transportation through community involvement. We also hoped to gain the trust and continued input and support of Loretto Hospital and its many clients.

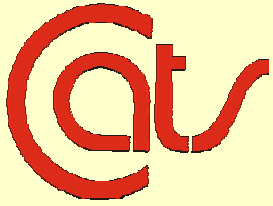
Keynote speakers were Jock Hardy, CATS Director of Communications, who discussed the Regional Transportation Plan, and Jim Kedvaras of IDOT, who discussed the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program.

We were joined at this “Partners in Progress” meeting by State Senator Kimberly A. Lightford and Steve Drucker, President/CEO of Loretto Hospital. The senator and other attendees identified several key transportation issues: congestion, public transportation service cuts, poor road conditions, limited accessibility for seniors and people with disabilities and railroad crossing delays. This meeting afforded staff from CATS and the CREATE program a birds-eye view of the Eisenhower Expressway and its direct impact on congestion in the Austin community, home to more than 117,000 residents.

CATS would like to extend a special note of thanks to Camille Lilly, Executive Director of the Austin Chamber of Commerce, and Belinda Burgess, Special Assistant to Senator Lightford, for their role in ensuring that the event was a success.

Each meeting participant was asked to fill out a brief Transportation Opinion Survey designed to identify their transportation concerns and issues. It is our intent to provide each community we visit with this survey to better understand the transportation strengths, weaknesses and needs from a local perspective. Survey results can found on the following pages.





Austin Transportation Opinion Survey Results

The following conclusions are to be regarded as general in nature. The results are not a product of rigorous quantitative or qualitative analysis. In several instances, the survey offered multiple options for answers, and as expected most respondents chose more than one option. Therefore, the responses to some questions add up to more than 100 percent.

The number of people completing the Transportation Opinion Survey at Loretto Hospital was 17: six males, ten females and one not specifying gender. The average age of the respondents is 47 years, with the youngest being 19 and the oldest 80. One hundred percent said they are employed, and 12 percent said they are also students at universities or community colleges in the Chicago area. Seventy-six percent said they can get to work using public transportation, while only half the students can. Slightly more than half (53%) said they use public transportation for non-work purposes.

The primary means of transportation for 82 percent of the respondents is driving an auto, van, pickup or SUV. Twenty-nine percent ride the El or subway and 12 percent ride CTA, Pace or paratransit buses. None use Metra commuter rail. Twelve percent each report being passengers in autos, vans, pickups or SUVs, walking or taking taxis to their destinations. Six percent ride bicycles.

Equal numbers of respondents (29 percent each) said they do not utilize public transportation because service is infrequent, it doesn't serve their destinations, it's too slow, it's unsafe or they don't have information about available service. Twenty-four percent said service is too expensive and 18 percent said it doesn't serve where they live.



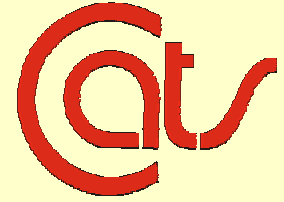
Since the vast majority of the respondents drive to their destinations, their chief concerns are traffic congestion (94%) and roads in poor condition (76%). Intersection delays (35%), railroad crossing delays (29%) and inadequate signage (29%) were also cited as significant problems encountered in daily travels.

Television (47%) is the primary source for transportation information for survey respondents. Radio (41%), the Internet (35%) and newspapers (18%) are other major sources of information. Only six percent said they receive information from the RTA/CTA/Metra/Pace and 24 percent said they receive no information whatsoever.

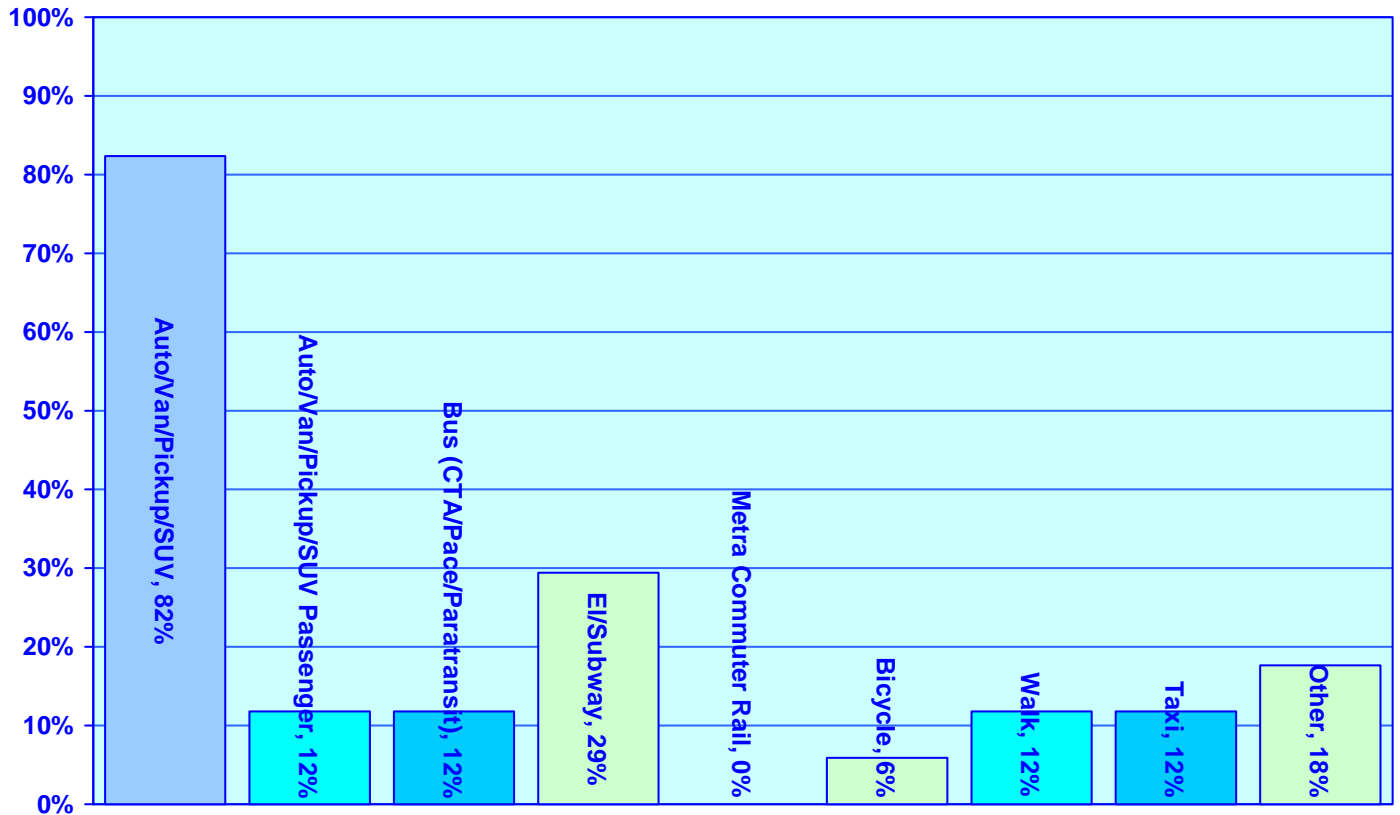
When asked to comment on what could be done to improve the transportation system in northeastern Illinois, the respondents indicated the following categories where improvements are needed:

- Widening the Eisenhower Expressway;
- More bus service;
- More public involvement in transportation decisions.

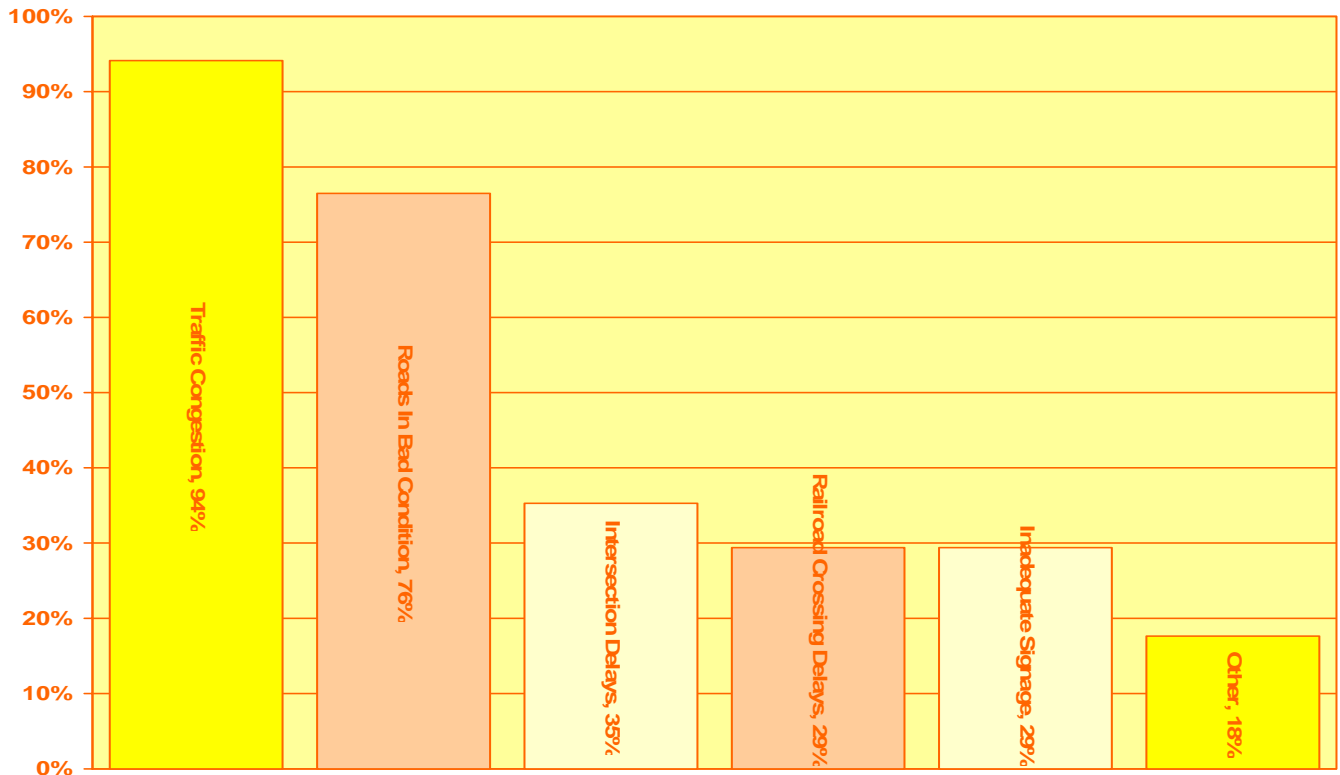
The charts on the following pages give breakdowns on responses CATS received from participants at the Austin meeting.



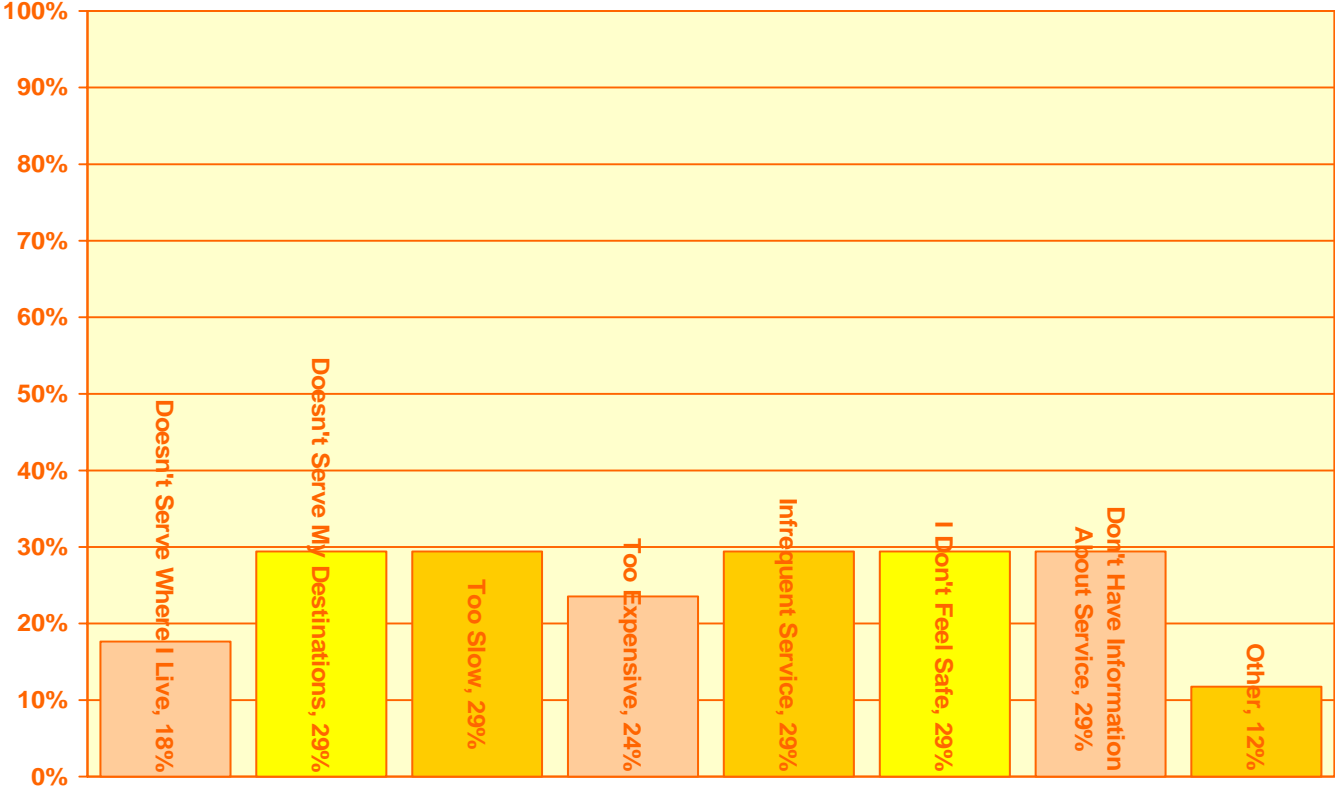
Question: What types of transportation do you typically use?



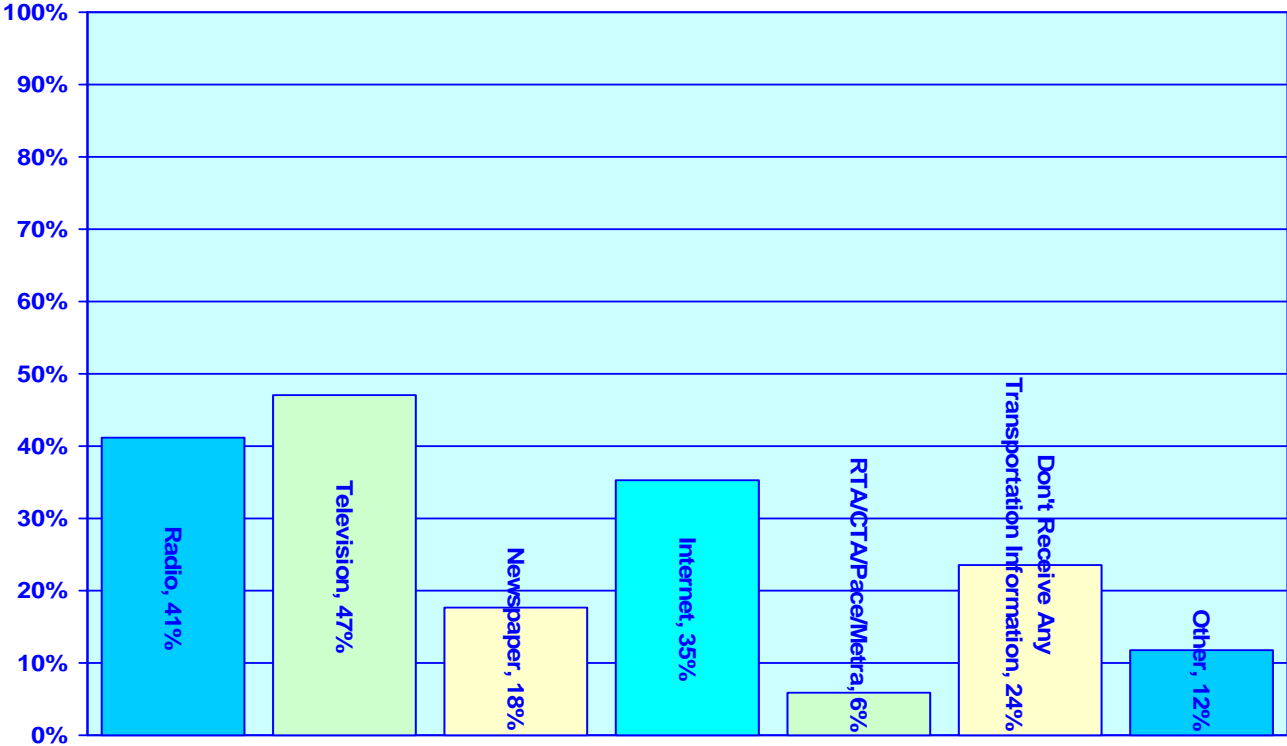
Question: What types of problems have you experienced in your daily travel?

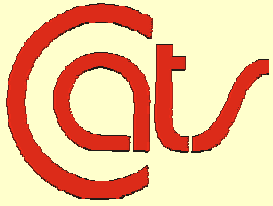


Question: Public transportation problems?



Question: How do you receive transportation information?





Written Responses To Survey Questions

Question 2A. What types of problems have you observed or experienced in your daily travels? Other (please specify).

Inadequate stop signs, especially for disabled and seniors.

Too many bottlenecks – for west and south side areas.

Hard access to transit stations over expressways; not ADA accessible or unsafe to walk to, no bike provisions.

Traffic on I-290.

Question 2B. Public transportation related problems. Other (please specify).

Service being cut in Austin area of Chicago, IL.

See access problems above.

It's ok.



Question 2C. Problems with other types of transportation.

Laramie avenue bridge at Lexington to Roosevelt Rd.

Too many railroads located in Maywood area

Too much cut back on some CTA bus lines.

Need to open EI stops in key community areas. (The) Austin community (is) the largest community area in Chicago, with over 117,000 residents.

EI stops.

Trains causing problems at crossings.



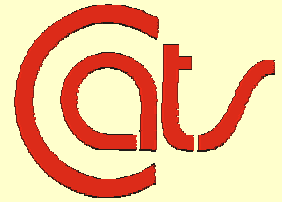
Question 3. Please tell us what you like about the transportation system in northeastern Illinois. Feel free to comment on all types of transportation.

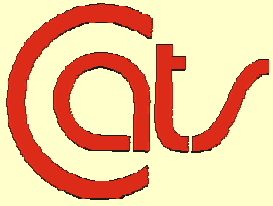
Easy access to public transportation.

Green line – more regular; coming on time.

(I) like the EI lines in (the) Chicago area, but (they) need to be extended to serve more areas.

The EIs are usually efficient and reliable.





Question 16. In your opinion, what can be done to improve the transportation system in northeastern Illinois? (Please consider improvements to all types of transportation.)

Expand Eisenhower lanes.

Better monitoring of drivers who speed through residential areas, i.e. speed bumps, more stop signs.

Time schedule of evening hours or midnight to 4 a.m. for travel of (freight) trains.

Truck routes thru city.

More buses; faster service.

Work closer with the city to involve more entities in the process. Stakeholders: aldermen, chambers, schools and churches. Work with tollway on the maintenance on the land.

More funding for capital and operating of public transit.

On the expressway, opening up more lanes will make it easy for traffic congestion to lessen.

Need to have more community representation on the CATS board. Need to open the bidder process.

Extend the public transportation to (the) west down I-290.

