

APPENDIX D - DRAFT

Public and Stakeholder Engagement



RTP

2026
**Regional
Transportation
Plan**



Chicago Metropolitan
Agency for Planning

Table of contents

Introduction	1
Why public engagement matters	1
Federal requirements at a glance	1
Overview of public engagement activities	2
Who's participating?	2
Public engagement strategies, tools, and tactics	3
Information sharing	3
Community engagement events	3
Faces of the RTP: Elevating community voices	5
RTP questionnaire	6
Public feedback shapes the RTP	7
Public comment and hearing (to be added October 2026)	7
Conclusion	7
Questionnaire results	8

Introduction

Public engagement is a cornerstone of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning’s (CMAP) mission to develop a shared vision for a thriving, inclusive, and connected region. For the 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), CMAP’s engagement activities ensure that the voices of residents, community leaders, transportation agencies, advocacy organizations, and other stakeholders shape the plan’s priorities and strategies. Guided by CMAP’s federally required [Public Participation Plan](#), these efforts combine broad engagement with targeted strategies to involve traditionally underrepresented voices, ensuring that engagement met both regulatory standards and regional values.

RTP engagement fulfills both CMAP’s commitment to collaborative planning and the federal metropolitan transportation planning requirement to “provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment” ([23 CFR 450.316](#)).

2026 RTP engagement at a glance

A regionwide effort to hear from residents, partners, and stakeholders



19 events

In communities across the region



100+ meetings

with transportation partners and agencies



3 resource working groups

convened across key topic areas



Hundreds of students

engaged through school events and Future Leaders in Planning (FLIP) program



40,000+ people reached through social media



30,000+ subscribers

reached through newsletters



6 faces of the RTP

showcasing the various ways people get around the region

Why public engagement matters

Engagement is not just a regulatory requirement — it is fundamental to creating a transportation plan that reflects the diverse needs, priorities, and lived experiences of the people who live and work in northeastern Illinois:

- Effective engagement is grounded in two-way education and trust building
- Effective engagement requires openness and transparency
- Effective engagement is not one-size-fits-all
- Effective engagement demands accountability

As highlighted in the Public Participation Plan, CMAP’s vision for public participation is rooted in the agency’s mission to advance fairness in northeastern Illinois by investing resources in engagement strategies that lift the voices of those who have been historically left out of the decision-making process, and working to ensure systemically excluded communities can meaningfully influence decision-making.

Federal requirements at a glance

Under 23 CFR 450.316, metropolitan planning organizations like CMAP must:

- Involve the public early and continuously in plan development
- Provide reasonable opportunities for comment on the draft plan
- Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by transportation
- Document engagement efforts and responses to public input

This appendix documents the progress towards meeting these requirements.

Public engagement strategies, tools, and tactics

To keep the public and stakeholders informed and engaged throughout the development of the 2026 RTP, CMAP prioritized regular, timely updates on both the plan itself and its supporting components. As major milestones were reached — such as the release of the Emerging Priorities Report and the Existing Conditions Report — CMAP shared accessible summaries, key findings, and opportunities for feedback. Select materials were also translated into Spanish to broaden access and ensure that residents could fully engage with the process.

This approach maintained transparency, sustained momentum between engagement events, and helped participants see how their input connected to ongoing technical work.

Information sharing

Key plan information was shared through:

- **Online engagement platform:** RTP hub with plan documents, introductory video, event information, and feedback tools
- **Printed materials:** RTP one-pager, flyer, palm card, and stickers shared at in-person events
- **Newsletters:** More than 20 RTP-related articles sent to over 30,000 subscribers
- **Social media:** More than 35 posts on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram, reaching over 40,500 individuals

Community engagement events

In summer 2025, CMAP hosted or participated in 19 events across the region, from farmers markets to block parties, collecting feedback through interactive displays, the RTP questionnaire, and direct conversations with residents.

At these events, CMAP staff members led activities to better understand how residents travel and the barriers they face. Three interactive posters asked:

- How did you travel here today?
- What transportation barriers do you face?
- How would you have liked to get here today?

The first question functioned as a voting exercise, with participants placing a sticker to indicate their travel mode. The remaining questions were open-ended, with participants using sticky notes to share experiences and preferences.

At the majority of events, participants reported traveling by personal vehicle. Exceptions included the Lombard Farmers Market and the Green Jobs Fair. Across events, participants expressed interest in using more transportation options, with barriers varying based on infrastructure, logistics, and weather.



CMAP staff members engaging with residents at events across northeastern Illinois.

Summer 2025 community engagement events

Event	Location
Chicago Architecture Center's Engineering Fest	Chicago, the Loop
Coffee with Mayor Sean R. McDermott	Countryside, west Cook County
Green Sustainable Job/Resource Fair	Chicago, the Loop
Presentation to McHenry School District students	McHenry County
Touch a Truck	Woodstock , McHenry County
Park Party	Romeoville, Will County
Presentation to University of Illinois and Clerk College students	Chicago, the Loop
Aurora Farmer's Market	Aurora, Kane County
Oswego Country Market	Oswego, Kane County
Taco & Art Fest	West Chicago, DuPage County
North Chicago Community Days	North Chicago, Lake County
Flossmoor Back to School Bash	Flossmoor, south Cook County
Diamond Fall Fun Fest	Diamond, Will County
Fall Nature Fest (LaBagh Woods)	Chicago, Albany Park
Transportation Equity Network Meeting	Chicago, the Loop
La Grange farmers market	La Grange, west Cook County
Lombard farmer's market	Lombard, DuPage County
CMAP FLIP presentation	Chicago, the Loop
Presentation to DePaul University students	Chicago, the Loop



Example of engagement materials shared at RTP engagement events.

Faces of the RTP: Elevating community voices

To complement its broader engagement efforts, CMAP launched *Faces of the RTP*, a storytelling initiative that highlights how transportation shapes daily life across northeastern Illinois. While surveys, meetings, and data analysis provide critical insights, this effort brings a human dimension to transportation planning by elevating the lived experiences of residents, workers, and business owners who rely on the transportation system every day. Through short videos, interviews, and photography, participants share how they travel, the challenges they face, and what improvements would make it easier, safer, and more reliable to get where they need to go.

CMAP worked with community-based organizations and through its digital network of newsletter and social media outlets to invite volunteers that represent a broad cross-section of geographies, travel modes, and perspectives — as well as those from communities historically underrepresented in planning processes. These stories are shared across CMAP’s website, social media, and public materials, and are incorporated into presentations and plan content to illustrate key themes and strategies.

By pairing personal experiences with technical analysis, *Faces of the RTP* helps ensure the plan reflects not only system-level needs, but also the people and communities it serves.



Terry is a bicycle advocate from Bartlett



Erik is executive director of the Illinois International Port District.



LaShawn is an owner of an urban farm and gets around the city by public transit.



Bailey is a reverse commuter who bikes from Metra’s Libertyville station to her office

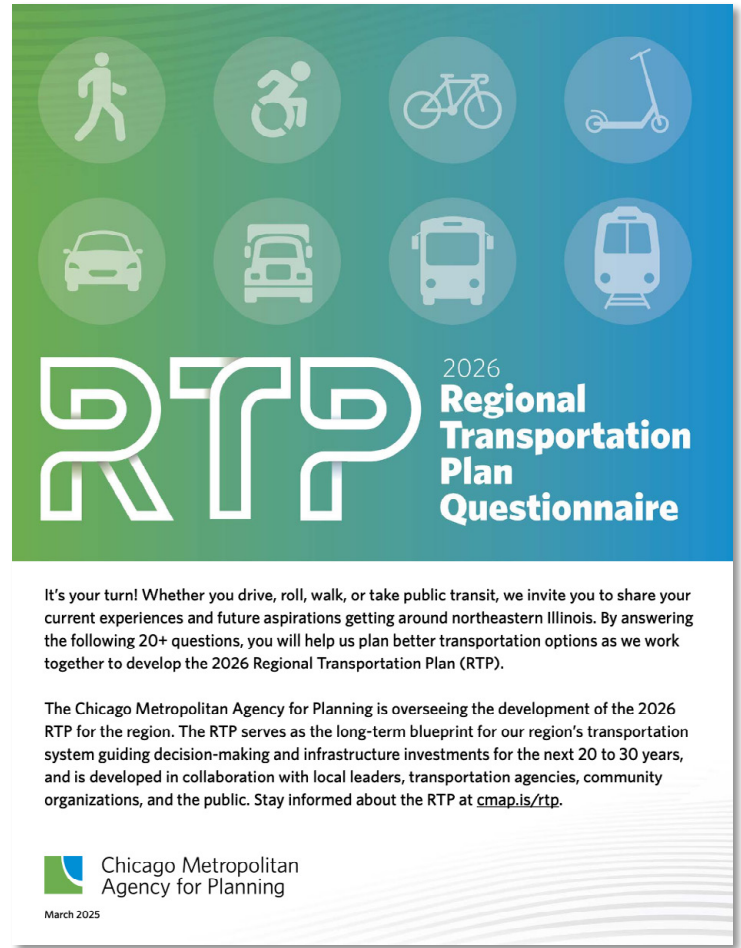
RTP questionnaire

The RTP questionnaire was an effective tool for gathering input on regional transportation priorities. CMAP promoted the questionnaire from February through December 2025, available in English and Spanish, both online and in print.

CMAP distributed the questionnaire through all communication channels and shared it with all municipalities through the Local Government Network (CMAP’s communication platform connecting each community with a dedicated staff member). A communications toolkit supported local engagement via newsletters, websites, and social media. A second targeted effort in late August focused on communities without responses.

The questionnaire reached an estimated 36,000 people and collected more than 1,700 responses, exceeding the goal of 1,000 responses.

While results are not statistically representative, they provide valuable insight into regional priorities.



Participation snapshot

- **Responses received:** 1,771
- **Geographic reach:** Responses from all 7 counties, with 67 percent from suburban communities and 33 percent from Chicago
- **Demographic diversity:** 15 percent of respondents identified as people of color; 9 percent were from households earning \$50,000 or below, annually; 31 percent were aged 18 to 34

Race/ethnicity	Percentage
White	75%
Latino or Hispanic	6%
Asian	5%
Black	2%
Other	2%
Prefer not to say	10%

Average annual household income	Percentage
Less than \$25,000	3%
\$25,000 - \$50,000	6%
\$51,000 - \$100,000	22%
\$101,000 - \$200,000	34%
More than \$201,000	19%
Prefer not to say	16%

Public feedback shapes the RTP

Feedback from the questionnaire helped shape the direction of the RTP. As plan development progressed and entered the strategy development phase, input from members of the public revealed alignment in some key areas pertaining to transportation policies and investments:

- Residents' experiences on roadways would be improved by prioritizing safety and mitigating congestion
- When investing in new projects, residents are most interested in more infrastructure for non-driving modes, such as transit, biking, and walking
- Many residents value the role transportation plays in improving climate resilience, and would like to have options to make environmentally sustainable transportation choices
- Residents commonly make travel decisions based on safety, reliability, and — especially for transit — frequency of service

Combined with research, data analysis, and input from transportation stakeholders, these areas of consensus from the questionnaire helped inform the RTP's final strategies.

Public comment and hearing (to be added October 2026)

A summary of the federally required public comment period and hearing will be included here after summer 2026.

Conclusion

Public engagement for the 2026 RTP plays a central role in shaping a vision that reflects the needs and priorities of northeastern Illinois. By combining broad engagement with targeted strategies to involve traditionally underrepresented communities, CMAP ensures the plan is grounded in real-world experiences and regional values.

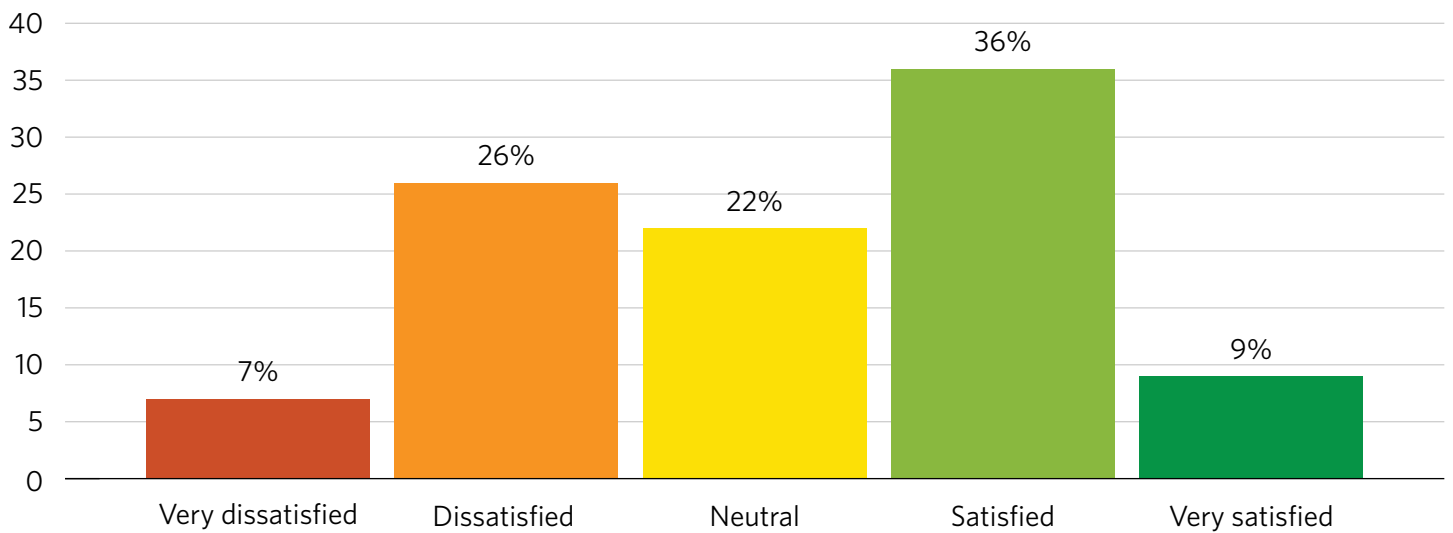
Feedback gathered through events, the RTP questionnaire, public comment opportunities, and ongoing stakeholder dialogue has helped ensure both technically sound and publicly supported priorities and recommendations. This collaborative approach strengthens the RTP as a shared blueprint for transportation investment and policy, guiding the region toward a more equitable, sustainable, and connected future.



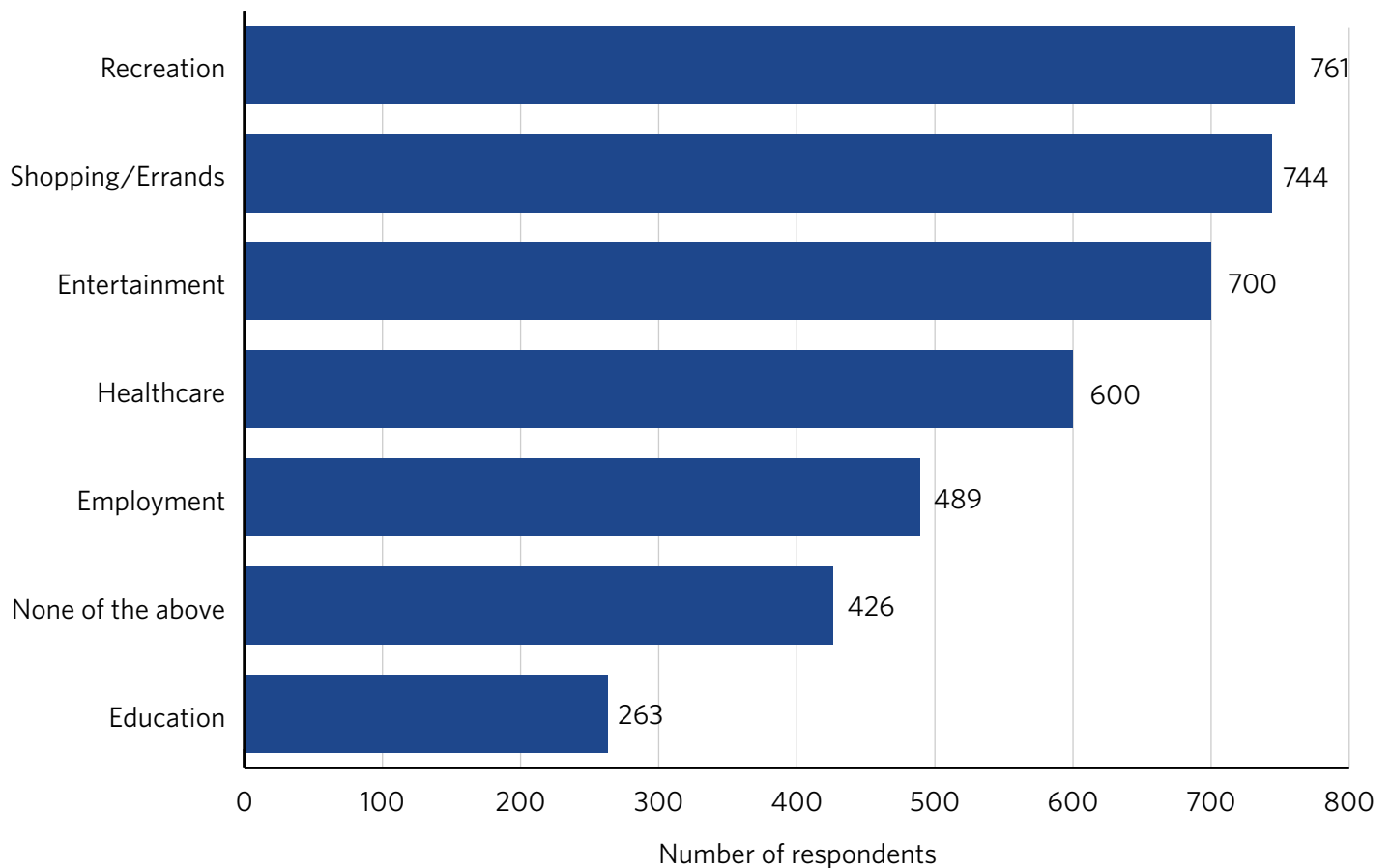
CMAP staff presenting the RTP, and specifically the history of regional transportation planning, to an audience in La Grange, IL

Questionnaire results

How satisfied are you with your transportation choices in the community you live in?

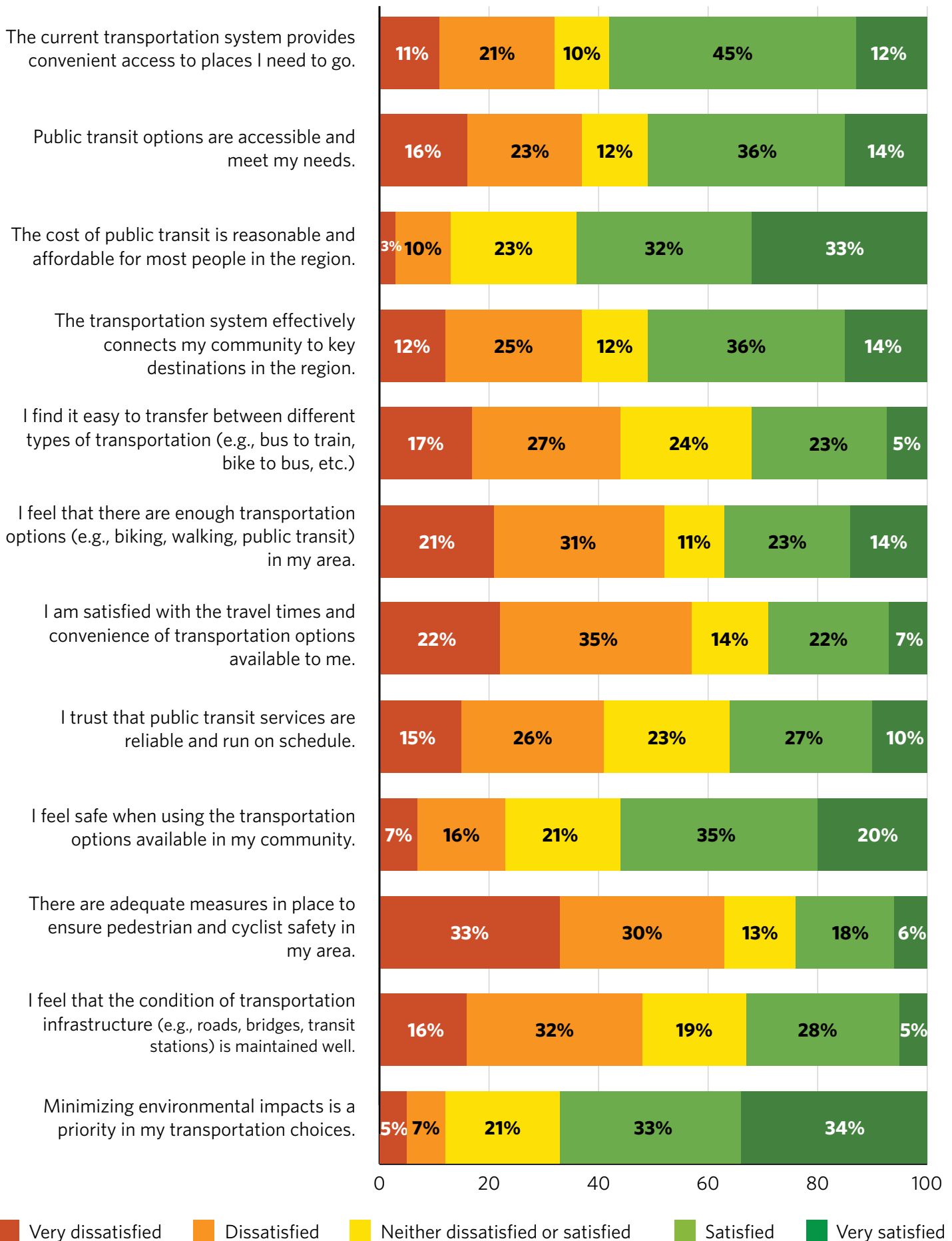


Are there any destinations difficult for you to travel to? Please select all that apply.¹



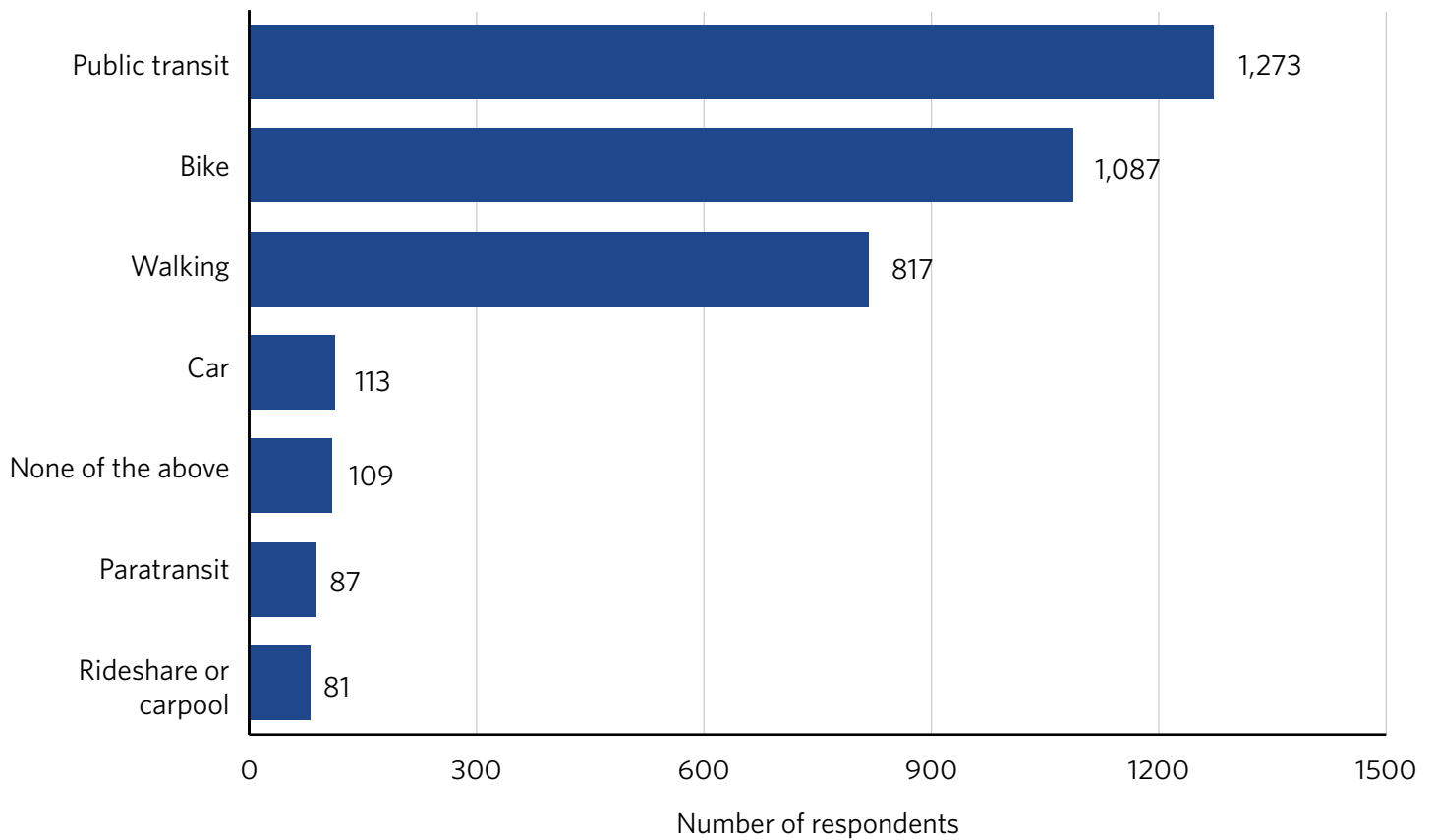
¹ Questions stating, "Please select all that apply" represent multiple selections by each respondent.

Please rate your travel experiences based on the following statements.

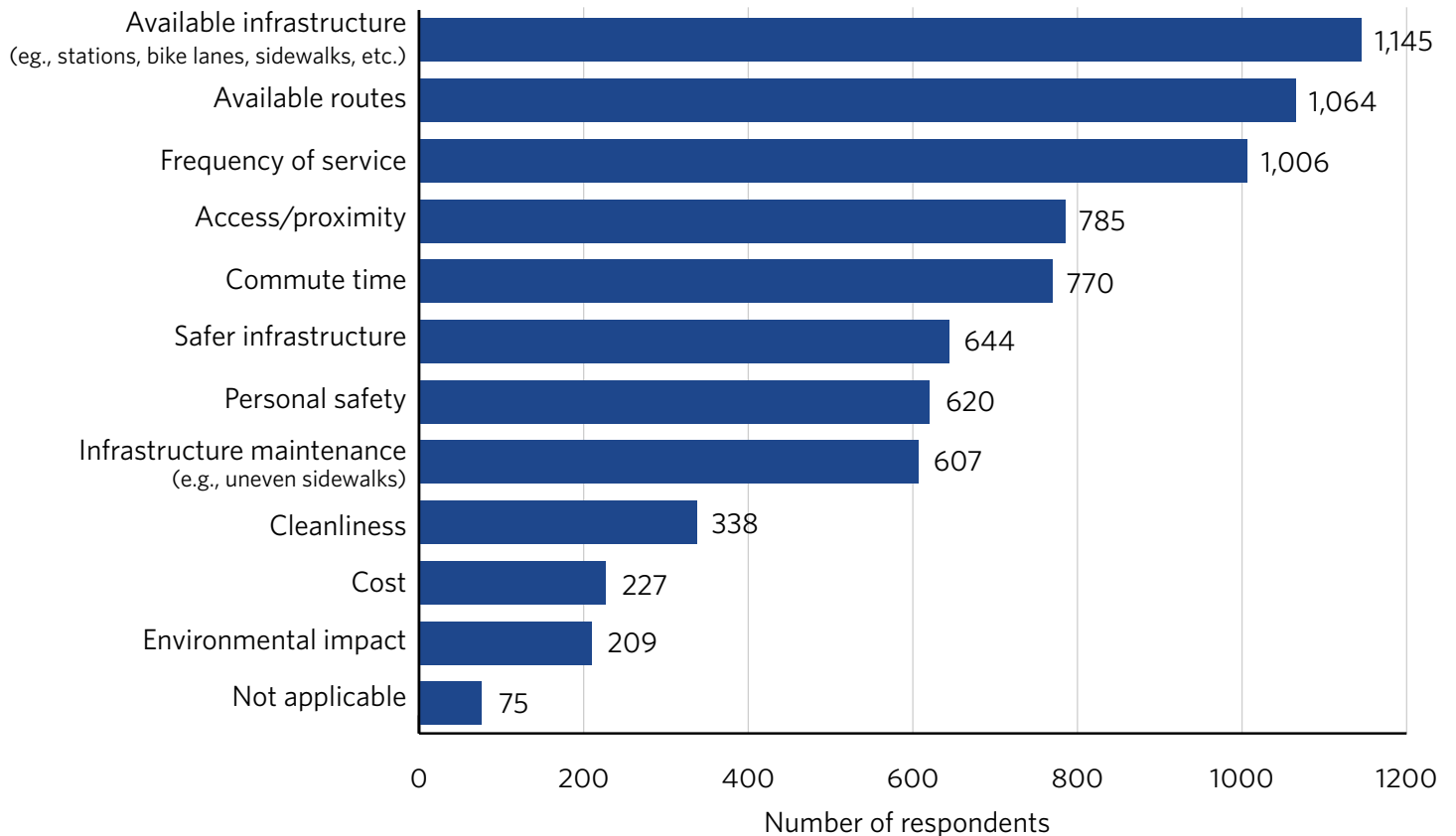


Very dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neither dissatisfied or satisfied Satisfied Very satisfied

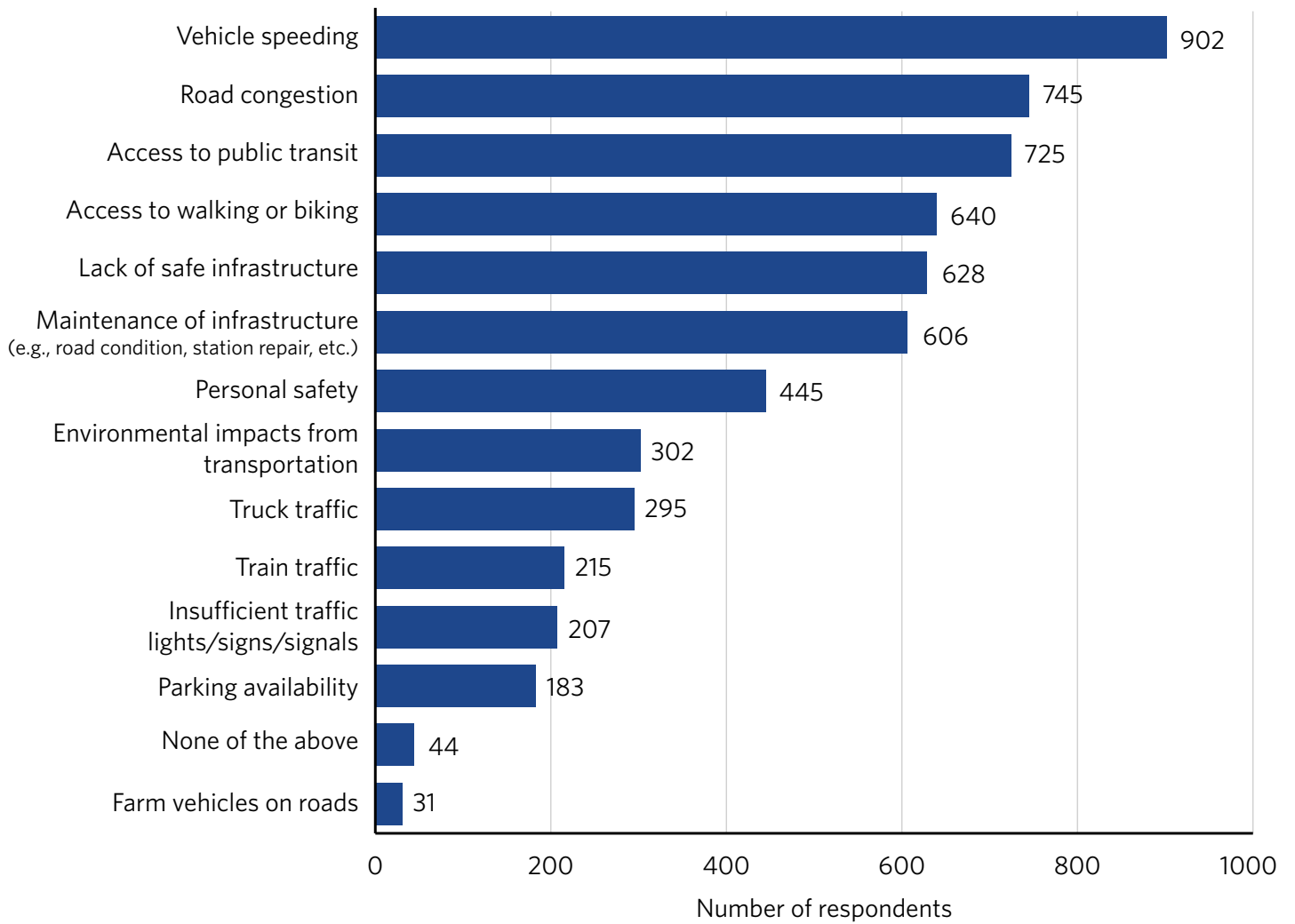
Are there transportation options you would like to use more often? Select all that apply.



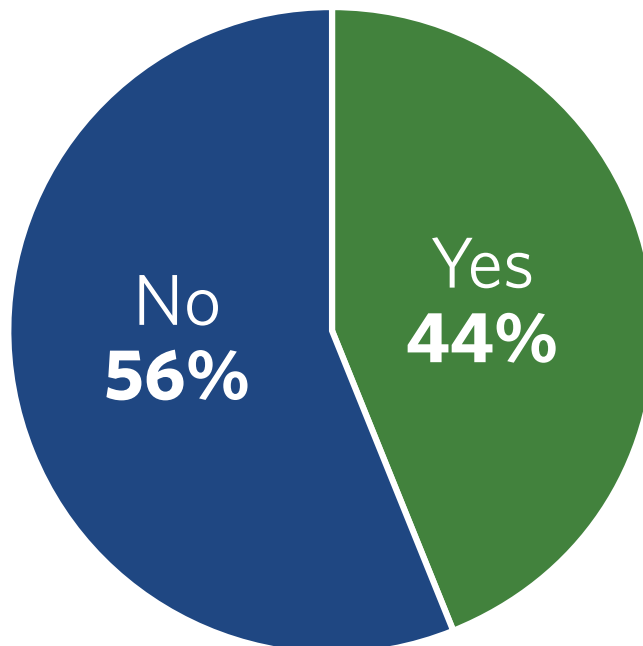
If so, what would allow you to use your preferred mode of travel more often? Select all that apply.



What are the biggest transportation challenges in the community you live in? Select all that apply.

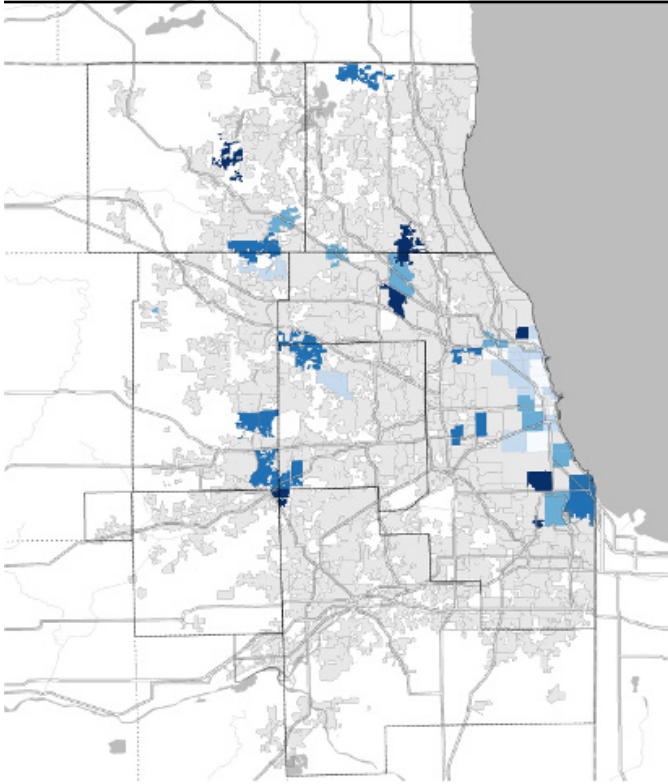


Are there specific areas in your community that you feel are underserved by current transportation options?

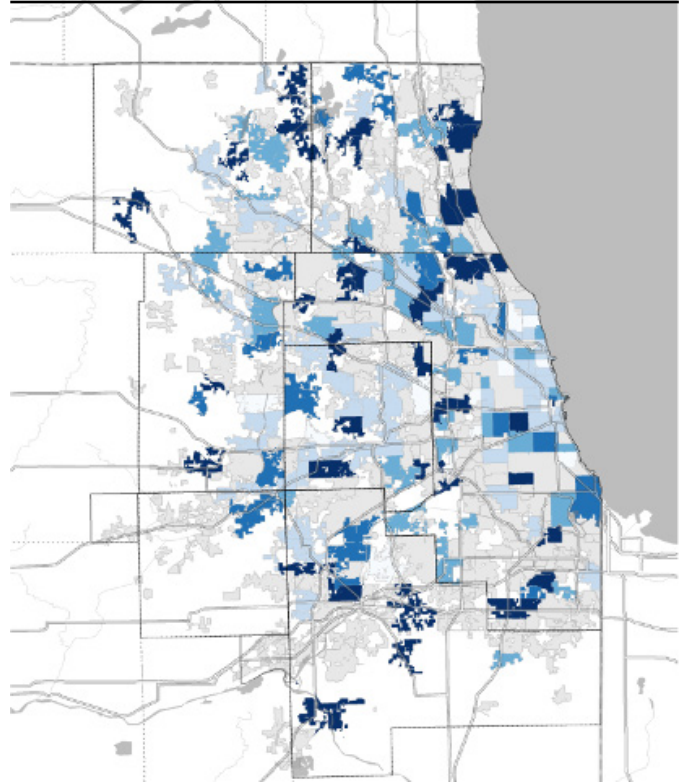


Geographic distribution of responses

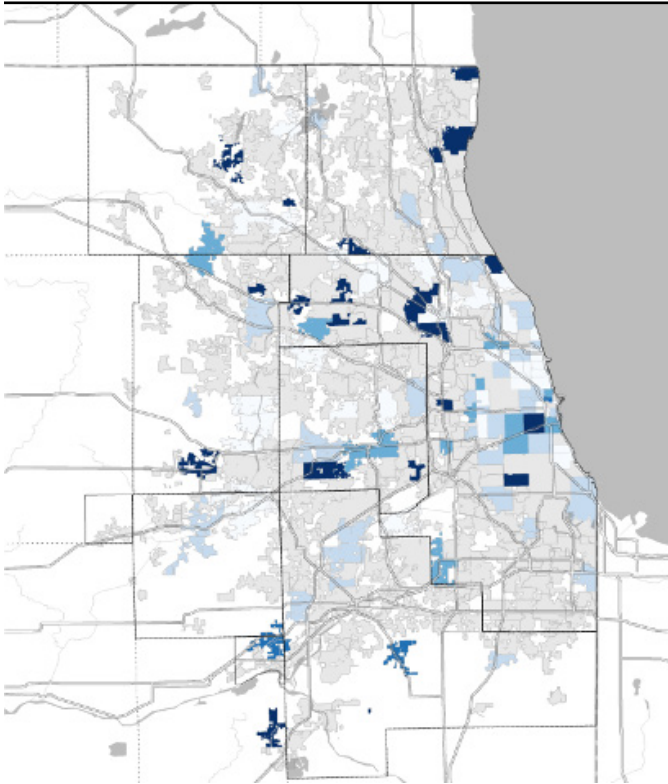
Access to public transit



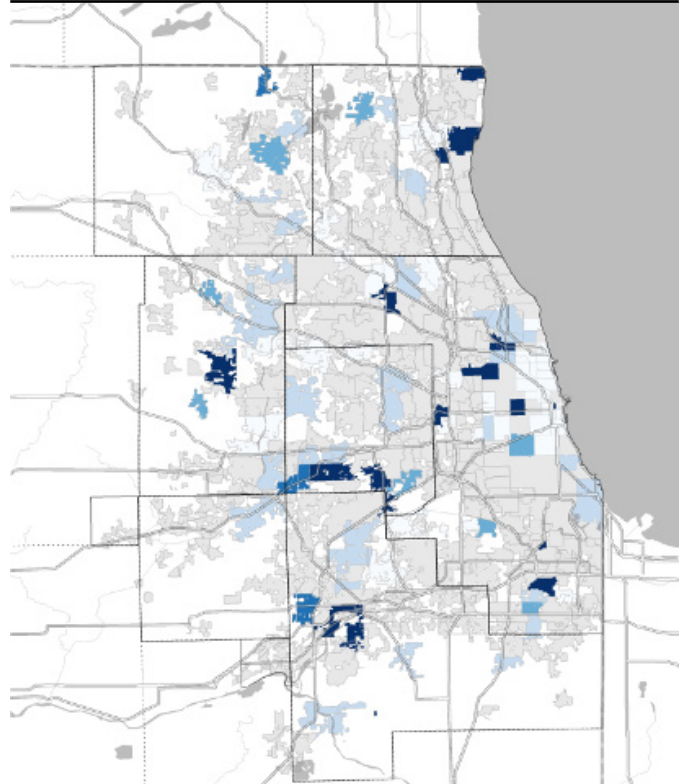
Access to walking or biking



Environmental impacts from transportation

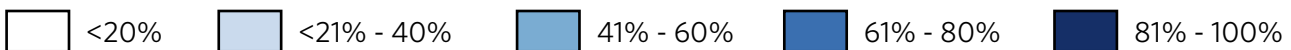


Insufficient lights/signs/signals



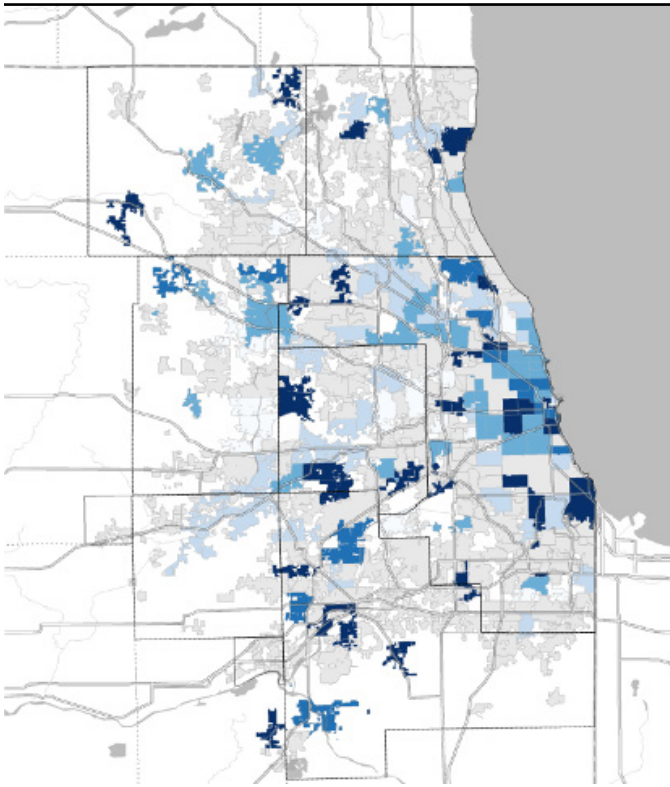
Legend

Percentage of respondents who said the indicator was an issue

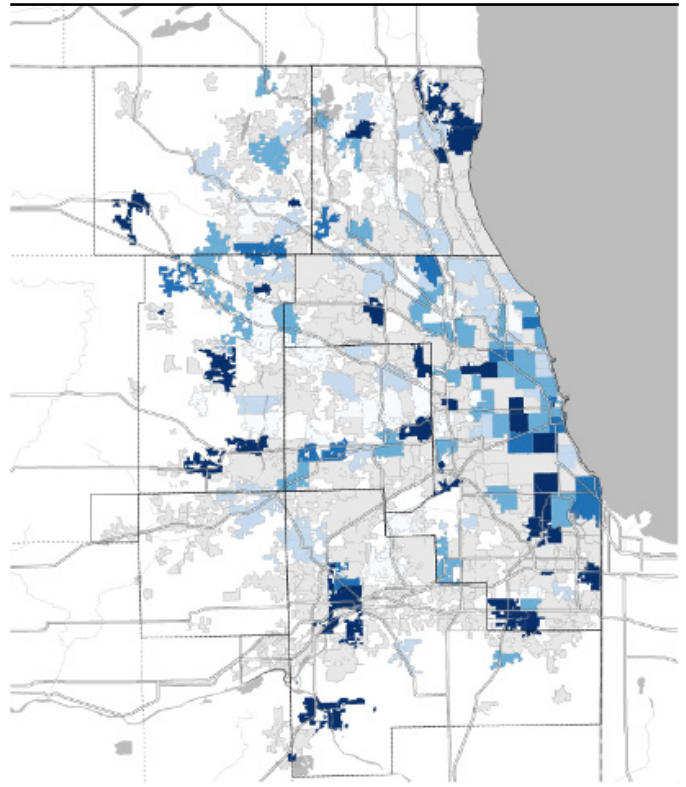


Note: Map excludes geographies with fewer than five responses

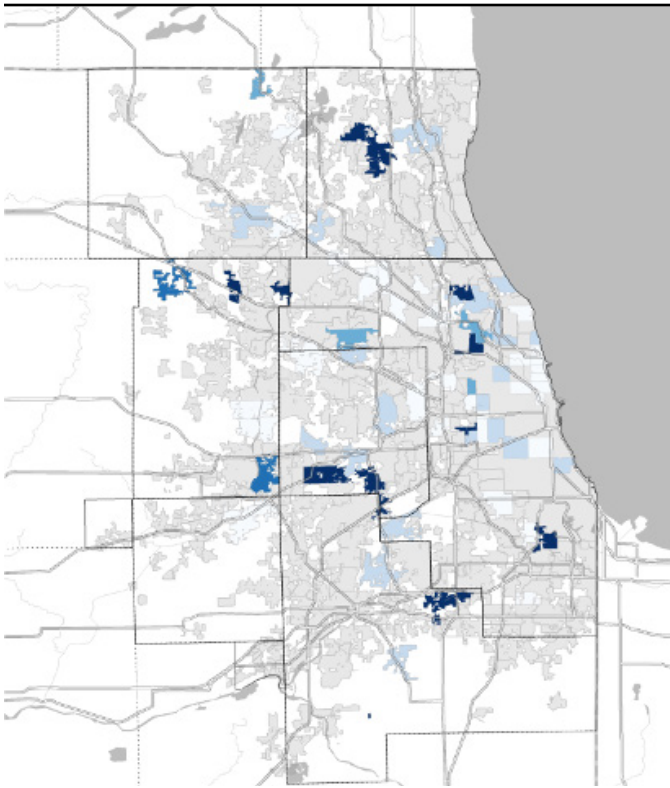
Lack of safe infrastructure



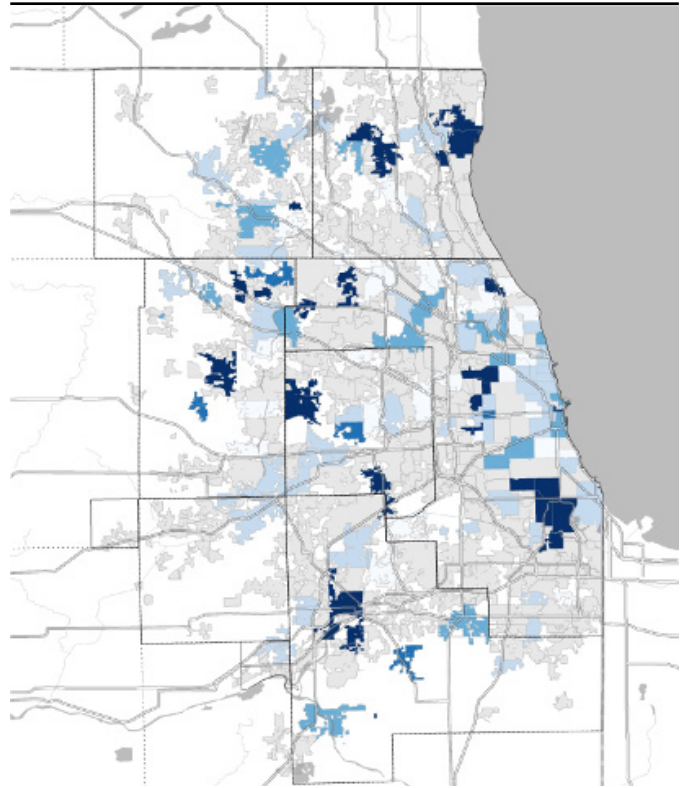
Maintenance of infrastructure



Parking availability

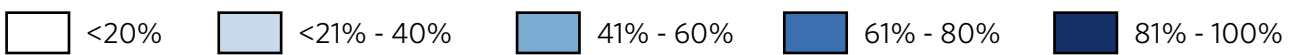


Personal safety



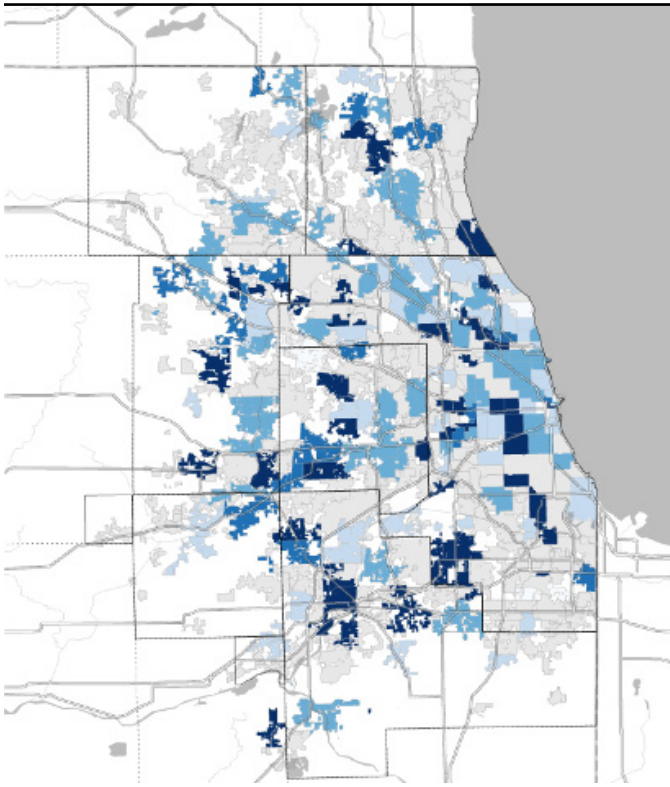
Legend

Percentage of respondents who said the indicator was an issue

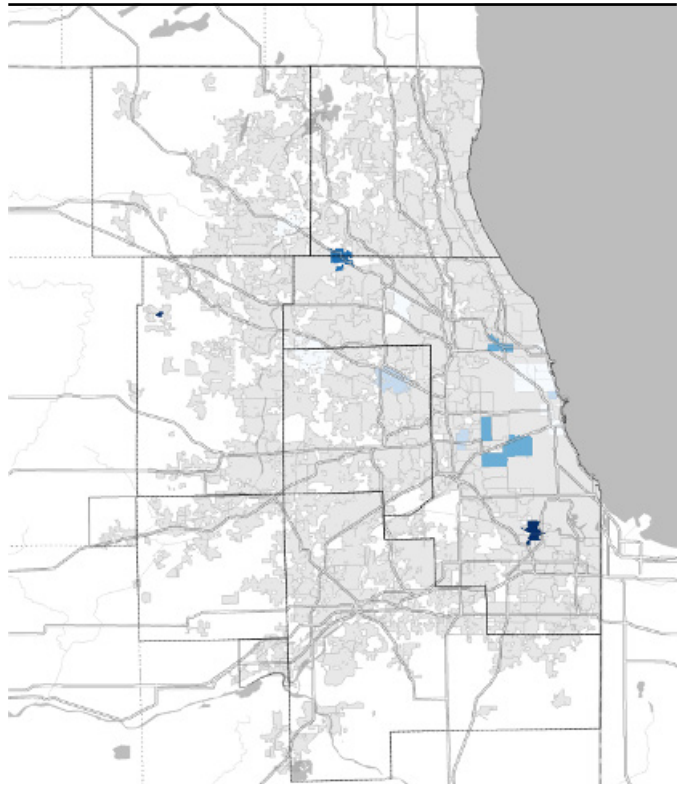


Note: Map excludes geographies with fewer than five responses

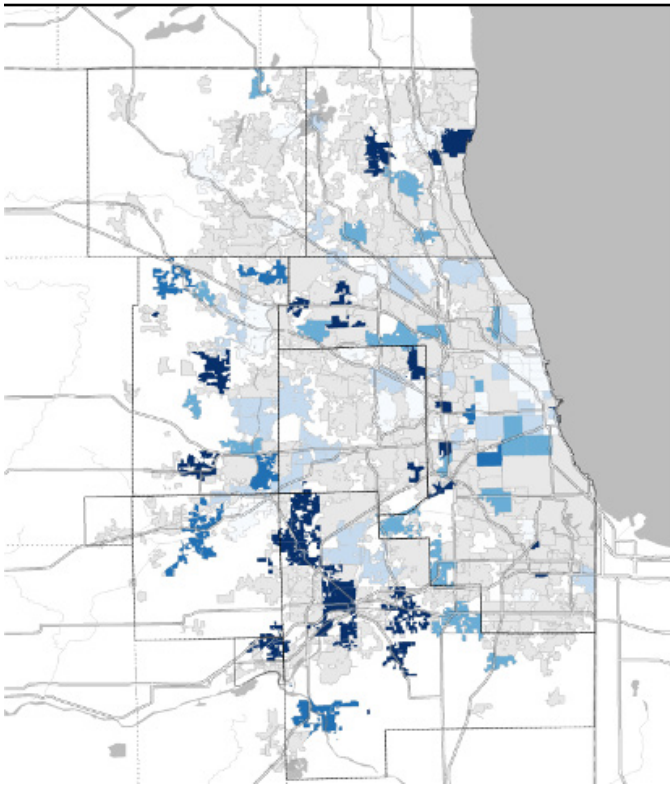
Road congestion



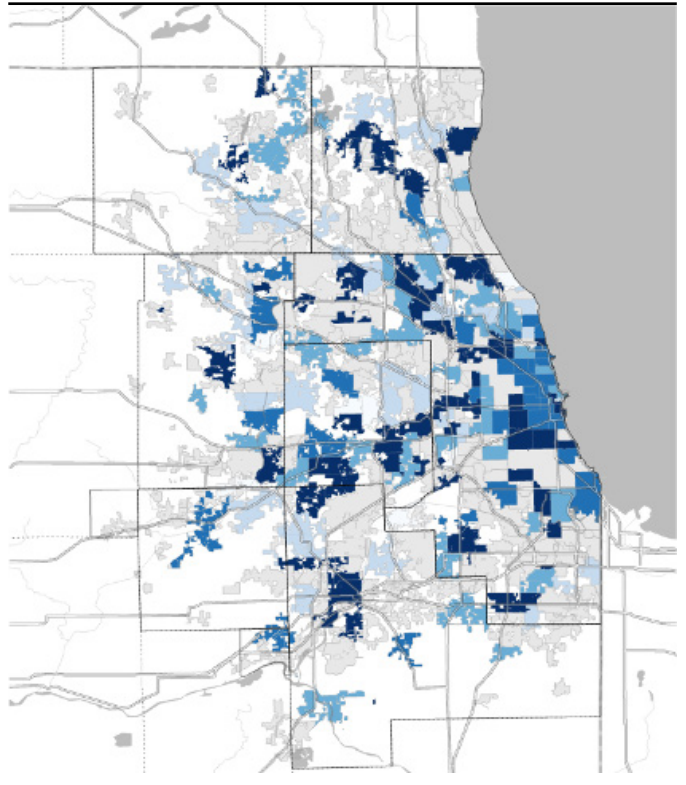
Train traffic



Truck traffic

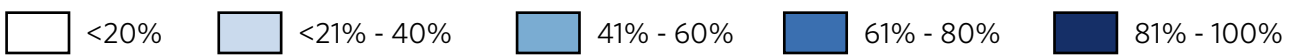


Vehicle speeding



Legend

Percentage of respondents who said the indicator was an issue

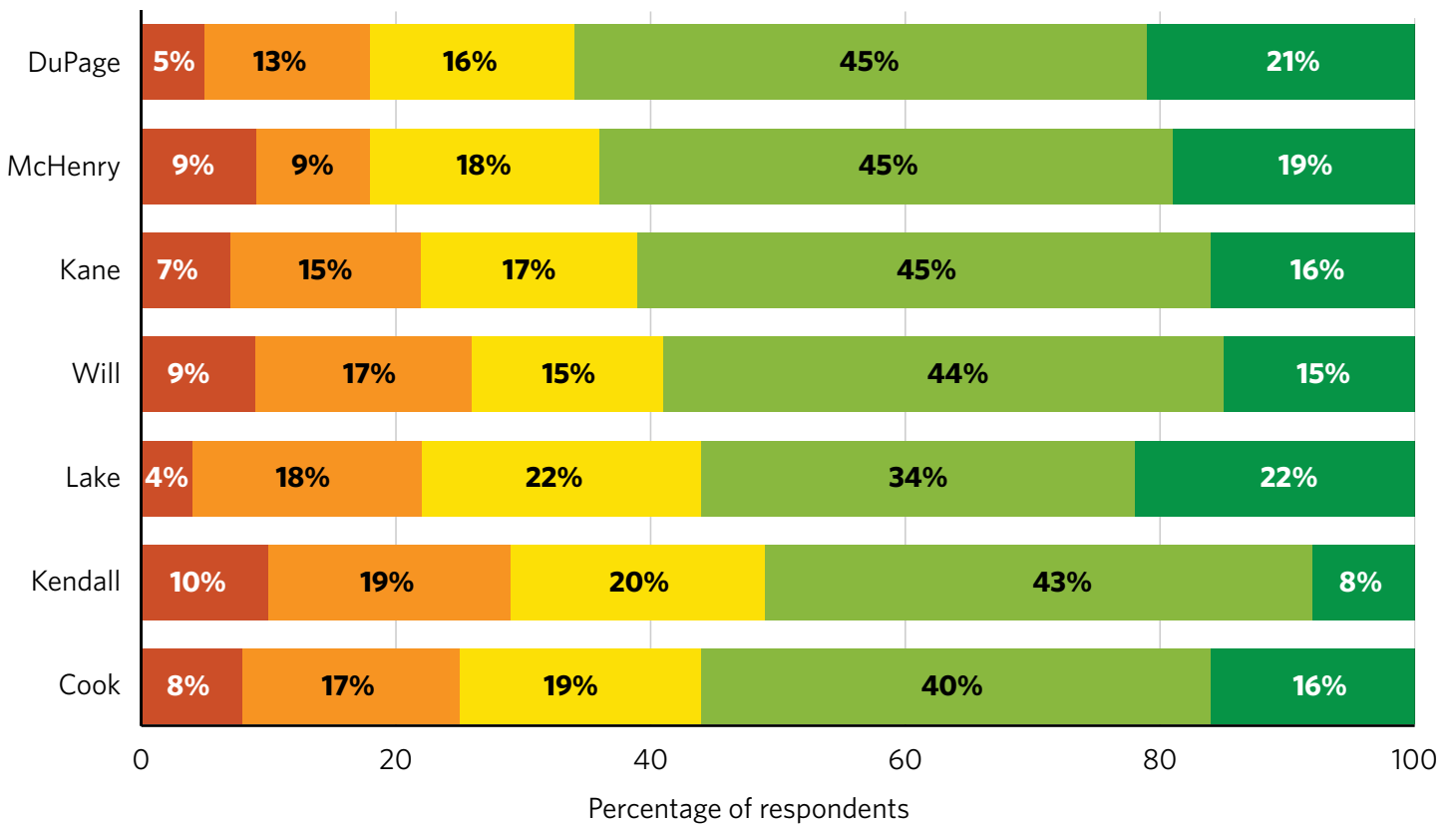
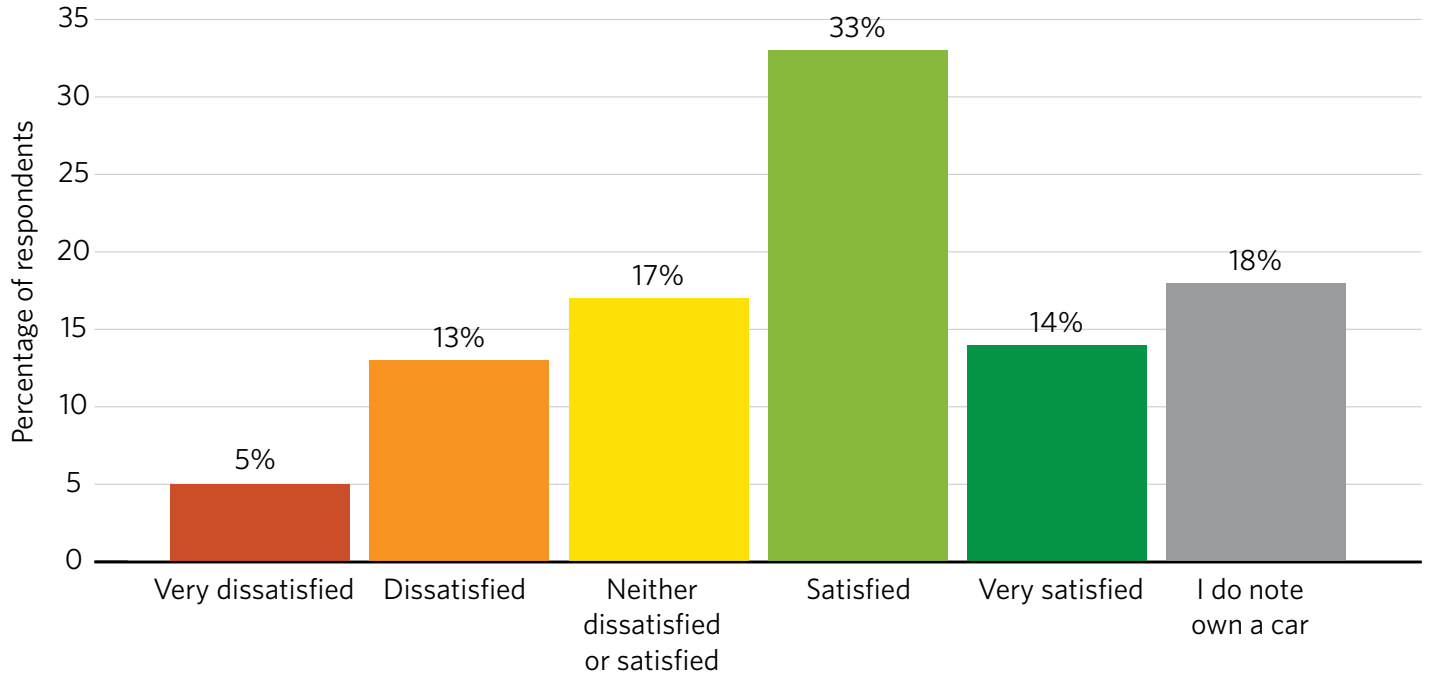


Note: Map excludes geographies with fewer than five responses

Are there any barriers to accessibility you face when using transportation (e.g., accommodation for mobility devices, audio/visual aids, physical barriers, or other accessibility features)?

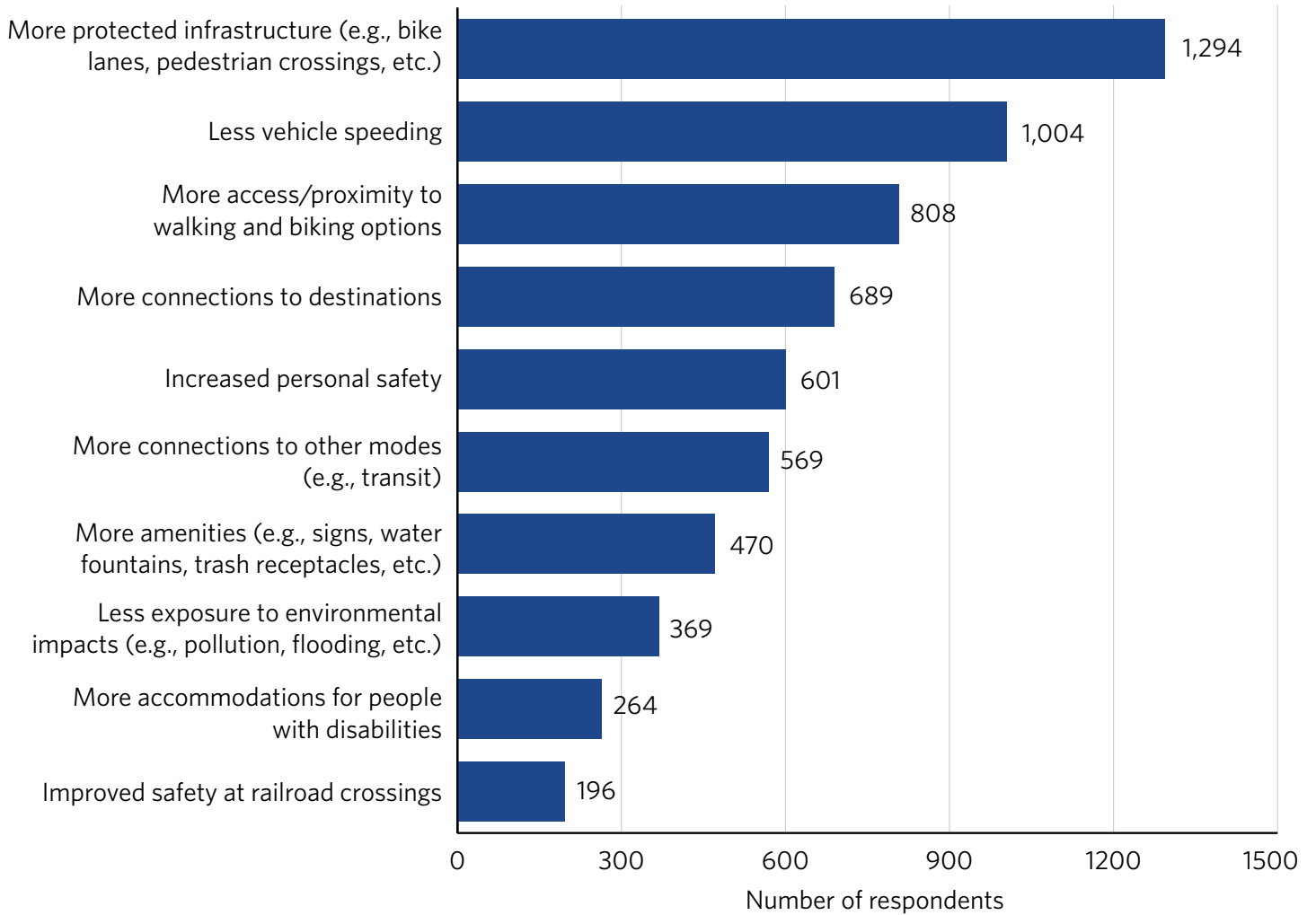
View the [full list](#) of responses received.

How satisfied are you with getting to destinations using your personal vehicle?

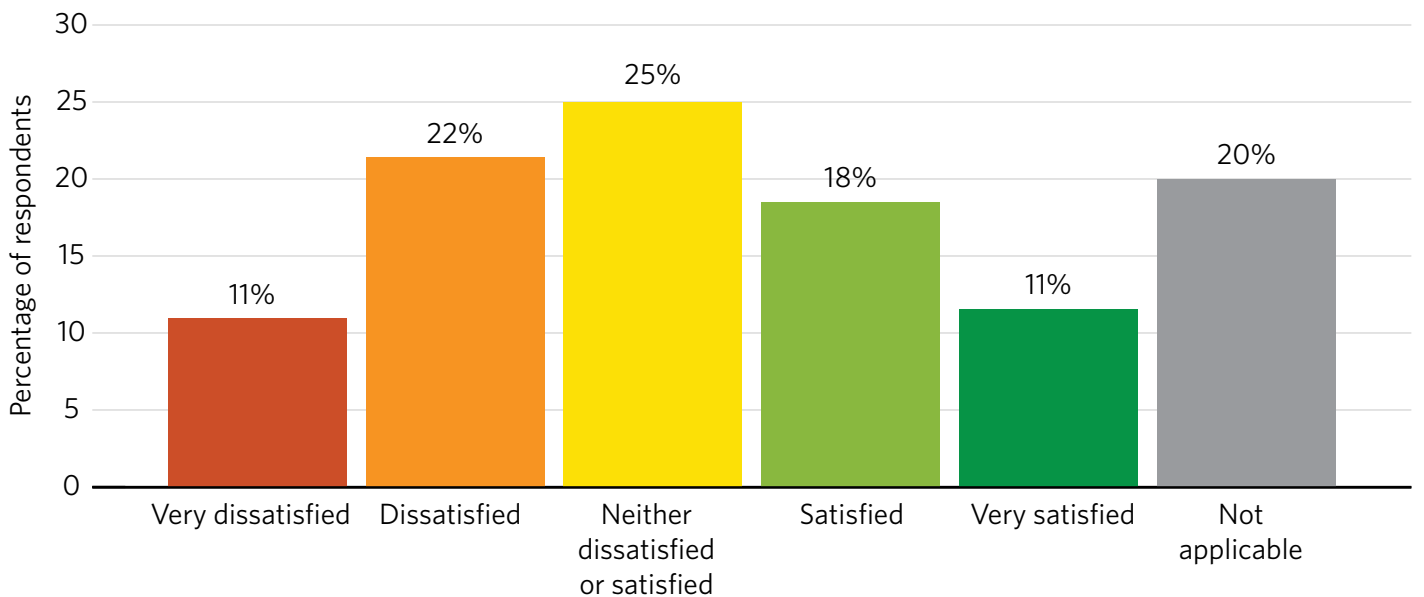


Very dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neither dissatisfied or satisfied Satisfied Very satisfied

What would make your walking or biking experiences better, or more likely? Select all that apply.

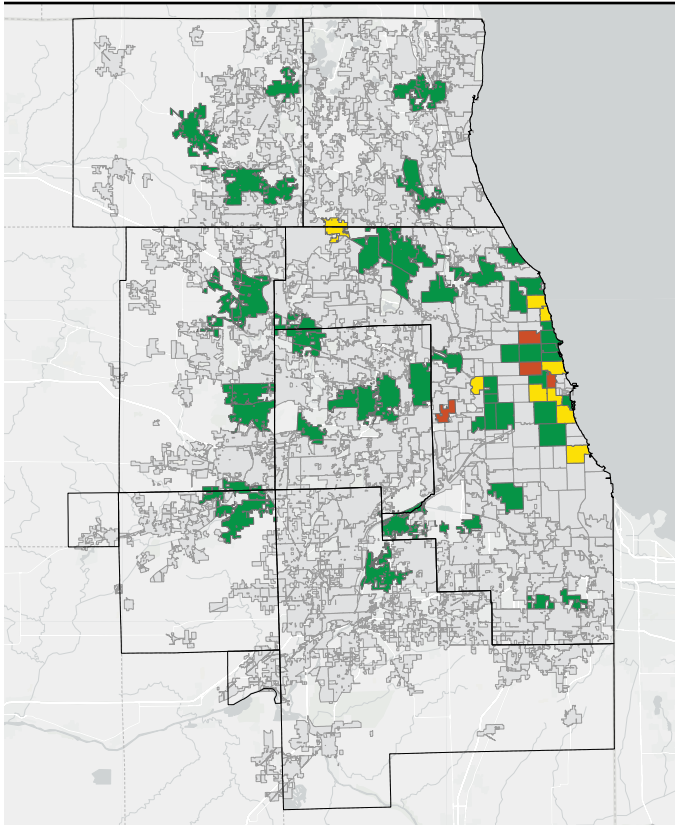


How satisfied are you with options to travel outside of the region via bus or train (e.g., via Greyhound or Amtrak)?

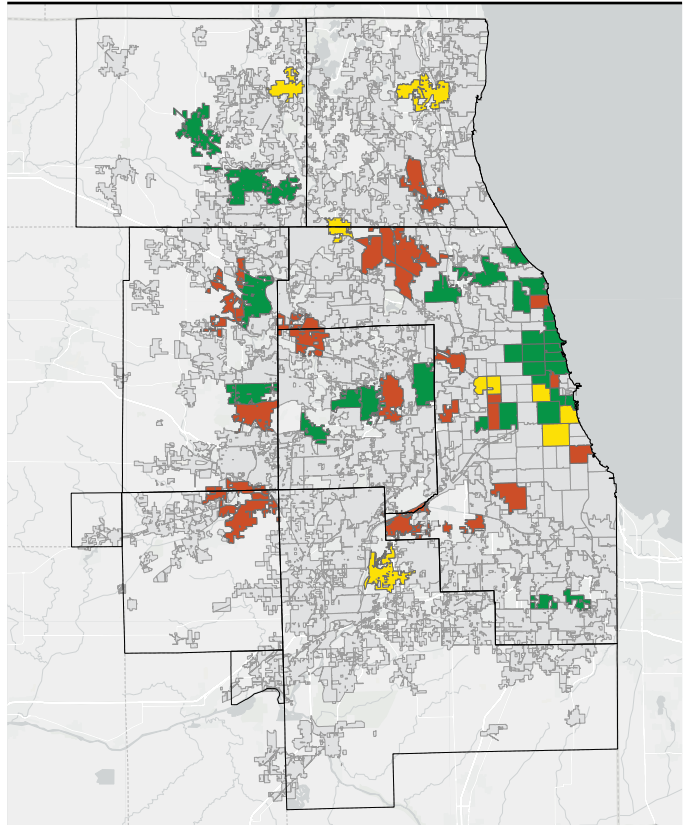


Geographic distribution of satisfaction levels across modes of transport

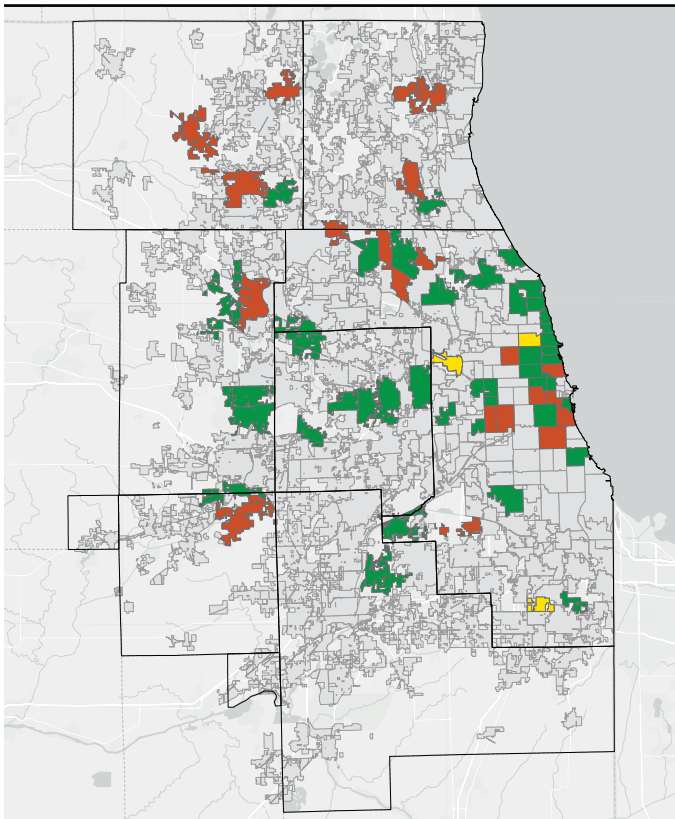
How satisfied are you with getting to destinations using your personal vehicle?






How satisfied are you with getting to destinations using public transit?



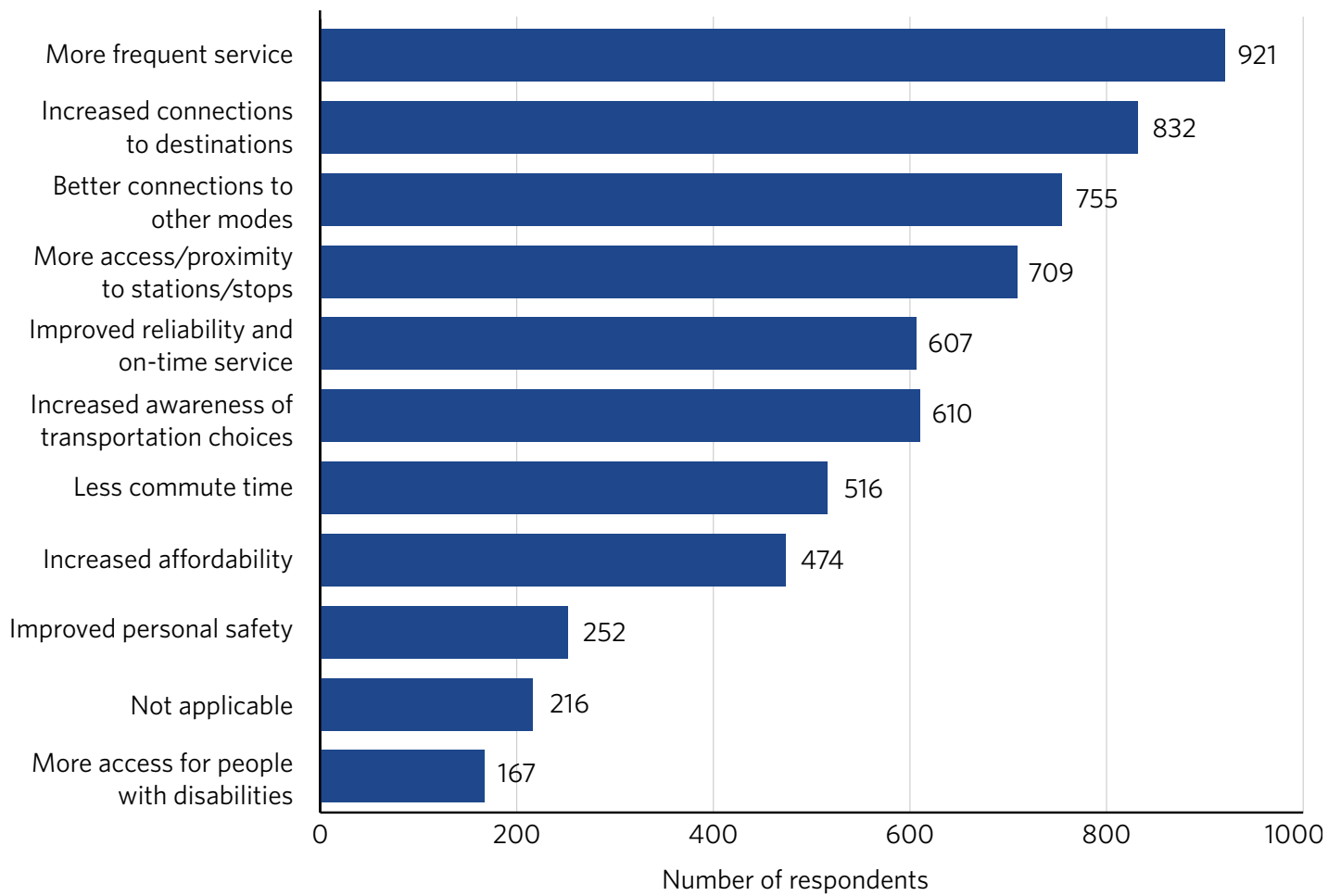
How satisfied are you with walking and biking options in your community?



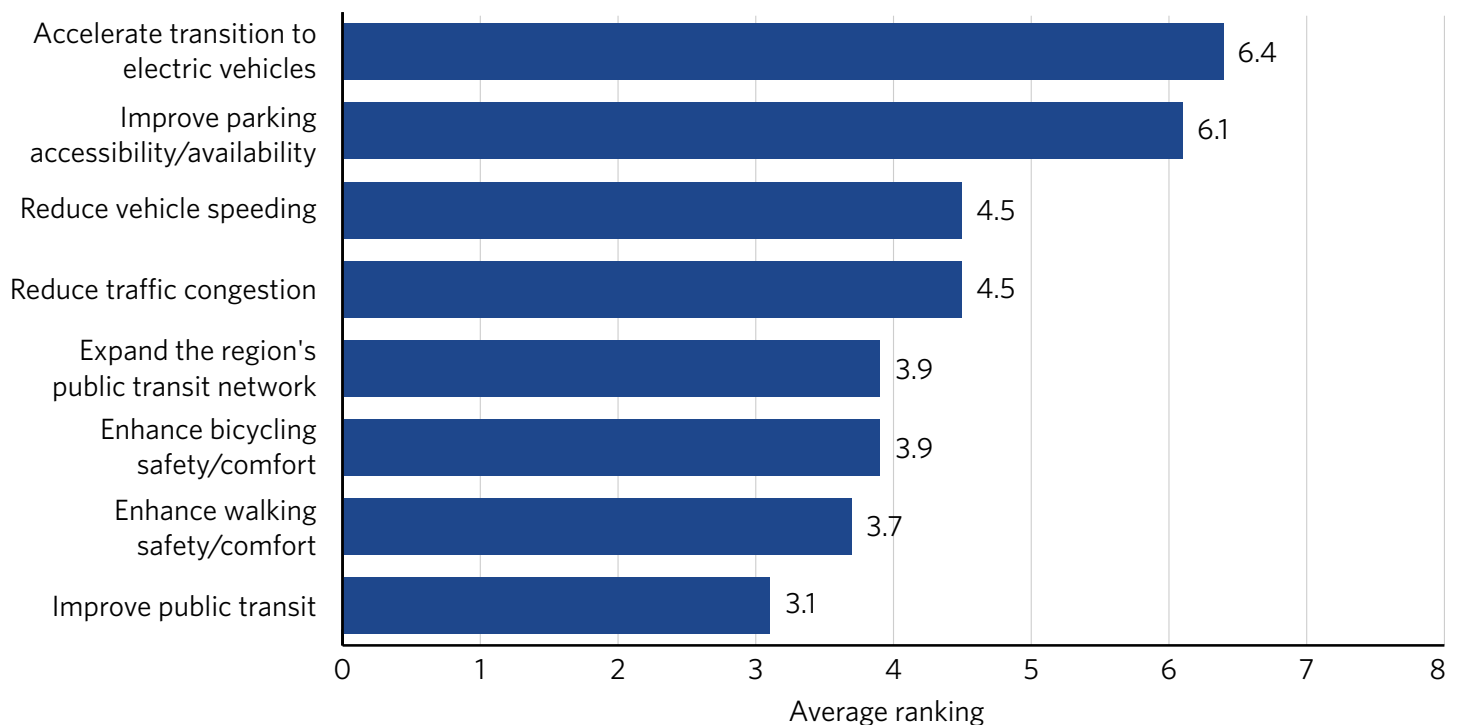
Legend

-  Predominantly satisfied or very satisfied
-  Predominantly neutral
-  Predominantly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied

What would make your walking or biking experiences better, or more likely? Select all that apply.



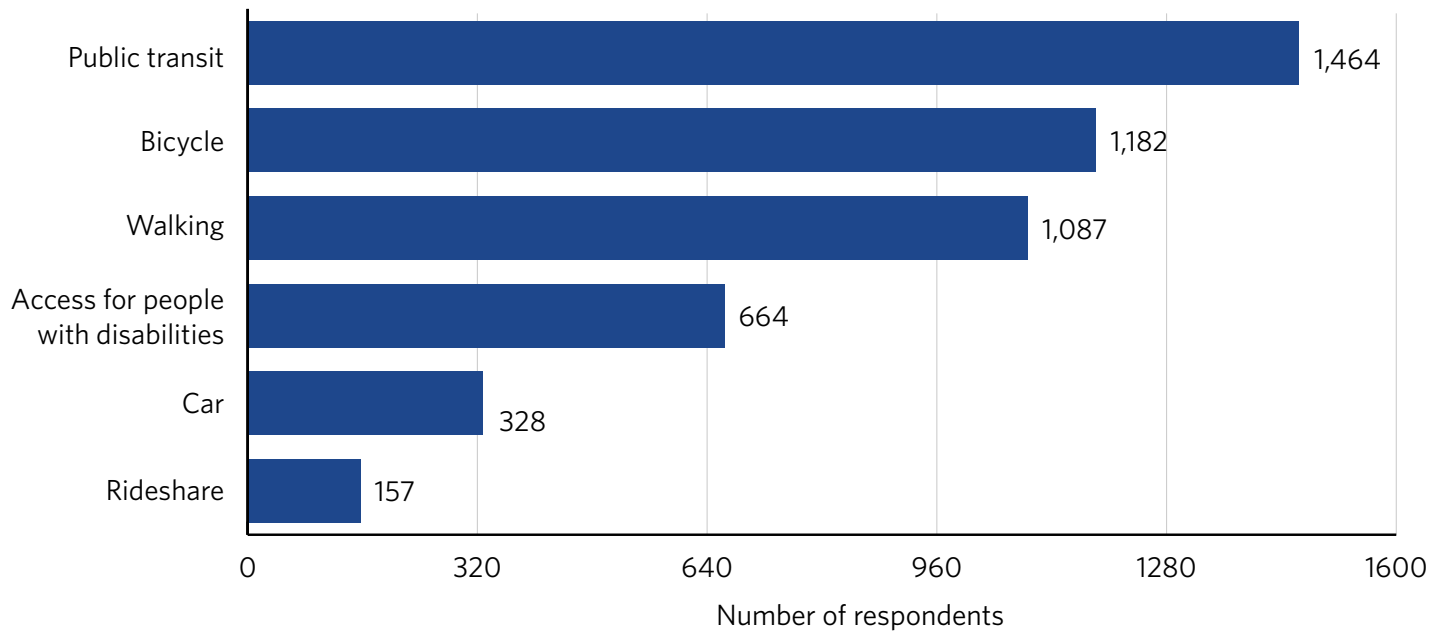
Rank the following transportation strategies in order of importance to you, with 1 being most important:



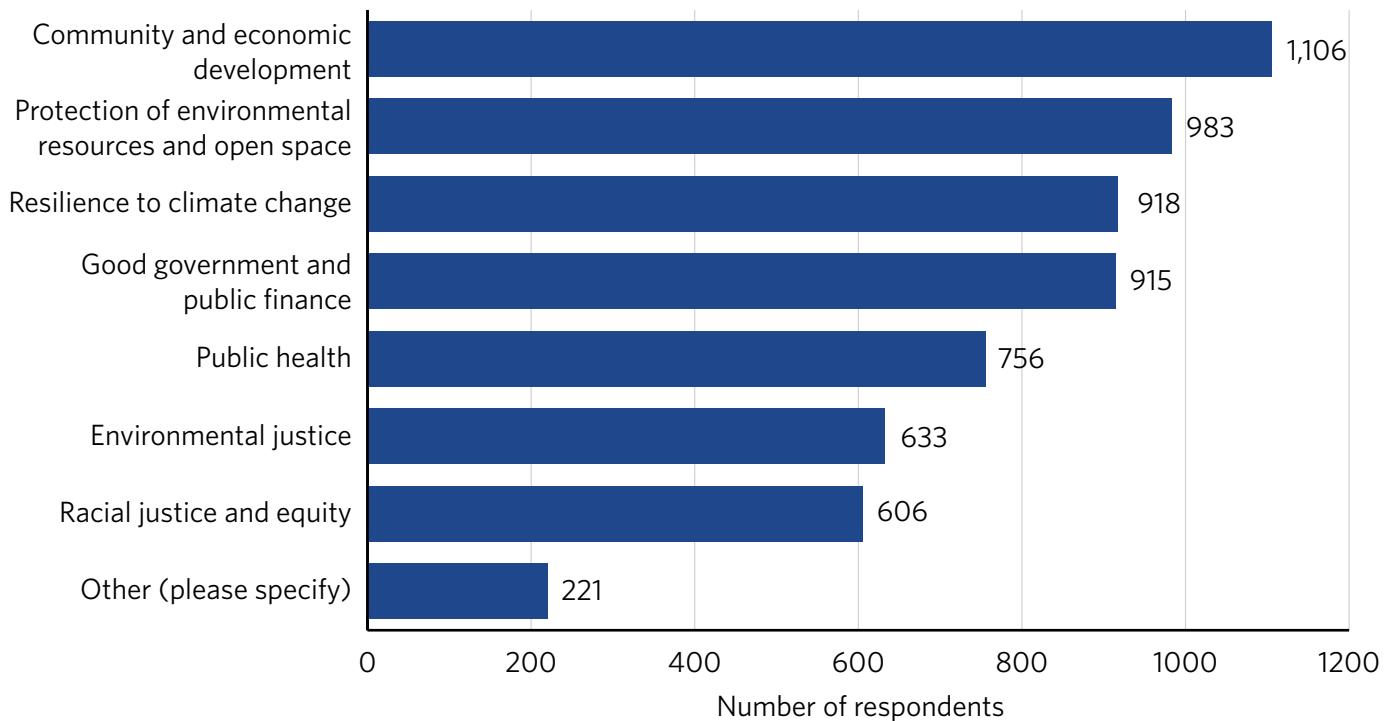
Describe your ideal transportation system in 1-5 words.

View the [full list](#) of responses received.

Which transportation modes do you think the region should increase investment in? Select all that apply.



What other topic areas would you like to see the transportation system address? Please select all that apply.



Do you have any additional comments regarding the long-term planning for our regional transportation system?

View the [full list](#) of responses received.



2026
**Regional
Transportation
Plan**



The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the region's comprehensive planning organization. The agency and its partners developed and are now implementing ON TO 2050, a long-range plan to help the seven counties and 284 communities of northeastern Illinois implement strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues.

See cmap.illinois.gov for more information.



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