



# Des Plaines River Trail Southern Segment Corridor Plan



ACTIVE  
TRANSPORTATION  
ALLIANCE

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN	3
HISTORY OF THE DES PLAINES RIVER TRAIL	4
EXISTING CONDITIONS FOR THE SOUTHERN SEGMENT	6
WHY THE SOUTHERN SEGMENT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	11
MAKING CHANGE	11
ACTION ITEMS	14
NEXT STEPS	19
SURVEY RESULTS	20
THANK YOU	23

---



Friends of the Des Plaines River & Trail will support trail improvement projects and bring awareness to the need for upgraded infrastructure along the Des Plaines River Trail.



## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Des Plaines River Trail is a popular regional multi-use trail extending from the Illinois and Wisconsin border south into central Cook County. While the trail is a great community asset along its entire length, existing conditions on its southern end make accessing and using it challenging.

The Forest Preserves of Cook County (Forest Preserves) and local municipalities are studying potential improvements along the southern segment of the trail from Touhy Avenue to North Avenue. Active Transportation Alliance (Active Trans) is working directly with these public sector stakeholders as well as residents and trail advocates to ensure these proposed improvements become a reality.

An anticipated phase I engineering study is being conducted for the Village of Rosemont that will include detailed analysis of trail alignment and roadway crossings. The study is the result of funding from the West Central Municipal Conference and Cook County and the efforts of many adjacent municipalities. The Des Plaines River Trail – Southern Segment Corridor Plan will capture complementary information on existing conditions, challenges and community perceptions of the trail. This document will also lay out an action plan for improving bicycle and pedestrian access to the trail from surrounding communities.

Current issues facing the Des Plaines River Trail are the flooding and erosion resulting from the adjacent Des Plaines River, especially during the warmer months. Currently, trail users must also cross many four-lane or wider arterial streets, including Touhy Avenue, Irving Park Road and North Avenue. Trail users are either forced to cross many lanes of fast-moving traffic; pass under streets through frequently flooded tunnels or underpasses; or make their way off the trail to the closest intersection, which often has poorly marked crosswalks. As a result of these conditions, a number of pedestrian and bicycle crashes have occurred near the trail.

Improving the entire trail system, including the condition of the current trail, connectivity across major arterials, and providing better access from adjacent communities, trail users will have a safer and more user friendly experience. Providing additional amenities, from comfort stations to consistent wayfinding, will improve the quality of the trail for all users. These improvements are reflected in the results of a recent user survey, which generated more than 600 responses from pedestrians and bicyclists using the trail.

To help government agencies, elected officials and dedicated trail advocates work together to improve these conditions, Active Trans has selected the southern segment of the Des Plaines River Trail as one of its four initial target areas as a part of the new Trail Connect Chicagoland campaign. To support this effort, Active Trans is building two coalitions: an intergovernmental coalition and the Friends of the Des Plaines River & Trail. These coalitions will support the ongoing engineering efforts and help get trail improvement projects off the ground, while bringing awareness to and building support from elected officials, nearby businesses and community residents to the need for upgraded infrastructure along the Des Plaines River Trail.

## HISTORY OF THE DES PLAINES RIVER TRAIL

Running from the Wisconsin border through Lake County and into northern and central Cook County, the Des Plaines River Trail is one of Chicagoland's most heavily used and historically important trails. The trail largely follows the Des Plaines River as it meanders through more than a dozen communities in Cook County. While the trail runs through protected green space and Forest Preserves land, the trail also runs adjacent to some of the most densely populated suburban communities, particularly those in central Cook County. Trail users come predominately from these communities, but also residents throughout the rest of the Chicagoland region use the trail for walking, biking, hiking, horse riding and other activities throughout the year.

The Des Plaines River was an important trade route for local Native American tribes and early European settlers. As the metropolitan region developed, many recognized the importance of preserving the green space around the river for continued transportation and recreational use. In the midcentury, Forest Preserves, municipalities and preservations groups worked in partnership to create the beginnings of the Des Plaines River Trail. Today, the trail extends more than 50 miles through northwestern Chicagoland. In 2015, the Lake County Forest Preserve District filled in the last gaps of the Des Plaines River Trail in Lake County.

Over the last couple of decades, the Forest Preserves of Cook County has been working to improve existing conditions along the trail, fill in gaps created by other transportation infrastructure, and extend the trail south of the existing terminus of North Avenue. For the purposes of this plan, we'll be examining the conditions around the existing southern segment of the Des Plaines River Trail, which we define as the portion of the Des Plaines River Trail running from Touhy Avenue to North Avenue (see following image). This segment is approximately 7 miles in length and passes alongside the northwest and central Cook County communities of Des Plaines, Park Ridge, Rosemont, Schiller Park, Norridge, Franklin Park, River Grove, Elmwood Park, Melrose Park and River Forest as well as a number of adjacent Chicago neighborhoods. This segment of the trail also passes within just a few miles of a number of other adjacent suburban municipalities, which are interested in seeing this segment of the trail improved for their residents.

While the trail currently terminates at North Avenue, the Forest Preserves, in conjunction with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, is examining opportunities to expand the trail south of North Avenue and connect the Des Plaines River Trail to some of the other prominent trails running through central Cook County, including the I&M Trail, Salt Creek Trail and Illinois Prairie Path. While this plan focuses on the section just to the north, Active Trans' Trail Connect Chicagoland campaign will work with those government agencies and residential stakeholders to eliminate that gap in the regional network as well.

# DES PLAINES RIVER TRAIL MAP

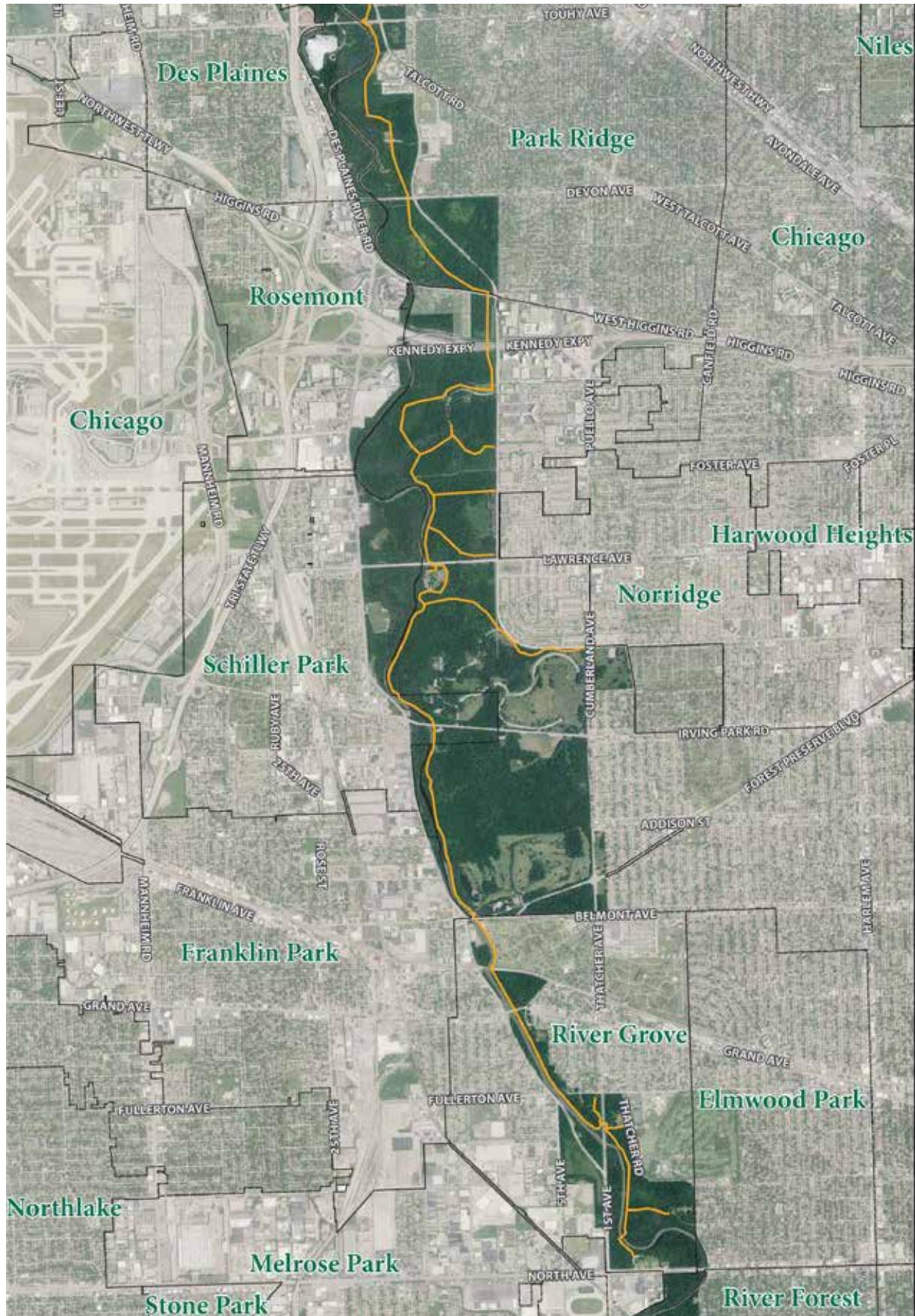


Image courtesy of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS FOR THE SOUTHERN SEGMENT

The southern segment of the Des Plaines River Trail, from Touhy Avenue to North Avenue, has been a protected bicycling and walking trail for years. The trail is used by Chicagoland residents near and far, but many problems persist on the trail.

In addition to the most glaring issue of flooding, other issues that make this segment of the trail less user friendly than other Cook County and Lake County sections include connectivity, accessibility, composition and wayfinding. The southern segment of the Des Plaines River Trail is the portion of the existing larger trail that runs through the most densely populated communities. Many of these inner-ring early 20th century suburbs, like Franklin Park, River Grove and Park Ridge, are connected to other adjacent suburban communities via large arterial streets, like Touhy Avenue, Devon Avenue, Higgins Road, Lawrence Avenue, Irving Park Road, Belmont Avenue, Grand Avenue and North Avenue, among others. And each of these large arterial streets also pass through sections of the forest preserve where the Des Plaines River Trail runs.

### FLOODING

Many sections of the trail run near the Des Plaines River, which frequently floods. As a result, the trail is often under water or in less-than-ideal conditions for bicycling and walking. Additionally, heavy flooding can also result in erosion of portions of the trail as well. During warmer months, it's often common to find that a portion of the trail is under water from a recent rainstorm. This is both common along portions of the trail that run through the woods and sections that cross under arterial roads with flooded tunnels.



This portion of the trail is under water due to common flooding.

### ARTERIAL CROSSINGS

Where the trail meets many of these arterial streets, there are midblock crossings. Some of the crossings have poor striping, while others have no striping. But all of these arterial crossings lack a safe respite, like a pedestrian island, so that trail users do not have to cross up to four lanes or more of traffic at a single time. Additionally, in all of these arterial streets that cross through eorest preserves land, the speed limit increases only during the portion of those roads that runs through the forest preserves. Speed limits on these arterial streets are either 5 or 10 miles per hour less as soon as you pass out of the portion of the street that runs through the forest preserve.

# DES PLAINES RIVER TRAIL

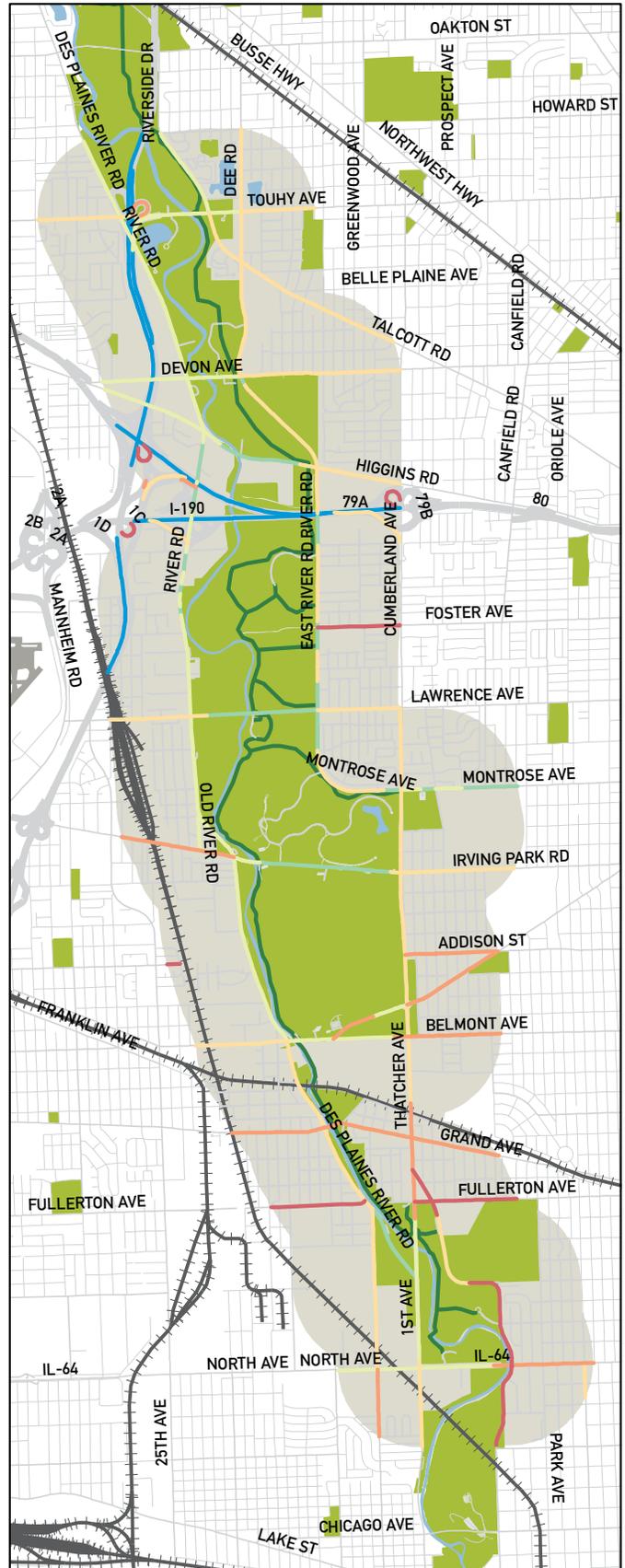
## Speed Limit



Prepared By: Active Transportation Alliance 8/30/2018  
 Data Source: IDOT, Active Transportation Alliance,  
 Navteq, Cook County Forest Preserve District



- No Data
- 25 MPH
- 30 MPH
- 35 MPH
- 40 MPH
- 45 MPH
- 55 MPH



In some cases, to allow trail users to avoid these major arterial streets, the trail will veer off through a tunnel passing under the street. However, these tunnels can flood and be unusable when the river floods. Alternatively, there are also parts of the trail that pass under the road immediately adjacent to bridges extending over the road or train tracks. Due to the immediate proximity to the river, these sections of the trail often flood during warmer months.



Pedestrian and bike access across the busy arterial street.



Many tunnels or underpasses need improvements to make them more user friendly and safe.

## TRAIL SURFACE AND AMENITIES

Some of the most heavily used trails in the region and around the country institute a variety of different trail materials, while this segment of the Des Plaines River Trail is predominately a dirt trail through the woods. Some users prefer this option, but others find it difficult to navigate through, especially after a rainstorm. In addition, the current dirt trail does not meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Users of the trail have also identified the need to add more trail amenities, from comfort stations to consistent wayfinding signage, throughout this segment of the trail.

## TRAIL ACCESS

The final way to improve the trail doesn't have anything to do with the trail itself, but, rather, how trail users can access the trail. Existing conditions make accessing the trail from one's home or workplace without a vehicle rather difficult. Intersections immediately adjacent to the forest preserves vary in quality, but many have insufficient striping and inadequate accessibility options for pedestrians and people with disabilities who want to cross those intersections to access the trail. Further, for pedestrians accessing the trail, some sidewalks in adjacent communities are in less-than-ideal condition. For bicyclists hoping to access the trail from their homes or work, the arterial streets that run through the forest preserves and many of the other streets in the surrounding communities do not have safe, on-street bicycle infrastructure for these trail users.

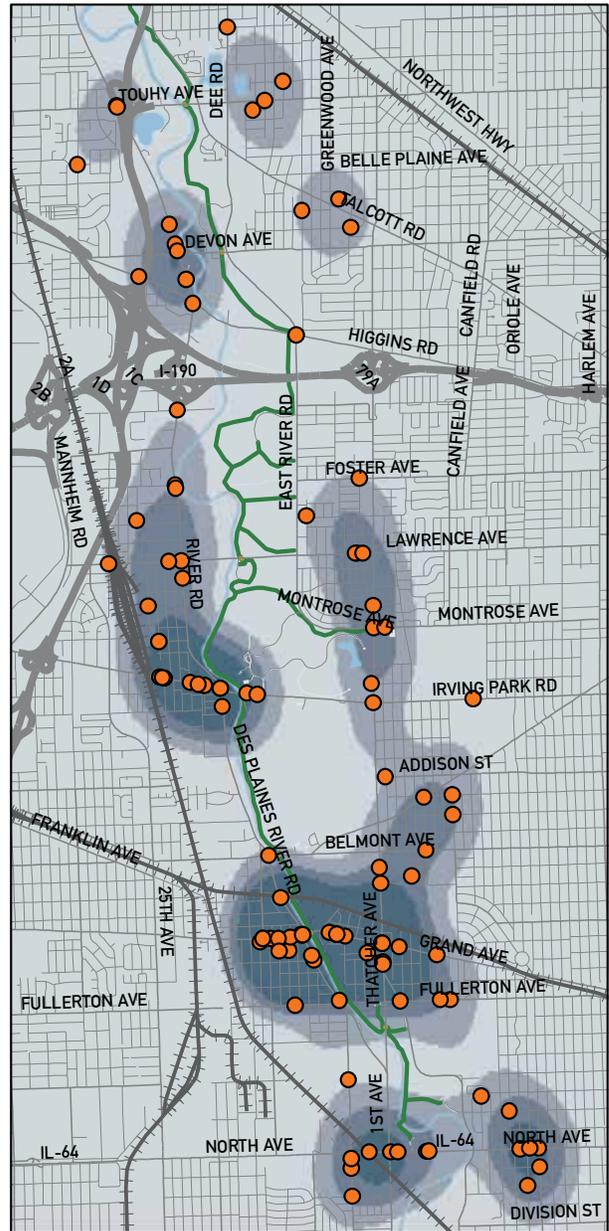
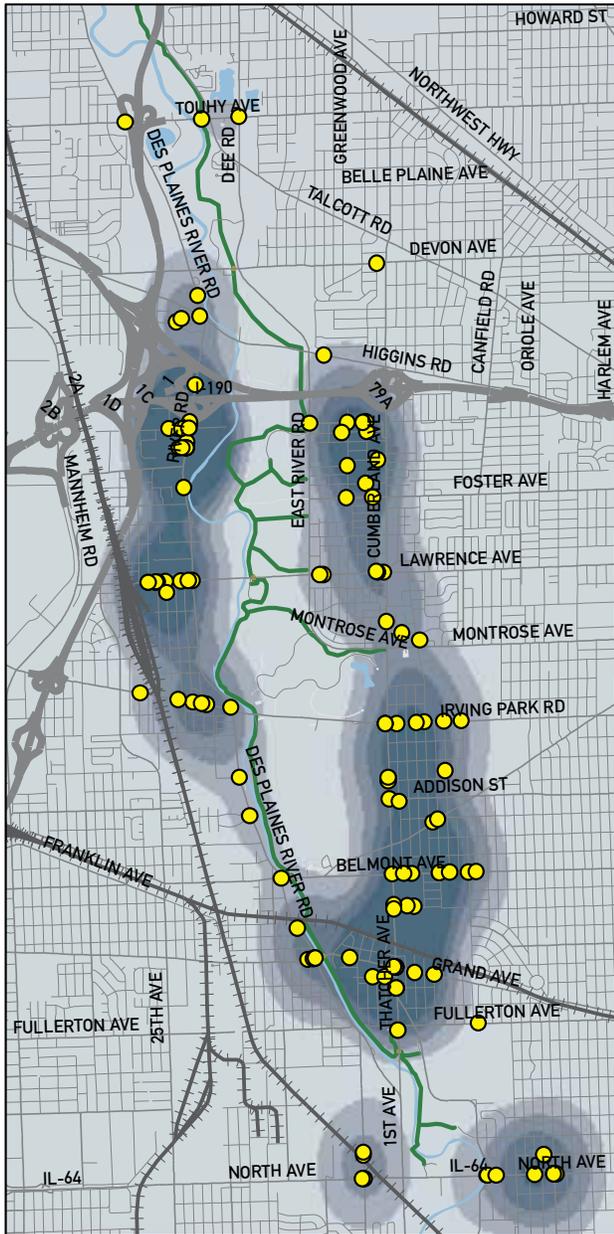


Both images shown here display difficulty for the trail user, especially those with disabilities, to access the trail.



# Pedestrian & Bicycle Crashes & Crash Density

## 2011 - 2016



- Value
- High Crash Density
  - Low Crash Density
  - Pedestrian Crashes within 1/2 Mile of the Des Plaines River Trail
  - Bicycle Crashes within 1/2 Mile of the Des Plaines River Trail



0 1 2 Miles

## WHY THE SOUTHERN SEGMENT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

In addition to the noticeable visual upgrades that could occur along the trail and in the communities adjacent to the trail, recent data supports the need for infrastructure updates. Bicycle and pedestrian crash data from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), reflects that there are an alarming number of crashes that have happened from 2011-2016 along this segment of the trail, particularly near popular access points. The heat maps show in detail where all of those registered crashes took place. Given that one of the fundamental objectives for Active Trans is to eliminate pedestrian and bicycle crashes, it is imperative to us that we work closely with the governmental bodies and municipalities to push for more safety measures for bicyclists and pedestrians who want to access and use the Des Plaines River Trail.

From Aug. 1 – Sept. 1, 2018, Active Trans, in partnership with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), conducted a survey on improving the Des Plaines River Trail in Cook County. We collected more than 600 responses from Des Plaines River Trail users.

**The results of the 15-question survey can be seen in the section titled “Survey Results” but the general results of the survey show the following trends:**

- Users of the southern segment of the trail often use the northern segment in Cook County as well.
- Approximately two-thirds of survey respondents use the trail for bicycling. The remaining one-third use the trail predominately for running and walking.
- Most trail users live nearby, access the trail on a weekly or monthly basis, and make solo trips to the trail.
- While most people would like to see the trail flood less often, they also want to see connectivity and accessibility improved, as well as more diverse trail surfaces, like crushed limestone.
- If the trail surface was improved, more folks would use the trail for exercise and leisurely recreation.

**One other result that the survey highlighted is that most people access the southern segment of the trail at the following access points and trailheads (also shown in the map below):**

- North Avenue – 23 percent of southern segment respondents.
- Irving Park Road – 21 percent of southern segment respondents.
- Bloomingdale/Evans Field – 14 percent of southern segment respondents.
- Devon Avenue – 11 percent of southern segment respondents.
- Fullerton Avenue – 10 percent of southern segment respondents.

Of note, there is a direct correlation between where people access the trail and where crashes are taking place. As a result, improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and crossings around these access points will be a major focus of our work in improving accessibility to the trail.

## MAKING CHANGE

In the winter of 2018, Active Trans brought together elected officials, government agencies and municipal stakeholders to form an intergovernmental coalition to review the conditions of the trail and access to the trail from adjoining communities, discuss opportunities for improving the current infrastructure, and identify ways that the coalition can be useful in improving the trail. Since that initial kickoff meeting, that coalition has met regularly and will continue to meet quarterly to work on how to improve the trail. Among its main objectives, the intergovernmental coalition will:

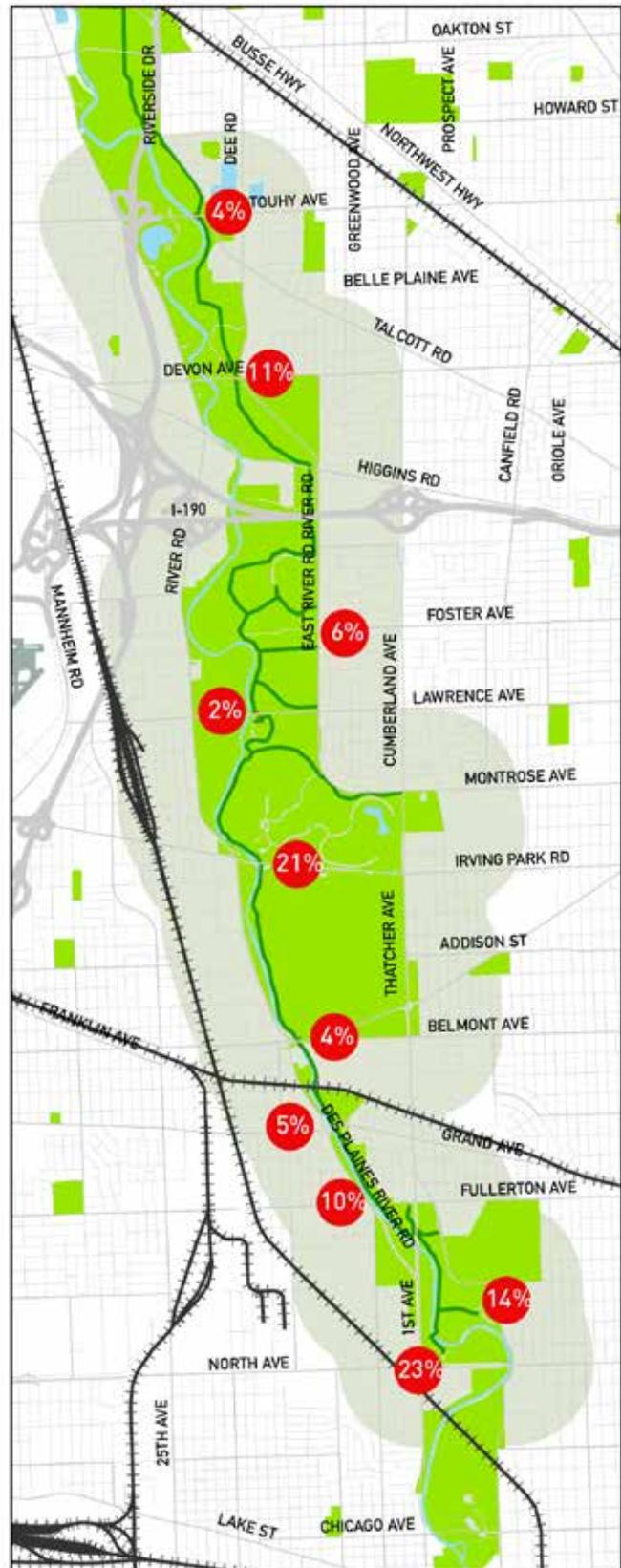
- Help identify and secure public and private funding opportunities, from competing for federal and local grants to determining which companies, especially those in close proximity to the trail, can partner with the coalition to help improve sections of the trail.

# DES PLAINES RIVER TRAIL

## Where do people get on the trail?



Prepared By: Active Transportation Alliance 9/7/2018  
 Data Source: IDOT, Active Transportation Alliance,  
 Navteq, Cook County Forest Preserve District



- Assist in organizing and hosting events along the trail to raise funds and bring awareness to the conditions of the trail.
- Use its resources, network and connections to push for other governmental agencies to fund or directly improve the existing or proposed infrastructure changes.
- Push for improvements in their own communities, whether through the adoption of a new transportation policy or plan (i.e. complete streets policy, active transportation plan, bike plan, etc.) and/or general upgrades to their street and sidewalk networks to be more bicycle and pedestrian accessible.
- Develop educational materials to distribute to stakeholders, from their constituents to nearby businesses.

Alongside the work of the intergovernmental coalition, Active Trans has brought together a group of trail advocates to form the Friends of the Des Plaines River & Trail. This group of active trail users from communities along the Des Plaines River Trail will help Active Trans and its intergovernmental advocacy by doing the following:

- Bring awareness of the trail and necessary improvements to their neighbors and elected officials.
- Monitor municipal legislation and funding progress.
- Host community events on or near the trail to gather input and raise funds for improvements.
- Create membership or donation opportunities for individuals and companies.
- Build networks of advocates to push for improvements.
- Host clean-up projects along the trail.
- Create reports and plans showcasing the benefits the trail could bring to surrounding communities.
- Develop maps and educational resources to get more people out on the trail.
- Monitor conditions of the trail and river and inform people of recent improvements and activities.

These two advocacy coalitions will work together to support the efforts of the engineering study and help get trail improvement projects off the ground, while bringing awareness to and building support for the need for upgraded infrastructure.

To track the projects, Active Trans, in partnership with the intergovernmental coalition and the Friends of the Des Plaines River & Trail group, has developed a chart of action items that government agencies, elected officials, nearby businesses, community groups and residents can implement to improve the conditions of the trail. These projects aim to provide a more seamless trail that is easily accessible from adjacent communities through upgrades, including:

- Providing better striping at intersections and midblock crossings.
- Improving tunnels and underpasses along arterials or bridges.
- Creating bike lanes and side paths from communities to the trail.
- Improving sidewalk infrastructure.
- Reducing speed limits along the arterial streets adjacent to the trail.
- Improving trail amenities, including composition, lighting, interpretative areas, comfort stations, drinking fountains, etc.
- Improving wayfinding signage.

Further, the coalition and Friends of the Des Plaines River & Trail group will help in creating strategies for transportation engagement and project completion, economic development and funding opportunities, and community and political engagement.

## ACTION ITEMS

Many of these proposed projects will require coordination across multiple government agencies and jurisdictions, as well as additional engineering studies, possible land acquisition, utility relocation and private land ownership requests. Further, some requests may change based on recommendations from the phase 1 engineering study currently underway.

### PROVIDE MORE LOW-STRESS ACCESS TO THE TRAIL

DESCRIPTION	TARGETED PARTY/ RESPONSIBLE PARTY
<b>Striped or protected bike lanes or side path along the following streets to provide better access to trailheads   Construction started by 2023/2024</b>	
Talcott Road	IDOT
Touhy Avenue	IDOT
Dee Road	Park Ridge
Devon Avenue (IDOT is planning to improve the bridge over the Des Plaines River)	IDOT, Rosemont
East River Road/Montrose Avenue	Chicago
Bryn Mawr Avenue	Chicago, Rosemont
Foster Avenue	Norridge, Chicago
Lawrence Avenue	IDOT
Cumberland Avenue/Thatcher Avenue/First Avenue	IDOT
Irving Park Road	IDOT
Addison Street	IDOT
Forest Preserve Drive	IDOT
Belmont Avenue	IDOT
Grand Avenue	IDOT
Fullerton Avenue	Elmwood Park, IDOT, River Grove
Fifth Avenue	River Grove
Bloomingdale Avenue	Elmwood Park
North Avenue	IDOT

## PROVIDE MORE LOW-STRESS ACCESS TO THE TRAIL

DESCRIPTION	TARGETED PARTY/ RESPONSIBLE PARTY
<b>Reducing speed limits (shown in mph) along the following streets through the forest preserve   <i>Reductions completed alongside other on-street improvements</i></b>	
<b>TOUHY AVENUE</b> 35 throughout (goes from 35 before the forest preserve to 40 in the forest preserve)	IDOT
<b>DEE ROAD</b> 35 throughout (goes from 35 north of Devon to 45 south of Devon)	Park Ridge
<b>DEVON AVENUE</b> 35 throughout (goes from 35 before the forest preserve to 40 in the forest preserve)	IDOT
<b>HIGGINS ROAD</b> 35 throughout (goes from 35 before the forest preserve to 45 in the forest preserve)	IDOT
<b>LAWRENCE AVENUE</b> 35 throughout (goes from 35 before the forest preserve to 45 in the forest preserve)	IDOT
<b>IRVING PARK ROAD</b> 35 throughout (goes from 35 before the forest preserve to 45 in the forest preserve)	IDOT
<b>BELMONT AVENUE</b> 30 throughout (goes from 30 before the forest preserve to 40 in the forest preserve)	IDOT
<b>FIRST AVENUE</b> 30 throughout (goes from 30 before the forest preserve to 40 in the forest preserve)	IDOT
<b>NORTH AVENUE</b> 30 throughout (goes from 30 before the forest preserve to 40 in the forest preserve)	IDOT

## PROVIDE A MORE SEAMLESS TRAIL

DESCRIPTION	TARGETED PARTY/ RESPONSIBLE PARTY
<b>New or improved striping and other pedestrian accommodations at midblock crossings along the following streets</b> <i>Improvements started by 2020/2021</i>	
Touhy Avenue (IDOT plans to resurface as part of multiyear plan 2020–2024.)	IDOT
Dee Road (by Maine South High School)	Park Ridge
Devon Avenue	IDOT
Lawrence Avenue	IDOT
Irving Park Road	IDOT
Belmont Avenue	IDOT
Grand Avenue	IDOT
<b>New or improved striping and other pedestrian accommodations at the following intersection crosswalks</b> <i>Improvements started by 2020/2021</i>	
Touhy Avenue and Des Plaines River Road	IDOT, Des Plaines
Touhy Avenue and Dee Road (IDOT plans to resurface as part of multiyear plan 2020–2024.)	IDOT, Park Ridge
Devon Avenue and Dee Road	IDOT, Park Ridge
Higgins Road and East River Road	IDOT, Park Ridge, Chicago
Bryn Mawr Avenue and East River Road	Chicago
Foster Avenue and East River Road	Chicago
Lawrence Avenue and East River Road	IDOT, Chicago
Lawrence Avenue and Des Plaines River Road (IDOT plans to resurface as part of multiyear plan 2020–2024.)	IDOT
Belmont Avenue and Des Plaines River Road (IDOT plans to resurface as part of multiyear plan 2020–2024.)	IDOT
Metra Tracks and Des Plaines River Road (IDOT plans to resurface as part of multiyear plan 2020–2024.)	IDOT
Grand Avenue and Des Plaines River Road (IDOT plans to resurface as part of multiyear plan 2020–2024.)	IDOT
Bloomingdale Avenue and Thatcher Avenue	Elmwood Park
North Avenue and Thatcher Avenue (IDOT plans to resurface as part of multiyear plan 2020–2024.)	IDOT
<b>Improved tunnels and underpasses at the following crossings   Upgrades started by 2022/2023</b>	
Touhy Avenue	IDOT
Devon Avenue	IDOT
Lawrence Avenue	IDOT
Irving Park Road	IDOT
Belmont Avenue	IDOT
Metra Railroad Crossing	Metra
Grand Avenue	IDOT
First Avenue	IDOT

## REQUESTED UPGRADES ALONG THE TRAIL

DESCRIPTION	TARGETED PARTY/ RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMEFRAME
New or improved trail amenities, including trail makeup, interpretative areas, comfort stations, drinking fountains, etc.	Forest Preserves	New amenities ongoing
Improve wayfinding signage, including consistent branding.	Forest Preserves, adjacent municipalities	Wayfinding signage improvements placed by 2021/2022

## CREATE TRANSPORTATION ENGAGEMENT AND PROJECT STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION	TARGETED PARTY/ RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMEFRAME
Work with councils of government and elected officials to develop effective lines of communication with transportation agencies.	IDOT, Metra, CTA, CDOT, Pace, County	Improved communication by 2019/2020
Get all adjacent communities to adopt bike plans, complete streets policies, active transportation policies, etc.	Elected officials and boards, municipal staff	Adoption of plans and policies by 2022/2023
Apply for or support other coalition members applying for transportation infrastructure improvement grants.	Municipal staff, councils of government, elected officials	Grant applications starting in 2019

## CREATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDING PLAN

DESCRIPTION	TARGETED PARTY/ RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMEFRAME
Develop business model for ensuring long-term success of DPRT coalitions, with assistance from similar groups.	Other local Friends Of groups	Creation of model in 2019
Provide data on potential job creation and annual revenue to adjacent municipalities and major employers.	Major employers, businesses, attractions, elected officials	Plan with supplemental data created by 2019/2020
Get major employers and nearby destinations to join the coalition and commit to providing funding for trail improvements (adopt a segment) or promote events (marathon/triathlon, etc.).	Major employers, businesses, attractions, elected officials	Employers and destinations start joining campaign by 2019

## CREATE COMMUNITY AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION	TARGETED PARTY/ RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMEFRAME
Host events on the trail every year to bring elected officials and community residents together to learn about the trail history, existing conditions, and necessary upgrades.	Trail users, adjacent community residents, community groups, elected officials, major employers, businesses, attractions	Trail events start in 2019
Create a website that gives updates on trail conditions along with project statuses, event calendar and ways to join the campaign.	Trail users	Creation of website in 2019/2020
Provide educational resources on the history of the trail, tracking of trail and river improvements, various plant and animal species and informative maps of the trail.	Trail users	Creation of educational resources in 2019/2020
Get elected officials to commit to providing better access from their communities to the trail with sustained funding.	Elected officials and boards, municipal staff	Commitments from elected officials starting in 2019
Get community groups to participate in community engagement opportunities.	Trail users, adjacent community residents, community groups	Engagement with community groups starting in 2019

## NEXT STEPS

The infrastructure upgrades needed to improve the quality of the Des Plaines River Trail, from Touhy Avenue to North Avenue, will be done in phases. The engineering study will give recommendations, and, from there, some trail projects will emerge as priorities with higher likelihood of success. Just like the engineering study, our advocacy work has developed priority projects and ones we believe can be achieved quickly to start building momentum for larger trail improvement success. Among these projects are the identification and outreach to nearby companies to join and support these trail upgrade efforts, opportunities to get adjacent communities to commit to funding smaller transportation infrastructure upgrades from improved crosswalk striping to sidewalk improvements, and the creation or enactment of pedestrian and bicycling plans and policies in adjacent municipalities to develop more protected on-street and side-path connections.

As the chart of action items shows, we believe that some of these tasks can be started or completed in the next year or two. Other infrastructure upgrades may take a few more years to get underway, either after the engineering plans have been adopted or after municipalities or government agencies have agreed to appropriate funds or enact larger non-trail infrastructure upgrades.

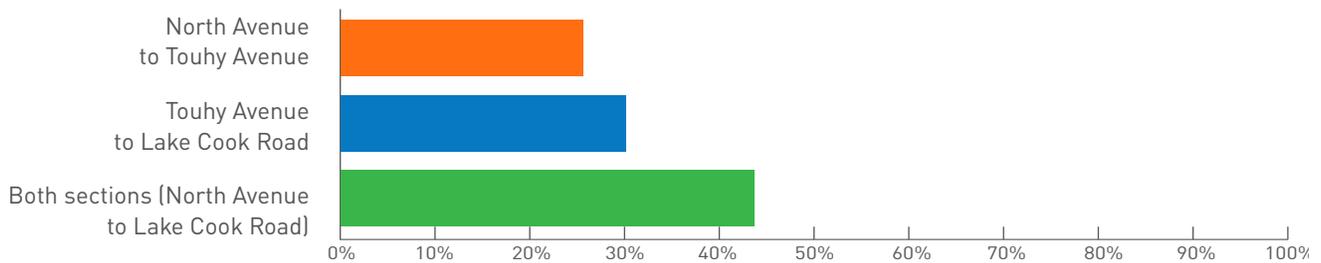
We look forward to many productive years of working alongside government officials and trail advocates to improve the southern segment of the Des Plaines River Trail.

# SURVEY RESULTS

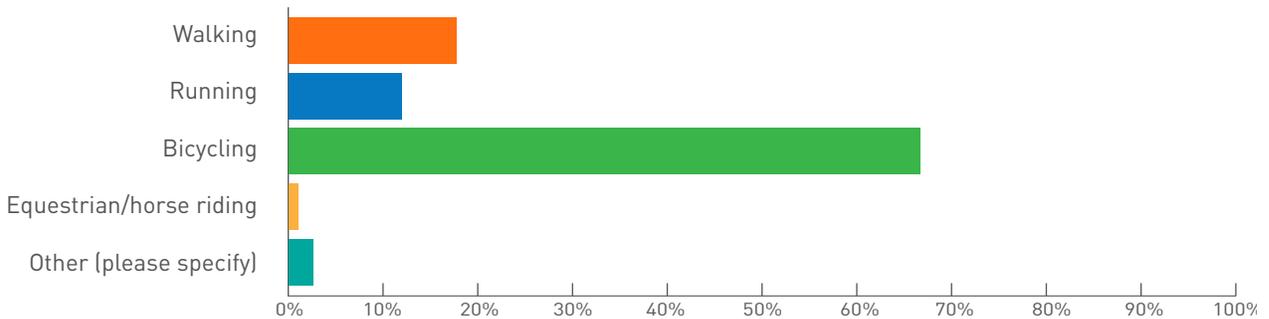
Active Trans, in partnership with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and MPC asked trail users in August 2018 to complete a survey on improving the Des Plaines River Trail in Cook County. More than 600 people responded.

Below are the results of the survey. Of course, we excluded personal and contact information provided by respondents. For question 13, we included a handful of responses that were most applicable to the corridor plan.

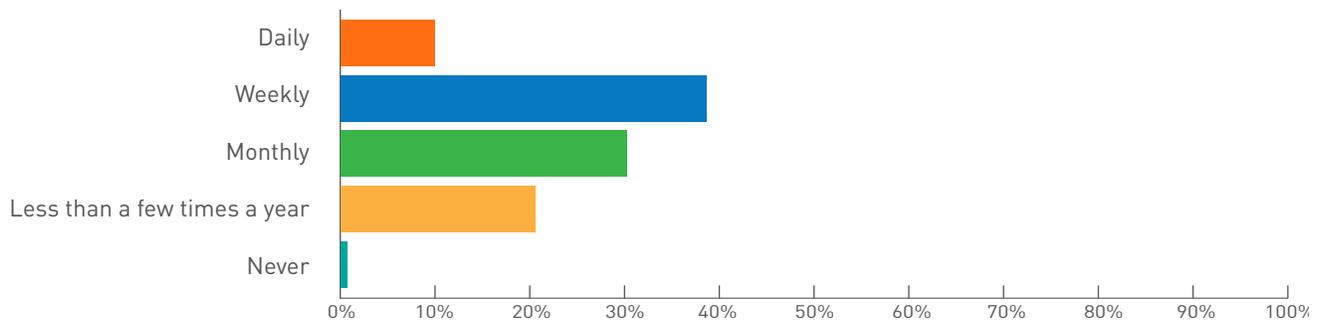
## 1. What section(s) of the Des Plaines River Trail in Cook County do you use?



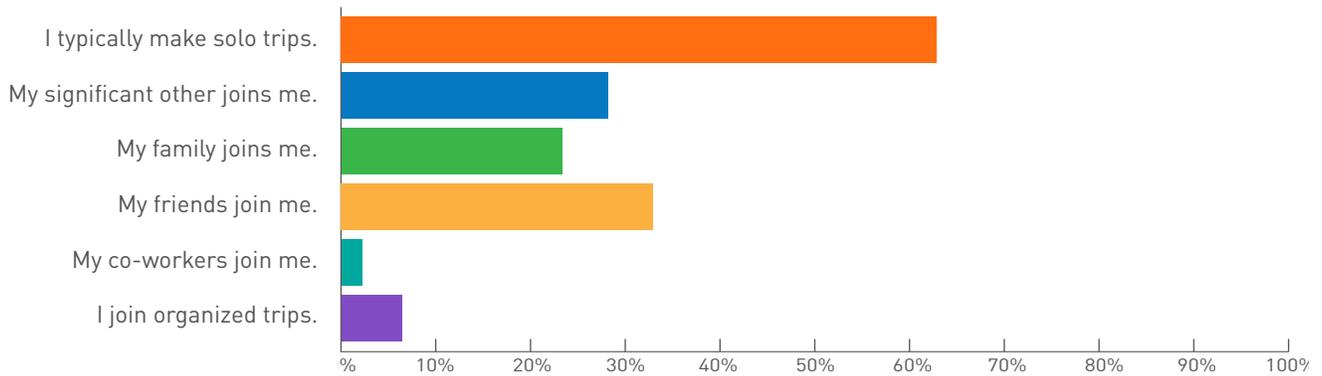
## 2. What do you primarily use the Des Plaines River Trail for?



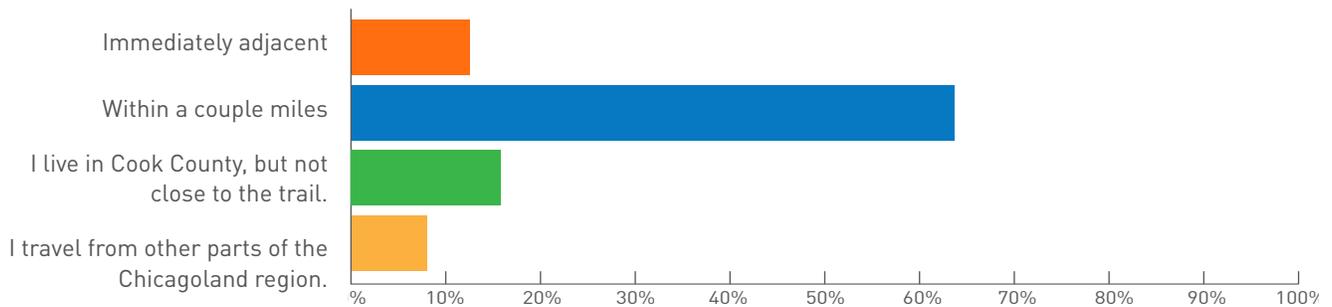
## 3. How often do you use the trail?



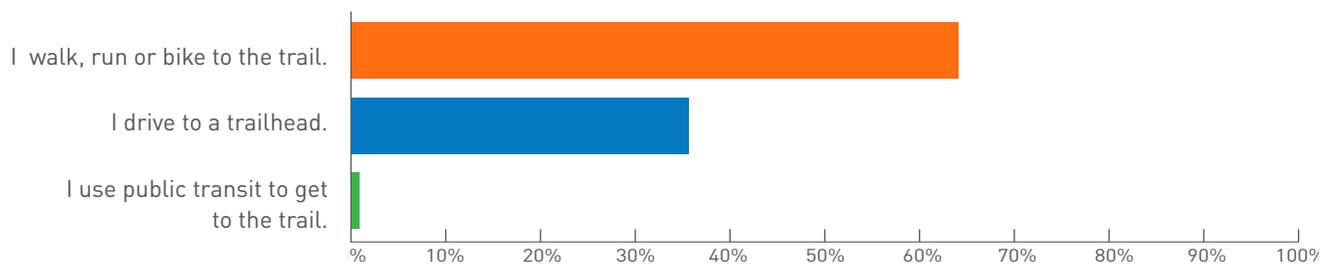
**4. Who joins you on trail trips? (Choose as many options as appropriate.)**



**5. How close do you live to the trail?**



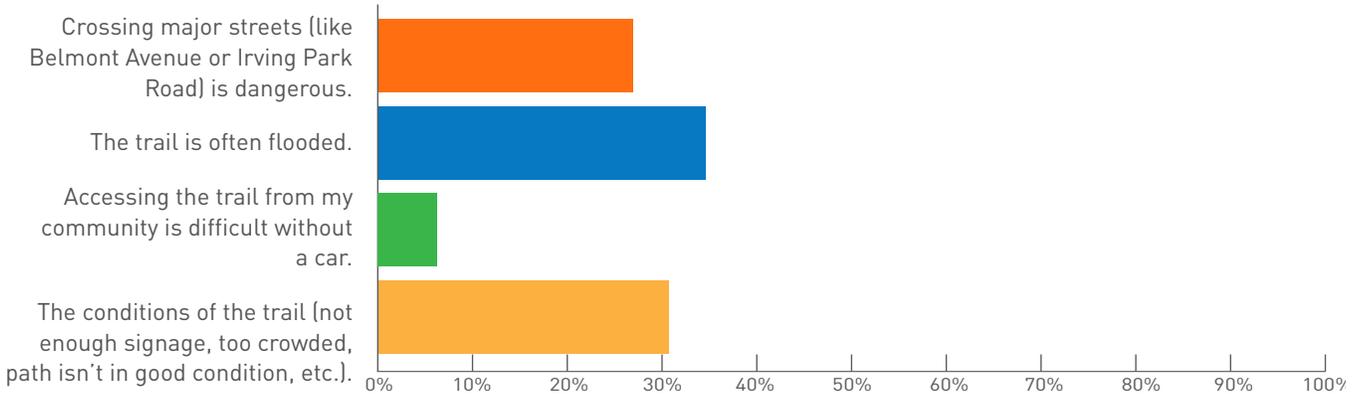
**6. How do you primarily access the trail?**



**7. Where do you get on the trail (e.g. at Schiller Woods or off of Fullerton)?**

See map on Page 12.

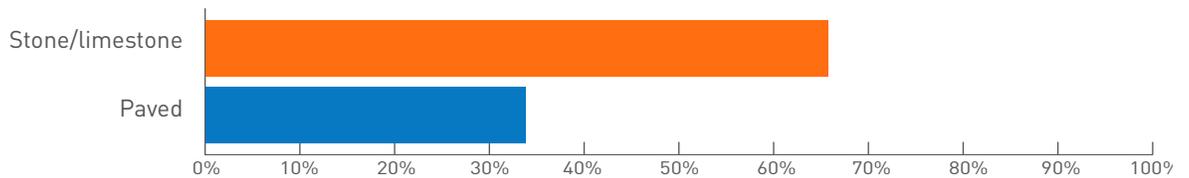
**8. What do you think is the biggest problem with the trail?**



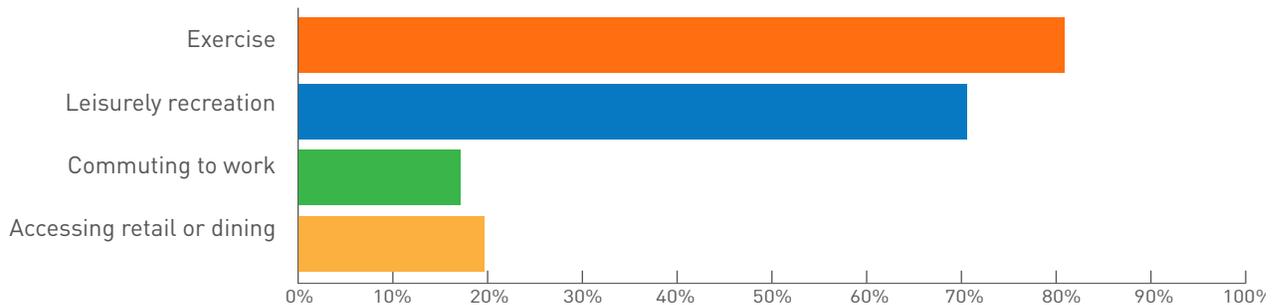
**9. What trail improvements are most important? (Please rank your answers.)**



**10. If the trail surface was improved, what would you prefer?**



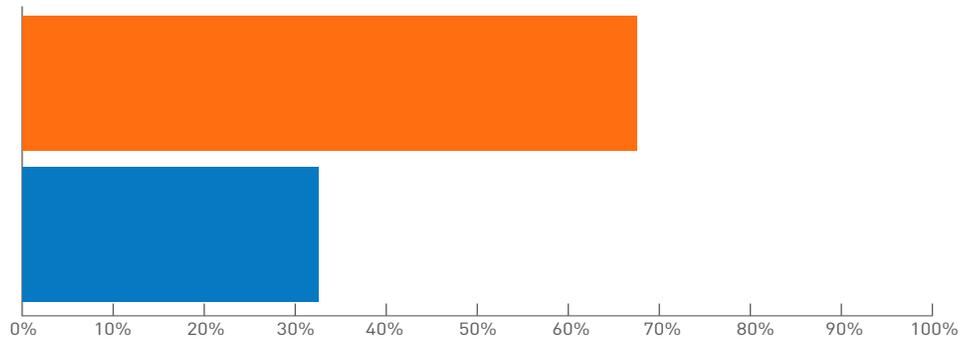
**11. If the trail had a more consistent surface, which of the following activities would you use it for? (Choose as many options as you'd like.)**



**12. The Des Plaines River can regularly flood surrounding areas and retain water in some locations. In imagining an updated trail, please identify your preference below:**

Keep the trail as close to the river as possible, understanding that there may be flooding and frequent closures.

Move the trail further from the river that could be adjacent to the road and possibly use on-street connections.



**13. What other thoughts or comments do you have that you'd like to share?**

*"I live on the south end of Des Plaines near Touhy and River, and even though I'm less than a mile from the trail, it is extremely difficult to access. There are no lots to park near me, no bike lanes, no bike racks. It's frustrating because I would use it every day if it was easier to get to."*

*"Many don't know the trail exists because of poor signage."*

*"Major roads are way too dangerous to cross. Many drivers don't respect the rights of people in the crosswalk — where there is one."*

*"Accessibility for the disabled and/or for children in strollers is important."*

*"I enjoy this trail for a number of reasons, not least of which are its shelter from the sun on hot days and shelter from the wind on windy days."*

*"The trail is a great resource for the community."*

*"Trail access point curbs are way too high, you have to*

*dismount at every intersection/trail access route."*

*"I'd love to use the trail more. Keep improving it!"*

*"Ideally, the DPRT should be expanded south to connect with the Illinois Prairie Path."*

*"It would be nice to have benches along the trail so you could sit down and watch the animals/birds/river."*

*"Expanding the trail south so it connects to the I&M trail would be very awesome."*

*"Expand the use for people of all physical abilities and get more people outdoors."*

*"Better signage both on the trail and getting there."*

*"The trail is a wonderful asset to the Chicagoland area. Improving marketing, access and safety (better ways to cross major roads) should be top priorities."*

## THANK YOU

Active Trans would like to thank the following municipalities for their participation in the development of the Corridor Plan and membership in the intergovernmental coalition: Franklin Park, River Grove, Rosemont, Des Plaines, Park Ridge, River Forest, Maywood, Schiller Park, and Melrose Park. We'd also like to thank Cook County Commissioners Peter Silvestri and Sean Morrison for participating in this effort as well.

Active Trans would like to thank the many government agencies, civic organizations and engineering firms for their participation in this campaign, including the Forest Preserves of Cook County, West Central Municipal Conference, Northwest Municipal Conference, Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways, National Park Service, Metropolitan Planning Council, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Illinois Department of Transportation, Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Terra Engineering, and Epstein Engineering.

In addition to the government and private sector professionals engaged in this process, we'd like to also thank the dedicated trail advocates of the Friends of the Des Plaines River & Trail.

Finally, to get this campaign underway, we want to thank Searle Funds at the Chicago Community Trust for its tremendous support.

