

CATS

Partners in Progress Meeting

Results for Elmhurst League of Women Voters
Elmhurst, Illinois

July, 2005



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Public Outreach Report

Elmhurst League of Women Voters Elmhurst, Illinois

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On the evening of March 16, 2005 the Chicago Area Transportation Study enjoyed a meeting with the esteemed women of the Elmhurst League of Women Voters. Thanks to the insight and direction of Ms. Jan Dorner, president of ELWV, CATS staff and members of the CREATE Program and IDOT enjoyed an opportunity to share and explore the ever-evolving world of transportation planning.

In our continued attempts to inform, educate and involve the public in the transportation planning process, we were honored by the personal invitation of Ruth Fox and Jan Dorner of the ELWV to make a presentation on the planning process, the opportunities for public input, and the overall benefits to active and informed communities and organizations.

Our keynote speakers included CATS Acting Executive Director Don Kopec, who discussed the 2030 RTP; IDOT Area Programmer Roger Valente, who discussed local road projects; and Union Pacific Railroad/CREATE Program Representative Tom Zapler, who covered the efforts of the State of Illinois, the City of Chicago and passenger and freight railroads to identify needed improvements designed to help reduce the impact of increasing freight traffic on the city and outlying communities.

This "Partners in Progress" meeting was both "informative and engaging," according to the 25 guests seated in the comfortable quarters of the Elmhurst Public Library. Our speakers were presented with an array of transportation inquiries, ranging from tentative local projects like York Rd., to the likely local impacts caused by the proposed O'Hare Airport expansion. It was an evening that afforded everyone an opportunity to increase their knowledge, ask questions and have a voice in the planning process.

All meeting participants were asked to fill out the CATS Transportation Opinion Survey. This survey was designed to help identify local transportation concerns and issues affecting communities throughout this region. It is our intent to provide each community we visit with this survey to better understand the transportation strengths, deficiencies and needs from a local perspective. Survey results can be found on the following pages.





Elmhurst 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 in Elmhurst was 16: 15 females and 1 male. The average age of the respondents is 65 years, with the youngest being 19 and the oldest 88. Twenty-five percent said they are employed, and 56 percent said they are retired. None are students at universities or community colleges in the Chicago area. Among the employed respondents, only two said they can get to work using public transportation and two said they cannot use public transportation.

The primary means of transportation for 94 percent of the respondents is driving an auto, van, pickup or SUV. Ninety-four percent said they ride Metra commuter rail, and 75 percent said they walk to their destinations. More respondents take taxis (44%) than ride as passengers in autos, vans, pickups or SUVs (38%). Thirty-one percent ride bicycles, 19 percent use the El/subway, and six percent ride CTA, Pace or paratransit buses.

Respondents said their chief concerns with public transportation are that it doesn't serve their destinations (63%), where they live (38%), infrequent service (44%) and they have no information about available service (44%). Only 13 percent said service is too slow, while six percent each said it is too expensive or unsafe.



Since the vast majority of the respondents drive to their destinations, their chief concern (88%) is traffic congestion. Railroad crossing delays (69%), poor roads (50%), intersection delays (50%) and inadequate signage (25%) were also cited as significant problems encountered in daily travels.

The Internet (50%) is the primary source for transportation information for survey respondents. Radio and newspapers were cited by 31 percent each, and 25 percent get their transportation information from the RTA/CTA/Metra/Pace. More respondents (25%) said they receive no information than receive information from television (19%).

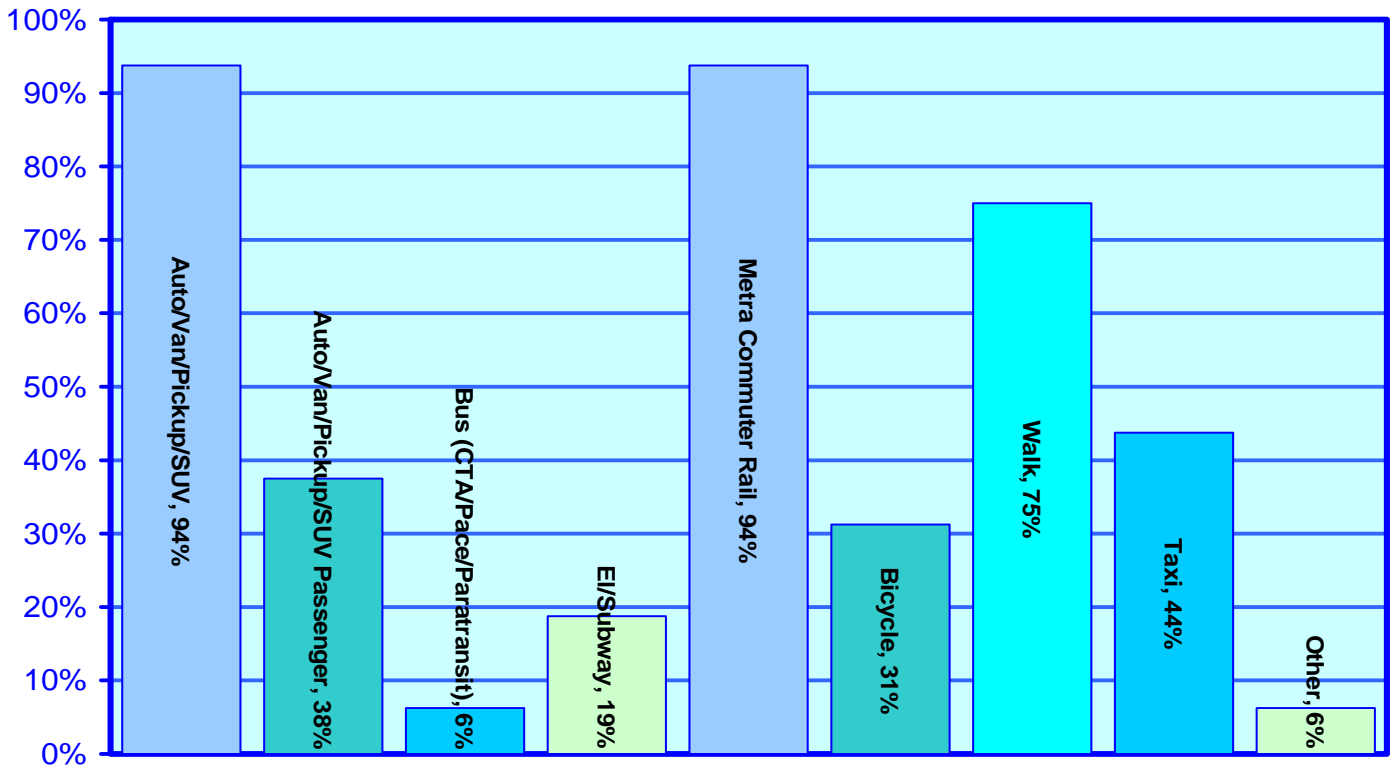
When asked to comment on what could be done to improve the transportation system in northeastern Illinois, the respondents indicated the following categories where improvements are needed:

- Public transportation;
- More and better signage;
- Bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

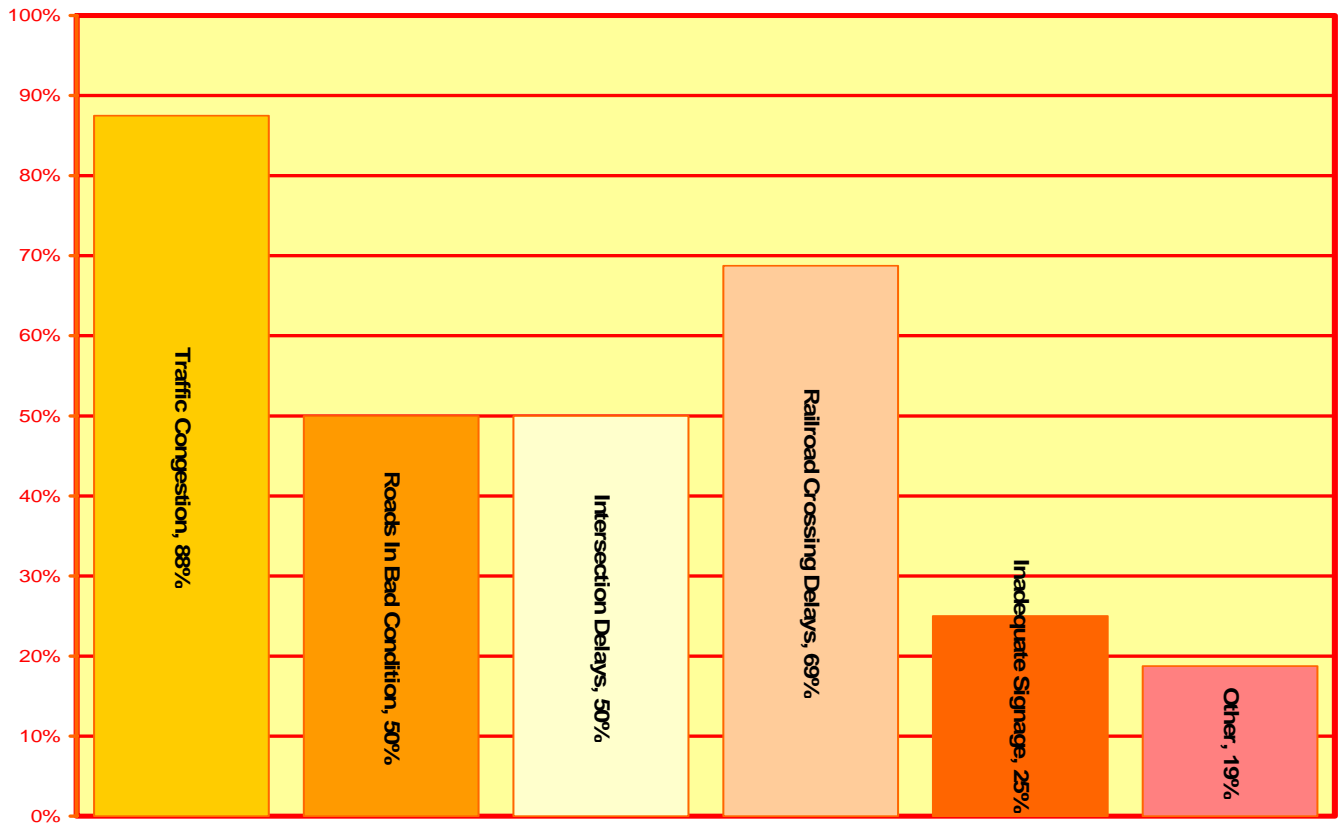
The charts on the following pages give breakdowns on responses CATS received from participants at the Elmhurst meeting.



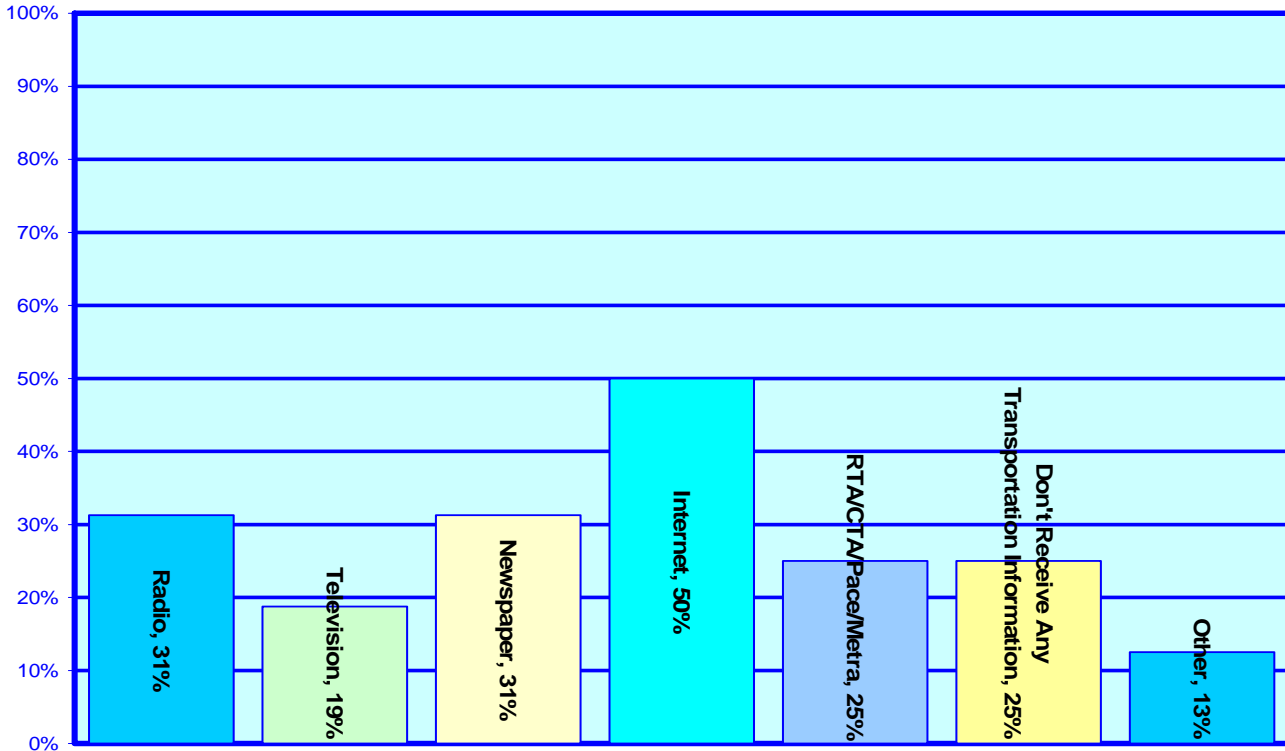
Question: What types of transportation do you typically use?



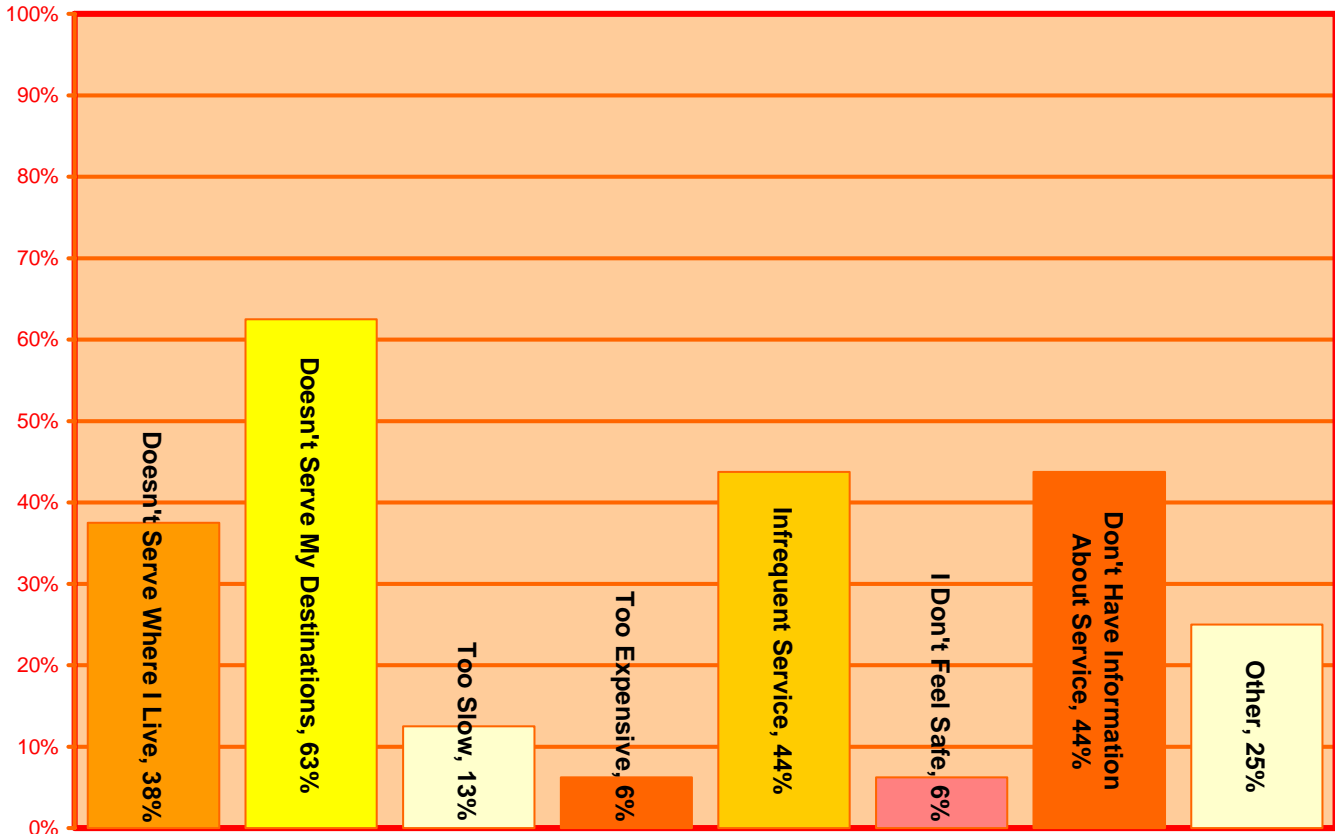
Question: What types of problems have you experienced in your daily travel?

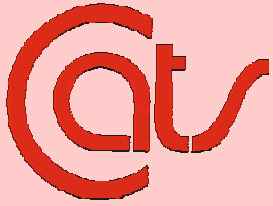


Question: How do you receive transportation information?



Question: Public transportation problems?





Written Responses To Survey Questions

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

Road rage, cross streets – people don't pay attention to stop signs. Railroad crossing delays in (the) center of Elmhurst.

Inadequate signage – Often, (the) type is too small to read easily. Poor law enforcement – speeding cars, weaving in and out, (are) very distracting and make driving harder, especially when also trying to read signage.

(We) need more over/under passes in Wheaton.

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

Train service is infrequent.

It doesn't serve the places I need to travel to, except into the city.

Freight trains interfere with traffic of passenger trains. Freight trains separate cities and towns. Service is infrequent on Sunday.

(We) need more late Metra trains. I'd like to see transportation line maps posted in public places to know more about available lines.



Question 2C. Problems with other types of transportation.

Walking/cycling on Prairie Path. Crossing streets.

Takes too long to get through toll booths.

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

Worry at Amtrak – Is that one of your responsible concerns?

Trains – CTA in Chicago.

I enjoy Metra – reading, relaxing. I enjoy the local shopping – walking or bike-riding to the 7/11, White Hen, etc.



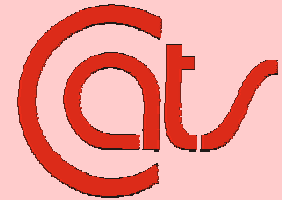
Metra works well for going into the City of Chicago.

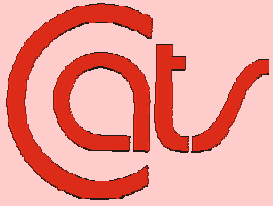
Metra train is reliable and usually comfortable.

Metra commuter line (Union Pacific) from Elmhurst to downtown Chicago provides good transportation to the city.

Forcing drivers to use I-Pass seems to have helped alleviate tollway congestion.

I would like it better if the transportation, i.e. buses and trains, ran more frequently. I use public transportation as often as I can and love to do so. I can work and ride!





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.)

Need public transportation which goes north and south.

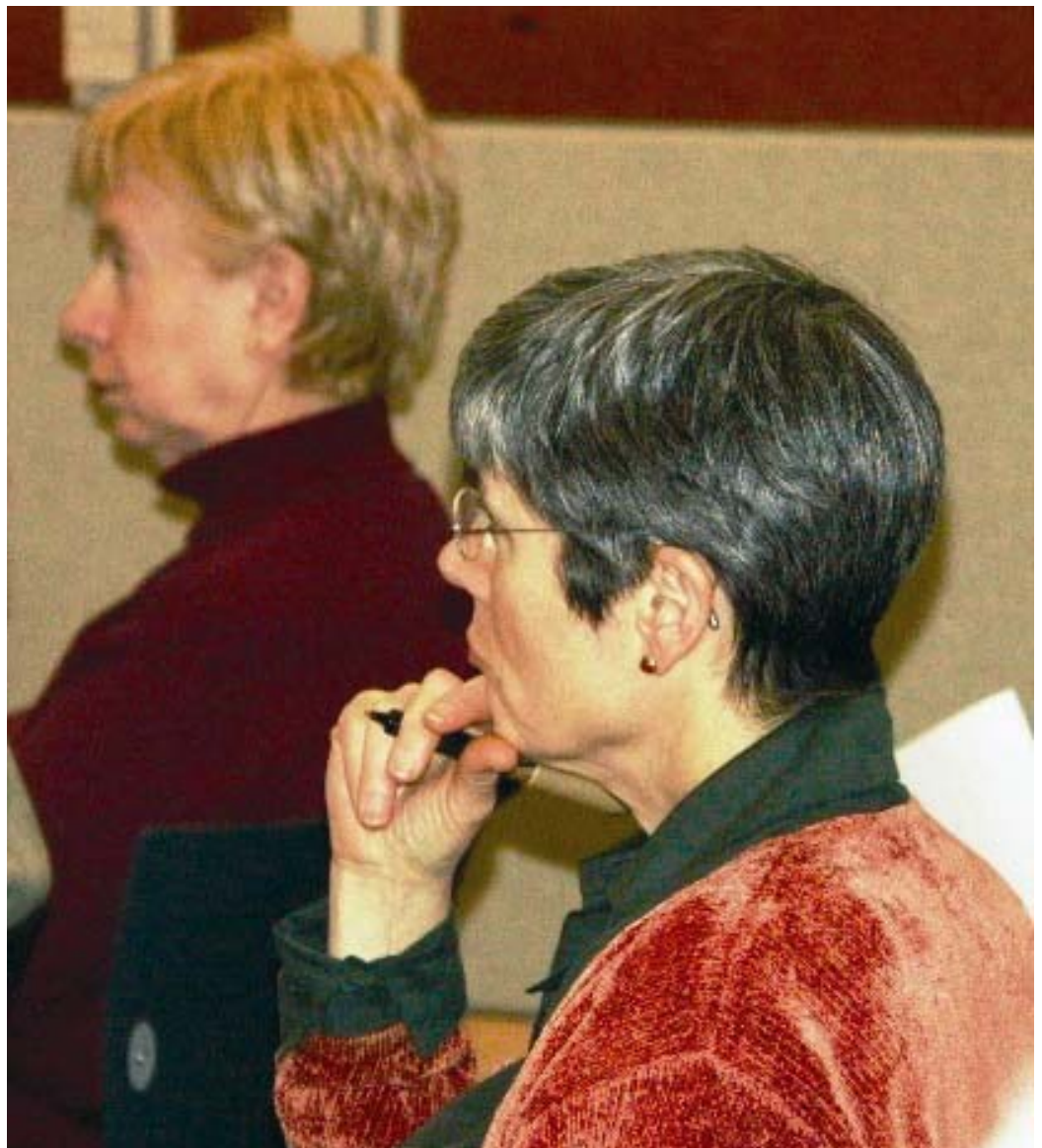
There could be more knowledge of the area.

Improve coordination of transportation delivery systems and user groups. Better materials for construction. More money committed to R and D for continuous improvement. Include multimode user mindset to all planning, such as bike lanes with new road construction or redesign.

Let the public know what is available, like transferring from train to the CTA in Oak Park to get to various parts of Chicago.

Tell everybody else to stop driving but me. This is the attitude!

The CREATE plan sounds good. Rail from O'Hare to Midway.



Encourage carpooling, van pooling. Better policing of roads to discourage bad driving (i.e. running thru yellow-red lights, not stopping at stop signs). Provide disincentives for large cars, SUVs.

More and better signage. Larger print on signs. More electronic signs on highways giving traffic and road conditions. Smaller buses or other conveyances for small communities to reduce use of cars.

Promote more mass transit/bicycle use – taking bikes on mass transit. Elmhurst needs to find ways to accommodate rollerblades, bicycles, skateboards downtown. Crosswalks, especially not in intersections, need better signaling to let drivers know someone is crossing. (In Seattle, some have lights in the pavement that flash when in use.) It's very difficult to get into Chicago neighborhoods that are not the Loop.

More frequent train services to and from city. More frequent buses. Giving all directions earlier and later running buses. Buses going north and south. Trains and single rail going north and south. Rail like Aurora and Elgin. Prefer public transportation rather than increased roads.

