

CATS

Partners in Progress Meeting

Results for Steger/Crete Chambers of Commerce

September, 2005



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Public Outreach Report

Steger Area Chamber of Commerce & Crete Chamber of Commerce

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On April 28, 2005, staff from the Chicago Area Transportation Study, professional planners and local transportation programmers joined the Steger and Crete area Chambers of Commerce to host "Partners in Progress," CATS' community outreach program aimed at educating the public on transportation planning. The transportation information session was held at Scrementi's Banquet facility in South Chicago Heights.

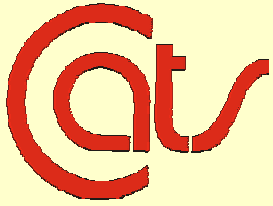
CATS attended this meeting to educate, empower and involve local business owners, community leaders and stakeholders in the ever-critical transportation planning process. CATS provides this service to all communities that are interested in learning how to make a difference through public awareness and involvement.

Mark Thomas, CATS' Director of Transportation Decision Systems, discussed the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan and the TIP, noting the need for more public input to give communities a voice in the process. Jim Kvedaras of the Canadian National Railroad provided a review of the CREATE Program, the "public-private" partnership between the State of Illinois, the City of Chicago and the region's freight and commuter railroads. Chris Cochrane, IDOT Department of Aviation/South Suburban Airport, provided a preview of the much debated "third airport" with beautiful displays and maps. She also entertained pressing questions from residents who would be directly impacted by this project. And we heard from Ed Paesal and Marcus Arnold, of the South Suburban Mayors and Managers, who provided a local perspective on current and tentative projects affecting southern Cook and Will counties.

Community leaders, members and transportation professionals alike said meetings like "Partners in Progress" are needed and appreciated. CATS would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to all of our speakers and the participating chambers for allowing CATS to serve as a conduit for connecting communities to the transportation planning process.

Each meeting participant was asked to complete a brief Transportation Opinion Survey designed to identify their specific transportation concerns and issues. We were encouraged by the positive response, as we received completed surveys from more than 50 percent of the meeting participants. Survey results are on the following pages.





Steger 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 the Steger/Crete meeting was 32: 19 males, 12 females and one with gender unspecified. The average age of the respondents is 54 years, with the youngest being 39 and the oldest 75.

Eighty-eight percent said they are employed, three percent are not employed, and nine percent are retired. Six percent of respondents are students at area universities or community colleges. Among employed respondents, only nine percent said they can get to work on public transportation, while 81 percent said they can't. However, 63 percent of respondents said they use public transportation for non-work purposes, while 28 percent don't.

The primary means of transportation for 88 percent of the respondents is driving an auto/van/pickup/SUV. An equal number (34% each) said they ride Metra or as passengers in an auto/van/pickup/SUV. This is a relatively health-conscious group, with 31 percent saying they ride bicycles and 28 percent saying they walk to their destinations. The bus (CTA/Pace/paratransit) and the el/subway are apparently not options, with just three percent each saying they use those forms of transportation.

The low usage of public transportation might be explained by the 56 percent of respondents who said it doesn't serve where they live. Thirty-one percent said it doesn't serve their destinations, and 25 percent said service is infrequent. Slow service (13%), lack of information about available service (9%) and cost and safety (6% each) were also cited as reasons for not using public transit.



Traffic congestion is the biggest problem experienced in daily travel by a majority (84%) of the survey respondents. Poor roads (69%), railroad crossing delays (56%) and intersection delays (38%) were also cited as major problems. Inadequate signage appears to be a minor problem, cited by only nine percent of survey respondents.

Television (47%) is the primary source for transportation information for survey respondents. Radio (41%) and newspapers (38%) were secondary sources. The Internet provides transportation information to 28 percent of the respondents, and the RTA/CTA/Metra/Pace is a source for 22 percent. Nine percent say they receive no information whatsoever.



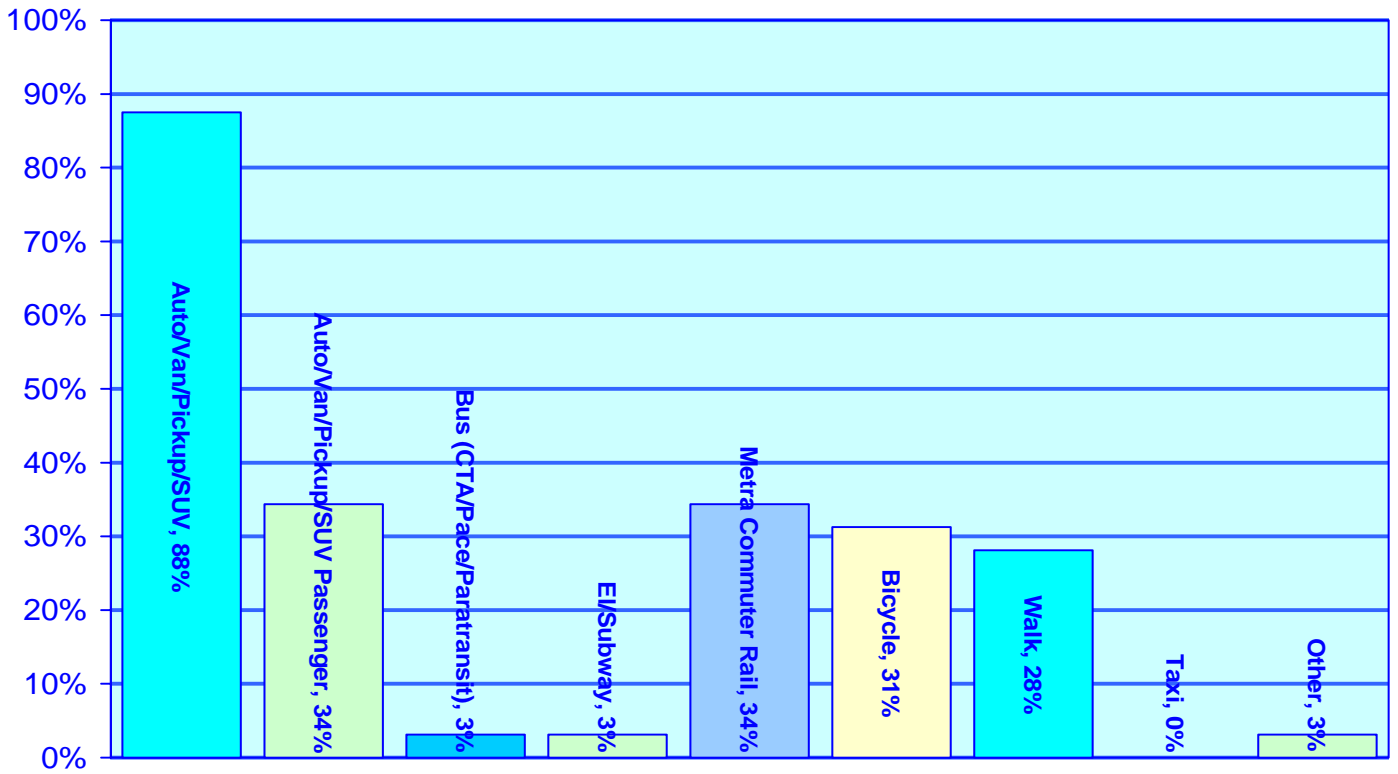
When asked to comment on what could be done to improve the transportation system in northeastern Illinois, the respondents indicated the following categories where improvements are needed:

- More commuter rail service;
- Under/overpasses at railroad grade crossings;
- Addition/improvement of east-west roads.

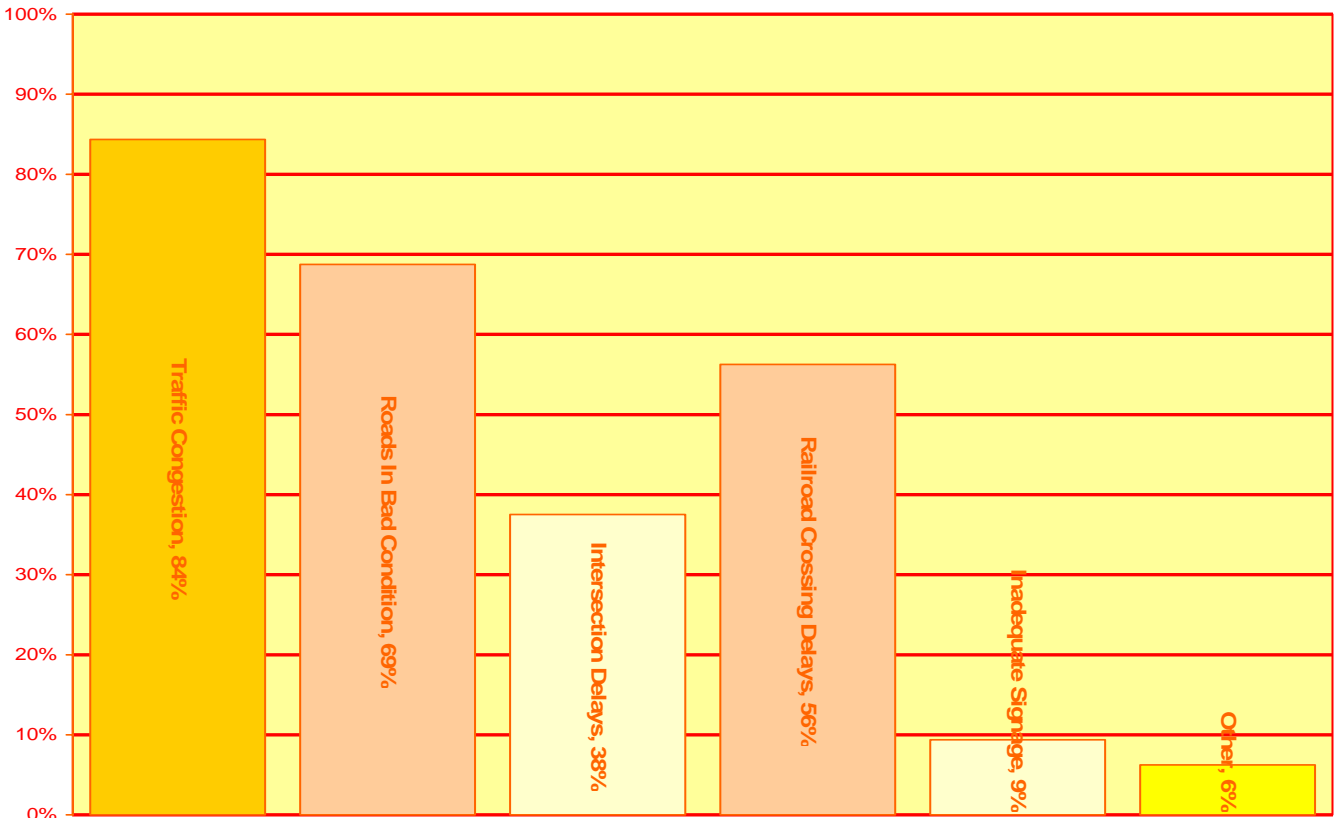
The charts on the following pages give breakdowns on responses CATS received from participants at the Steger/Crete meeting.



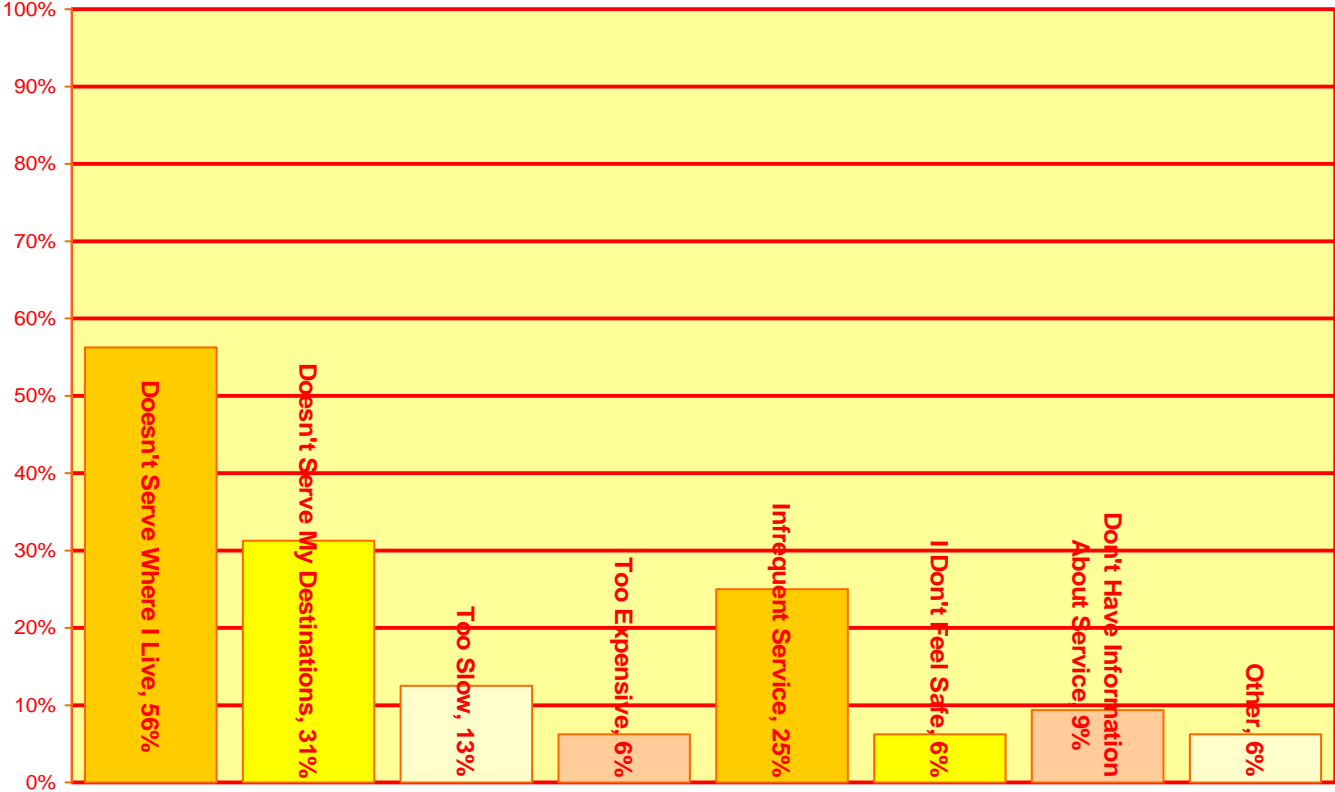
Question: What types of transportation do you typically use?



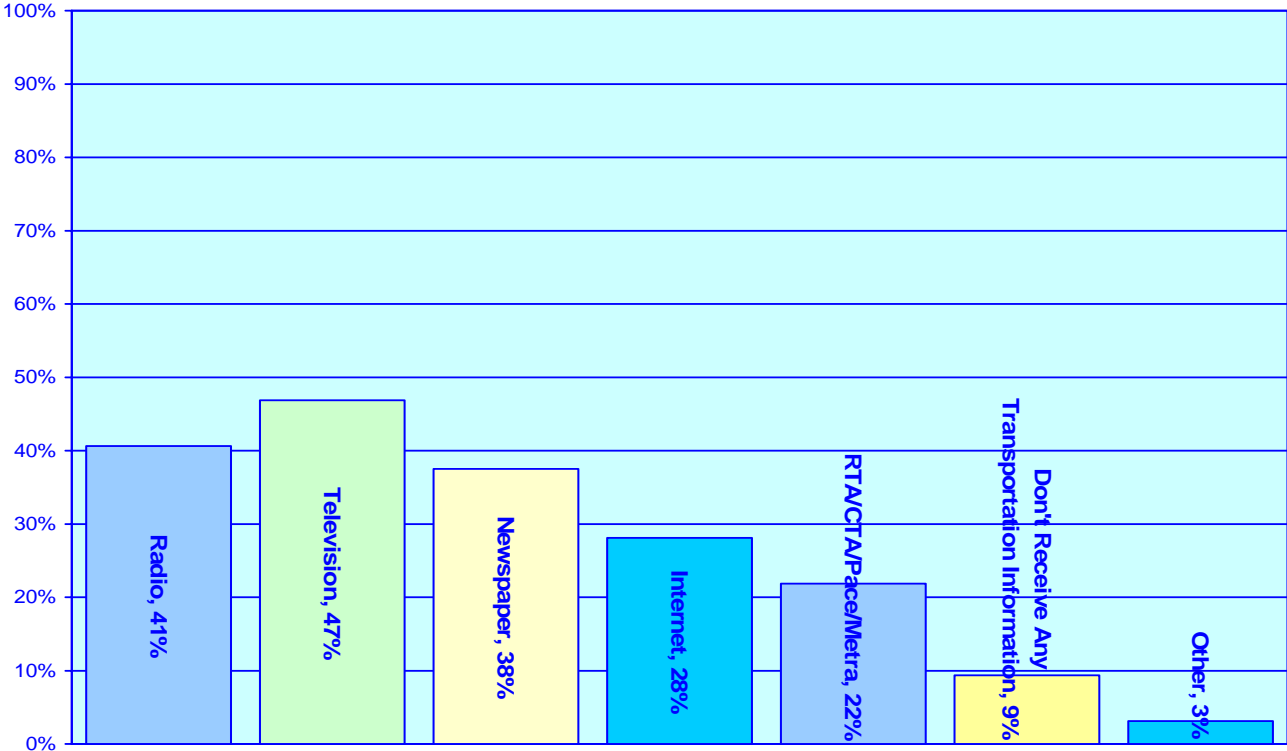
Question: What types of problems have you experienced in your daily travel?

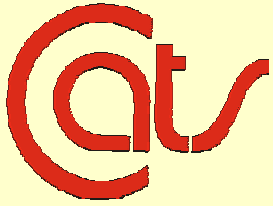


Question: Public transportation problems?



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):

Heavy interchange congestion.

All the above. It's way too late.

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

Only bus service (is) available.

Poor access from Southland to O'Hare and Midway.

Question 2C: Problems with other types of transportation.

Roads are too crowded to drive to Chicago. No way to get to hospitals.

Too many cars, trucks.



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

I-Pass has reduced delays.

Seeing how there is nothing in Crete, there is nothing to like.

Convenient.

Hub – few stops.

Expressways (are) improving.

Don't use it.

Expanded train station (UP); more parking.



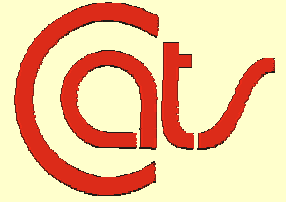
Different kinds of transportation.

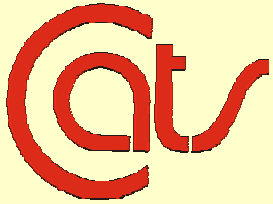
Nothing.

We need (the) South Suburban Airport.

Transit system pretty well developed in many regional areas – south not really being one of those areas.

In general, I feel it is good.





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.)

Install a commuter line from Crete to Chicago.

Buses, trains to the area where I live.

Remove train tracks from intersections by overpasses/underpasses.

Passenger rail to Crete.

Metra train south.

Expansion of rail service. Separation of rail/auto. Provide funding for grade separations.



Stop talking about it and actually do something to fix it.

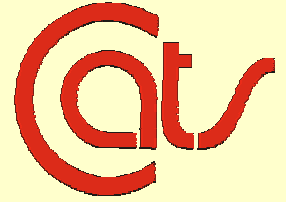
Use our high tax dollars to improve our area.

More stations; cheaper.

Enlarge interchanges; improve roads. Why weren't Monee and Peotone invited to this or even made aware?

Start building.

Take government out. Government is too wasteful and know-nothing.



Build a south suburban airport and bring infrastructure to region (south) and balance the regional economy.

More extensive cross-connects in south suburbs to facilitate more than N-S traffic.

Loop drives to facilitate bypassing major congestion points.

Cross-corridor from I-57 to IL 394 east to Rt. 41 Indiana. Rail line north to Chicago that mirrors IL 394.

Private passenger railroad service from downtown Crete to Chicago. "Turn-arounds" as in San Antonio, Texas, eliminate traffic problems and congestion. Frontage roads that go adjacent to expressways and do not end, but continue from town to town (example: San Antonio, Texas, expressway system).