

2025 Illinois Traveler Opinion Survey Key Findings

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Key Findings

I. Planning

COMMUTING

The 2025 Illinois Traveler Opinion Survey begins by assessing the commuting behaviors of Illinois travelers. The most common mode of transportation for those who report commuting is “car/personal vehicle” (76%), slightly higher than the 2024 rate (72%). There was a 4-percentage point decrease in respondents who use a regional train service to commute (20%) and respondents who commute by bike (12%).

In terms of distance traveled, respondents from age 60 years and older (41%), female (36%) and with less than a four-year degree (36%) were most likely to report commuting less than 10 miles. Furthermore, 14% of those with a four-year degree or more, 11% of white respondents and 11% of downstate respondents indicate that they travel more than 50 miles to work.

SUPPORT FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Respondents were asked to select up to three capital projects that they believe are the most important. The options available were repair/upgrade deteriorating highways and bridges, construct new highways and bridges, improve mass transit/public transportation system, comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act/improve accessibility, construct or update bike and pedestrian paths, improve freight rail, and improve passenger rail and stations. The most frequently selected capital improvement project was once again “repair/upgrade deteriorating highways and bridges” (73%), up five percentage points from 2024, followed by “improve mass transit” (57%) and “Construct or upgrade bicycle and pedestrian trails” (32%). The largest decline in support from 2024 was for “improve or expand bicycle and pedestrian trails,” dropping from 38% to 32%.

SATISFACTION, SUPPORT AND USE OF AMTRAK PASSENGER RAIL SERVICES

When asked their opinion of Amtrak, a large majority of respondents (84%) believe that Amtrak is an important part of the transportation system in Illinois. A majority of respondents (55%) support passenger rail and believe current levels of access should be expanded, down 6 percentage points from 2024. Broken down by groups, respondents ages 18 to 34 (61%), with a four-year degree or more (62%), and from Chicago (69%) believe that Amtrak is important, *and it should be expanded in Illinois.*

Just under half (47%) of respondents report they use Amtrak rarely (once a month or less), while 12% of respondents use Amtrak at least once a week. As expected, those who use Amtrak daily were much more supportive (95%) of Amtrak than those who have never used it (70%). However, across every demographic in the comparison group, the majority of respondents in each believe that Amtrak is an important part of the transportation system in Illinois, is meeting the needs of travelers and should be expanded.

TRANSIT SERVICES, AIR TRAVEL, HIGHWAY SYSTEM, AND BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCOMMODATIONS

Respondents were asked whether the current transit services, air travel, highways, and bike and pedestrian paths were at adequate levels or should be expanded. For transit service, 61% of respondents believe that transit service should be expanded in Illinois. In terms of air travel, 47% of respondents believe that passenger aviation service in Illinois is currently meeting the needs of travelers, while 44% report that the passenger aviation service needs to be expanded.

Furthermore, 45% of respondents believe that Illinois should focus on maintaining the current highway system, up 9 percentage points from 2024, while 40% believe Illinois should focus on expanding the highway system, up 4 percentage points from 2024. Lastly, 53% of respondents believe Illinois should expand its pedestrian and bike paths.

As previously discussed, when asked to prioritize capital improvement projects, respondents prioritize the highway system, though when specifically asked about bicycle and pedestrian trails, the majority support expansion. Collectively, this could suggest that Illinois residents would like to see an expansion in other areas of public transportation, but not at the expense of deprioritizing the Illinois highway system. When asked to compare their use of public transportation prior to COVID to now, the majority (59%) of respondents indicated that their use of public transportation is about the same as it was prior to COVID. This is unchanged from 2024.

Finally, respondents were asked a set of questions about electric vehicles. Most respondents (91%) indicated that they do not drive an electric vehicle or plug-in hybrid, and just over a third (38%) indicated that they were seriously considering purchasing one while nearly half (47%) reported they were not too likely or not likely at all to purchase an electric vehicle. Respondents from Chicago (52%), those with a four-year degree or more (51%), and those ages 18-34 (52%) were more likely to consider purchasing an electric vehicle or plug-in hybrid, while downstate respondents (27%) and those 60 years or over (22%) were least likely.

II. COMMUNICATIONS

ACCESS TO IDOT INFORMATION

In this section, respondents were asked about their preferred sources and media outlets when looking for information regarding IDOT projects, road conditions, road closures and employment opportunities with IDOT. The options were local news on TV, media websites, IDOT website, IDOT social media and state of Illinois website.

For road conditions and road closures, most respondents reported they get their information from the local news on television. A total of 48% of respondents used the local news on TV for information on road conditions, while 49% of respondents used it

for road closure information, largely unchanged from 2024. When it comes to IDOT projects, 64% of respondents look for information on the IDOT website, up from 58% in 2024, while two-thirds (66%) of respondents searched for employment opportunities through the IDOT website.

IDOT WEBSITE USE AND ACCESSIBILITY

A total of 37% of all respondents indicated that they had visited the IDOT traveler information website (www.gettingaroundillinois.com), a 6-percentage-point increase from 2024. Respondents ages 60 and over (41%) were more likely to have visited the site, as well as those who are male (39%), white (39%), and who live downstate (48%). A total of 67% of all respondents indicated that they had visited the IDOT information website (www.IDOT.illinois.gov), up from 61% on 2024. Respondents most likely to have visited the site were those ages 35-59 (70%) and 60 and over (71%), with a four-year degree or more (75%), male (71%), white (75%), and living downstate (75%). As was the case for both websites, the percentage of respondents who reported they had visited this website increased in every demographic category. The most commonly sought out information on the websites included “areas of construction” (42%), “traffic/travel updates” (37%), and “travel routes/maps” (30%).

ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Respondents were asked to rate the following nine aspects of Illinois roads on a four-point scale from “very good” to “very poor:” cleanliness of the roadsides, removal of debris, landscaping, snow removal, traffic signs, message boards, highway paint, traffic signals and roadside lighting. Respondents in 2025 rated all of the nine aspects of Illinois roadways more positively than compared to 2024. Electronic message boards to advise drivers of delays or construction areas (86%) and traffic signs (directional signs, warning signs and “miles to destination” signs) (85%) were rated highest. The largest increase (+9) was for cleanliness of roadsides, while visibility of lane and shoulder (edge) paint stripes on highways and roadside lighting and reflectors for visibility after dark and in bad weather also increased, +8 and +7 percentage points respectively.

When looking at the comparison groups, there were only minor differences in ratings for gender, education and age group. Analysis by race shows respondents who identified as non-white were more positive on visibility of lanes (+5), cleanliness of roadsides (+9), landscaping (+13), roadside lighting (+10) and timing of traffic signals (+8), while analysis by region shows Chicago residents more positive in cleanliness of roadsides (+13), landscaping (+12), timing of traffic signals (+2) and timely removal of debris/dead animals (+13).

Finally, when asked to rate overall conditions of interstate highways and state routes in Illinois, 70% agreed that the conditions are very good or good, up 8 percentage points from 2024, while two-thirds (68%) of respondents believe that bike and pedestrian accommodations are very good or good.

OVERALL IDOT RATING

Over two-thirds (69%) of respondents rated the job IDOT was doing as “very good” or “good.” This is an increase from 2024 (57%) and indicated that most respondents have a positive evaluation of the agency at the abstract level. Moreover, 63% of respondents indicated they could trust IDOT to do the right thing “just about always” or “most of the time” – a 9-percentage-point increase from 2024 (54%).

RATING IDOT EMPLOYEES

In the four areas surveyed, as in previous years respondents’ positive ratings of IDOT employees remain high, with overwhelming majorities having positive evaluations in each category. The most positively rated item was “overall conduct of employees on the job” (86%) with “courtesy and respect shown to motorists” (85%) a close second. In all, this year’s ratings are slightly more positive than those in 2024. This indicates a high level of satisfaction among Illinois travelers with IDOT employee performance directly compared to evaluations of the agency at the abstract level.