

CATS

Partners in Progress Meetings

Results for January-March, 2005

August, 2005



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Public Outreach Report

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During the first quarter of 2005, staff from the Chicago Area Transportation Study took part in seven "Partners in Progress" community outreach events in northeastern Illinois. The events were held to inform, educate and involve the public in the transportation planning process.

Presentations were given to groups of varying sizes representing chambers of commerce, senior citizens and community organizations as part of CATS' overall outreach efforts in advance of the 2006 update of the Regional Transportation Plan. Some aspects of the presentations, such as how the planning process works and how the public can get involved, were generic to all audiences. Other aspects, such as scheduled construction projects, were aimed at the specific audience being addressed.

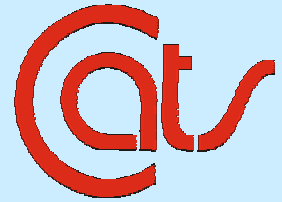
The meeting schedule and participants were as follows:

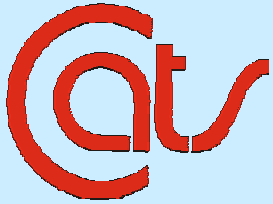
- The Green Oaks, Libertyville, Mundelein and Vernon Hills Chambers of Commerce on January 18.
- The Crystal Lake, McHenry Area, Algonquin/Lake-in-the-Hills, Cary-Grove, Huntley, Marengo-Union and Woodstock Chambers of Commerce on January 19.
- The Albany Terrace Apartments, a Chicago Housing Authority senior citizens residence, on February 9.
- The Fox Lake Chamber of Commerce on February 22.
- The Orland Park, Tinley Park and Homer Glen Chambers of Commerce on March 15.
- The Elmhurst League of Women Voters on March 16.
- The Village of Dixmoor on March 23.

Speakers at the meetings included various CATS staff members and representatives from the freight railroads and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

All meeting participants were asked to fill out Transportation Opinion Surveys to help identify local concerns and issues affecting their communities. Survey results were then tabulated, put into reports and sent to the participating organizations, local elected officials, and the Public Involvement Task Force, the Regional Transportation Planning Committee and the Work Program Committee at CATS.

Survey results for the entire first quarter can be found on the following pages.





First Quarter Transportation Opinion Survey Results

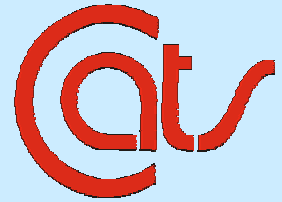
The following conclusions are to be regarded as general in nature. The results are not a product of rigorous quantitative or qualitative analysis. In several instances, the survey offered multiple options for answers, and as expected most respondents chose more than one option. Therefore, the responses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

The number of people completing the Transportation Opinion Survey in the first quarter of 2005 was 363: 150 males, 207 females and six not specifying gender. The average age of the respondents is 52 years, with the youngest being 15 and the oldest 88. Eighty-one percent said they are employed, three percent don't work and 15 percent said they are retired. Two percent are students at a university or community college in the Chicago area. Among the employed respondents, 15 percent said they can get to work using public transportation, with 62 percent saying they cannot, and five percent saying they were unsure.

Among the employed respondents, 53 percent said they use public transportation for non-work purposes, and 30 percent said they don't.

The primary means of transportation for 87 percent of the respondents is driving an auto, van, pickup or SUV. Thirty-eight percent walk to their destinations. Thirty-one percent report riding as passengers in autos, vans, pickups or SUVs, the same percentage as those who use Metra commuter rail. More respondents ride bicycles (21%) than the bus (14%), subway/El (12%) or taxis (12%), which is probably a reflection of most of the surveys coming from suburban areas.





Since the vast majority of the respondents drive to their destinations, their chief concern (85%) is traffic congestion. Poor road conditions (60%), and intersection delays (47%) were also cited as major problems, with railroad crossing delays (36%) and inadequate signage (16%) seen as significant but lesser concerns.

The relatively low usage of public transportation can be explained by the following survey answers: it doesn't serve my destinations (33%), service is infrequent (33%) and it doesn't serve where I live (29%). Other problems cited include slow service (20%), lack of information about available service (16%), expensive service (11%) and feeling unsafe (9%).

The radio (53%) is the primary source for transportation information for survey respondents. Television (49%), newspapers (33%) and the Internet (26%) were also major information sources. Twenty-one percent said they receive their information from the RTA/CTA/Metra/Pace, while eight percent said they receive no information from any source.

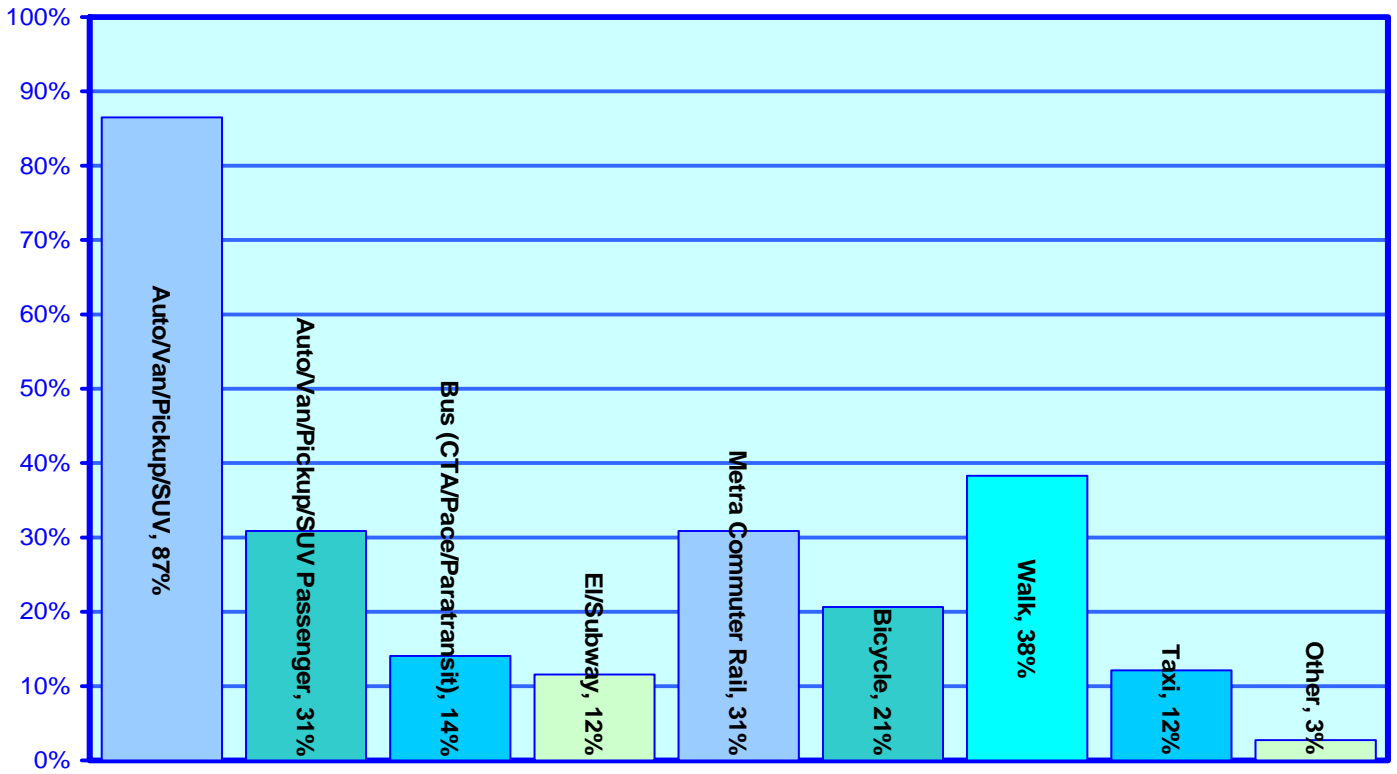
When asked to comment on what could be done to improve the transportation system in northeastern Illinois, the respondents indicated the following categories where improvements are needed:

- More public transportation;
- Wider roads to improve traffic flow;
- Better coordination of road repair projects;
- More bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

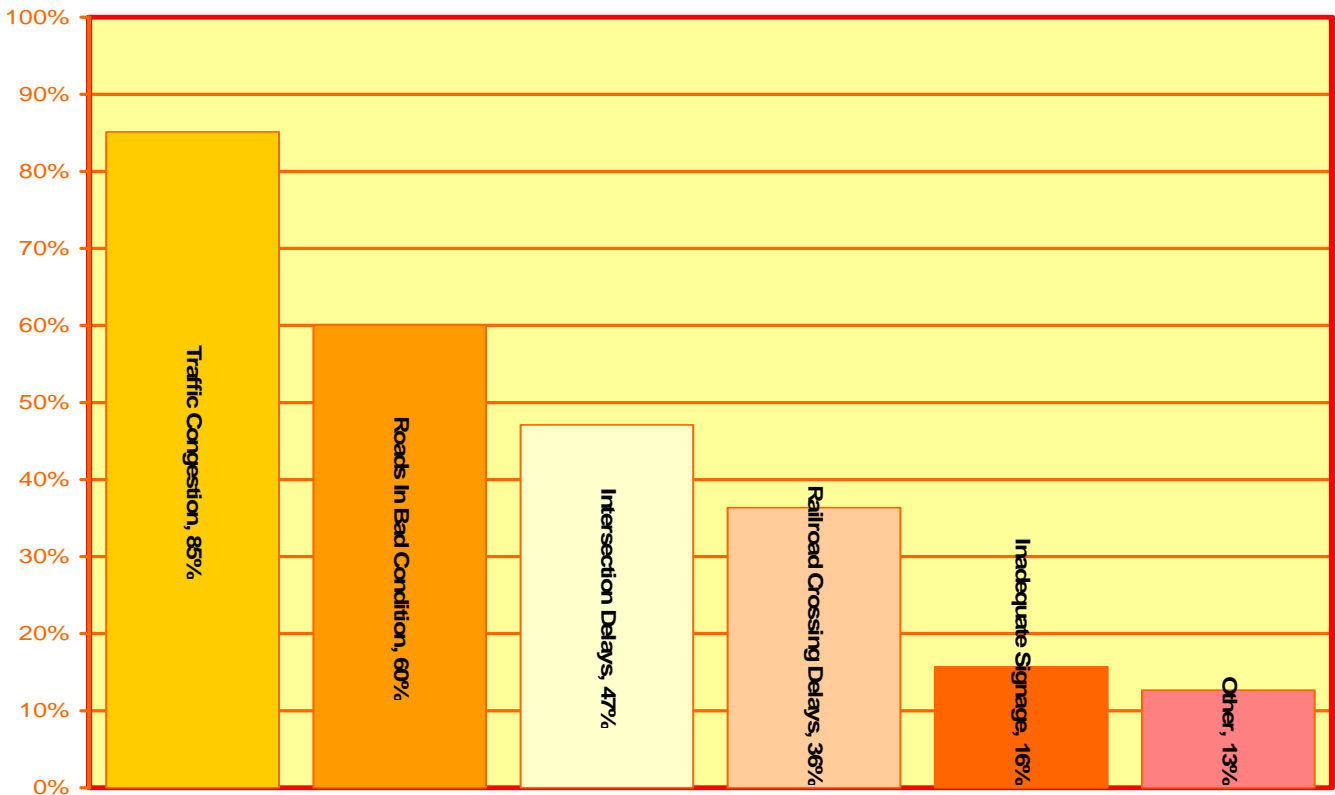
The charts on the following pages give breakdowns on responses CATS received from participants at the various meetings. Following the charts are the written responses to survey questions.



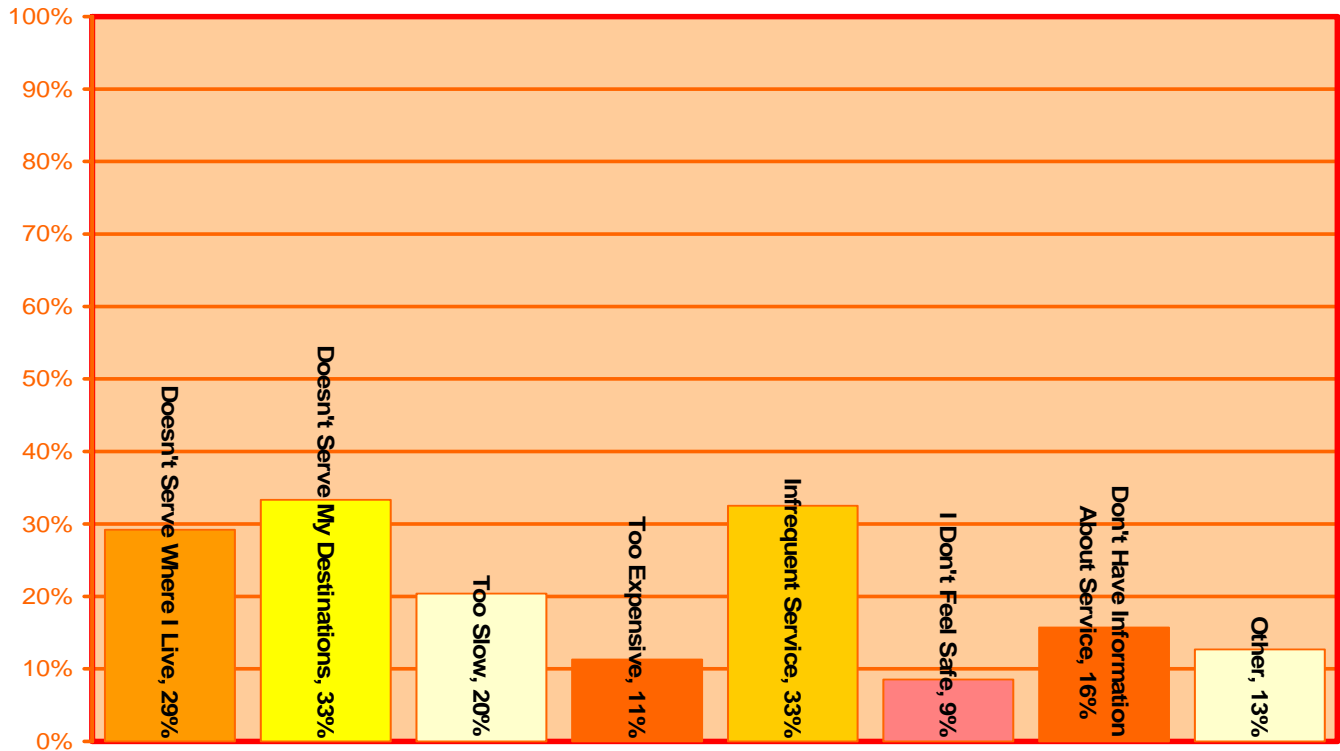
Question: What types of transportation do you typically use?



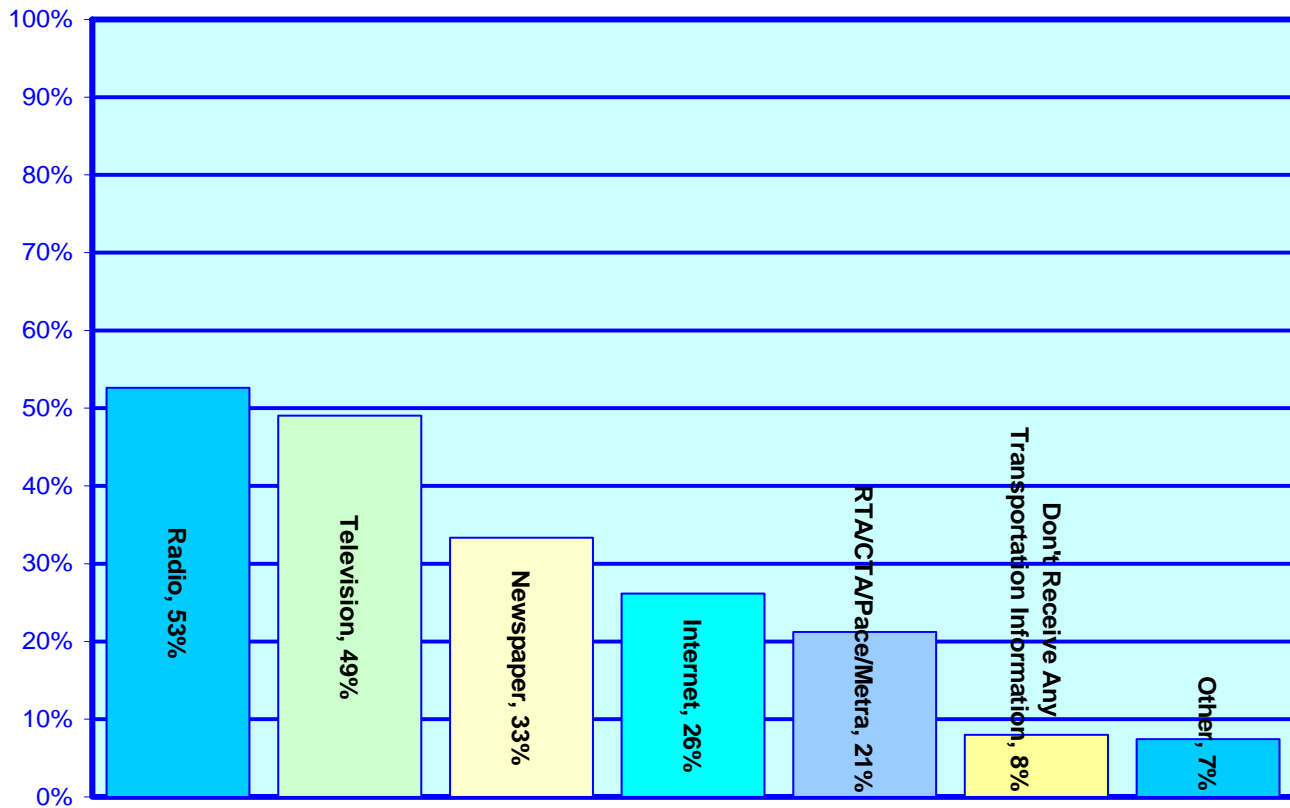
Question: What types of problems have you experienced in your daily travel?

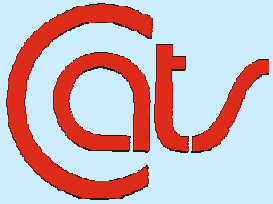


Question: Public transportation problems?



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).

Railroad crossing delays in downtown Libertyville.

Too much congestion – Why do they make a lot of lanes for the tolls, then condense the lanes after?

Trains in Vernon Hills do not run enough.

Lights (are) too short to clear traffic.

Congestion; railroad crossing backups (caused) by freight trains.

No safe place for bicycles and pedestrians.

Capacity needs.

Main roads are two lanes.

Safety of bike and walking paths is a concern when attached to main thoroughfares.

Police (are) causing congestion during (stops for) traffic violations and accidents.

Speeding/tailgating/aggressive drivers passing on the right and passing on the inside of left turns.

Delays in Mundelein and Vernon Hills are horrible.



Bus drivers pulling away after they have seen a senior citizen running for the bus.

Sometimes there are later delays.

CTA: too long about coming, wait 12-22 minutes; medical pick-up van does good.

The drivers at the paratransit companies; many times pick up really late and sometimes not at all.



Traffic congestion – east to west – all Lake County, late afternoon. Intersection delays – 176/31.

I don't travel more than 3 miles to work. Although congestion on 60, 120, 83 and 45 need to be 4 lanes.

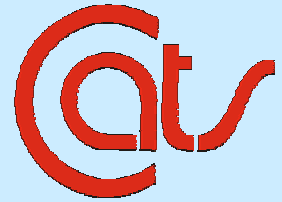
Not enough turn lanes.

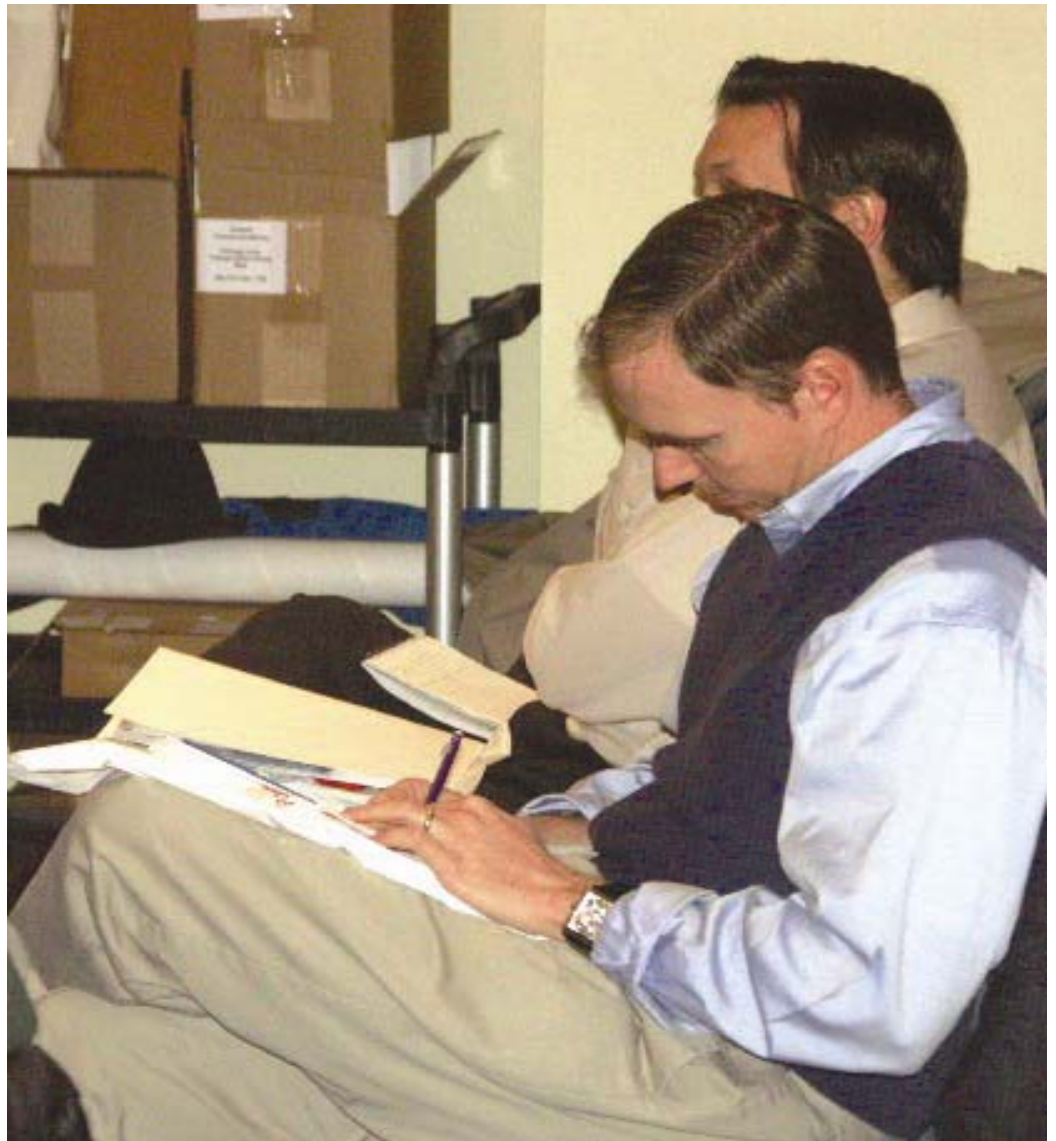
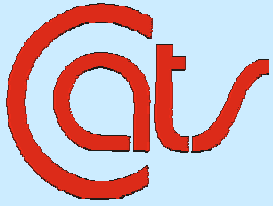
Intersection delays – 12 and 134 eastbound; 134 – left turn lane backups.

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.





Not enough lanes to accommodate traffic due to fast growth.

One-lane traffic; need two lanes.

Lights are badly timed in Fox River Grove since the train/bus crash.

Streets (expressways) being fixed every two-three years. Why?

Not enough lanes on IL 62, IL 58, IL 31, IL 47, IL 59.

Lack of signs at dangerous intersections (lights/signals).

Traffic congestion is extremely bad in Algonquin and on Randall, Route 47 in Huntley and Woodstock.

Lack of turn lanes to the left going into big subdivisions is causing traffic backups. You can't pass a turning car from behind on the right. A lot of two-lane highway problems and many areas need to be widened.

Too few expressways.

Traffic congestion – Tinley/Orland area. Intersection delays – 159th and Rt. 45.

Road construction.

LaGrange in Orland.

Accidents.

Especially southbound on Lemont Road exiting off of I-55.

Unmarked intersection at 151st and Bell is dangerous. People come up on right side and will cause accidents. Should be right turn only. Same at 159th and south Bell.

Gas price, accidents.

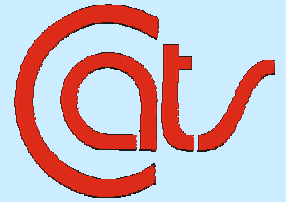
Timing of lights (traffic) have not changed with the increase of traffic, i.e. 159th and LaGrange. Some streets need to be widened – 159th St. and LaGrange between 183rd-131st.

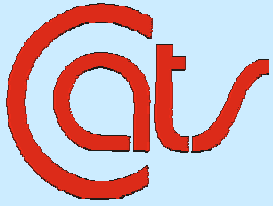
Railroad crossing delays in southwest area, but not Orland Park.



Shelters at bus stops.

Hurt on the buses – no help for people with disabilities.





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

Fares should not be raised again for the next couple of years!

Sometimes slow.

Too late or way too early, leaving me to have to call a cab.



No problem.

Southwest service out of Orland is infrequent.

Service is infrequent in Lemont.

Parking at the commuter station.

Not enough parking at local area train station.

Don't use.

Haven't had a need for it lately.

Don't use.

Doesn't effect me. My needs are met.

I don't use this service often.

Hard to enter for (people with) walkers and canes.

Bus transportation service is infrequent.

The bus service (Pace) is very limited and hours are not commuter friendly.

Would like weekend train service to Antioch.

Metra trains OK.



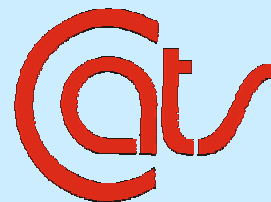
Train service is infrequent.

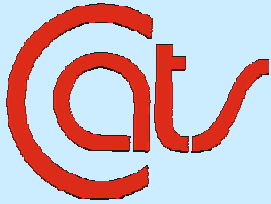
It doesn't serve the places I need to travel to, except into the city.

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.

It doesn't serve the places I need to travel without a lot of transferring or rerouting, which is time-consuming.





I don't use public transportation.

Metra is generally great.

There is not enough direct service to Chicago on Metra. Midday rides stop at every stop along the way – not enough express routes.

Does not go through Huntley yet.

Not at all times.

I prefer private bus schedules and frequency as compared to Pace/RTA.

Need more public transportation options (bus, light rail to other suburbs, etc.).

Too soon to be considered – concentrate on the roads.

No regular routes.

Most of McHenry County does not have a public transportation service. Dial-A-Ride is only available, but you have to call 24 hours in advance.



Metra Chicago-Libertyville A.M. Libertyville-Chicago P.M.

When I use public transportation, everything is great, except for delays, but they are usually because of weather.

Not a problem.

Not enough trains scheduled.

When I use it, it is fine.

No north/south Metra rail.

Expand service to West Gurnee area.

Inconvenient to get to.



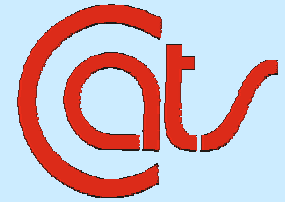
It's great and timely (Metra) for travel to and from the city (Chicago).

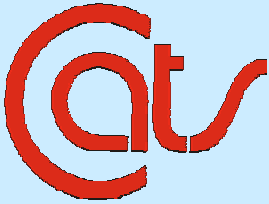
I can rarely use public transportation.

It is currently not a need of mine.

Lack of weekend parking for commuting downtown!

Metra runs from downtown to Vernon Hills starting at 1:00. No morning lines run.





Question 2C: Problems with other types of transportation:

Traffic into and out of McHenry County restricted by lack and size of roads, especially through Cary and Algonquin.

Need scheduled bus service, more taxis.

Bike riders blocking traffic flow.

Our community suffers from through traffic that congests our local streets and intersections.

Infrequent, no information available.

People need public transportation to get to work in McHenry County; they need a schedule they can follow, and it needs to meet all three shifts. Right now the only sure way to get to work is with a car.

Inadequate number of bike paths in convenient locations. No local bus service.

We need to study and coordinate traffic signals on Randall Rd., Rte. 14 and Rte. 47.

Public transportation needs to be more suburb-to-suburb focused vs. suburb-to-Chicago.

Not available.

Busing: I know it's there, just don't know where it goes. I use commuter trains into Chicago – easier than driving.



Road congestion.

Times are not as frequent as may be needed (schedule of departures) or buses or areas not served.

Too much congestion.

Roads and transportation do not support the amount of growth we have in Lake County. Also, I have heard from people who use (public) transportation (that) it is not consistent.

Congested roads – especially E-W travel.

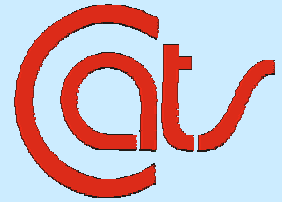
Concerned with the safety of main streets now that large trucks are increasing in number due to cost of tollways.

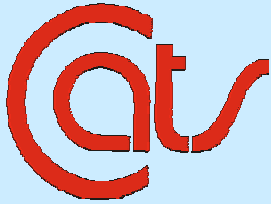
The intersection of 21 and 60 – eastbound traffic on Rt. 60 is held up every day by the timing of the signals at this intersection. Can anything be done about this? I observe many road widenings in my daily travel (Rollins Rd., Round Lake, Washington St.).

Gridlock.

A shuttle from the Metra stop to Hawthorn Mall area would be a big help for many.

Handling rush hour commute.





Leaves seniors with disabilities.

My transportation comes late to pick me up.

S.C.R. and ART are sometimes late for my pick-up.

I sometimes get a ride when I am in a hurry or late.

Not ever on time and rude drivers.

SCR, ARTS Paratransit companies need to tell the truth when there will be problems with time pick-up and drop-off.

None.

Highway 12.

Congestion.

Parking and where you pay.

Walk ways over major roads to get to railroads would help with safety and would help people get around town without driving.

More highways.

Major road construction (on main routes) occurs at the same time as those on alternate routes. This is a problem here in Illinois.

Pace buses – boarderless boundaries.

Metra's Mayfair stop – steep stairs, dangerous facility, old design. Hard to rise for people, especially elderly. My mom is not safe.

Road congestion. Road construction.

Railroad trains are all too long and slow-moving around 139th and Western and 147th is horrible. You're blocking hospitals such as St. Francis in Blue Island and Ingalls Hospital in Harvey.

I'm not sure it's reasonably available and time efficient.

No help with access to buses

Scaled down schedules.

Public transportation needs to be increased, especially bike lanes.

I work close to home, but when wanting to travel into the Loop I occasionally use Metra from Joliet. From Plainfield, the train station is not conveniently located.

Seniors who do not drive have no way to get to where they have to go.

1. I80/94, Borman Expressway. 2. I-80-Wolf Rd. interchange. 3. Rt. 45 widening.

Toll roads. There are too many people in the Chicago area for this to work efficiently anymore.

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?

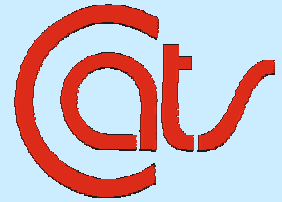
Trains – CTA in Chicago.

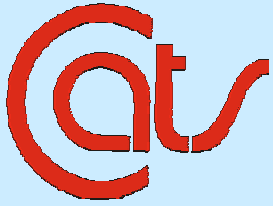
I enjoy Metra – reading, relaxing. I enjoy the local shopping – walking or bike-riding to the 7/11, White Hen, etc.

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!

Not too much. Have a problem with arrival time and return pick-up time.

The RTA and Metra are good. Medical vans are good, on time mostly.

Don't know.



Nothing. Too long to go from Antioch to Lincolnshire at 8 a.m. I-94 is bad, back roads are worse.

Fox Lake is fortunate to be on the train line. We are not so fortunate to be near major roads.

Non-existent.

Variety of options when one route is too crowded.

Roads and routes are better than years ago, though more heavily traveled. Thank you!

Having used it, to be able to comment. Six years ago, I had to change trains halfway home. I now always drive.

Not as congested as Chicago.

The train is good to travel on to downtown.

Trains to Antioch really opened opportunities to Chicago and O'Hare.

On-time Metra.

Metra is great to downtown, but county (Lake) to county (Cook, McHenry) is becoming very overly congested with new development.

On Metra, ability to work on train.

Very happy.

The availability in the city for public transportation.

We could use more express service on the Rock Island Metra line.

I-Pass is efficient.

Southeast suburbs ignored.

Lots of traffic congestion.

Good train service.

Frequent EI service.

Metra system fares are reasonable, especially on weekends. Trains run frequently.

The Chicago-style numbering system and the every mile thoroughfare.

Metra and connecting metro buses at short intervals.

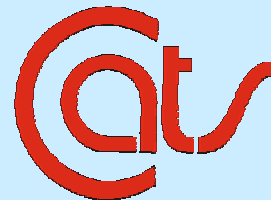
I Pass system seems to be working.

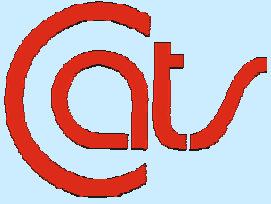
Good tollway system.

We have a great interstate system. We need to continue to make those roads safe and less congestive.

I-355 extension very good.

I-355 is excellent! All the rest need major work. Check out the Minneapolis-St. Paul, Mn., highway system – no tolls!





Road network in southwest Cook County needs capacity improvement. We have many of the same two-lane roads we had 60 years ago when the area was more rural.

Have trains routed late night to early morning to prevent travel delays.

You can get anywhere using the expressways and tollways. Public transportation is only convenient if you travel downtown.

I like that the bus system has expanded into the suburbs.

I think our subway system for downtown and the north side is great. Southwest area needs something like this for us to reach western and northern areas.

Metra trains are great!

Not enough service to areas.

Metra-Downtown access saves parking time.

Some scenic areas – conservation areas, protected areas, forest preserves. NW train lines (Metra). Availability of Pace in some areas.

Some private bus lines offered in McHenry County area to O'Hare.

Improved roads in towns with wealth.

Some of the current updates in replacing stop signs with lights.

Expanded Metra service, bike trails.

Metra is good for downtown.

I DO NOT like the degree to which Illinois requires reaching CONSENSUS prior to approving MAJOR HIGHWAY expansions.

Accessible and affordable.

Route 53 should be completed.

Metra is good.

Highway system is inadequate.

Look at I-Pass – increase lanes, not raise costs. Need more roads that connect both east-west and north-south.

The trains I have taken in years past as a commuter were very good – on time, clean, etc.

