

WILL COUNTY  
COMMUNITY FRIENDLY  
FREIGHT MOBILITY PLAN



**CED** WILL COUNTY  
CENTER FOR  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

APPENDIX G  
PUBLIC SURVEY REPORT

September 2017

*[This page intentionally blank]*



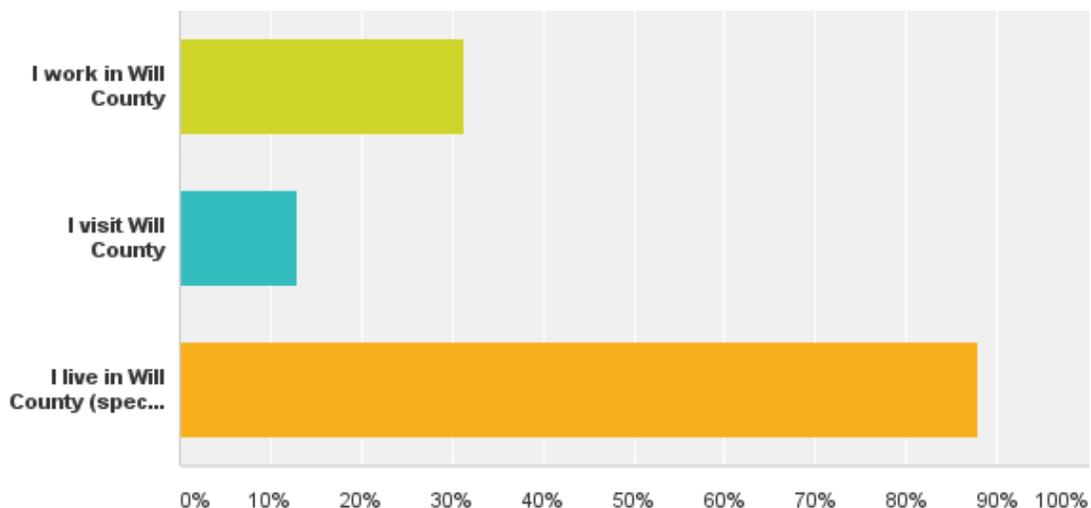
## Overview

The public survey, which remained open from April 24 to May 26, yielded 586 responses. The survey was intended to allow people who were unable to attend the public open houses to share input with the project team on quality of life considerations and specific areas of concern. The public survey was publicized simultaneously with the public open houses. A flyer was created for the survey and open house that was distributed widely via email lists, municipal channels, and news media. The freight plan website, [www.WillCountyFreight.org](http://www.WillCountyFreight.org), also directed visitors to the public survey during the period it was open.

The following pages summarize the results of the survey by demographics, preferences and rankings and open ended responses.

## Results - Demographics

Survey takers were a mix of those who live (88%), work (31%) and visit (13%) Will County.



Survey responses from those who live in Will County came from 38 different municipalities including:

Frankfort Township  
Joliet  
New Lenox  
Crete  
Mokena  
Manhattan Township  
Crete Township  
Manhattan

New Lenox Township  
Frankfort  
Beecher  
Monee  
Peotone  
Cherry Hill  
Bolingbrook  
Plainfield

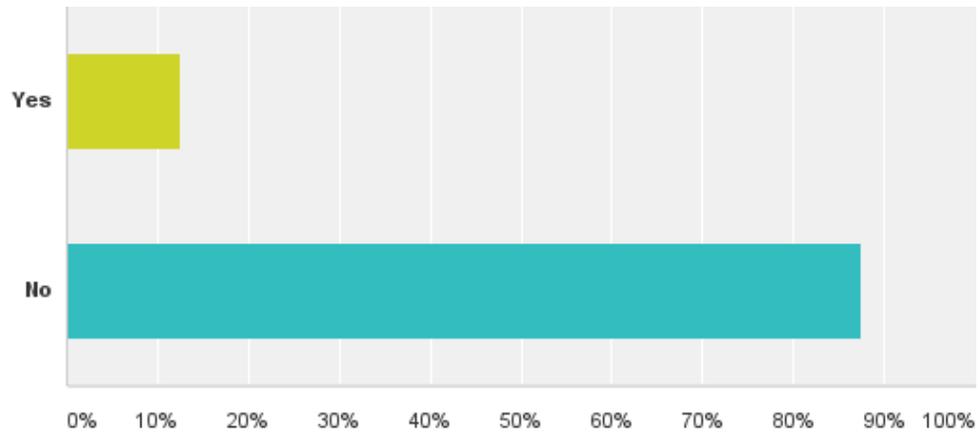
Homer Glen  
Wilmington  
Channahon  
Lockport  
Homer Township  
Joliet Township  
Elwood  
Custer Township

Braidwood  
 Wesley  
 Romeoville  
 Naperville  
 Shorewood

Crest Hill  
 Florence  
 University Park  
 Minooka  
 Jackson Township

Steger  
 Green Garden  
 Township

The majority of survey takers (approximately 88%) do not work in the freight or transportation industry.



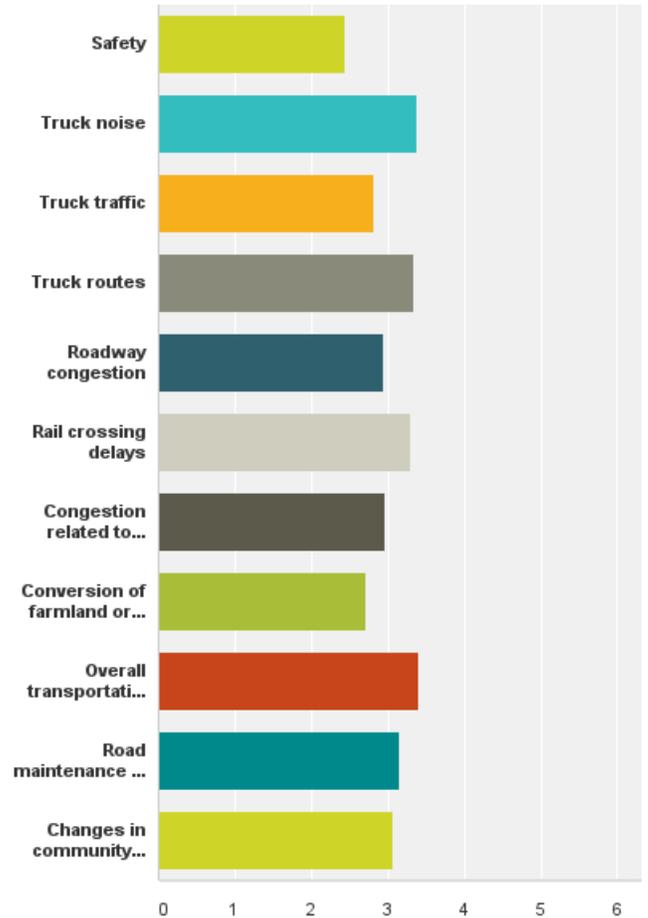
Over 150 survey takers provided their email addresses in order to receive future updates on the project.

**Results – Preferences and Rankings**

**Q: WHAT ARE THE TOP 5 MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTORS TO QUALITY OF LIFE AND LIVABILITY IN YOUR COMMUNITY OR NEIGHBORHOOD?**

Survey takers believed the top contributors to quality of life and livability in communities and neighborhood to be:

1. Feeling safe getting around and using the streets, roads, sidewalks, etc.
2. Feeling safe in my neighborhood
3. Having mostly passenger cars on neighborhood streets (no large trucks/18-wheelers)
4. Clean air
5. Low noise levels
6. Well maintained roads
7. Roads with low traffic speeds and low traffic volume
8. Having a say in what happens in my neighborhood
9. Living in an economically thriving neighborhood
10. Living close to amenities (schools, parks, etc.)
11. Quality affordable housing
12. Having a sense of community
13. Having convenient alternative transportation options (walk, bike, public transit)
14. Other



The most common write-in response for quality of life and community livability related to open space, natural areas, agricultural communities, and country living.

Survey takers those who self-identified as working in freight and transportation industry had some differences in quality of life contributors than the general group. Industry respondents ranked feeling safe in neighborhood, living in economically thriving neighborhood, affordable housing and living close to amenities higher than the general population.

**Q WHAT ARE YOUR TOP 5 CONCERNS RELATED TO FREIGHT IN WILL COUNTY? (RANK YOUR TOP 5 IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE WITH 1 AS THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCERN AND 5 AS YOUR LEAST IMPORTANT CONCERN.)**

Top concerns related to freight in Will County are:

1. Safety
2. Conversion of farmland or open space for freight developments/use
3. Truck traffic
4. Roadway congestion
5. Congestion related to warehouse distribution and intermodal sites
6. Changes in community character due to growth in freight industry
7. Road maintenance and repairs
8. Rail crossing delays
9. Truck routes
10. Truck noise
11. Overall transportation connectivity

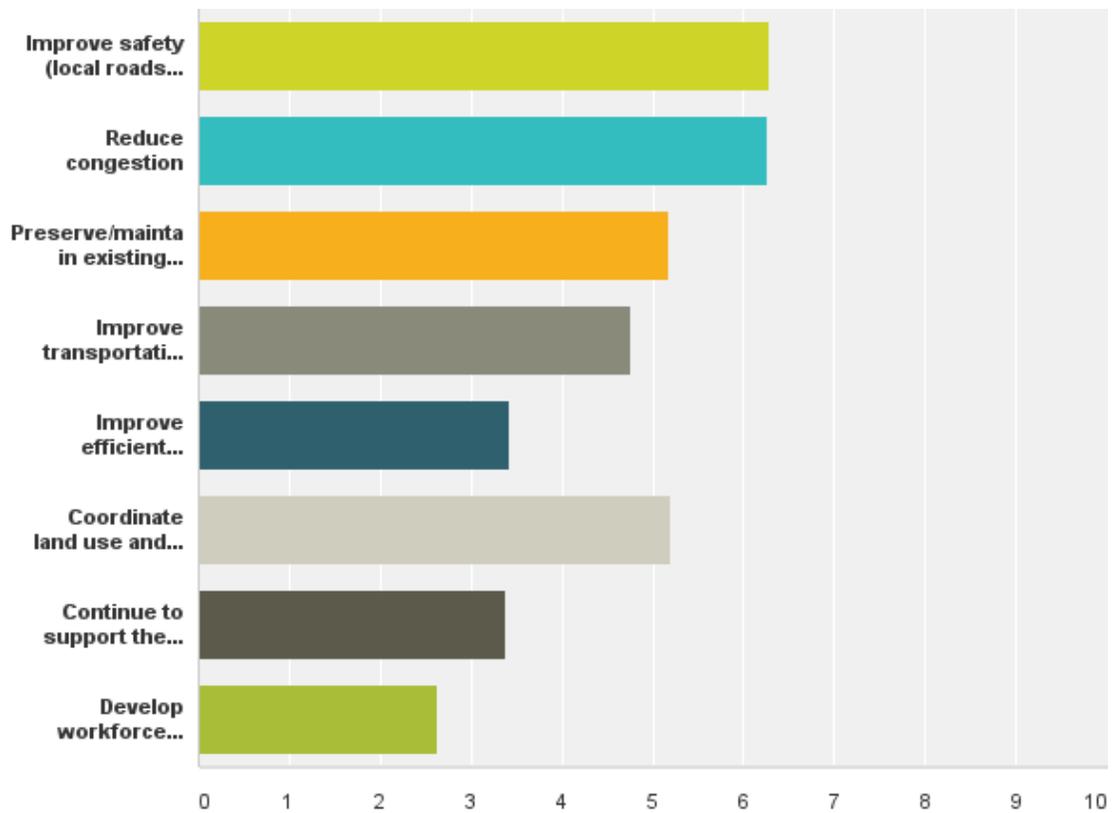
**Q: In your opinion, what is the best way to help mitigate the impacts of freight transportation?**

Best ways to mitigate the impacts of freight transportation is to decrease truck traffic on local and neighborhood roads (29%) increase capacity on highways/interstates.

Answer Choices	Responses
Increase capacity on highways/interstates	<b>15.60%</b> 90
Reconstruct and resurface existing road network	<b>7.80%</b> 45
Separate highway and railroad crossings (over/underpass)	<b>16.29%</b> 94
Decrease truck traffic on local and neighborhood roads	<b>28.94%</b> 167
Increase coordination between land use and transportation (e.g. location of freight-related buildings and developments)	<b>14.56%</b> 84
Other (please specify)	<b>16.81%</b> 97
<b>Total</b>	<b>577</b>

**Q: HOW CAN THE FREIGHT PLAN HELP SUPPORT COMMUNITIES IN WILL COUNTY?  
(RANK IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE.)**

1. Improving safety (local roads, highways, rail crossings, etc.)
2. Reducing congestion
3. Coordinating land use and transportation planning to improve communities and quality of life
4. Preserving/maintaining existing roads and transportation network
5. Improving transportation, transit and mobility options for residents and workers in the region, (including those working in freight industry)
6. Improving efficient movement of goods
7. Continuing to support the economic development and competitiveness of will county
8. Developing workforce programs and training opportunities



Several commenters stated that the freight concerns listed above are all equally high priorities to them. Many of the write-in comments were regarding environmental concerns: pollution, air quality, train noise and conserving natural areas.

**Results – Open Ended**

Q: WHAT AREAS (ROADS, HIGHWAYS, INTERSTATES, INTERSECTIONS, OR SPECIFIC LOCATIONS) IN THE COUNTY HAVE YOU SEEN OR EXPERIENCED FREIGHT BOTTLENECKS/CONGESTION OR FREIGHT-RELATED SAFETY CONCERNS THAT ARE IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENTS AND FURTHER ATTENTION (E.G., LARAWAY ROAD/IL RTE 53)?

Areas most commonly identified needing improvements included:

- IL Rte. 53
- I-80, I-55
- Laraway Rd
- IL Rte. 30
- I-394
- IL Rte. 1
- IL Rte. 6
- Manhattan Rd
- Gougar Road
- Weber Rd
- Wilmington Peotone Rd.

These locations were named as a whole by some survey takers and at specific locations by others.

Phrase*	Number of mentions
53	401
80	338
55	200
Laraway	146
30	93
394	60
59	44
52	32
river	30
Wilmington	29
Manhattan	27
Chicago	27
Peotone	26
Weber	26
Arsenal	25
126	24
Gougar	21
Bridge	20
57	20

\*Phrases less than 2 characters, such as 6 and 1 were not calculated in the text frequency analysis table.



## Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER THOUGHTS OR SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING FREIGHT IN THE WILL COUNTY REGION?

There were several recurring themes that respondents chose to expound upon in open-ended questions. Those themes included:

1. Ideas of where to make road improvements.
2. Desires to separate industrial land use from residential use and freight traffic from other vehicles, including rail crossings.
3. Emphasizing need to increase road capacity prior to building warehouses/intermodals.
4. Warning freight will disrupt rather than contribute to existing character of communities, particularly when facilities are located near small town and residential areas.
5. Highlighting importance of maintaining existing roads
6. Sentiments in favor and against the Illiana (or similar east/west route) as a solution.
7. Concerns that freight is not the right kind of development to focus on.
8. Interest in fees and permitting as solution and stronger enforcement.
9. Environmental and home value concerns.
10. Support for economic growth and opportunity that freight can bring to Will County.
11. Concerns specific to the Crete intermodal.

Below are a few comments representative of overall comments made regarding each theme.

1. Ideas of where to make road improvement. Widening roads and increased access to certain areas were common recommendations.
  - *Laraway need to be widened to 4 lane road with a center turning median.*
  - *Somehow create incentives to operate the trains and the trucking industry at night to relieve the congestion during the day. Would seem like a win/win for all involved.*
  - *Build a 4-LANE (EACH DIRECTION) BYPASS as an, Inter-county Bi-State HIWAY connecting I-88 between Yorkville & Oswego going SOUTH, with intersection at I-80, continuing SOUTH turning EAST and intersecting I-55 & I-53 north of Wilmington & south of Channahon continuing EAST to I-65 in Indiana!*
  - *Must improve both exit ramps from I-80 - Chicago St/Route 53 and Briggs/Route 52 and expand highways to Laraway intersection.*
2. Desires to separate industrial from residential and freight traffic from other vehicles (right lane only for trucks, other designated lanes). Freight should be located as close as possible to interstates where trucks can make quick/easy entrances or exits.
  - *Keep it right off the interstate and out of neighborhoods.*
  - *Freight should not allowed in high density residential areas (Laraway Road through New Lenox, Frankfort and Richton Park)*
  - *Designated truck routes and no overnight traffic in the communities.*
  - *Other states separate interstates into cars only and trucks/cars (i.e NJ). The amount of trucks on state routes and interstates just keeps increasing. There are too many accidents caused by the congestion already and this will increase if nothing is done. Is it worth risking lives for economic development?*

For rail, separating train crossings and reducing crossing time are also desirable.

- *Train overpasses need to be built on heavily used freight lines.*
  - *If the CN RR is any indication of the future of transportation in Will County, it is going to be frustrating unless something can be done to reduce delays in blocking traffic.*
  - *I do worry about hazardous materials and potential accidents. So many homes are near the CN railroad tracks. I also have major concerns about increased freight train traffic and being cut off from emergency care for longer periods of time.*
3. Emphasizing need to increase road capacity prior to building warehouses/intermodals instead of the other way around.
- *We need to be better prepared to provide the necessary infrastructure BEFORE they settle in.*
  - *Make sure the roads are ready for these big trucks before the warehouse developments are approved--not afterwards.*
  - *Will County should have done an impact study instead of the hell with it let's just build it and then see what happens.*
4. Prefer freight development away from small towns and residential developments; Beliefs that freight will disrupt rather than contribute to existing character of communities.
- *When they start to over taking country farmland, there is no place to live in the "country". They need to stay by the already established industrial area. It will be nothing but congestion, noise, and accidents.*
  - *Encourage growth elsewhere. Seriously. It's not a not in by backyard thing but encourage growth on existing tracks outside of Will County, such as the NS/CSX line through Kankakee to Streator. Encourage growth on such lines to save track time in Will County for trains that will bring economic growth to the community.*
  - *Stop ruin our county with warehouses. There is no benefit to the residents.*
  - *Let them build elsewhere. What actual benefit is going to come from these centers? Joliet is already planning for water issues in 15 to 20 years, so why are they building these huge, inefficient, sites?*
5. Maintaining existing roads is important to residents.
- *We need to maintain what we have in place.*
  - *Should be pushing for construction and tolling to support maintenance of existing roads.*
  - *I do not support the Illiana tollway and I would prefer that existing roads be maintained instead. I am concerned about the environmental impacts of building more roads and i o not want more farmland to be converted to industrial parks and roads. I want to protect the Midewin Tall Grass Preserve.*
  - *I dont want to see more construction for new roads versus maintaining what already exists.*
6. Sentiments in favor and against the Illiana (or similar east/west route) as a solution.
- *What about the Illiana project? The county should take it over and complete this connection.*
  - *Do not build or support the Illiana in these plans.*
  - *The Illiana Highway is the only solution to the truck traffic on local roads.*

- *Convert Peotone/Wilmington Road to a 4 lane truck route.*
  - *We need a new Highway to the South that parallels I-80 between I-55 and I-394. But it will never happen Illinois is broke.*
7. Concerns that freight is not the right kind of development to focus on.
- *Other industry should be the focus in Will County, not additional freight/intermodal terminals.*
  - *Geography makes I-80 I-55 corridor ideal for logistic jobs. Warehouses do not necessarily create that many jobs and those that are created are often low paying or temporary. Truck drivers who support warehouses are not necessarily local. Planning needs to be developed that will bring a better mixed use for highest use of land and better paying jobs to support our local economy.*
  - *This is area is high quality farm land and good for residential and commercial development. The desire to degrade all this for return on investment for developers is not what Eastern Will County is about. 'Build it and they will come' is not a good business model.*
  - *We need to not put all of the county's eggs in one basket. While freight will be a part of Will County, it should not be the end all of our economic focus.*
8. Some interest in fees and permitting as solution and stronger enforcement.
- *Make the companies responsible for overweight & out of compliance trucks rather than the individual drivers.*
  - *We need more truck enforcement police to keep unsafe drivers and vehicles off our roads, and we need to enforce the "no trucks" areas.*
  - *I would like to see greater enforcement of truck safety regulations - speeding, material condition of trucks - by Will County sheriffs.*
  - *Railroad companies should be held to higher standards with conditions of crossings, noise levels, and the frequency/length of blocking intersections.*
9. Environmental and home value concerns.
- *I am concerned that I will have a harder time selling my house, and get less money, with all the truck traffic we are seeing in this area due to more warehouses. I'm also concerned about all the farm land and trees/landscape we are losing. It's very industrial looking now, not like the natural scenery we used to have.*
  - *You will force land and home values to plummet.*
  - *I don't want a freight system in Will County. I moved here for open and clean areas. We need more forest preserves, more hiking trails, cleaner air and water.*
10. Some residents are positive about the economic growth and opportunity that freight can bring to Will County.
- *If the intermodal is built most of the job should go to the local community. Give the local residents a reason to support the intermodal.*
  - *Let the railroad go through. It'll create jobs.*
  - *As long as the roads are maintained and improved for this type of traffic and equipment, it is bringing jobs and economic growth to the community.*

#### 11. Concerns specific to Crete Intermodal

- *No intermodal in Crete. Why not further south just north of Grant Park*
- *I feel that building the CSX Intermodal facility in Crete Township is premature until the Illiana Tollway location is picked and has been built...the current roads in Crete Township do not support the location,,,nor will they...The CSX facility once built should be easy access from the Illiana and in close proximity to the UP/CSX main line. This should also include extending Rte 394 farther south and east of Beecher IL to connect with the Illiana Tollway. If the CSX facility is built in the current location tractor trailer traffic coming from/to I65 through Beecher and Grant Park on Rt 1 will be unbearable and destroy current roads.*
- *CSX to buy Goodenow residents out! 200 feet from the entrance is too close!*