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## Public Engagement

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## Introduction

Stakeholder and Public engagement is an essential element of the decision-making process that goes into identifying transportation needs for the region. MACOG began the Michiana Move 2050 planning process with the goal of increasing public engagement by raising awareness of the planning process and opportunities for the public to provide feedback and input. Staff utilized a variety of outreach efforts to ensure information collected was representative of across the region.



MACOG staff began gathering public input in the Fall of 2022 with an online survey and comment map. The focus of the surveys was to gather input on future development in our region and identify transportation concerns. Throughout the fall MACOG staff held a series of popup events at 9 locations throughout the region, producing survey responses from over 200 individuals. At the same time and throughout the 2022/2023 winter, MPO staff also held and attended numerous meetings with elected officials, engineers, planners, and

other key stakeholders to gather feedback on a vision, goals, and strategies for transportation investments. MACOG utilized meetings for Policy Board and the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) to provide updates on planning activities for the Michiana on the Move plan. The public was also given the opportunity to provide comments on the Plan and projects in its final draft state during an open public comment period from September 8, 2023 to October 9, 2023. An open house was held on September 21st from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in order to provide all a chance to ask questions and give feedback.

## Stakeholder Engagement

Identified stakeholders included representatives from county and municipal governments, economic development partners, and other interested parties throughout the four counties. Additionally, consultants and engineers regularly working with the stakeholders were invited to participate. On August 31, 2022 MACOG held kick off meetings in Kosciusko and Marshall County and on September 1, held meetings in St. Joseph and Elkhart County. During these meetings, stakeholders were informed about the planning process and asked to think through three different growth scenarios for our region. The first scenario was “business as usual” where development occurred as expected. The second was a “compact” scenario where stakeholders considered high density development. The third and final exercise was a “visionary” scenario where the question was posed - “If you could have everything you wanted, what would development look like?” Stakeholders were also asked to identify regional benchmarks they would find useful for tracking progress. As an MPO, MACOG is required to establish performance measures centered around seven national goals. While MACOG’s Policy Board has chosen to support INDOT’s performance measures, stakeholder were able to provide potential several benchmarks specific to the region. Stakeholders were given seven national goals and asked to share benchmarks that they would use to track progress. For example, one national goal is “infrastructure condition” and a benchmark that was suggested to track the progress of this goal was “the percentage of roads in good pavement condition”.



information about our engagement activities. The survey was created to better understand how people move around the region, what transportation issues impact their daily lives, and what factors they believe should be considered when thinking about the future of transportation. A social media plan that included sponsored Facebook posts, eye-catching graphics, and short informational videos was executed to capture as many survey responses as possible. In addition to this survey, an interactive comment map was created to allow people to leave location specific comments, both positive and negative, about our transportation network. To further capture survey responses, staff attended a variety of pop up events, including:

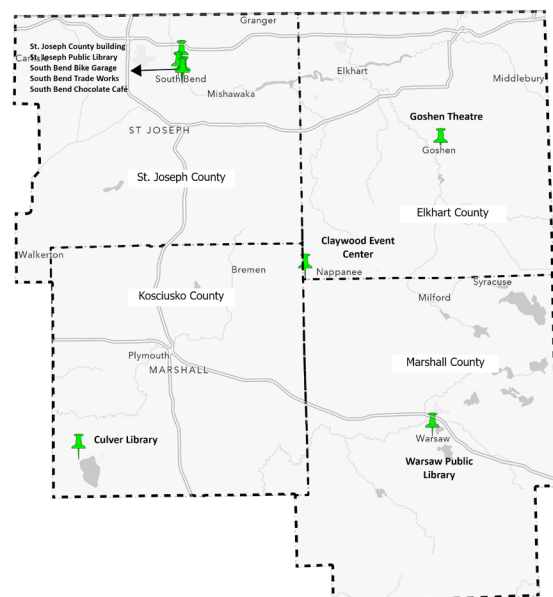
- Urban Adventure Games in St. Joseph County
- First Friday in Downtown Goshen
- First Friday in Downtown South Bend
- South Bend Bike Garage
- Green Drinks
- Transpo Transfer Center
- Interurban Trolley Transfer Center
- Culver Library
- Warsaw Public Library
- South Bend Library
- Michiana Bike to Work Week
- Nappanee Family Safety Day

Staff held a series of Spring 2023 stakeholder meetings to identify potential projects. During the Spring meetings stakeholders were presented with data related to crash locations, pavement and bridge conditions, and level of service to assist in informing potential projects. Working directly with staff and with this information, stakeholders were provided the opportunity to identify additional transportation project needs, including both vehicular and active transportation.

### Public Engagement

A variety of approaches were also used to engage our region’s public. A website specific to our plan (move.macog.com) was created, which housed information about the plan, links to our survey and interactive comment map, and up to date

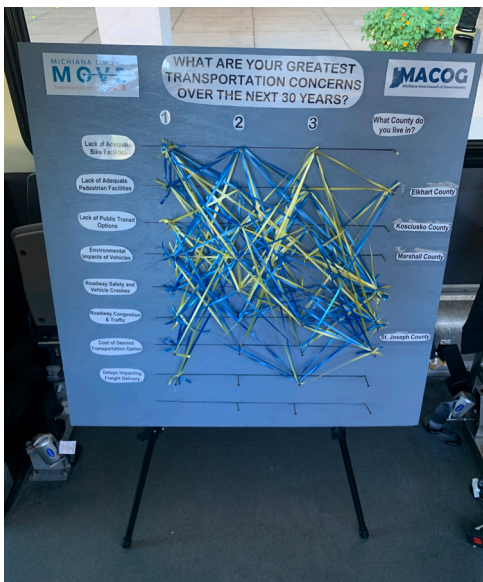
Figure 4-1: In-Person Events



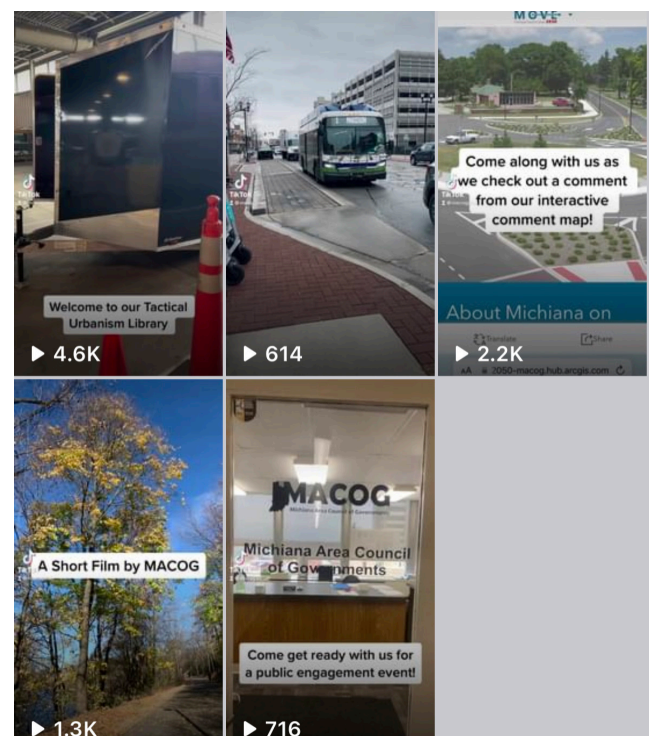
Staff utilized a number of survey methods throughout the engagement process. This included common methods such as paper question/answer survey and online versions of the same survey. Part of the online survey also included the opportunity to electronically place a pin at locations of concern and provide details or the concern. It should be noted that a number of pinned locations were followed up with field verification of the issue and, when appropriate, the concerns were noted to be addressed in future projects. Less common, but effective methods also included string boards and feedback frames during pop up events.

MACOG staff also attempted to build interest and engagement through social media. Regular text and graphic posts were posted with included links to the online survey. Additionally, short videos were regularly created to emphasize particular aspects of the plan. These included:

- Public Transportation
- How Tactical Urbanism is a part of Planning
- How staff addresses Input
- Overview of the Long Range Plan
- How to provide Input



Stakeholders were also provided the opportunity to identify specific projects for future planning. In addition to vehicular transportation, active transportation projects were identified on separate maps. These included both known project needs and desirable projects for all modes of transportation.





MICHIANA ON THE  
**MOVE**  
transportation plan 2050

MACOG

### How will I get to work in 2050?



**Provide feedback for a chance to win a \$150 gift card!**

Scan the QR code with your camera app to comment and learn more about the transportation plan.

[www.move.macog.com](http://www.move.macog.com)

All of the comments received online are summarized in Figure 4-2 in the maps on the following page.

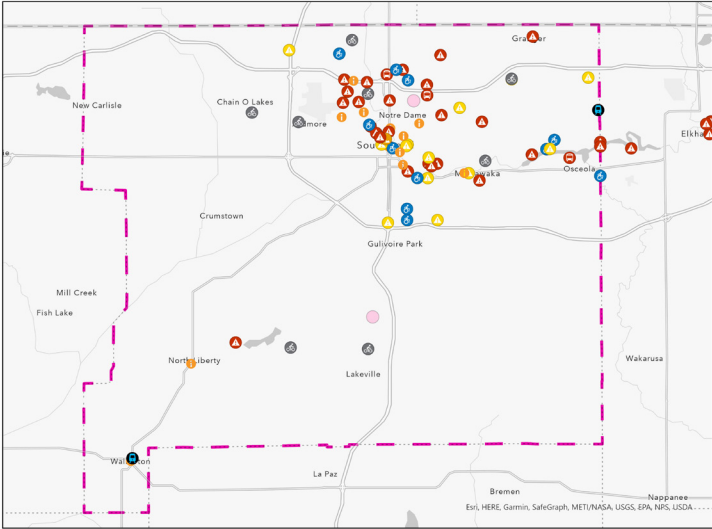
Not all residents have access to the internet, particularly the significant Amish community within the Region. MACOG made specific efforts to ensure members of the Amish community had an opportunity to provide input on the plan. MACOG attended the Nappanee Family Safety Day event, which is a one day event bringing together the area Amish community. Attending this event was suggested by the leadership of the Nappanee Area Safety Committee following a stakeholder with them.

In addition to online promotion, MACOG used strategically placed yard signs (see above example) to promote the online survey. These were placed in downtowns and along trails throughout the region. Participants could just scan the QR code and it would take them directly to the website.

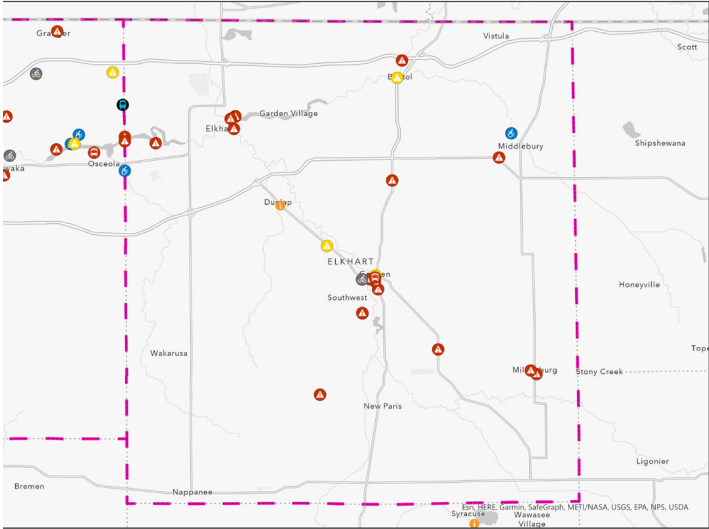


Figure 4-2: Online Comment Map Summary

St. Joseph County



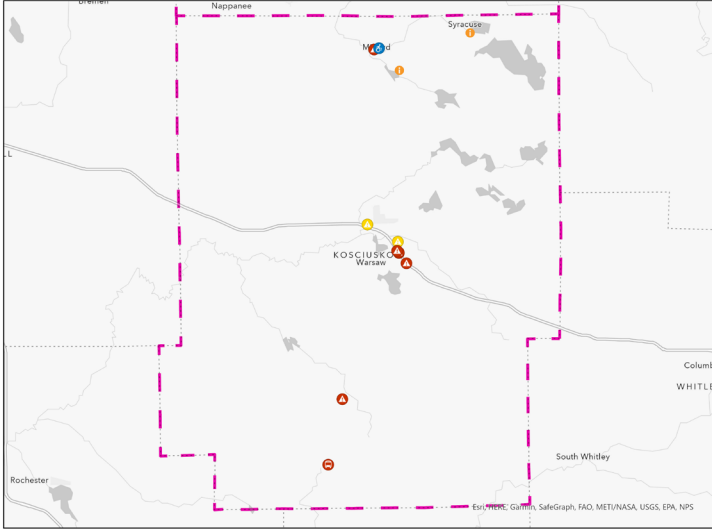
Elkhart County



Marshall County



Kosciusko County



- Safety
- Congestion
- Intersection improvement
- Sidewalk and Curb Ramps
- Active transportation
- Transit
- Rail
- Maintenance
- Other

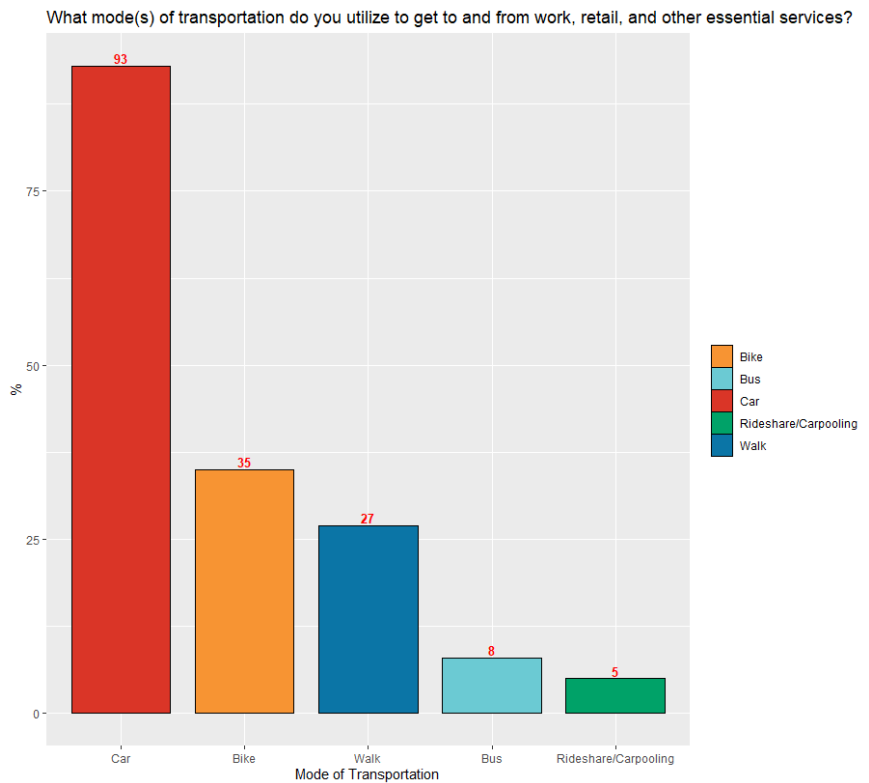
## Survey Summary

The following pages provides a summary of the public survey conducted for the Move 2050 Plan.

### How You Move

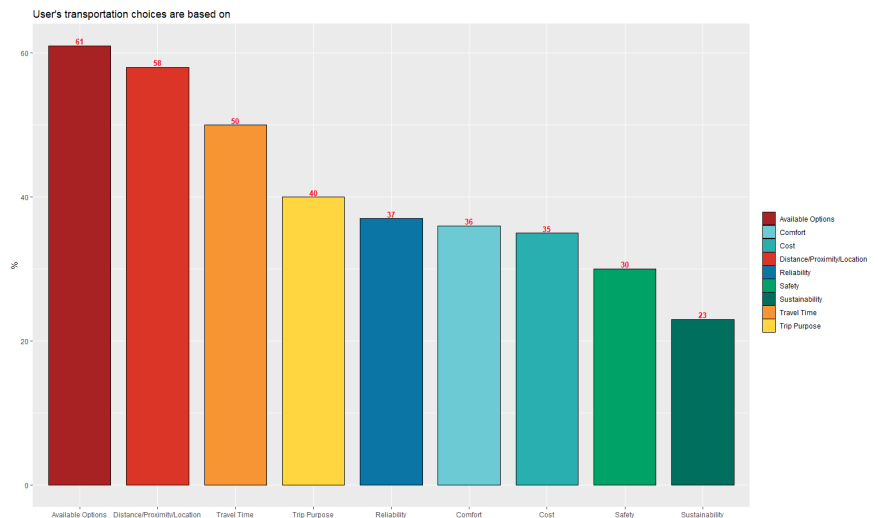
#### What mode(s) of transportation do you utilize to get to and from work, retail, and other essential services?

Majority of responses utilize car, however the next highest responses were by bike or walking.



#### My transportation choices are based on...

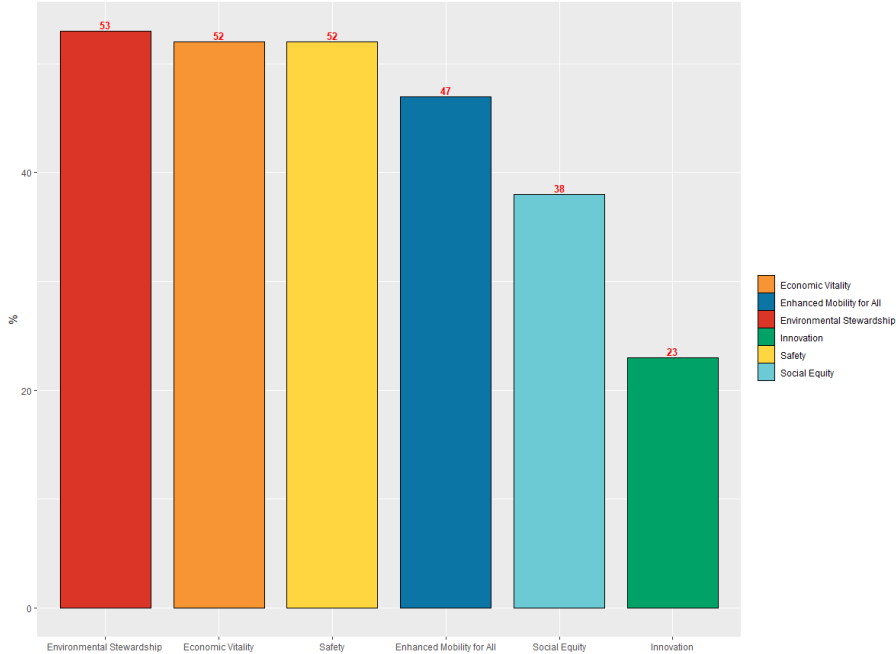
The main factors in choosing the mode of transportations are having available options and the distance or location to those options.



Vision for the Future

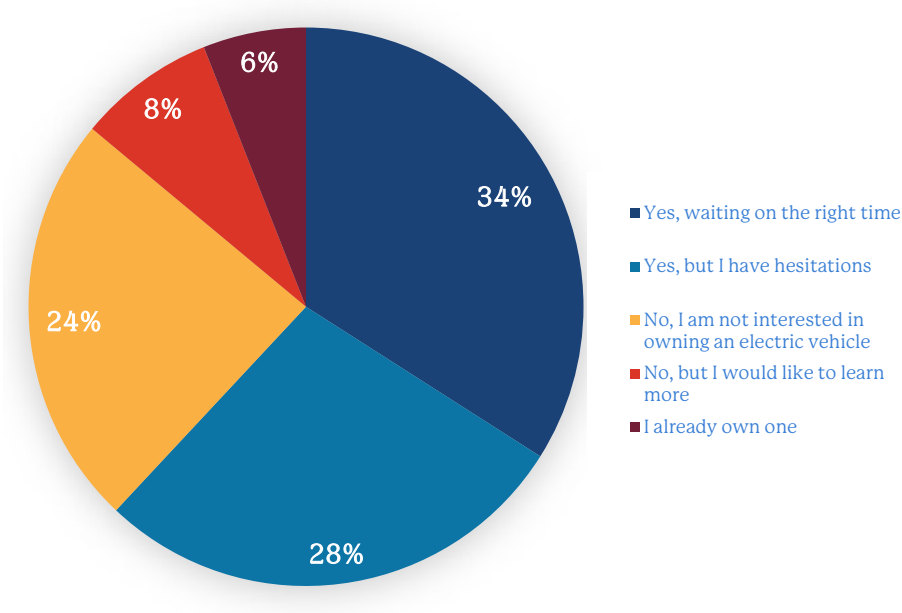
Which regional goals are most important to you?

The top three goals were Environmental Stewardship, Economic Vitality, and Safety.



Have you considered owning an electric vehicle?

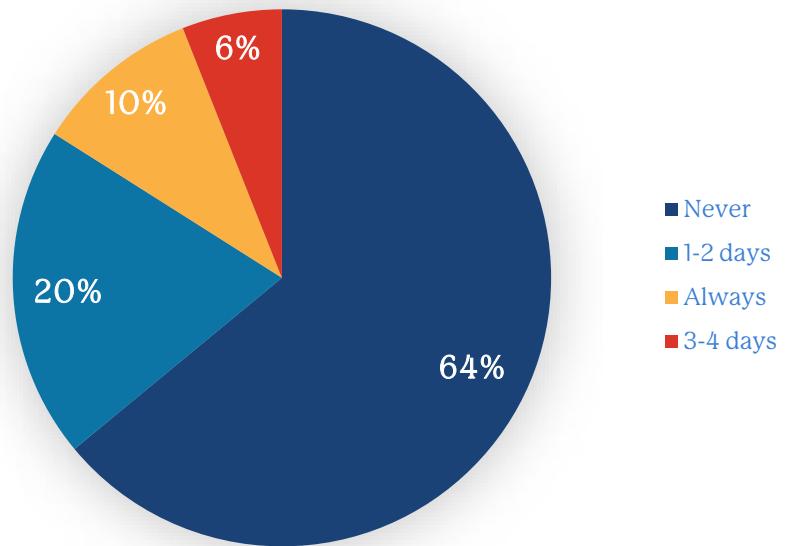
The majority of responses indicated they would consider owning an electric vehicle, with only approximately a quarter of the responses indicating they are not interested.





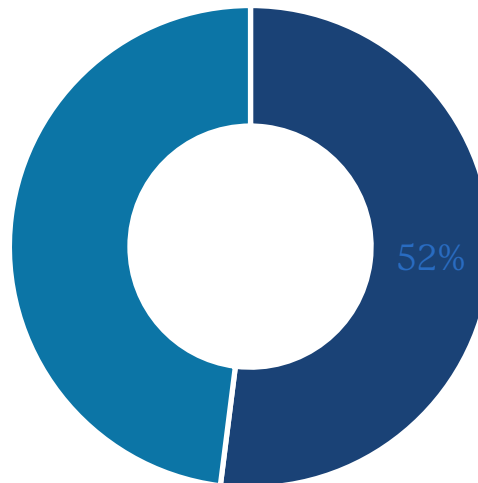
**On average, how often do you work from home each week?**

The majority of responses indicated they never work from home, however a significant portion do at least work from home one day a week.



**Should Autonomous (self-driving) vehicles should be considered throughout transportation planning.**

As the existing transportation network evolves, accommodation for autonomous vehicles will likely become necessary and the majority of responses support that.

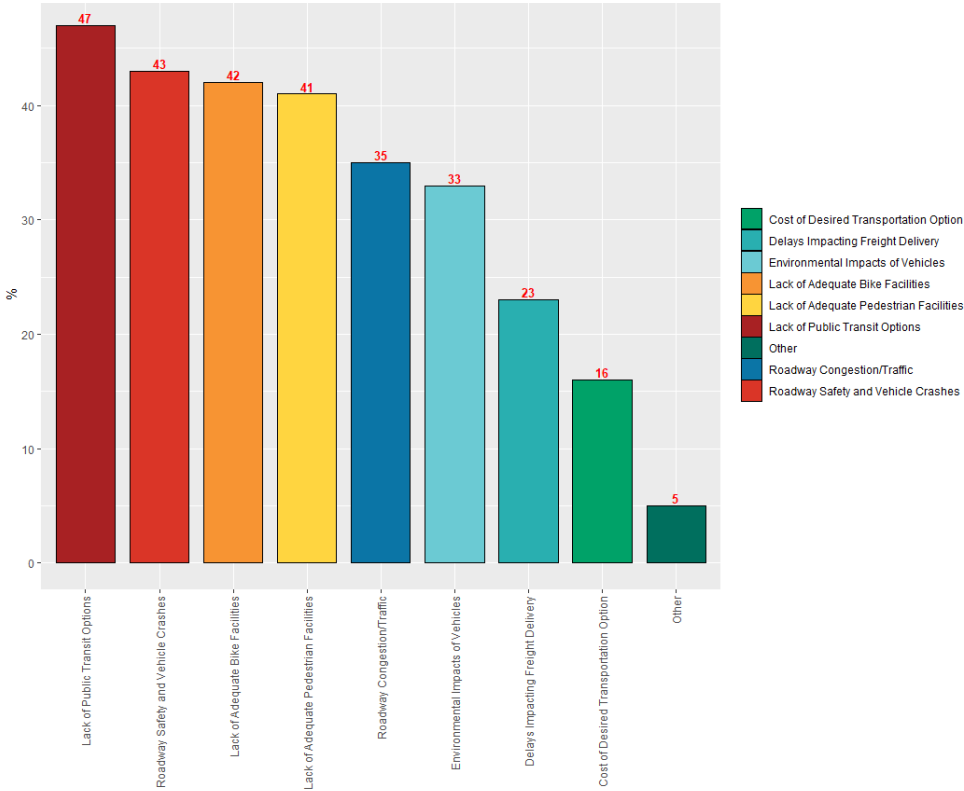


■ Agree ■ Disagree

Needs and Priorities

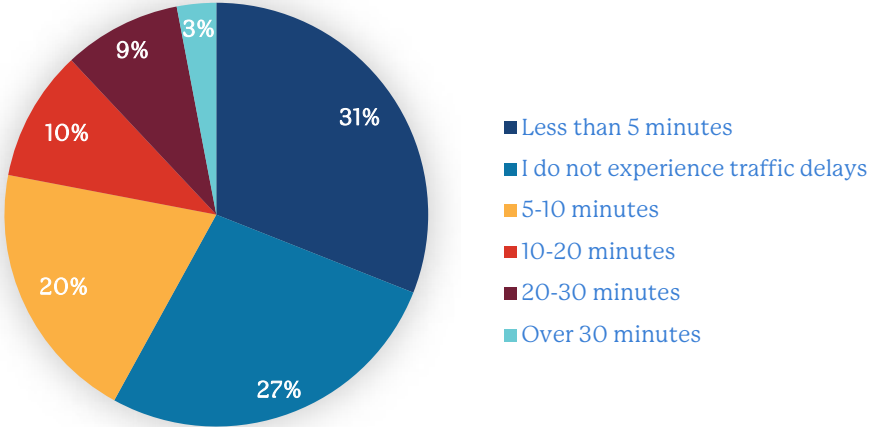
What are your greatest transportation concerns?

The top four concerns are: Lack of Public Transit, Roadway Safety, Lack of Bike Facilities, and Lack of Pedestrian Facilities.



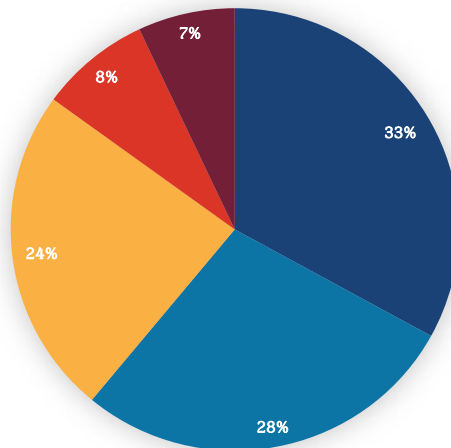
On average, how much time per day do you spend in traffic?

Most of the response said less than 5 minutes or did not experience traffic delays.



**Which statement best describe you?**

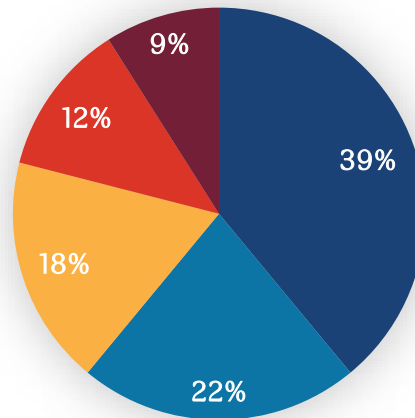
Over half of the responses would consider other forms other modes were more viable.



- I would drive less if there were more viable alternatives
- I will only drive, but think we should also invest in other modes of transportation
- If I could meet my daily needs using alternative modes of transportation, I would not use a car
- I currently meet my daily needs WITHOUT a car
- I will only drive and do NOT think we should invest in other modes of transportation

**If active transportation infrastructure allowed you to commute to work, retail, and other essential services, would you walk/bike?**

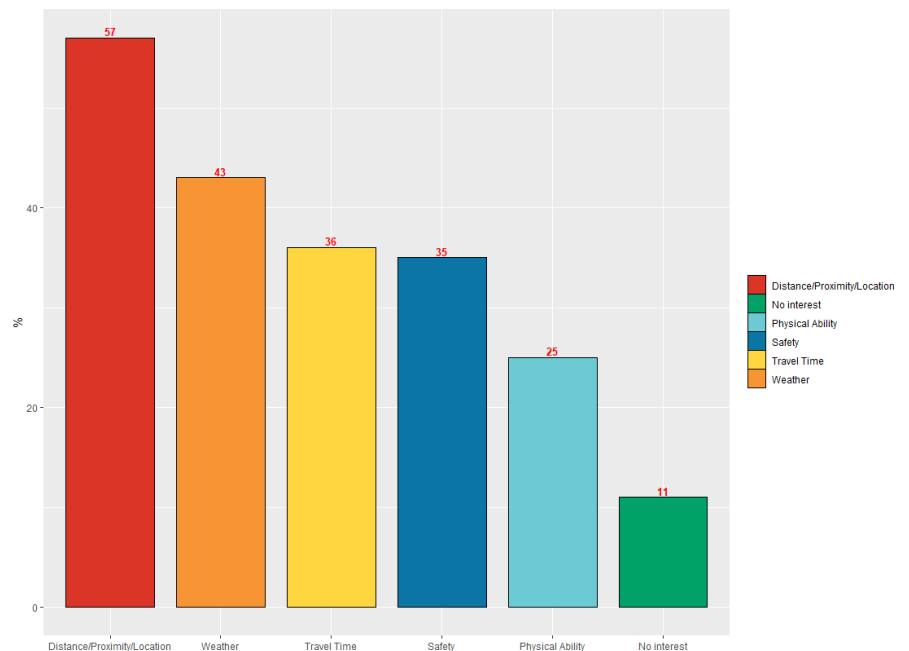
Significantly more than half would at least occasionally use active transportation if the infrastructure were in place.



- Yes, frequently
- Yes, occasionally
- No
- Maybe
- I already commute via walking/biking

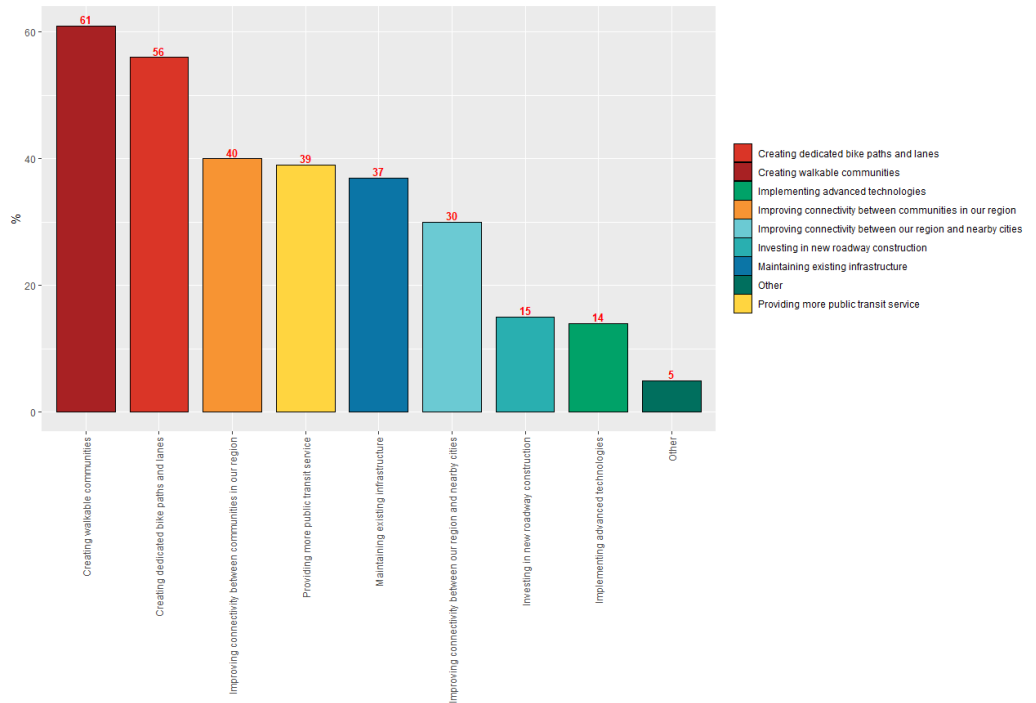
**What prevents you from commuting via active transportation?**

The top reason is the distance to travel, followed by the weather, travel time and safety.



### Which transportation improvements are MOST important to you?

The top two responses are creating walkable communities and creating dedicated bike paths and lanes, indicating more support for active transportation.



## Final Draft Plan Review and Adoption

The Draft Long Range Transportation plan 2050 was released for a 30-day public comment on September 8, 2023 and was open through October 9, 2023. An Open house meeting for providing information and collecting comments on the Plan was held at the MACOG Office on September 21, 2023. The comment period and meetings were advertised in the South Bend Tribune and other local newspapers. Copies of the draft plan were made available at the MACOG office. Comment sheets were provided along with the draft copy to simplify the comment process. The draft 2050 plan was also available for online review and comments were collected through the MACOG website. Appendix H contains the comments received during the development and draft review public comment periods.

The Final Plan was presented and approved by MACOG's Policy Board on October 11, 2023.

LOCAL

### Drive, bike, walk: Area transportation plan open for review, final comment

Joseph Dits South Bend Tribune  
Published 5:22 a.m. ET Sept. 16, 2023 | Updated 5:22 a.m. ET Sept. 16, 2023



SOUTH BEND — A draft plan for transportation projects across Elkhart, Kosciusko, Marshall and St. Joseph counties for the next 20 to 25 years is now available for the public to review and offer feedback.

The Michiana Area Council of Governments will hold an open house from 3 to 5 p.m. Sept. 21 in its conference room on the 11th floor of the County-City Building in downtown South Bend. The draft plan may also be viewed at [move.macog.com](http://move.macog.com). Public comments will be taken until Oct. 9.

**Infrastructure bill in motion: Pete Buttigieg visits Elkhart to highlight project to make railroads cause fewer delays**

The plan will then MACOG Policy Board a.m. Oct. 11 in the

The plan is a federal input from local go



A bicyclist waits near a caution sign at the spot where U.S. Secretary of Transportation and former South Bend mayor Pete Buttigieg and Elkhart Mayor Rod Robinson toured the railroad crossing at Richmond Street and Blazer Boulevard on Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2023, during

### MACOG looks to future with long-term transportation plan

Published: Sep. 12, 2023 at 11:34 PM EDT

