

RESULTS OF THE NORTHERN ILLINOIS COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE SURVEY

of the citizens of Boone and Winnebago Counties
regarding commuter rail service to Chicagoland

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Conducted for



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents results of a survey of Boone and Winnebago County residents regarding potential interest in using commuter service from the Rockford Area to Chicagoland by connecting to the Metra station at Elgin's Big Timber Station as well as citizen preferences for the way in which the service would be governed and funded. Amtrak might run to Union Station on the same tracks.

Ten thousand six surveys were mailed to randomly selected households proportionate to the number of households in each zip code. Households in the sample received a four-page questionnaire (both English and Spanish) with background and a postage paid reply envelope. Overall response was 1,660 (16.6%) or one in six households, with similar response in both counties. About one-fourth of the respondents who work are employed outside the two-county MSA, many of them in the Chicago Area..

Regarding the importance of commuter rail, about one-third (32.2%) find this step to be "among the highest priorities for the area" while an additional 22.5% describe commuter rail as very important to the future of the area. "A good idea, but funding is a concern" said 24.3%. Not a high priority or not needed at all is how 15.3% feel about initiating commuter rail in the Rockford area.

By far, the highest priority ratings came from those who work in the Chicago Area, young adults and new movers to the area. Less enthusiasm is shown by the elderly, non-workers and residents of Northern or Western Winnebago County and Boone County.

Respondents also indicated their potential commuter rail use. For work, the service would be used daily by 8.2%, most days by 7.3% and occasionally by 21.8%. Those working in the Chicago Area would be the strongest users. More than a quarter (27.8%) would use passenger rail often for shopping, entertainment or leisure (especially younger females) and one in seven (14.1%) to connect to other destinations for general travel. Potential work commuters also tended to indicate additional rail use for other purposes. Seniors report being least likely to use rail for any reason.

Asked about funding options, the leading choice was a sales tax (31.9%) with a state income tax addition second at 21.0%. Four other options were in the 10-15% range. Sales tax scored best for all demographic groups. However, more than a third (35.7%) of respondents indicated that they would not support any of the taxing options for rail service. Leading related comments were to assure that riders pay for the service or depend on federal funds.

Presented with six governmental organizations which might oversee passenger rail service in Boone and Winnebago Counties respondents were asked to choose one. More than four in ten (42.5%) felt unable to respond and 4.3% did not answer the question. About one in six (16.3%) respondents would prefer an expansion of the Greater Rockford Airport Authority to oversee passenger rail service, while about one in ten believe the area should join the Regional Transportation Authority (10.0%) or expand the Rockford Mass Transit District to serve all of Boone and Winnebago Counties (9.5%). Fewer support just working on Amtrak inter-city service (7.0%), creating a new Mass Transit District (6.2%), or creating an intergovernmental agreement among the governmental partners (3.0%).

Given the opportunity for open-ended comments, many expressed positive views of passenger rail and urged moving forward. As for specific ways to offer service, some desire connections to O'Hare and the Greater Rockford Airport.

Chapter 1 METHODOLOGY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Introduction

The purpose of this survey is to investigate potential interest in using commuter rail service from the Rockford Area as well as citizen preferences for the way in which the service would be governed and funded. Specifically, the survey sought to determine for Boone and Winnebago County residents:

- Importance for the area of establishing commuter rail service.
- Potential use for work, shopping, entertainment or leisure or general travel.
- Preference for funding method.
- Preference for governmental entity to oversee local passenger rail service.
- Respondent demographics including residence zip code and primary work location.

Health Systems Research (HSR) at the University of Illinois College of Medicine-Rockford conducted this study for the Northern Illinois Commuter Transportation Initiative. HSR is an applied research unit experienced in survey research and familiar with demographic, social and economic characteristics of the Rockford area.

Background

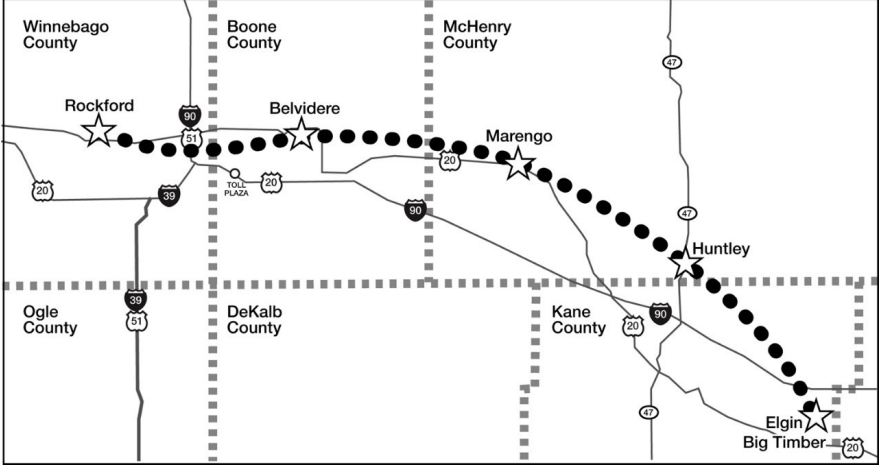
For several years, the Northern Illinois Commuter Transportation Initiative (Cities of Rockford and Belvidere, Boone, and Winnebago Counties, Rockford Mass Transit District) has studied the possibility of initiating passenger rail service from the Rockford area to the Chicagoland region, both inter-city passenger service (Amtrak), and commuter rail service (Metra) connecting at the Elgin Big Timber Station or reaching Union Station in Chicago.

NICTI has studied alternatives, unanimously selecting an existing 48 mile rail line which connects Rockford to existing Metra service at the Elgin Big Timber Station over tracks owned by the Union Pacific Railroad. Potential stations along the way include Huntley, Marengo, Belvidere, and Rockford. Bus or other transportation services may be linked to the commuter stations.

Service is expected to operate weekdays with three AM peak period inbound and outbound trains and three PM peak period inbound and outbound trains. Expansion of service could include weekends and holidays. A transfer might be required at Big Timber for some runs. NICTI also recommends that Amtrak inter-city service operate on the same tracks to reduce capital and operating costs as well as to increase available trains for local residents.

The capital cost to upgrade the railroad tracks and add train signaling systems in the Boone and Winnebago County portion of the project range from \$100 million to \$160 million dollars depending on station locations and other factors. The operating cost would range between \$5 million and \$10 million annually depending on the frequency of trains, the size of the train sets, as well as other factors. Capital and operating costs in McHenry and Kane County would be the responsibility of the Regional Transit Authority (RTA), which is a six-county Chicago area special governmental taxing unit. NICTI expects that the majority of the capital funding would come from Federal and State sources, but some local dollars will be required as matching funds.

Figure 1
PROPOSED COMMUTER RAIL
ROUTE TO ELGIN BIG TIMBER METRA CONNECTION



The majority of the operational funding will have to be provided by local sources. Fares collected to ride the trains only cover approximately one-quarter of the expected operating costs.

Methodology

Ten thousand six surveys were mailed to randomly selected households in Boone and Winnebago Counties distributed proportionate to the number of households residing in each zip code. The sample sent is shown in Table 1.1 by zip code.

Households in the sample received a four-page questionnaire which included commuter rail background on the front with space for open-ended comments on the back page. Both English and Spanish versions were sent to all sample households. A postage paid business reply envelope addressed to Health Systems Research accompanied the questionnaire.

Response

When response was cut off on April 17 and analysis began, 1,660 surveys or 16.6% of the 10,006 had been returned or approximately one of six households in the sample. If the respondents are representative of the area population, the margin of error is plus or minus 2.3%. However, results reported for subgroups such as a zip code area or age group have substantially larger margins of error.

Response was relatively similar from both Boone (16.3%) and Winnebago (15.9%) Counties. However, some variation took place in response rates by zip code. The highest return rates came from Rockford - Far Northeast 61114 (27.1%), Pecatonica (21.6%), Capron (21.3%), Rockford - Near Northeast 61107 (20.5%) and Winnebago (20.2%).

Among zip codes with at least ten surveys sent, lower return rates were seen from South Beloit 61080 (10.2%), Rockford - Southwest 61102 (10.3%), Rockford - East Central 61104 (10.4%), Rockford Northwest 61101 (11.1%), Garden Prairie - 61038 (11.4%) and Durand - 61024 (11.6%). The zip code response rate may indicate potential interest in use of commuter rail. Table 1.1 reveals response proportions for all study area zip codes.

Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1.2 compares selected characteristics of respondents to Census levels for the two-county Rockford MSA though some respondents chose not to indicate certain demographic characteristics requested. For instance, 3.7% did not provide their zip code.

Slightly more males (49.2%) responded than females (46.8%), an uncommon pattern since women often answer surveys on behalf of their household even though men are indicated more often to be the "householder" on the Census form.

By age group, the largest proportion of respondents (58.1%) came from the 40 - 64 age group, somewhat more than the census would predict. Young adult (18-39) returns were less than half of the Census proportion, while seniors 65+ were slightly elevated.

All homes in the survey received both English and Spanish questionnaires. Twenty-three (1.4%) of the Spanish surveys were returned with the remainder in English. Census data reports that 6.1% of individuals five or older do not speak English very well although a family member conceivably might respond for them.

Respondents tended to be long term residents of the two-county area with 62.1% residing in Boone or Winnebago Counties for 25 years or longer. However, one in eight (12.5%) respondents could be classified as “new movers,” living here for five years or less.

Asked where their work is located, nearly one-fourth (24.8%) of survey respondents who work report being employed outside Boone/Winnebago Counties including those with multi-site job locations. The level employed “elsewhere” is somewhat higher than the 16.4% shown for workers by the Census. As compared to Census results, a breakdown of work sites in the Chicago Area reveals that survey respondents are far more likely to work in Cook County and somewhat more likely to work in the Collar Counties. An exception is McHenry County which had fewer survey respondents working there than “expected” based on Census data. In addition to the counties, eight persons wrote in DeKalb County. Additionally, 29 individuals work in Wisconsin, six in Stephenson County and five in Ogle County.

Some Census indicators are derived from the American Community Survey, an annual sample survey which replaces the former “long form.” Recently released results summarize 2005 - 2007 data for the Rockford MSA.

Table 1.1
SURVEY SAMPLE AND RESPONSE
BY ZIP CODE

County	Zip Code Name	Zip Code	Sent	Returned	Returned Percent
Boone	Belvidere	61008	893	156	17.5%
	Caledonia	61011	82	14	17.1%
	Capron	61012	47	10	21.3%
	Garden Prairie	61038	35	4	11.4%
	Poplar Grove	61065	282	34	12.1%
	Boone County		1,339	218	16.3%
Winnebago	Cherry Valley	61016	152	30	19.7%
	Durand	61024	69	8	11.6%
	Loves Park	61111	764	112	14.7%
	Machesney Park	61115	696	105	15.1%
	Pecatonica	61063	97	21	21.6%
	Rockford - Northwest	61101	602	67	11.1%
	Rockford - Southwest	61102	513	53	10.3%
	Rockford - North End	61103	719	115	16.0%
	Rockford - East Central	61104	491	51	10.4%
	Rockford - Near Northeast	61107	985	202	20.5%
	Rockford - Southeast	61108	894	154	17.2%
	Rockford - Bypass	61109	817	108	13.2%
	Rockford - Cherryvale	61112	2	0	0.0%
	Rockford - Far Northeast	61114	490	133	27.1%
	Rockton	61072	331	54	16.3%
	Roscoe	61073	558	101	18.1%
	Seward	61077	2	0	0.0%
	Shirland	61079	4	0	0.0%
	South Beloit	61080	313	32	10.2%
	Winnebago	61088	168	34	20.2%
	Winnebago County		8,667	1,380	15.9%
		No zip code given			62
	Total Survey		10,006	1,660	16.6%

Table 1.2
SURVEY CHARACTERISTICS
WITH CENSUS COMPARISONS

GENDER	Survey		Census (ACS 2005 - 2007) ¹	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Male	816	49.2%	70,202	55.4%
Female	777	46.8%	56,592	44.6%
No answer	67	4.0%	-----	-----
Total	1,660	100.0%	126,794	100.0%

¹Householder gender.

AGE GROUP	Survey		Census (ACS 2005 - 2007) ²	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
18 - 39	259	15.6%	40,783	32.2%
40 - 64	964	58.1%	59,796	47.2%
65+	404	24.3%	26,215	20.7%
No answer	33	2.0%	-----	-----
Total	1,660	100.0%	126,794	100.0%

²Householder age group.

LANGUAGE ³	Survey		Census (ACS 2005 - 2007)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
English	1,637	98.6%	302,295	93.9%
Spanish	23	1.4%	19,574	6.1%
Total	1,660	100.0%	321,869	100.0%

³Persons 5+ Spanish speaking individuals who do not speak English well.

Table 1.2 (cont'd.)
 SURVEY CHARACTERISTICS
 WITH CENSUS COMPARISONS

YEARS LIVING IN MSA	Survey		No Comparative Census Data
	Number	Percent	
0 - 2 years	63	3.8%	
3 - 5 years	145	8.7%	
6 - 9 years	100	6.0%	
10 - 14 years	117	7.0%	
15 - 24 years	188	11.3%	
25+ years	1,031	62.1%	
No answer	16	1.0%	
Total	1,660	100.0%	

MSA OF WORK LOCATION	Survey		Census (ACS 2005 - 2007) ⁴	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Rockford MSA	906	75.2%	131,930	83.6%
Outside MSA	298	24.8%	25,831	16.4%
Total	1,204	100.0%	157,761	100.0%

⁴Workers 16+.

CHICAGO AREA COUNTY OF WORK LOCATION	Survey		Census (2000)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Cook	87	7.2%	2,991	2.0%
DuPage	15	1.2%	884	0.6%
Kane	14	1.2%	1,604	1.1%
Lake	7	0.6%	327	0.2%
McHenry	21	1.7%	4,442	2.9%
Total - Cook/Collar	144	12.0%	10,248	6.7%

Chapter 2
NEED FOR COMMUTER RAIL

Introduction

The first survey question sought to learn how high a priority establishment of commuter rail is for residents of Winnebago and Boone Counties. Survey recipients were given five possible answers ranging from “Among the highest priorities for the area” to “not needed at all.” Intermediate choices included “very important for the future of the area,” “very good idea, but funding is a major concern for me” and “not a very high priority”.

Results: Commuter Rail as a Priority

“How do you feel about the need to establish commuter rail service from Rockford-Belvidere to Chicago?” the first survey question asked. Nearly one-third (32.2%) of respondents place commuter rail among the highest priorities for the area.

Table 2.1
COMMUTER RAIL AS A PRIORITY

Response	Number	Percent
Among the highest priorities for the area in order to stimulate economic development, manage growth, and enhance the quality of life.	535	32.2%
Very important to the future of the area.	457	27.5%
A very good idea, but funding is a major concern for me.	404	24.3%
Not a very high priority; there are more pressing regional issues.	169	10.2%
Not needed at all.	85	5.1%
No answer	10	0.6%
Total	1,660	100.0%

Calling commuter rail “very important to the future of the area” were an additional 27.5%. Therefore, six of ten (59.8%) area residents rate commuter rail to Chicagoland as being “among the highest priorities” or “very important to the future of the area”.

One quarter (24.3%) say that commuter rail is a “very good idea,” but they find funding to be a major concern. Individuals rating commuter rail as a lower priority totaled 15.3% of which 10.2% rate commuter rail to not be a very high priority (there are more pressing regional issues) and 5.1% find that the concept is not needed at all.

Table 2.2 indicates the extremes among groups. Commuter rail achieves an especially elevated “highest priority” level among those individuals who work in Chicago or elsewhere in Cook County with two-thirds (67.9%) rating commuter rail as a highest priority. Strong priority support also came from newer residents, those who work in the Collar Counties, young adults and individuals who are working in Boone County.

The proportion of respondents giving commuter rail the “highest priority” is not as great for those who do not work, are senior citizens, live in western or northern Winnebago County or are individuals who work in Boone County.

Table 2.2
GROUPS GIVING HIGHEST AND LOWEST PRIORITY

TOP GROUPS HIGHEST PRIORITY		GROUPS GIVING LOWEST “HIGHEST PRIORITY”	
Group	Percent	Group	Percent
1. Work in Chicago, Cook County	67.9%	Do not work	21.4%
2. New residents, 0 - 5 years	43.5%	Elderly 65+	21.9%
3. Work in Collar Counties	42.1%	West Winnebago County	22.2%
4. Young adults 18 - 39 years	39.8%	Work in Boone County	26.4%
5. Area residents 15 - 24 years	38.8%	Live in North Winnebago	26.9%

A strong difference in priority level may be observed according to whether the respondent expects, to use the commuter rail for reaching work. Rail commuters marked high priority 58.8% of the time compared to 20.4% of non-rail commuters. The difference in responses by rail commuting category is shown below IN Table 2.3.

Table 2.3
COMMUTER RAIL PRIORITY
BY WHETHER TO BE USED TO REACH WORK

Response	Use for Work		Would Not Use	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Highest priority for the area	281	58.8%	225	20.4%
Very important to future	133	27.8%	295	26.8%
Good idea, funding a concern	52	10.9%	338	30.7%
Not a high priority	10	2.1%	154	14.0%
Not needed at all	1	0.2%	82	7.4%
No answer	1	0.2%	8	0.7%
Total	478	100.0%	1,102	100.0%

Variations by Demographic Group

Table 2.4 reveals the perceived need for commuter rail for survey respondents according to their demographic characteristics. Women are slightly more favorable to commuter rail than men - 64.8% giving a highest priority or very important compared to 57.1% of men. Support is highest among young adults, then declines with age. City of Rockford residents appear most enthusiastic with less support to the north and west in Winnebago County.

Another way to interpret the results is through a mean score analysis as presented in Table 2.5. On a scale from 1-5 where 5 = "highest priority" and 1 = "not needed", the mean score is 3.72 across all respondents. Mean scores were highest for the following groups: working in Chicago/Cook County (4.43), working in the Collar Counties (4.00), living in the area 0-5 years (3.99), and aged 18-39 (3.97).

Those groups with the lowest mean scores included aged 65 and older (3.38), do not work (3.39), residence in Western Winnebago County (3.51), and residence in Northern Winnebago County (3.53).

Table 2.4
NEED FOR COMMUTER RAIL
BY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTIC

Respondent Characteristic	Highest Priority	Very Important	Good Idea, Funding?	Not a High Priority	Not Needed at All	Total
GENDER						
Male	31.2%	25.9%	25.7%	11.1%	6.2%	100.0%
Female	34.7%	30.1%	23.8%	8.4%	3.0%	100.0%
AGE GROUP						
18 - 39	39.8%	28.2%	23.6%	6.6%	1.9%	100.0%
40 - 64	34.9%	29.0%	22.8%	9.5%	3.8%	100.0%
65+	21.9%	25.4%	30.0%	13.9%	8.8%	100.0%
RESIDENTIAL AREA						
Boone County	28.2%	26.4%	29.6%	11.1%	4.6%	100.0%
Northeast Rockford	36.3%	31.7%	20.8%	7.9%	3.3%	100.0%
South/SE Rockford	33.0%	27.8%	23.4%	10.3%	5.5%	100.0%
West/Central Rockford	33.2%	30.4%	24.5%	6.6%	5.2%	100.0%
Loves Park/Machesney Park	36.9%	27.6%	18.0%	10.1%	7.4%	100.0%
Northern Winnebago County	26.9%	23.7%	29.0%	16.1%	4.3%	100.0%
Western Winnebago County	22.2%	27.0%	33.3%	14.3%	3.2%	100.0%
YEARS LIVING IN AREA						
0 - 5 years	43.5%	24.6%	22.7%	5.3%	3.9%	100.0%
6 - 14 years	38.4%	30.1%	19.9%	8.8%	2.8%	100.0%
15 - 24 years	38.8%	27.1%	18.1%	8.0%	8.0%	100.0%
25+ years	27.7%	28.1%	27.2%	11.9%	5.2%	100.0%
WORK LOCATION						
Rockford	34.8%	29.7%	22.2%	9.0%	4.3%	100.0%
Other Winnebago County	28.9%	27.2%	28.3%	10.0%	5.6%	100.0%
Boone County	26.4%	37.4%	24.2%	9.9%	2.2%	100.1%
Chicago, Cook County	67.8%	14.9%	10.3%	5.7%	1.1%	99.8%
Collar Counties	42.1%	26.3%	21.1%	10.5%	0.0%	100.0%
Other Areas	32.2%	22.0%	39.0%	1.7%	5.1%	100.0%
Multiple	37.9%	30.5%	13.7%	10.5%	7.4%	100.0%
Does Not Work	21.4%	26.1%	30.0%	14.5%	8.0%	100.0%

Table 2.5
NEED FOR COMMUTER RAIL
MEAN SCORE¹ BY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTIC

Respondent Characteristic	Mean Score
All Respondents	3.72
GENDER	
Male	3.65
Female	3.85
AGE GROUP	
18 - 39	3.97
40 - 64	3.82
65+	3.38
RESIDENTIAL AREA	
Boone County	3.63
Northeast Rockford	3.90
South/SE Rockford	3.73
West/Central Rockford	3.80
Loves Park/Machesney Park	3.76
Northern Winnebago County	3.53
Western Winnebago County	3.51
YEARS LIVING IN AREA	
0 - 5 years	3.99
6 - 14 years	3.93
15 - 24 years	3.81
25+ years	3.61
WORK LOCATION	
Rockford	3.82
Other Winnebago County	3.64
Boone County	3.76
Chicago, Cook County	4.43
Collar Counties	4.00
Other Areas	3.75
Multiple	3.81
Does Not Work	3.39

¹Scale from 1-5 where 5="highest priority" and 1="not needed".

Chapter 3 POTENTIAL COMMUTER RAIL USE

Introduction

A survey question focused on how respondents might use passenger rail service to the Chicago region, asking about the possible use of rail service for work, shopping/entertainment/leisure, and general travel. Respondents were asked how often they might use passenger rail service for each of the three categories of travel.

Passenger Rail Use for Work

Of those respondents who are employed, more than one in seven respondents report that they would use passenger rail service to the Chicago region everyday for work (8.2%) or most days for work (7.3%). An additional 21.8% would take advantage of the service occasionally for work, resulting in more than one-third (37.3%) who would consider using passenger rail service for getting to work. Six in ten, (60.5%) survey respondents, however, reported that they would never use the service for work (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1
USE OF PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE FOR WORK¹

Response	Number	Percent
I would use the service everyday for work.	99	8.2%
I would use the service most days for work.	88	7.3%
I would use the service occasionally for work.	263	21.8%
I would never use the service for work.	728	60.5%
No answer	26	2.2%
Total	1,204	100.0%

¹Excludes respondents who indicated in a separate question that they do not work.

Most likely to indicate using passenger rail service everyday for work are respondents who work in Chicago or elsewhere in Cook County at 34.1%, followed by respondents who work in the Collar Counties (26.8%), and respondents new to the area during the past five years (18.7%) (Table 3.2). Least likely to use rail service everyday for work are respondents working in Winnebago County outside of Rockford (1.1%), seniors aged 65+ (3.5%), and residents of Western Winnebago County (3.7%).

Full analysis of potential use for work by respondent characteristics is presented in Table 3.4. When the “use everyday” and “use most days” responses are combined, males (17.3%) slightly led females (14.4%), and respondents working in Chicago/Cook County (71.7%) and the Collar Counties (51.8%) answered far more positively than those working in other areas. In addition,

respondents living in Boone County (23.7%) and South/Southeast Rockford (21.8%) would more often use passenger rail service for work compared with residents of other areas.

New movers, residents of the area 0-5 years (32.6%) were also more likely than longer-term residents to indicate that they would use rail service everyday or on most work days.

Table 3.2
GROUPS GIVING HIGHEST AND LOWEST
WOULD USE RAIL SERVICE EVERYDAY FOR WORK

TOP GROUPS USE EVERYDAY FOR WORK		LOWEST GROUPS USE EVERYDAY FOR WORK	
Group	Percent	Group	Percent
Work in Chicago, Cook County	34.1%	Work in Other Winnebago Co.	1.1%
Work in Collar Counties	26.8%	Elderly 65+	3.5%
New Resident, 0 - 5 years	18.7%	Resident W. Winnebago Co.	3.7%

Passenger Rail Use for Shopping, Entertainment, Leisure

More than four in ten (43.7%) respondents respond that they would occasionally use passenger rail service for shopping, entertainment, and leisure travel, while more than one-quarter (27.8%) would use rail service often for the listed purposes of shopping, entertainment or leisure (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3
USE OF PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE FOR SHOPPING, ENTERTAINMENT, LEISURE

Response	Number	Percent
I would use the service often for shopping, entertainment, and leisure travel.	461	27.8%
I would occasionally use the service for shopping, entertainment, and leisure travel.	726	43.7%
I would seldom use the service for shopping, entertainment, and leisure travel.	304	18.3%
I would never use the service for shopping, entertainment, and leisure travel.	167	10.1%
No answer	2	0.1%
Total	1,660	100.0%

Those respondents who would seldom use passenger rail service for shopping, entertainment, or leisure totaled 18.3% of survey participants and 10.1% said that they would never use the service for these listed purposes.

Table 3.4
**USE OF PASSENGER RAIL FOR WORK
 BY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTIC**

Respondent Characteristic	Everyday	Most Days	Occasion-ally	Never Use	Total
GENDER					
Male	8.9%	8.4%	25.1%	57.6%	100.0%
Female	8.1%	6.3%	19.8%	65.8%	100.0%
AGE GROUP					
18 - 39	8.6%	9.5%	25.9%	56.0%	100.0%
40 - 64	8.8%	7.4%	22.1%	61.7%	100.0%
65+	3.5%	3.5%	14.0%	79.1%	100.0%
RESIDENTIAL AREA					
Boone County	13.2%	10.5%	18.4%	57.9%	100.0%
Northeast Rockford	7.0%	5.2%	33.2%	54.6%	100.0%
South/SE Rockford	11.4%	10.4%	18.8%	59.4%	100.0%
West/Central Rockford	8.1%	7.2%	23.9%	60.8%	100.0%
Loves Park/Machesney Park	7.7%	7.1%	15.4%	69.8%	100.0%
Northern Winnebago County	5.3%	6.8%	17.3%	70.7%	100.0%
Western Winnebago County	3.7%	0.0%	27.8%	68.5%	100.0%
YEARS LIVING IN AREA					
0 - 5 years	18.7%	13.9%	20.5%	47.0%	100.0%
6 - 14 years	10.7%	14.0%	26.4%	48.9%	100.0%
15 - 24 years	8.9%	4.4%	27.2%	59.5%	100.0%
25+ years	5.2%	4.9%	20.7%	69.2%	100.0%
WORK LOCATION					
Rockford	5.4%	3.9%	22.1%	68.6%	100.0%
Other Winnebago County	1.1%	2.2%	21.2%	75.4%	100.0%
Boone County	6.6%	1.1%	28.6%	63.7%	100.0%
Chicago, Cook County	34.1%	37.6%	11.8%	16.5%	100.0%
Collar Counties	26.8%	25.0%	17.9%	30.4%	100.0%
Other Areas	7.0%	3.5%	24.6%	64.9%	100.0%
Multiple	10.5%	11.6%	30.5%	47.4%	100.0%

The analysis by respondent characteristics (Table 3.6) reveals that females (32.8%) were more likely than males (24.1%) to say that they would use passenger rail service often for shopping, entertainment, or leisure travel. Age also factored into answers such that respondents aged 18-39 (37.5%) and aged 40-64 (31.3%) were more likely than seniors aged 65 and older (13.9%) to report they would use rail service often for shopping, entertainment, or leisure travel. Respondents living in West/Central Rockford (35.0%) and Loves Park/Machesney Park (33.6%) voiced the strongest support among the residential areas for using passenger rail service often for leisure travel to Chicagoland.

Passenger Rail Use for General Travel

Asked about the possibility of using passenger rail service to connect to other destinations beyond the Chicago region, 14.1% said they would use the service often to connect to other destinations, 32.8% would occasionally use the service, 28.9% would seldom use the service, and 22.5% would never use the service to connect to other destinations beyond the Chicago region (Table 3.5). Thus, nearly half (46.9%) of survey respondents report that they would “often” or “occasionally” use passenger rail service to connect to other destinations.

Table 3.5
USE OF PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE FOR GENERAL TRAVEL

Response	Number	Percent
I would use the service often to connect to other destinations beyond the Chicago region.	234	14.1%
I would occasionally use the service to connect to other destinations beyond the Chicago region.	545	32.8%
I would seldom use the service to connect to other destinations beyond the Chicago region.	479	28.9%
I would never use the service to connect to other destinations beyond the Chicago region.	374	22.5%
No answer	28	1.7%
Total	1,660	100.0%

Table 3.7 shows responses by respondent characteristic. Young, 18-39 (17.4%) and middle aged, 40-64 (16.4%) respondents are much more willing to use passenger rail service often to connect to other destinations than seniors aged 65 and older (7.9%). Connecting to other destinations often was supported most often among residential areas by residents of West/Central Rockford (19.2%) and Loves Park/Machesney Park (17.2%). In addition, residents of the area less than 25 years reported at higher levels than 25+ year residents that they would use the service often to connect to other destinations.

Respondent groups who said at the highest levels that they would never use the passenger rail service to connect to other destinations beyond the Chicago region include seniors aged 65 and older (35.1%), respondents who do not work (33.8%), respondents who work in “other” locations (27.6%), and residents of Western Winnebago County (27.0%).

Table 3.6
**USE OF PASSENGER RAIL FOR SHOPPING, ENTERTAINMENT, LEISURE
 BY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTIC**

Respondent Characteristic	Often	Occasion-ally	Seldom	Never Use	Total
GENDER					
Male	24.1%	43.1%	21.8%	10.9%	100.0%
Female	32.8%	45.3%	14.3%	7.6%	100.0%
AGE GROUP					
18 - 39	37.5%	45.2%	13.9%	3.5%	100.0%
40 - 64	31.3%	44.4%	17.8%	6.4%	100.0%
65+	13.9%	42.5%	22.9%	20.6%	100.0%
RESIDENTIAL AREA					
Boone County	22.5%	45.9%	17.4%	14.2%	100.0%
Northeast Rockford	29.9%	46.9%	16.7%	6.6%	100.0%
South/SE Rockford	25.7%	42.8%	20.5%	11.0%	100.0%
West/Central Rockford	35.0%	46.2%	11.5%	7.3%	100.0%
Loves Park/Machesney Park	33.6%	38.2%	19.8%	8.3%	100.0%
Northern Winnebago County	21.9%	40.1%	27.8%	10.2%	100.0%
Western Winnebago County	12.7%	54.0%	17.5%	15.9%	100.0%
YEARS LIVING IN AREA					
0 - 5 years	31.7%	46.6%	14.9%	6.7%	100.0%
6 - 14 years	30.4%	47.0%	16.1%	6.5%	100.0%
15 - 24 years	35.6%	37.8%	16.0%	10.6%	100.0%
25+ years	24.9%	44.0%	19.9%	11.2%	100.0%
WORK LOCATION					
Rockford	34.8%	42.5%	16.1%	6.6%	100.0%
Other Winnebago County	24.9%	43.6%	23.8%	7.7%	100.0%
Boone County	30.8%	48.4%	16.5%	4.4%	100.0%
Chicago, Cook County	35.6%	48.3%	11.5%	4.6%	100.0%
Collar Counties	35.1%	45.6%	14.0%	5.3%	100.0%
Other Areas	28.8%	54.2%	10.2%	6.8%	100.0%
Multiple	30.5%	42.1%	15.8%	11.6%	100.0%
Do Not Work	13.5%	42.6%	24.1%	19.8%	100.0%

Table 3.7
**USE OF PASSENGER RAIL FOR GENERAL TRAVEL
 BY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTIC**

Respondent Characteristic	Often	Occasion-ally	Seldom	Never Use	Total
GENDER					
Male	14.5%	33.3%	28.7%	23.5%	100.0%
Female	14.6%	34.0%	30.6%	20.7%	100.0%
AGE GROUP					
18 - 39	17.4%	36.4%	30.6%	15.5%	100.0%
40 - 64	16.4%	34.7%	29.9%	18.9%	100.0%
65+	7.9%	29.5%	27.5%	35.1%	100.0%
RESIDENTIAL AREA					
Boone County	7.9%	32.9%	34.3%	25.0%	100.0%
Northeast Rockford	14.7%	35.8%	30.6%	19.0%	100.0%
South/SE Rockford	15.8%	30.2%	29.5%	24.6%	100.0%
West/Central Rockford	19.2%	36.7%	24.9%	19.2%	100.0%
Loves Park/Machesney Park	17.2%	33.5%	23.7%	25.6%	100.0%
Northern Winnebago County	11.3%	32.3%	32.8%	23.7%	100.0%
Western Winnebago County	4.8%	30.2%	38.1%	27.0%	100.0%
YEARS LIVING IN AREA					
0 - 5 years	19.9%	37.9%	26.2%	16.0%	100.0%
6 - 14 years	17.6%	31.9%	31.9%	18.5%	100.0%
15 - 24 years	20.0%	27.6%	31.4%	21.1%	100.0%
25+ years	11.6%	33.9%	29.1%	25.4%	100.0%
WORK LOCATION					
Rockford	16.2%	33.9%	30.7%	19.1%	100.0%
Other Winnebago County	12.2%	33.3%	31.1%	23.3%	100.0%
Boone County	13.2%	31.9%	37.4%	17.6%	100.0%
Chicago, Cook County	28.2%	45.9%	15.3%	10.6%	100.0%
Collar Counties	10.5%	33.3%	42.1%	14.0%	100.0%
Other Areas	15.5%	36.2%	20.7%	27.6%	100.0%
Multiple	21.3%	35.1%	21.3%	22.3%	100.0%
Do Not Work	8.1%	29.9%	28.3%	33.8%	100.0%

Tabulations relating commuter rail use for work to other potential uses reveals that work commuting is a strong predictor of high use for shopping or general travel as detailed in Tables 3.8 and 3.9. Almost half (49.0%) of workers by rail say they would use rail to shop compared to just 18.3% for others.

Table 3.8
 COMMUTER RAIL USE FOR WORK
 BY USE FOR SHOPPING, ENTERTAINMENT, LEISURE

Response	Use for Work		Would Not Use	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Often for shopping etc.	234	49.0%	202	18.3%
Occasionally for shopping etc.	212	44.4%	475	43.1%
Seldom for shopping etc.	28	5.9%	268	24.3%
Never for shopping etc.	4	0.8%	157	14.2%
Total	478	100.0%	1,102	100.0%

Table 3.9
 COMMUTER RAIL USE FOR WORK
 BY USE FOR CONNECTION FOR GENERAL TRAVEL

Response	Use for Work		Would Not Use	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Often to connect	130	27.2%	88	8.0%
Occasionally to connect	206	43.1%	313	28.4%
Seldom to connect	111	23.2%	354	32.1%
Never to connect	20	4.2%	338	30.7%
No answer	11	2.3%	9	0.8%
Total	478	100.0%	1,102	100.0%

Similarly, slightly more than one-quarter (27.2%) of work commuters might connect for general travel, but only eight percent of non-rail commuters. (See Table 3.9)

Chapter 4 FUNDING

Introduction

Survey respondents were asked to mark which of six funding options they would support to aid in the establishment of passenger rail service. Respondents were also given an option to mark that they would not support any of the taxing options.

Support for Funding Options

Nearly one-third (31.9%) of respondents indicate that they would support a sales tax on most purchases at 0.25% with food and medicine most likely excluded (Table 4.1) to be used to support commuter rail. Less popular with respondents at 21.0% is a state income tax addition of 0.25%, raising the total state tax to 3.25% - with approval of the state legislature. Only one in seven (14.7%) respondents support a property tax at an authorized rate of 0.25% of valuation - for the average home, the cost would be about \$90-\$150 annually or a vehicle registration fee of \$50 annually (13.2%). More than one in ten (11.5%) would prefer another funding source not listed or a local sales tax on gasoline of eight cents per gallon (10.8%).

Overall, respondents marked an average of 1.03 funding options, thus most local residents chose only one funding choice.

Table 4.1
FUNDING OPTIONS FOR PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE

Response	Number	Percent
I would support a <u>sales tax on most purchases</u> at 0.25%. Food and medicine would most likely be excluded.	529	31.9%
I would support a <u>state income tax addition</u> of 0.25%, raising the total state tax to 3.25% (must have approval of the state legislature).	348	21.0%
I would support a <u>property tax</u> at an authorized rate of 0.25% of valuation (for the average home, the cost would be about \$90-\$150 annually).	244	14.7%
I would support a <u>vehicle registration fee</u> of \$50 annually.	219	13.2%
Other funding source	191	11.5%
I would support a <u>local sales tax on gasoline</u> of 8¢ per gallon.	180	10.8%

Support for the different funding options varied by respondent characteristic as seen in Table 4.2. Those most likely to support a sales tax on most purchases include respondents who work in Chicago or elsewhere in Cook County (43.7%), those who work in the Collar Counties (36.8%), movers to the area within the past five years (36.1%), and residents of Northeast Rockford (35.8%). Females were more supportive of raising the sales tax than males, though not much variation took place among age groups.

A state income tax addition was most popular among workers in Chicago or elsewhere in Cook County (32.2%), residents of Northeast Rockford (27.2%), workers in other Winnebago County locations (25.3%), and residents of Northern Winnebago County (24.1%). Raising the state income tax to fund rail service was more popular among males than females, while support increased somewhat with rising respondent age.

Increasing property taxes to support rail service is supported most strongly by workers in Chicago or elsewhere in Cook County (29.9%), workers in the Collar Counties (26.3%), respondents aged 18-39 (22.4%), and movers to the area within the past five years (21.6%). Small numbers of Western Winnebago County residents (4.8%), seniors aged 65 and older (6.7%), and respondents who do not work (7.6%) would support increasing property taxes to fund rail service. Agreement with increasing property taxes to fund rail service decreases dramatically with age from 22.4% for respondents aged 18-39 down to only 6.7% for those aged 65 and older.

A vehicle registration fee received the most positive response from workers in the Collar Counties (22.8%), residents of Northeast Rockford (20.3%), movers to the area within the past five years (19.7%), and respondents aged 18-39 (18.9%). Support for a vehicle registration fee decreases with age falling from 18.9% for respondents aged 18-39 down to only 6.7% for seniors aged 65 and older. The two areas with the least support for a vehicle fee include Western and Northern Winnebago County residents.

Raising the local sales tax on gasoline was not generally popular, but a few groups voiced somewhat stronger support than others including workers in the Collar Counties (17.5%), residents of Northeast Rockford (15.5%), new movers to the area within the past five years (15.4%), and workers in "other" area locations (15.3%). Males answered more positively than females regarding raising the local sales tax on gasoline, while respondents aged 18-64 voiced more support than seniors aged 65 and older. The increase in the gas tax is least popular among residents of Northern Winnebago County (4.3%), seniors aged 65 and older (6.9%), respondents who do not work (7.6%), and residents of Loves Park/Machesney Park (8.3%).

Summary

For all demographic groups, a general sales tax is the leading choice ranging from a high acceptance of 43.7% among those currently working in Chicago or Cook County to 24.2% in Boone County.

In general, most groups place state income tax as their second choice. However, the 18-39 age group makes property tax their second choice and Boone County residents prefer a vehicle fee as their second choice.

Those working in the Collar Counties or at multiple locations place property tax second. For new movers within the 0-5 years, state income tax and property tax tie for second while for 6-14 year residents, property tax and vehicle tax tie for second.

Table 4.2
**FUNDING OPTIONS FOR PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE
 BY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTIC**

Respondent Characteristic	General Sales Tax	State Income Tax	Property Tax	Vehicle Fee	Other Source	Gas Sales Tax
GENDER						
Male	29.0%	23.0%	15.3%	12.7%	13.6%	13.4%
Female	35.3%	19.4%	14.8%	14.2%	9.8%	8.6%
AGE GROUP						
18 - 39	31.3%	18.1%	22.4%	18.9%	10.4%	12.4%
40 - 64	33.2%	21.4%	16.3%	14.5%	13.3%	12.4%
65+	30.2%	22.5%	6.7%	6.7%	8.2%	6.9%
RESIDENTIAL AREA						
Boone County	33.0%	16.1%	12.4%	12.4%	12.8%	10.1%
Northeast Rockford	35.8%	27.2%	14.0%	20.3%	13.4%	15.5%
South/SE Rockford	28.8%	17.8%	16.1%	9.6%	12.7%	8.9%
West/Central Rockford	35.3%	19.9%	17.5%	15.7%	9.8%	15.0%
Loves Park/Machesney Park	30.0%	22.1%	18.0%	10.6%	11.1%	8.3%
Northern Winnebago County	27.3%	24.1%	12.8%	8.0%	10.2%	4.3%
Western Winnebago County	25.4%	17.5%	4.8%	9.5%	9.5%	11.1%
YEARS LIVING IN AREA						
0 - 5 years	36.1%	21.6%	21.6%	19.7%	11.5%	15.4%
6 - 14 years	32.7%	16.1%	18.0%	18.0%	16.1%	12.9%
15 - 24 years	29.3%	20.7%	20.2%	17.6%	10.6%	8.5%
25+ years	31.4%	22.1%	11.8%	10.3%	10.8%	10.1%
WORK LOCATION						
Rockford	32.5%	20.4%	16.4%	16.7%	11.2%	12.2%
Other Winnebago County	27.5%	25.3%	12.1%	5.5%	12.6%	9.3%
Boone County	24.2%	15.4%	16.5%	18.7%	12.1%	9.9%
Chicago, Cook County	43.7%	32.2%	29.9%	14.9%	9.2%	13.8%
Collar Counties	36.8%	14.0%	26.3%	22.8%	10.5%	17.5%
Other Areas	35.6%	23.7%	15.3%	13.6%	23.7%	15.3%
Multiple	28.4%	16.8%	21.1%	16.8%	11.6%	9.5%
Does Not Work	30.2%	21.6%	7.6%	8.4%	10.9%	7.6%

Disagreement with Any Taxing Options

More than one-third (35.7%) of survey respondents indicated that they could not support any of the listed taxing options to develop passenger rail service. Most likely to say that they would not support any of the listed taxing options were the following groups: residents of Western Winnebago County (47.6%), respondents aged 65 or older (44.3%), respondents who do not work (43.1%), residents of Northern Winnebago County (41.7%), and workers in Winnebago County outside of Rockford (40.7%) (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3
DISAGREEMENT WITH ANY TAXING OPTION
BY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTIC

Respondent Characteristic	Percent	Respondent Characteristic	Percent
GENDER		YEARS LIVING IN AREA	
Male	37.3%	0 - 5 years	29.8%
Female	32.3%	6 - 14 years	33.2%
AGE GROUP		15 - 24 years	33.5%
18 - 39	29.7%	25+ years	37.1%
40 - 64	32.8%	WORK LOCATION	
65+	44.3%	Rockford	32.5%
RESIDENTIAL AREA		Other Winnebago County	40.7%
Boone County	38.1%	Boone County	35.2%
Northeast Rockford	31.0%	Chicago, Cook County	19.5%
South/SE Rockford	39.0%	Collar Counties	19.3%
West/Central Rockford	26.2%	Other Areas	30.5%
Loves Pk./Machesney Pk.	37.8%	Multiple	38.9%
Northern Winnebago Co.	41.7%	Do Not Work	43.1%
Western Winnebago Co.	47.6%		

The lowest levels of opposition to all taxing options were found among workers in the Collar Counties (19.3%), workers in Chicago or elsewhere in Cook County (19.5%), residents of West/Central Rockford (26.2%), respondents aged 18-39 (29.7%), and new movers to the area within the past five years (29.8%).

Comments

Many participants in the survey provided funding ideas, some of them other than proposed in the survey question.

Table 4.4
OPEN-ENDED SUGGESTIONS
TO SUPPORT COMMUTER RAIL
(Five or More)

Source	Number
Riders, users should pay	43
Federal, stimulus	31
Alcohol, tobacco tax	17
Tollway fees	15
Private sources	11
Lottery	9
Bonds	9
Gambling, casinos	8
Freeze government	6

Rider fees were foremost with 43 suggestions followed by federal sources including stimulus funds with 31.

Other ideas for funding put forth included alcohol or tobacco taxes (17), tollway fees (15), private sources (11), lottery (9), bonds (9) and gambling (8).

Chapter 5
ORGANIZATIONAL OVERSIGHT

Introduction

Respondents were presented with six government organizations which could potentially oversee passenger rail service in Boone and Winnebago Counties and were asked to choose the one they believe should oversee rail service. They were also given the option to answer with “unsure at this time, I need more information before I can make a choice.”

Organizational Oversight

More than four in ten (42.5%) respondents answered that they are unsure at this time which governmental organization should oversee passenger rail service in Boone and Winnebago Counties and 4.3% did not answer the question, resulting in nearly half of respondents (46.8%) not offering a specific opinion on which organization should oversee rail service. (Table 5.1)

Table 5.1
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION TO OVERSEE PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE

Response	Number	Percent
Unsure at this time, I need more information before I can make a choice.	706	42.5%
Expand the Greater Rockford Airport Authority (Chicago-Rockford Airport) to oversee passenger rail in Boone and Winnebago Counties.	270	16.3%
Boone and Winnebago Counties should join the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). This would require a change in the enabling legislation that created the RTA.	166	10.0%
Expand the Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) to serve all of Boone and Winnebago Counties and expand the RMTD mission to include passenger rail.	158	9.5%
Boone and Winnebago Counties should just work on Amtrak inter-city service because separate governance is not required.	117	7.0%
Create a new Mass Transit District that would oversee passenger rail in Boone and Winnebago Counties.	103	6.2%
The members of NICTI should enter into an intergovernmental agreement to oversee passenger rail service in Boone and Winnebago Counties. This would be subject to an appropriation of funding in each agency’s annual budget.	49	3.0%
Other	19	1.1%
No answer	72	4.3%
Total	1,660	100.0%

Those respondents most unsure at this time which organization should oversee passenger rail service include residents of Western Winnebago County (56.5%), respondents who do not work (51.3%), seniors age 65 and older (51.0%), residents of Northern Winnebago County (49.4%), and females (48.9%) (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2
 UNSURE, NEED MORE INFORMATION TO MAKE A DECISION
 ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION TO OPERATE COMMUTER RAIL
 BY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTIC

Respondent Characteristic	Percent	Respondent Characteristic	Percent
GENDER		YEARS LIVING IN AREA	
Male	39.9%	0 - 5 years	40.2%
Female	48.9%	6 - 14 years	36.8%
AGE GROUP		15 - 24 years	42.5%
18 - 39	38.9%	25+ years	47.1%
40 - 64	43.2%	WORK LOCATION	
65+	51.0%	Rockford	43.6%
RESIDENTIAL AREA		Other Winnebago County	44.8%
Boone County	46.9%	Boone County	44.2%
Northeast Rockford	42.3%	Chicago, Cook County	37.2%
South/SE Rockford	44.0%	Collar Counties	33.3%
West/Central Rockford	41.9%	Other Areas	33.9%
Loves Pk./Machesney Pk.	40.7%	Multiple	41.1%
Northern Winnebago Co.	49.4%	Do Not Work	51.3%
Western Winnebago Co.	56.5%		

About one in six (16.3%) respondents would prefer an expansion of the Greater Rockford Airport Authority to oversee passenger rail service, while about one in ten believe the area should join the Regional Transportation Authority (10.0%) or expand the Rockford Mass Transit District to serve all of Boone and Winnebago Counties (9.5%). Fewer support just working on Amtrak inter-city service (7.0%), creating a new Mass Transit District (6.2%), or creating an intergovernmental agreement among NICTI members (3.0%).

Though unable to answer dominated the results, variables in choices may be of interest. Among demographic groups, the Greater Rockford Airport led in all areas except West/Central Rockford which placed RMTD first. The highest Airport support (22.4%) was in South/Southeast Rockford with the lowest (12.8%) in Boone County.

Newer residents (0-5 years) placed RMTD first with all other groups by years living in the area placing the Airport first. RMTD also received the greatest support among Chicago Area workers.

Both genders and all age groups had the Airport first. Men (12.0%) were more likely than women (8.9%) to favor joining RTA.

Some respondents chose to write in or comment on organizations to oversee commuter rail, many related to those organizations proposed.

Rockford Airport led for Boone and Winnebago County workers. Chicago Area workers chose RMTD and workers in “other areas” or multiple sites chose joining RTA of those making a choice.

Table 5.3
HIGHEST PROPORTIONS
FAVORING SELECTED GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Greater Rockford Airport		RMTD		Join RTA	
S/SE Rockford	22.4%	Work Chicago/Cook	20.9%	Work Other Areas	20.3%
Work Winn. County outside Rockford	21.5%	Work Collar Counties	15.8%	6-14 Year Resident	16.3%
Work Boone County	18.6%	0-5 Year Resident	15.6%	Work Multiple Sites	14.4%
Work Other Areas	18.6%	W/Central Rockford	15.2%	Work Winn. County outside Rockford	14.0%
NE Rockford	18.1%	Loves Park/Machesney Park	13.7%	NE Rockford	13.5%
				18 - 39 Years	13.5%

Chapter 6 OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

Introduction

As a final question, respondents were asked “Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail?” Nearly one-third (32.2%) of all survey completers took the time to express themselves. Commonalities among comments have been tabulated and the most frequent topics are discussed below. Such compilations and categories are somewhat subjective, but provide thoughts of respondents which may not be reflected in the structured questions. Comments received after the cut-off for analysis have been included.

The reader is directed to Appendix III for verbatim responses in order to gain a full understanding of the thought of local residents.

Common Themes

The most common comment, offered 137 times, was a positive urging to the Rockford-Belvidere Area to move forward. Most persons indicate that the project would be highly beneficial and that commuter rail is long overdue.

Several dozen local residents indicated that they are already using Metra or CTA. Most popular among the stations already being accessed by local residents is Harvard, named 21 times. Other sites to board and the number of times named were: Elgin Big Timber (7), Crystal Lake (6), Cumberland (4), Woodstock (2) and Elburn (1).

The most cited reasons for commuter rail were economic development benefits. Forty-six respondents said that commuter rail will promote growth and provide an economic boost. Another 32 individuals named enhanced employment opportunities, many noting that persons could live in Rockford with positive advantages and work in Chicagoland. A few others (6) noted that a rail connection would bring persons from the Chicago area to Rockford attractions, events and shopping. Four said that with rail Rockford would benefit should Chicago be chosen for the 2016 Olympics.

Environmentally related benefits were named by many survey participants. Improving congested roads was given by 22 respondents, 18 noted that rail saves on gas and reduces pollution. Eight persons feel that rail is safer than driving.

Many persons named how they would use commuter rail, the most frequent are shown below:

Table 6.1
REASONS FOR USING COMMUTER RAIL WHEN ESTABLISHED
(Named three or more times)

Reason	Number
Visit friends, family	19
Shopping	17
Work, look for job	16
Sports - Cubs, Sox, Bears	12
Colleges, Universities	12
Entertainment	12
Sites, attractions	8
Museums	7
Health care	6
Events	4
Restaurants	3

Many commuter rail respondents shared ideas about how the service should be provided. Below Table 6.2 shows the most common suggestions.

Table 6.2
SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PROVISION OF COMMUTER RAIL SERVICE
(Named three or more times)

Suggestion	Number
Connect to O'Hare, Blue Line	35
Should go to Rockford Airport	21
High Speed	13
Services at extended hours	10
Reasonable ticket price	9
Weekend service	8
Would like service to the west	7
Would like service to the north	7
Station in downtown Rockford	7
Want to go to Woodfield	5
Use old IL Central tracks	3
Consider disabled	3
Want to go to Union Station	3
Bus, taxi connections at station	3

Not everyone was enthusiastic at the prospect of commuter rail especially because of the expected expense for development and operation. Forty-seven respondents said that taxes are already too high so that new taxes are not advisable. Those who use the service should pay or the commuter rail should be self-supporting was put forth by 23 individuals. A similar theme, put forth by 12 respondents, is that taxing non-users for something used by others is not fair.

Others had negative views of plans for commuter rail for additional reasons. Eight commenters said that the Rockford area has other more pressing issues, seven desire that the monies be used for better roads and bridges first. Ten respondents said that commuter rail is not needed, five noted that the rail service failed before and three said that if commuter rail were viable, a private entity would have done so already.

Appendix I

COVER LETTER AND SURVEY INSTRUMENT

NORTHERN ILLINOIS COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE SURVEY

Dear Boone or Winnebago County resident:

For several years, the Northern Illinois Commuter Transportation Initiative (Rockford, Belvidere, Boone, and Winnebago Counties, Rockford Mass Transit District) has studied the possibility of initiating passenger rail service from our area to the Chicagoland region. We have studied both inter-city passenger service (Amtrak), and commuter rail service (Metra) to Elgin Big Timber or Union Station. Now, we would like your thoughts. Would you use the service? Is initiation of service important to you personally or as an economic development engine for the area? Would you support new funding to provide an operating subsidy?



A household member 18 or older should read the background below, then answer the questions and return the form in the enclosed postage paid envelope. Responses are anonymous. Health Systems Research at the U of I College of Medicine-Rockford is conducting this study for NICTI and will compile the results. Call 815/395-5639 or 800/854-4461 with questions.

BACKGROUND

The Northern Illinois Commuter Transportation Initiative (NICTI) has studied alternatives for passenger rail service to Chicago, unanimously selecting an existing 48 mile rail line which connects Rockford to existing Metra service at the Elgin Big Timber Station over tracks owned by the Union Pacific Railroad. Potential stations along the way include Huntley, Marengo, Belvidere, and Rockford. Bus or other transportation services may be linked to the commuter stations.

Service is expected to operate weekdays with three AM peak period inbound and outbound trains and three PM peak period inbound and outbound trains. Expansion of service could include weekends and holidays. A transfer might be required at Big Timber for some runs. NICTI also recommends that Amtrak inter-city service operate on the same tracks to reduce capital and operating costs and increase available trains. If only inter-city service were provided by Amtrak, the service would most likely be one trip each way per day during non-peak hours.

The capital cost to upgrade the railroad tracks and add train signaling systems in the Boone and Winnebago County portion of the project range from \$100 million to \$160 million dollars depending on station locations and other factors. The operating cost would range between \$5 million to \$10 million annually depending on the frequency of trains, the size of the train sets, and other factors. NICTI anticipates that capital and operating costs in McHenry and Kane County would be the responsibility of the Regional Transit Authority (RTA), which is a six-county Chicago area special governmental taxing unit. NICTI expects that the majority of the capital funding would come from Federal and State sources, but some local dollars will be required as matching funds. The majority of the operating funding will have to be provided by local sources. The fares collected to ride the trains would probably only cover approximately 25% of the operating costs.

NICTI would appreciate your answering this brief survey to help guide regional decisions related to implementation of passenger rail service. Thank you for your prompt response and for taking the time to provide your views and comments.

1. How do you feel about the need to establish commuter rail service from Rockford-Belvidere to Chicago? **(Mark One)**

- (1) Among the highest priorities for the area in order to stimulate economic development, manage growth, and enhance the quality of life.
- (2) Very important to the future of the area.
- (3) A very good idea, but funding is a major concern for me.
- (4) Not a very high priority; there are more pressing regional issues.
- (5) Not needed at all.

How might you use passenger rail service to the Chicago region? **(Mark One In Each Category)**

2. **Work**

- (1) I would use the service everyday for work.
- (2) I would use the service most days for work.
- (3) I would use the service occasionally for work.
- (4) I would never use the service for work.

3. **Shopping, Entertainment, Leisure**

- (1) I would use the service often for shopping, entertainment, and leisure travel.
- (2) I would occasionally use the service for shopping, entertainment, and leisure travel.
- (3) I would seldom use the service for shopping, entertainment, and leisure travel.
- (4) I would never use the service for shopping, entertainment, and leisure travel.

4. **General Travel**

- (1) I would use the service often to connect to other destinations beyond the Chicago region.
- (2) I would occasionally use the service to connect to other destinations beyond the Chicago region.
- (3) I would seldom use the service to connect to other destinations beyond the Chicago region.
- (4) I would never use the service to connect to other destinations beyond the Chicago region.

What funding options would you support? **(Mark All That Apply)**

- 5. I would support a property tax at an authorized rate of 0.25% of valuation (for the average home, the cost would be about \$90-\$150 annually).
- 6. I would support a sales tax on most purchases at 0.25%. Food and medicine would most likely be excluded.
- 7. I would support a vehicle registration fee of \$50 annually.
- 8. I would support a local sales tax on gasoline of 8¢ per gallon.
- 9. I would support a state income tax addition of 0.25%, raising the total state tax to 3.25% (must have approval of the state legislature).
- 10. Other funding source (please specify): _____

- 11. I would not support any of these taxing options.

- 12. Please choose the governmental organization that should oversee passenger rail service in Boone and Winnebago Counties. **(Mark One)**
 - (1) Expand the Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) to serve all of Boone and Winnebago Counties and expand the RMTD mission to include passenger rail.
 - (2) Create a new Mass Transit District that would oversee passenger rail in Boone and Winnebago Counties.
 - (3) Expand the Greater Rockford Airport Authority (Chicago-Rockford Airport) to oversee passenger rail in Boone and Winnebago Counties.
 - (4) The members of NICTI should enter into an intergovernmental agreement to oversee passenger rail service in Boone and Winnebago Counties. This would be subject to an appropriation of funding in each agency's annual budget.
 - (5) Boone and Winnebago Counties should join the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). This would require a change in the enabling legislation that created the RTA.
 - (6) Boone and Winnebago Counties should just work on Amtrak inter-city service because separate governance is not required.
 - (7) Other (please specify): _____

 - (8) Unsure at this time, I need more information before I can make a choice.

Please Circle Your Response:

13. Your Gender: (1) M (2) F

14. Your Age Group: (1) 18-39 (2) 40-64 (3) 65+

15. Your Residence Zip Code _____

16. Your Primary Work Location (if employed) **(Mark One)**

____ (1) City of Rockford

____ (9) Lake County

____ (2) Other Winnebago County

____ (10) McHenry County

____ (3) City of Belvidere

____ (11) Ogle County

____ (4) Other Boone County

____ (12) Stephenson County

____ (5) City of Chicago

____ (13) Wisconsin

____ (6) Other Cook County

____ (14) Multiple sites

____ (7) DuPage County

____ (15) Other: _____

____ (8) Kane County

____ (16) I do not work

17. Number of years you have lived in Boone or Winnebago Counties?

____ (1) 0 - 2 years

____ (4) 10 - 14 years

____ (2) 3 - 5 years

____ (5) 15 - 24 years

____ (3) 6 - 9 years

____ (6) 25+ years

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail?

Thank you for completing this survey

Survey approved by the University of Illinois College of Medicine
Institutional Review Board (IRB) February 6, 2009.

REVISIÓN DE INICIATIVA DE TRANSPORTE DE VIAJERO DIARIO DE ILLINOIS DEL NORTE

Querido Boone o residente de Condado Winnebago:

Durante varios años, la Iniciativa de Transporte de Viajero diario de Illinois del Norte (Rockford, Belvidere, Boone, y Condados Winnebago, Distrito de Tránsito de Misa de Rockford) ha estudiado la posibilidad de iniciar el servicio ferroviario de pasajeros de nuestra área a la región Chicagoland. Hemos estudiado tanto servicio de pasajeros interurbano (Amtrak), como el servicio ferroviario de persona que vive fuera de la ciudad (Metra) a la Estación de Unión o Madera Grande Elgin



Miembros del hogar de 18 años o mayores deben leer el fondo por debajo, y luego devolver el formulario en el sobre de franqueo pagado con las respuestas de las preguntas. Las respuestas son anónimas. Sistemas de Investigación de Salud en la Universidad de Illinois Colegio de Medicina en Rockford está llevando a cabo este estudio para NICTI y compilar los resultados. Llame al 815/395-5639 o 800/854-4461 con preguntas.

FONDO

La Iniciativa de Transporte de Viajero diario de Illinois del Norte (NICTI) ha estudiado alternativas para el servicio ferroviario de pasajeros a Chicago, unánimemente seleccionando una línea ferroviaria de 48 millas existente que une Rockford a la existencia del servicio de Metra en la Estación de Madera Grande Elgin sobre pistas poseídas por la Unión Ferrocarril de Océano Pacífico. Las estaciones potenciales a lo largo del camino incluyen Huntley, Marengo, Belvidere, y Rockford. El autobús u otros servicios de transporte pueden ser unidos para las estaciones de persona que vive fuera de la ciudad.

Se espera que el servicio funcionará Lunes a Viernes con tres servicios en períodos de máximo uso en la mañana de entrada y de salida y tres trenes en períodos de máximo uso por la noche de entrada y de salida. Expansión de los servicios pueden incluir fines de semana y días festivos. Transferencia de tren puede ser necesaria en Big Timber para algunas rutas. NICTI También recomienda que Amtrak viaje en las mismas pistas en la ciudad para reducir los gastos operativos y aumentar los servicios de trenes. Si Amtrak proviene el servicio en la ciudad, el servicio lo más probable será un viaje por día en cada sentido durante las horas de menos uso.

El coste de capital para mejorar las pistas de ferrocarril y añadir tren sistemas señalados en el Boone y parte de Condado Winnebago de la variedad de proyecto de 100 millones de dólares a dólares de 160 millones de dólares según posiciones de estación y otros factores. El coste operativo se extendería entre 5 millones de dólares a 10 millones de dólares anualmente según la frecuencia de trenes, el tamaño de los juegos de tren, y otros factores. El NICTI espera que la capital y los costes operativos en McHenry y Kane County serían la responsabilidad

El NICTI apreciaría su contestación de esta breve revisión para ayudar a dirigir decisiones regionales relacionadas con la realización del servicio ferroviario de pasajeros. Gracias por su respuesta incitador y para tomar el tiempo para proporcionar sus vistas y comentarios.

1. ¿Cómo te sientes acerca de la necesidad de establecer servicios de transporte ferroviario de Rockford-Belvidere a Chicago? (**Marque Uno**)

- (1) Entre las más altas prioridades de la zona a fin de estimular el desarrollo económico, gestión de crecimiento, y mejorar la calidad de vida.
- (2) Muy importante para el futuro de la zona.
- (3) Una muy buena idea , pero la financiación es una preocupación importante para mí.
- (4) No es una prioridad muy alta, hay más apremiantes problemas regionales
- (5) No es necesario en absoluto.

2. **Trabajo**

- (1) Quiero usar el servicio todos los días para el trabajo.
- (2) Me gustaría utilizar el servicio de la mayoría de los días para el trabajo.
- (3) Me gustaría usar el servicio de vez en cuando para el trabajo.
- (4) Yo nunca uso el servicio para el trabajo.

3. **Compras, Entretenimiento, y Tiempo Libre**

- (1) Quiero usar el servicio a menudo para ir de compras, entretenimiento y tiempo libre.
- (2) Quiero utilizar el servicio de vez en cuando para ir de compras, entretenimiento y tiempo libre.
- (3) Yo rara vez cuando utilizar el servicio para ir de compras, entretenimiento y ocio.
- (4) Yo nunca uso el servicio para ir de compras, entretenimiento y tiempo libre.

4. **Viajes General**

- (1) Quiero usar el servicio a menudo para conectar a otros destinos más allá de la región de Chicago.
- (2) Quiero utilizar el servicio de vez en cuando para conectar a otros destinos más allá de la región de Chicago.
- (3) Yo rara vez cuando usar el servicio para conectar a otros destinos más allá de la región de Chicago.
- (4) Yo nunca uso el servicio para conectar a otros destinos más allá de la región de Chicago.

¿Qué opciones de financiación usted apoyaría? (**Marque todo lo que aplica**)

5. Yo apoyaría un impuesto autorizado de tasa de 0.25% de valor sobre la propiedad (el costo promedio por hogar, sería de unos \$ 90 - \$ 150 al año).
6. Yo apoyaría un impuesto de 0.25% sobre las ventas en la mayoría de las compras. Alimentos y medicinas serían probablemente excluidos.
7. Yo apoyaría un cargo de matriculación de vehículos de 50 dólares al año.
8. Yo apoyaría un impuesto local sobre las ventas de gasolina de 8 ¢ por galón.
9. Yo apoyaría un incremento del impuesto estatal de 0.25%, elevando el total de impuestos estatales a 3.25% (debe ser aprobado por la legislatura estatal).
10. Otras fuentes de financiación (especificar): _____
11. Yo no apoyaría ninguna de estas opciones de tributación.
12. Por favor, elija la organización del gobierno que debe supervisar el servicio ferroviario de pasajeros en Boone y Winnebago Condados. (**Marque Uno**)

- (1) Ampliar el Transporte Distrito de Rockford (RMTD) para servir a todos de los Condados de Boone y Winnebago y ampliar la misión RMTD para incluir pasajeros de ferrocarril.
- (2) Crear un nuevo Distrito de Transporte que se encargaría de supervisar pasajeros por ferrocarril en Boone y Winnebago Condados.
- (3) Ampliar el aeropuerto de Gran Autoridad Rockford (Chicago, Rockford Aeropuerto) para supervisar pasajeros por ferrocarril en Condados de Boone y Winnebago.
- (4) Los miembros de NICTI deben entrar en un acuerdo entre le gobierno para supervisar el servicio ferroviario de pasajeros en Condados de Boone y Winnebago. Esto estaría sujeto a un crédito de financiación en cada presupuesto anual de cada agencia.
- (5) Condados de Boone y Winnebago deben unirse a la Autoridad Regional de Transporte (RTA). Esto requeriría un cambio en la legislación que a creado la ACR.
- (6) Condados de Boone y Winnebago sólo deben trabajar en Amtrak en servicios la ciudad, porque gobernanza separada no es necesario.
- (7) Otras (por favor especifica): _____

- (8) Inseguro en este momento, necesito más información antes de que pueda tomar una decisión.

Por favor indique su respuesta:

13. Su género: (1) Hombre (2) Mujer
14. Su grupo de edad: (1)18-39 (2) 40-64 (3) 65+

15. Su código postal de residencia _____

16. Su principal lugar de trabajo (si trabaja) **(Marque Uno)**

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Ciudad de Rockford | <input type="checkbox"/> (9) Lake Condado |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Otra Condado Winnebago | <input type="checkbox"/> (10) McHenry Condado |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (3) Ciudad de Belvidere | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Ogle Condado |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Otra Condado Boone | <input type="checkbox"/> (12) Stephenson Condado |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (5) Ciudad de Chicago | <input type="checkbox"/> (13) Wisconsin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (6) Otra Condado Cook | <input type="checkbox"/> (14) Múltiples sitios |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (7) DuPage Condado | <input type="checkbox"/> (15) Otra: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (8) Kane Condado | <input type="checkbox"/> (16) Yo no trabajo |

17. Número de años que ha vivido en Boone o Winnebago Condados?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) 0 - 2 años | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) 10 - 14 años |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) 3 - 5 años | <input type="checkbox"/> (5) 15 - 24 años |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (3) 6 - 9 años | <input type="checkbox"/> (6) 25+ años |

18. Todo lo que usted desea decirnos sobre sus necesidades de conmutan o tren conmutar?

Muchas gracias por completar esta encuesta.

Aprobado por la Junta de Revisión Institucional de la Universidad de Illinois Colegio of Medicina
en 6 de febrero de 2009.

Appendix II

SURVEY FREQUENCIES

NORTHERN ILLINOIS COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE SURVEY

1. How do you feel about the need to establish commuter rail service from Rockford-Belvidere to Chicago? **(Mark One)**

Response	Number	Percent
Among the highest priorities for the area in order to stimulate economic development, manage growth, and enhance the quality of life.	535	32.2%
Very important to the future of the area.	457	27.5%
A very good idea, but funding is a major concern for me.	404	24.3%
Not a very high priority; there are more pressing regional issues.	169	10.2%
Not needed at all.	85	5.1%
No answer	10	0.6%
Total	1,660	100.0%

How might you use passenger rail service to the Chicago region? **(Mark One In Each Category)**

2. **Work**

Response	Number	Percent
I would use the service everyday for work.	110	6.6%
I would use the service most days for work.	92	5.5%
I would use the service occasionally for work.	276	16.6%
I would never use the service for work.	1,102	66.4%
No answer	80	4.8%
Total	1,660	100.0%

3. **Shopping, Entertainment, Leisure**

Response	Number	Percent
I would use the service often for shopping, entertainment, and leisure travel.	461	27.8%
I would occasionally use the service for shopping, entertainment, and leisure travel.	726	43.7%
I would seldom use the service for shopping, entertainment, and leisure travel.	304	18.3%
I would never use the service for shopping, entertainment, and leisure travel.	167	10.1%
No answer	2	0.1%
Total	1,660	100.0%

4. **General Travel**

Response	Number	Percent
I would use the service often to connect to other destinations beyond the Chicago region.	234	14.1%
I would occasionally use the service to connect to other destinations beyond the Chicago region.	545	32.8%
I would seldom use the service to connect to other destinations beyond the Chicago region.	479	28.9%
I would never use the service to connect to other destinations beyond the Chicago region.	374	22.5%
No answer	28	1.7%
Total	1,660	100.0%

What funding options would you support? **(Mark All That Apply)**

	Response	Number	Percent
5.	I would support a <u>property tax</u> at an authorized rate of 0.25% of valuation (for the average home, the cost would be about \$90-\$150 annually).	244	14.7%
6.	I would support a <u>sales tax on most purchases</u> at 0.25%. Food and medicine would most likely be excluded.	529	31.9%
7.	I would support a <u>vehicle registration fee</u> of \$50 annually.	219	13.2%
8.	I would support a <u>local sales tax on gasoline</u> of 8¢ per gallon.	180	10.8%
9.	I would support a <u>state income tax addition</u> of 0.25%, raising the total state tax to 3.25% (must have approval of the state legislature).	348	21.0%
10.	Other funding source	191	11.5%
11.	I would <u>not support</u> any of these taxing options.	592	35.7%

12. Please choose the governmental organization that should oversee passenger rail service in Boone and Winnebago Counties. **(Mark One)**

	Response	Number	Percent
	Expand the Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) to serve all of Boone and Winnebago Counties and expand the RMTD mission to include passenger rail.	158	9.5%
	Create a new Mass Transit District that would oversee passenger rail in Boone and Winnebago Counties.	103	6.2%
	Expand the Greater Rockford Airport Authority (Chicago-Rockford Airport) to oversee passenger rail in Boone and Winnebago Counties.	270	16.3%
	The members of NICTI should enter into an intergovernmental agreement to oversee passenger rail service in Boone and Winnebago Counties. This would be subject to an appropriation of funding in each agency's annual budget.	49	3.0%
	Boone and Winnebago Counties should join the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). This would require a change in the enabling legislation that created the RTA.	166	10.0%
	Boone and Winnebago Counties should just work on Amtrak inter-city service because separate governance is not required.	117	7.0%
	Other	19	1.1%
	Unsure at this time, I need more information before I can make a choice.	706	42.5%
	No answer	72	4.3%
	Total	1,660	100.0%

13. Your Gender

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	816	49.2%
Female	777	46.8%
No answer	67	4.0%
Total	1,660	100.0%

14. Your Age Group

Age Group	Number	Percent
18 - 39	259	15.6%
40 - 64	964	58.1%
65+	404	24.3%
No answer	33	2.0%
Total	1,660	100.0%

15. Your Residence Zip Code

Zip Code		Number	Percent
61008	Belvidere	156	9.4%
61011	Caledonia	14	0.8%
61012	Capron	10	0.6%
61038	Garden Prairie	4	0.2%
61065	Poplar Grove	34	2.0%
	Boone County	218	13.1%
61016	Cherry Valley	30	1.8%
61024	Durand	8	0.5%
61111	Loves Park	112	6.7%
61115	Machesney Park	105	6.3%
61063	Pecatonica	21	1.3%
61103	Rockford - North End	115	6.9%
61109	Rockford - Bypass	108	6.5%
61108	Rockford - Southeast	154	9.3%
61114	Rockford - Far Northeast	133	8.0%
61101	Rockford - Northwest	67	4.0%
61102	Rockford - Southwest	53	3.2%
61112	Rockford - Cherryvale	0	0.0%
61104	Rockford - East Central	51	3.1%
61107	Rockford - Near Northeast	202	12.2%
61072	Rockton	54	3.3%
61073	Roscoe	101	6.1%
61077	Seward	0	0.0%
61079	Shirland	0	0.0%
61080	South Beloit	32	1.9%
61088	Winnebago	34	2.0%
	Winnebago County	1,380	83.1%
	No answer	62	3.7%
	Total	1,660	100.0%

16. Your Primary Work Location (if employed) **(Mark One)**

Work Location	Number	Percent
City of Rockford	633	38.1%
Other Winnebago County	182	11.0%
City of Belvidere	66	4.0%
Other Boone County	25	1.5%
City of Chicago	40	2.4%
Other Cook County	47	2.8%
DuPage County	15	0.9%
Kane County	14	0.8%
Lake County	7	0.4%
McHenry County	21	1.3%
Ogle County	5	0.3%
Stephenson County	6	0.4%
Wisconsin	29	1.7%
Multiple sites	95	5.7%
Other	19	1.1%
I do not work	394	23.7%
No answer	62	3.7%
Total	1,660	100.0%

17. Number of years you have lived in Boone or Winnebago Counties?

Years	Number	Percent
0 - 2 years	63	3.8%
3 - 5 years	145	8.7%
6 - 9 years	100	6.0%
10 - 14 years	117	7.0%
15 - 24 years	188	11.3%
25+ years	1,031	62.1%
No answer	16	1.0%
Total	1,660	100.0%

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail?

Comments	Number	Percent
Total	534	32.2%

19. Language

Language	Number	Percent
English	1,637	98.6%
Spanish	23	1.4%
Total	1,660	100.0%

Appendix III

VERBATIM COMMENTS

NORTHERN ILLINOIS COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE
SURVEY COMMENTS

5-10. What funding options would you support? (10) Other funding source (please specify):

- Ticket prices to cover operating costs. Why only cover 25%?
- Hotel tax.
- I would support a local tax increase on cigarettes, tobacco products.
- Increase RTA region to include all counties interested in rail service.
- Additional tax on cigarettes and alcohol.
- Government-federal.
- Take some funds from the tollway.
- Federal economic stimulus and private companies raise investors themselves.
- Eliminate extraneous state and local political positions that are overpaid and provide little taxpayer benefit.
- Federal funding.
- Let people pay that use it. No taxes for service.
- I would support this if other counties benefitting from this service were also taxed the same.
- Should support itself.
- Stop all the traveling and consulting costs and issue bonds.
- Lottery, where does that money go? Was supposed to be no extra taxing and school funding.
- Make sure enough is charged to ride so that it covers.
- A combination of 5, 6, and 7 to result in lowering each.
- Lottery.
- Increase new vehicle sales tax.
- Private, we have no more room for deficit.
- Tobacco, alcohol, firearms, and State Lottery.
- Tax alcohol and cigarettes if you need more taxes.
- Tobacco and alcohol.
- Prepaid train pass.
- User cost/ticket price. People who use, would pay.
- Get the money first.
- Ask Obama for stimulus.
- Cigarettes and liquor.
- Tax on liquor.
- Private sector.
- Rail line must be self sustaining.
- Government bailout!

5-10. What funding options would you support? (10) Other funding source: (cont'd.)

- The same way the other train service is being paid for (Harvard to Chicago).
- Private funding.
- Raise the luxury tax on items by half to 1 percent.
- Add user tax on tickets.
- Mayor Daley's slush fund for Summer Games which I hope never comes here.
- Liquor and tobacco.
- Make it self-sufficient. Fares should cover the cost.
- Fares should be equivalent to provide at least 50% of income.
- Fares should cover 75% of the operating costs. We are not getting a good return on our taxes now.
- Tax on cigarettes and alcohol.
- Maybe a combination of a couple of the above.
- User tax, federal funds, cigarette tax increase, lottery proceeds, gambling.
- Stimulus.
- Increase tollway fees to reduce congestion and help rail costs.
- Private investors/corporate, advertising/donations.
- Remove excessive spending from the government, how about paying illegal immigrants medical, that would save millions!
- Commuter tax on anyone working in Rockford, but not paying local property taxes.
- Passenger fares.
- Bond issue with users paying a higher ticket price.
- Olympic funds for Chicago if we win the bid in 2009.
- Use overpriced toll system money!
- Private and corporate sponsorship, regional fund raising, government funding.
- Rider fees should be set to cover operating costs.
- Toll money, what the hell is it used for anyway? Certainly not roads and infrastructure.
- I would support partnership pay for it in full. Stop subsidies.
- Grant options.
- Tobacco and alcohol.
- Federal stimulus funding.
- Private funds and company to own and run it.
- Stimulus.
- Combination of 5, 6, 8, and 9. Spreading the sources over four options would have less of a perceived impact.
- To foster ridership, I would recommend as low a fare as possible.
- User pays.
- City car/vehicle stickers.

5-10. What funding options would you support? (10) Other funding source: (cont'd.)

- Stimulus funding.
- Get it from the feds or toll roads.
- Tobacco, alcohol.
- Have our legislation take cuts in pay.
- Federal stimulus and other subsidies.
- Proposed increases in tolls on the I-90 could help support this implementation while at the same time reducing auto traffic on the toll road.
- Home Rule Authority through luxury/hotel/motel/tourism taxes.
- Charge fees for the service to cover the majority of cost.
- Rider fee. No new taxes!
- Sponsorship from corporations' fund drives.
- Users should fund more than others. Some people would never use this service.
- Toll money and use fees.
- People who make \$200,000 or more should pay more in some form of tax based on their income.
- Divert 20% of the NW tollway money to develop, saving on wear and tear of I-90.
- % tax on leisure, recreation, entertainment, restaurants, and lesser rate on property taxes.
- Get it from Obama's stimulus fund.
- Extractions on new subdivisions.
- Ticket sales. The Rockford O'Hare bus sells tickets. It does not use sales, property, vehicle, or income tax.
- I don't know that the percentages are such an acceptable rate.
- Any lottery money.
- Use a portion of the many tolls that are collected.
- Increase tollway fees, drivers should help subsidize mass transit.
- Pay to use.
- Stations along the route should share the cost. Possibly a fee for each customer getting on the train and getting off, if we are helping people to get to Chicago to shop, then should help pay.
- Issuing bonds to be repaid out of ticket monies.
- Gambling boats or casino money.
- Stimulus package.
- Federal funding.
- The few that ride should be funding program cost.
- Federal funding, Rockford is highly taxed now.
- If Amtrak wants to put railway system here, let them pay for it themselves.
- How about people taking buses to O'Hare instead of using rail (Van Galder).
- Delete some of the Pet Projects from the stimulus and use those funds.

5-10. What funding options would you support? (10) Other funding source: (cont'd.)

- Lotto.
- Tax tobacco, alcohol, cell phones, non-insured drivers, anything to deter accidents.
- Casinos, lottery tickets, highway tolls, alcohol tax.
- Pay cuts for state officials.
- User pays just like the Rockford to O'Hare/Midway buses.
- Let the Chicago area pay for it that's where our state tax money goes!
- Bring some of the billions here that are currently rebuilding other countries.
- Toll money from the toll road.
- Private enterprise, philanthropy, sponsorships, cars as traveling billboards.
- Would support outside fund-raising events.
- Increase in fare.
- Sales 0.25% (food and medicine excluded).
- Any funding that would not impose on low-income families.
- I want this train and would support almost anything.
- Anything to get a train here.
- Would support income tax addition of 0.05%, raising total state tax to 3.05%.
- All funds should come from riders.
- Put extra tax on all new housing and development in the area.
- You have taxed the shit out of us already. You can use the 2% you bastards steal from me everyday.
- Let the commuters pay. They save \$\$ by living out here.
- Should be user/self-supporting.
- Sell bonds.
- 25/75 operating cost split can't be a static ratio, identify economic beneficiaries both public and private in seeking a funding solutions.
- Public bond drive and donations.
- Make it a user based source.
- User fee, similar to airport fees.
- Use a percentage of the tollway monies collected.
- Use Illinois tollway money.
- Using casino money (taxes).
- Use bail out federal money for several years then work on other sources in the future.
- Ticket prices. Don't set them too low. People want rail and will pay for it!
- Only people using it.
- Use the funds from the tollway system. For this in many areas, should have been lifted years ago.
- Passenger fees for tickets to ride rail, adjust state budget in other non effective use of funds.

5-10. What funding options would you support? (10) Other funding source: (cont'd.)

- Contributions or government freeze on politicians' salaries.
- Combo of property and income tax.
- Local business that would profit from it.
- Freeze on politicians salaries.
- The people using this service must pay at least 50% of the operating cost in fares. Then raise the total state tax to 3.125%.
- UPRR makes over \$1B annually, they could help pay for construction. They will make money off this deal or it won't happen.
- A coffee and gift shop at each stop with food and souvenirs.
- The Illinois Lotteries and casinos.
- Let those that use it pay for it.
- Sell bonds to support efforts with 20-25 year payback, privatization would also be an excellent option.
- Federal grant monies from stimulus monies.
- Tobacco, alcohol.
- Use some of the \$6.8B in the IL road fund which has not been used in a number of years.
- Tax on gambling revenue, hotel tax.
- Privatization of project would be more efficient and not result in higher taxes.
- Regional tax on areas or businesses that would benefit from increased traffic.
- Let the people that want to use it, pay for it via fares. I work to the west, don't want to subsidize someone else's commute. No one will subsidize mine.
- Federal funding, then self-sufficient through ticket sales.
- Federal stimulus money.
- Lottery, casino, alcohol and for cigarette taxes, high-end auto/RV/truck sales, tollway tolls.
- Fee on airline tickets out of Rockford. Airport stands to gain greatly if linked to O'Hare.
- Municipal Bonds for construction.
- There must be something else, maybe some of the stimulus package would help.
- Why not take money out of the price of train tickets.
- Obama's \$750 billion is supposed to designate enough \$ to cover this cost.
- Selling "Naming Rights" to certain express trains.
- Amtrak is federal funded.
- TIF – The rest of the City of Rockford has been tiffed – Why not this? Make every entity along the corridor pay the cost also.
- I already pay enough. We are in a recession! And you want more taxes! Make the people who use it pay!
- Tax the trips.
- Any acceptable tax that would bring the commuter or Amtrak trains to Rockford.
- Don't know right now have to think about it.

5-10. What funding options would you support? (10) Other funding source: (cont'd.)

- Hotels.
- Stimulus.
- Obama? He's handing out \$. ☺
- Highway and road (local) improvement/schools.
- Stimulus package. It is paying for everything else! It seems that our governors are pretty good at fund raising and trying to sell senate seats. Let them raise the money through their corrupt families and friends.
- Tobacco/cigarette tax.
- Sell bonds, cut wasteful government spending, tax on alcohol, gambling.
- I would support the state selling its 4 airplanes. I would support in salaries of government job holders that don't do their jobs. I would support less pork and nepotism and more honesty.
- Tax only the people using this service.
- Have the people that use the service pay for the service. If it can't pay for itself, then it is not needed.
- Vehicle registration fee of \$10 max, issue bonds (if credit available).
- Federal funding.
- President Obama's stimulus package money given to City, County, and State!

12. Please choose the governmental organization that should oversee passenger rail service in Boone and Winnebago Counties? (7) Other (please specify):

- Combine RMTD and Chi/Rkfd Airport Authority.
- Anything that would create new local jobs.
- Use Metra, add to the Metra rail system. They already have a group controlling the Metra lines, wouldn't cost any more for the administration of the system.
- Northern Illinois Regional Rail Authority - Boone, Winnebago, Kane, etc., Counties.
- Metra.
- Whichever option that would be the path of least resistance to making this become reality.
- Regional Board, total planning etc., all ground transport - bikes, cars, buses, trains.
- Metra.
- Let municipalities serviced appoint concerned citizens to form a volunteer non paid Board.
- The success of the Airport Board and their willingness to operate and communicate through the newspaper, radio, and television media qualifies them as being the best managerial choice.
- RMAP.
- Join Chicago Metra, have them help us expand their already existing trains.
- Or should be elected with little or no base salary or compensation.

12. Please choose the governmental organization that should oversee passenger rail service in Boone and Winnebago Counties? (7) Other: (cont'd.)

- Go Hi-Tech, Go-Hi-Speed, Get Modern, Go Futuristic- The bullet should have been built years ago on the east coast and the west coast and the midwest. This should be in President Obama's stimulus package! Create jobs with super speed transportation.
- Metra should be given the authority even though this would require a change to Metra's charter and a legislative change. I know Metra is within the RTA.
- The City of Belvidere's Mayor was good as the leader and I think he should be in charge of this.
- Both RMTD and Chicago Rockford Airport should combine and run the Amtrak passenger rails together, then possibly join with RTA later.
- Either join the RTA or expand Airport Authority.
- Metra.
- The way the area economy is it would be hard to choose. But through property taxes sounds best.
- Taxes.
- Increase truck taxes and move more of that traffic to the railroad.
- Unsure, but would hope the governing group would keep it honest and not act with their hands in the "till" for their own benefit. Governing bodies leave us a little dubious about how they handle public funds.
- Experts should decide this.
- It should be done at the private level.
- Although inclined to support #5. I hate to admit it, but I have more faith in RTA than any local governing Board, especially anything falling under purview of Mayor's office.
- No government, they mess up everything.
- We get so mad when we see only one or two people on the big buses and we're paying for this. It is so dumb, so get a much smaller bus.
- Private firm.
- If we want to truly have rail service, this is the only option.
- Private sector.
- Not the government.
- None. I do not like the government organization requirement.
- Between #1 and #3.
- We need fewer taxing bodies, not more! None of the above.
- Don't care, wouldn't use, won't pay for it. There are bigger economic situations where the money can be used!
- Don't want no part of it. Would never use. Cost too much. It's a bad time, the world is in bad shape. Can't afford our other needs, let alone this. Think about it.
- Least cost option.
- I don't trust you or our local, state, or federal government to handle any such job!

12. Please choose the governmental organization that should oversee passenger rail service in Boone and Winnebago Counties? (7) Other: (cont'd.)

- Creating a new organization to oversee system, so new jobs are created.
- If free enterprise would not go into this business because it is not profitable, then the government should not do this.
- No NEW organization needs to be formed. Any funding would be taken up by administrative costs.
- Private organization.
- Don't care, don't want to pay for it.
- Private business.
- Collar counties (McHenry, etc.) are burdened with paying for Cook County improvements that fail to benefit McHenry. This would extend \$ wisely to west.
- We don't need the damn thing, so don't worry about who should oversee it.
- Government should not be in charge of this in any way. If it can't pay for itself, we don't need it.
- Not 1 or 2 for sure! Keeping government small, I opt for 3/4 or 5/6.
- None of the above. The information which you've already provided suggests that, at best, this would never be expected to be self-sustaining, and would require a 75% operating subsidy. You've already convinced me that this is a lousy idea.
- Privatize.
- Would prefer not to have one more organization.
- Would like to see more information on options 3, 4, 5.
- Private entity, private can do it better and cheaper than government.
- If this was profitable in any way, some privately owned corporation would already be doing it. This is going to be expensive to maintain, let alone the cost of starting it up. How about figuring a way to get the cost down on medicines and health care, work in your own backyard maybe.
- I picked the airport because we don't need another authority and their salaries. Airport director is results oriented and has turned around the airport vs RMTD which is stuck in the old ways.
- Why not Metra!
- No government.
- Possibly would lean towards 3 or 4.
- Separate entity or stand alone business responsibly for their own P/L and budget. Not connected to the federal government.
- Cut our government waste and expense.
- Leaning towards #3 or #6.
- Use airport or toll road. All of the above would add to taxes.
- Privatize and get government out of things it doesn't belong in.
- This should be a private for profit company.

12. Please choose the governmental organization that should oversee passenger rail service in Boone and Winnebago Counties? (7) Other: (cont'd.)

- Fitting that Airport Authority oversees, but not sure that is their expertise.
- I oppose creation of any “committee” of any kind to expand government for oversight.
- What about bicycle routes!

16. Your Primary Work Location (if employed) (15) Other:
No Comments

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail?

- I think rail service is a great idea
- Would love to have a commuter rail to Chicago!
- We are retired and do not travel much except short trips by car. We hate to not see this materialize as there are a lot of people in our area 100 miles west of Chicago drive into the city every work day, so they would benefit from this service. Finance it by the fairest way so the people using this service will pay the most for it, as we would not benefit at all from this project.
- Much needed.
- Work in Elgin 5 or 6 days per week. Have wanted better commuting for work and recreation. I feel this would bring more people into Winnebago and Boone Counties. More business and homes would be built. It would be great for the economy.
- A fast bus lane is a better choice.
- Please do it!
- They had city to city back in the 60's and they should have kept it up then.
- We have to get rail going. The roads just are not and will not get big enough or be enough of to handle tomorrows number of cars. Got to have rail!
- Jobs.
- This would help a coworker I have who commutes daily from Elgin. She recently resigned her position here because of the long automobile commute.
- I am thrilled that this is finally being seriously considered. It's long overdue.
- What does the U of I College of Medicine have to do with commuting needs?
- This is not the time for this project. No more taxes! This town and this country have been hit in a hard recession. Some people can barely feed their children. This project should be considered again in 10 years. Thank you.
- If there was a train service from Chicago to Rockford, my gas prices would be cut in half due to train cost every other weekend exercising my visitation with my kids. Gas prices suck! Sitting in traffic for two hours on Friday evening has to be cut in half when you can be only sitting and no crazy drivers out there!
- Would be great for Cub games!

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- Some form of passenger rail connecting Rockford to Chicagoland is DESPERATELY NEEDED!
- They closed the train service in 1970 from Rockford to Chicago because there was not enough traffic to warrant the service. A waste of money for a few people.
- Concentrate on air service, not rail service!
- I believe the people who use it should pay a reasonable rider fee and not make it a “cheap” alternative to promote usage. The homeowners are taxed enough and sales tax in Winnebago County is highest of all communities. I think it’s a good idea but funding is a huge issue.
- I used the IL Central RR monthly and missed not using it.
- No more government subsidized transportation. If there was a true need for this service, we would already have it.
- I feel at this time it is really needed. The bus service is so confusing that this service will be necessity.
- Not needed, I pay enough in taxes and don’t have kids and pay for schools. I don’t want to pay for something I will not use!
- If there were weekend commuter times, I may use the service more often than I originally marked, but it would not be often. I would say it would be somewhere between seldom and often, occasionally.
- I think train service is a good idea. It will bring consumers to Rockford providing that it comes downtown and has very good access to bus, cab connections to Metro Center, museums, etc. Ourselves, we go to Harvard to take train to Chicago. Makes a nice weekend.
- I have a daughter and grandson in the La Crosse, WI area. I have looked into Amtrak, but the current service from Chicago does not come close to Rockford. I would like an easier and more direct route from Rockford to St. Paul/Minneapolis maybe going through La Crosse.
- I would like to move into Chicago job market, yet live in Rockford. This would be a great option.
- I am a realtor. I strongly believe in order to grow economically and bring people here to buy houses and work in Chicago it is very needed.
- Needs to come through the South Main area!
- Belvidere, Boone County, Marengo, Huntley need this service to save on commuting and help with the green environment.
- It would improve conditions for all counties involved.
- I believe fixing on streets and roads around Rockford. That would help everyone on commuting around town. I don’t believe it’s necessary and people that would never use it would be paying for it. So many more things are needed for all could get use of our taxes. People who work out of town (Chicago) is their choice.
- I can understand how a commuter would be of use for your school. I can’t understand how it can be financed at this time. At my age, I would not use it but I am sure it would be a good thing for all of these communities.
- Not enough people would use it to make it profitable regardless of what they say!

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- City/County planners should plan for local rail (e.g. the "L" or subway) in this area. Urban sprawl and irresponsible developers are making smart development and transportation harder. Include a rail line shuttle (i.e., the Blue Line that goes to O'Hare) from the airport to the city.
- There has never been an Amtrak that ran in the black, the Feds always helped them. IL Central ran out of Rockford for years, but they went down the tube. There isn't enough people that would use it. I think it would be a bad investment.
- I believe the plan for a route through Belvidere to downtown Rockford is much better than "southern" route to airport. In order to be used effectively by Rockford residents, train needs to stop in central, accessible locations. Going all the way to airport from 61107 area and other N,W, or E areas would not be very convenient. Also, scheduling needs to be considered – trains need to run at convenient times for business (quite early) stopping (8-10 a.m.) or evening (mid/late afternoon) with compatible returns.
- Commuter rail is an ubiquitous part of most European comminutes. I think it is not only essential for it to be included as a vital part of our regional infrastructure, I find it almost unconscionable that we are being forced to beg to reinstate a service this essential.
- I feel this would strengthen our airport and real estate market as well as influence shopping and entertainment in a positive movement.
- I would be so happy to get into Chicago a lot more often without driving, for mostly quality of life reasons.
- Less taxes. The people that moved to get less taxes should move back if they do not want to drive. I should not be taxed to help them save.
- You should also consider the needs of area college students attending Chicago schools. Our son will be a student beginning in Fall of 2009 at one of the Chicago schools and would find train service to be very helpful.
- We should have a track from the Rockford area that is linked to Metra. Harvard Metra seems closer than Big Timber-Elgin.
- Downtown is never going to grow or be safe so stop wasting our tax dollar down there. Can't stand any tax hike. Don't you understand, no one has any extra money.
- I would like to take train into Chicago for work from Rockford instead of driving 29 miles to Harvard to ride train. This would allow more convenience for me by shorting up my day. Thank you.
- This should have been done a long time ago. Stop paying for consulting fees and use them for the rail service. We have a granddaughter who lives in Chicago, no car and she has to go to Harvard to get a ride by car to Rockford.
We moved to Rockford in 1968, 2 kids in college, one in high school in one year. I would not have moved here if my children had to go to Rockford schools. They have always been stressed and the roads! An absolute shame. Do you really believe IBM did not want to come here because of not having enough colleges in a 100 mile radius? Good roads, (get rid of Rockford Blacktop) and availability to Chicago are essential. I don't hold out much hope for the schools.
- Service should be provided for workers for all three shifts, thus utilization of train better accomplished.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- I would take the train more often if it were in Rockford versus driving to Harvard. I have family I go to visit twice a month at least.
- I think it is a great idea.
- Just do it. Why is this so hard? This is a perfect time to add a gas tax. People are accepting the current prices and now oil is dropping in cost.
- This would be a wonderful regional stimulation.
- I think that it would be an awesome idea? Us Rockford people need to get to Chicago by a different mode of transportation besides cars. Rockford is getting big enough and has been big enough for quite some time. Time for change!
- I think it would be a good thing for people who work around the Chicago area, but I'm afraid of the impact it would create on area shopping. "Keeping things local." Thanks. Our taxes are too high for the area now, we don't need any more!
- Wish RR could connect with service to NW side of Chicago, it did once a long time ago.
- Any project must include lots of PR to promote new service and get public support.
- The commuter should at least stop or be near the Greater Rockford Airport.
- I believe it's a good idea, but safety would be our biggest concern. Thanks.
- Use old IL Central tracks, in better shape.
- Stop spending money we do not have.
- It must connect with the Rockford Airport or it will be a total waste of money.
- More than likely I would only use this service to go to ball games, McCormick Place, and museums.
- This has to be fast, clean, on time. Do it right.
- Cost of using the service must outweigh the costs of driving. As an individual commuter this service may be beneficial. However, will it be more affordable if I use it with my family? Can it also be connected to the airports?
- There would need to be connection service (bus and taxi) at train stations. Runs would need to be of higher frequency 4-6 a.m. and 4-6 p.m.
- It would be nice to see the old station stops and older tracks to facilitate these changes. This may also stimulate areas where these are located especially southwest Rockford area stops.
- I use the Harvard, IL Station to Union Station a few times per year.
- Are you crazy. Lost most of our retirement and don't need any more taxes. Have you shopped for groceries lately? Don't need any more taxes on gasoline!
- Let the ones that use it pay.
- This is needed, but do not look forward to the further influx of people who would move here because of the ease of commuting to work in the suburbs.
- Is it really that important to commute to Chicago?
- The City of Rockford is in great need for a true public transportation system and this is the first step in the right direction! Thanks!
- Any commuter rail should be as much as possible self supporting.
- Service to O'Hare would be good.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- It would seem to be a very important goal to connect the Rockford airport with O'Hare with rapid rail service.
- We have good bus service to Chicago. Don't see the need for additional rail service or any additional taxes or fees for the citizen at this time.
- Rail line must connect to O'Hare to be viable.
- Probably wouldn't need to use it except for occasional outings.
- I think that a rail service would be good for the City of Belvidere and county. But, as for me, I don't think I would use it.
- I fly out of Midway and O'Hare at a minimum twice monthly.
- It should pay for itself. If not, forget it.
- We need commuter rail service in Rockford. Stop taking surveys and get on with it!
- Getting going can't hardly wait.
- Would be interested in using the rail service to go to Cub games, Woodfield, museums, Shedd Aquarium, White Sox, O'Hare.
- I think rail service would be good. Having to go to Elgin or Chicago to board a train is just not good.
- A direct Rockford to downtown via an O'Hare field stop would decrease the amount of carbon emissions by decreasing automobile usage between the greater Rockford area, O'Hare Field, and Chicago.
- We need better transportation to Chicago to see plays, theatre, shopping, restaurants, etc.
- Ignore the critics and establish commuter rail to Chicago. Good luck!
- Saves on gas and pollution. Better for a lot of good reasons. Promote economic stimulation. Needs lots of support.
- I'd like to know why we don't have more bus, airlines, or trains going to other cities in other states more often. I wanted to go to Terra Haute for a memorial service and I had to give it up as no buses go non-stop, no airlines go nearby, and no trains go through anywhere near. Van Galder doesn't even go to Indiana. Greyhound does but has 2 layovers two to nine hours of waiting. Even going to downtown Chicago is almost impossible unless you go to the airport. Driving is okay except it costs \$26 a hour for parking. Would never use the service unless I can get a job in Chicago. I need a job.
- This would give easy ways of finding jobs. Good way to visit family. It would make more jobs in this county. It's a safer way to travel. Also would help to go back and forth to the doctors.
- I strongly believe that commuter rail will attract businesses and more young professionals to the Rockford region. Fewer commuter cars on our ageing roads and bridges would save infrastructure dollars. Commuter rail is a much more pleasant and efficient option when traveling to/from work. I believe we would see fewer roadway accidents and deaths.
- Be moderate when deciding how many stations to build. Restrict construction to these buildings to local contractors only.
- It's a day late and a dollar short.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- Occasional property check/management in Chicago. Some family visitation in Chicago and the area. Occasional health care appointments in Chicago. Grandchildren educational tours in the Chicago area.
- On Q. 4., would use for general travel more if it connected easily to the Blue Line to O'Hare. On Q. 6., .25% sales tax would have to be earmarked exclusively for this purpose. Cast in concrete, no wiggle room.
- This is a much needed service!
- No need for it. Will have a negative impact on this community and cause taxes to increase.
- I just want the rates to be fair for me to use to travel to Chicago on the weekends where I work.
- Timing is not good for this survey; maybe give survey again when gas exceeds \$6 a gallon.
- More times to choose from to and from Chicago.
- Commuter rail will help to develop local economy and bring more services that create more jobs for our people.
- High speed rail to O'Hare and Chicago would be wonderful!
- Let the users of the service pay!
- Would like to work in city, would use commuter rail.
- Commuter rail expansion to Chicago is a no brainer!
- It was very handy when I had rail service in the 60's and 70's. I never drove to Chicago, I would ride the train. Thank you.
- Don't really care. Won't help South Beloit.
- It's a stupid idea to spend that much money on a rail system for a handful of people that would use the system daily. Talk about other things that really need fixing, our roads and bridges should come first.
- This would allow me to work in suburbs again.
- There has been so much talk about this. Let's get it finally going.
- Find a way to make it self-sustaining before spending my money to build it.
- Use the CTA train from Rosemont on occasional sports trips only. No other need of travel to Chicago.
- The railroad system must connect with O'Hare Airport or don't build it.
- Have no need for commuter rail service.
- I am a nursing student at NIU and this would greatly help me with my commute to clinical sites outside of the Rockford area. Also once I graduate, it would allow easier access to the hospitals toward the city to work for.
- Rockford taxes are too high with too little to show for it! Bad schools, bad roads, where does the tax money go? I will never support any initiative that raises my taxes! I'm hurting enough! Get creative, boys. Come up with another means of funding. Period.
- Husband commutes daily to Chicago via auto, would use rail.
- Safety, speed, price are all concerns as I am a senior citizen.
- Don't commute, relocate!

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- I am 65. I was laid off at 60 but would like to work yet. But I would not like to drive the way commuters drive to Chicago. So given the economy, who knows that I might have to commute any day.
- Only occasional.
- Any possibility of Rockford to Madison or Milwaukee, WI? Eventually?
- Get it done ASAP. As far as organizing and management, use Metra as your model. Don't go reinventing the wheel.
- I would add temp services, need to try in public places. They need to follow ADA laws.
- 6-10 trips yearly to Chicago area for leisure, business, or airport travel. May use rail once or twice for these purposes.
- I would like to see this expand North - Beloit, Roscoe, Rockton. My usual trips into Chicago are from South Beloit using bus. If this came north, it could reduce traffic congestion between Beloit and Rockford/Belvidere.
- I think Rockford, Boone County would benefit from the commuter service, however, taxing the whole county for the benefit of Rockford and Boone County isn't a fair way to fund the commuter service.
- This would be a huge advantage for this area. An increase in sales tax revenue from people shopping here from other cities.
- It's time to stop throwing money away on studies and get busy building something. Some of that stimulus money could be directed this way.
- I think this commuter rail system will help the housing market in Boone and Winnebago Counties. Close transportation will almost double property values. Hope to see this soon. Good Luck.
- I enjoy traveling to Chicago to visit friends and it would be a quick way to get there.
- Just get it done!
- I'm sick of paying for anything with taxes.
- I am in sales but travel to Chicago frequently. I would love to have rail access. I would travel for entertainment and shopping often as well.
- I feel that due to the state of the economy by having a rail service less cars and gasoline would be used. There would be less emissions into the air and people after some time would use rail service as it was done back in the 30's and 40's. We have to get back to basics.
- I would only use rail service if station(s) is located in Rockford. I wouldn't use the service if I had to drive 20-30 minutes outside Rockford to the station, because I might as well just drive to Elgin.
- Enough stop lights, you guys are over the limit.
- Commuter rail is much needed. We are behind the times. Rockford needs a rail service. It would boost the economy.
- Not happy about a 75% operating cost per year.
- We don't need a commuter rail money pit. Stay out of my pocket?
- I strongly support a passenger rail service. Thank you for a more eco-friendly way of traveling!

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- Please, just a train running from and to Rockford and Chicago as soon as possible. Thank you.
- It's an idea whose time came 20 years ago. Let's do it!
- Rail service is, I believe, very important to environmental concerns as well as public safety (fewer cars) and access to rest of the nation.
- I would not travel alone. Limited income.
- Commuter rail service could provide more opportunities to access higher education for myself and my family.
- It would be a wonderful convenience.
- Don't need a rail system or more taxes. So, let it go!
- If private money is used, build it, if not, it means there is no profit in the project. Kill it.
- Commuter rail would connect Rockford to Chicago in ways that will cause Rockford to grow and thrive. Just look at traffic between each city. If Harvard has rail, why not Rockford? It's time for growth in Rockford, a city as large as ours should have options.
- Not having to use the tollway!
- Make services reasonable for all personal/economic statuses.
- Would be a good way to get to Chicago to attend plays and go to museums.
- I believe this would help give Rockford the much needed confidence boost it needs. Put us back on the map!
- Train service to Chicago would allow me to seek employment in Chicago. I would also take the train to events in Chicago instead of driving.
- This initiative will open the door to more opportunity in the Chicagoland area.
- Long overdue need. Do what it takes to make it happen!
- Currently employed in Winnebago County. I would highly consider a job in the other counties if/when rail service becomes available.
- Please hurry!
- Would not support, we have one of the highest property tax rates in the state. The state just raised this a few years ago.
- Need commuter rail service from Belvidere to Union Station in Chicago. Use every Monday-Friday for work.
- Not everyone works downtown (Chicago)!
- Rail services is a wonderful service to use.
- Let's get with the times of the future. Great idea!
- From where I live, I always use Harvard for my rail needs.
- You can do anything you want to as long as I do not have to pay for it in the form of tax increase. User pays.
- It is much needed in the area.
- Thank you for putting this survey together, I know it was a lot of hard work and I appreciate all of your efforts. The rail service is definitely needed! Thank you.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- I do not need to commute downtown. A train to O'Hare would be better. From there you can catch the CTA on the Blue Line to get downtown if needed. I would not want this train to only go into downtown Chicago.
- I have two adult children that live in/near Chicago. This would be a great way to visit more often and I wouldn't have to fight traffic or pay for parking.
- This is a hugely important initiative that would improve the region overnight. We should do whatever it takes to make this happen.
- Restore all rail commuter services. Abandonment of same was stupid. Restoration of same would reduce oil consumption, pollution, etc. Of course, I'm old and what the hell do I know.
- I enjoyed Amtrak in the 70's, going to Chicago and was saddened when we lost the service and to see how the RR Station has been left to deteriorate. I would love to see service back but gas, etc. is already too expensive.
- I think it would provide greater job opportunities for area residents by giving easy commuter access to the Chicago area.
- Need something going west of greater Rockford area, perhaps Freeport.
- The bus rides to O'Hare are adequate. All the \$ spent on a commuter train service could widen I-90, so concentrate on that.
- It needs to support itself.
- Rail service to O'Hare Airport where I have to go to fly out to the job sites in other states.
- Should go on weekends with later hours for those who go to shows, theatre, etc.
- This would be a great boost for Rockford and surrounding areas.
- If the Olympics ever comes to Chicago, this would be fantastic for our area. Belvidere and Rockford would greatly benefit - hotels, shopping, and housing for people that commute into Chicago.
- Please do not consider adding to our tax basis. We have had water, insurance, sales tax, and property tax increases! Do not add to our burden during this economic crisis.
- This needs to be completed by 2010.
- I would definitely oppose this commuter rail being governed by the CTA or Mayor Daley of Chicago. If the rail system does get built, it is essential that we, the counties, have the control over funding options.
- Passenger rail is great, but for people to get there, 251 needs to be widened. It's already packed and a mess in spots.
- I hope studies and surveys are soon done and "action" begins soon. This has been talked about a very long time!
- I "commute" into Chicago one or two times per week to assist elderly relatives who are dependent for needs such as banking, shopping, doctoring, etc. Often times I travel alone, with no possibility of car pooling, such a service could prove financially beneficial to my needs in this regard. With the cost of gas, car maintenance, tolls, and wear and tear, perhaps affordable rail transportation would be a good alternative.
- We'd use it very often for shopping, theatre, and restaurants. Also to visit our children.
- A stop in Boone County, please.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- Don't really need one.
- I believe this is the direction we must go to out our dependency on oil.
- The last thing we need is another taxpayer funded service.
- What about using the Canadian National Route (old Illinois Central), it seems in better shape.
- Commuter rail service to Chicago through the Metra rail line would be awesome. I would definitely use it!
- All residents in our household work 5-20 minutes from residence.
- I have a degree that would allow me to make better money in and around the Chicago suburbs. With the railway system, it would be more cost effective for me to use it to commute to employment, yet, still allow me to reside in Winnebago County.
- Rockford train terminal should be at area of Rockford Airport, close as possible.
- Not enough transportation needs for those without transportation.
- I connect with Metra via regional sites and have for several decades. This continues to be an issue of politics and not for the citizens of northern Illinois.
- Since Rockford and surrounding areas have low job opportunities, there is much more potential for people to commute to find work and save money on gas and wear and tear on cars. Also, I like the idea of taking the train into Chicago to visit sites I normally wouldn't do because of the drive. I am in total support of a rail service to Chicago and suburbs. Not sure an inter-city rail service is necessary since Rockford has a busing system in place.
- I think at this time it is absolutely STUPID to think about rail service when the money can be used toward other important things such as our roads and bridges. Plus taxing the people for a service that very few would use is only causing more economic stress to lower income people. You might see people leaving Rockford and not on the rail system!
- Right now the only train service on a schedule to other parts of this state or city is 35 miles away in Harvard, IL. to Chicago, etc. Plus you have to arrange to ride there and back or find parking.
- We don't need any more tax-based items.
- We always have to drive to Harvard to catch the train. A local one we would for sure use to travel to Chicago for leisure time, shopping, and etc. My husband agrees with all I marked, he's 66 now.
- Right now I work part-time in Belvidere and also part-time in Rockford. Depending on the routes available, I would visit my family more often and possibly go to Chicago. I could also be a borrowed employee for other stores that my employer's company has. I feel I would use the service as I grow older and wouldn't want to drive as often.
- We are way behind Europe. Something needs to happen in mid-range mass transit. Rails are cheaper to maintain than roads. We cannot wait!
- Driving may still be the more convenient option into suburban destinations, but parking makes a commuter train to Chicago very appealing.
- Essential, long overdue, must link airport, airport services.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- This topic has been in the discussion stage for far too long. Rail service should have been established years ago. If Harvard can make this work, why can't we. Once again, Rockford is 20 years behind the times. I shouldn't have to travel to Elgin or the Cumberland Station each time I want to travel to Chicago.
- Travel time = < Van Galder Bus to Loop-Union Station. Ticket cost - family oriented, Cub games/sports/shopping. No transfers required from Rockford.
- The NICTD has "studied" this concept for "several years" and this is being presented a supposedly viable consideration? I'm all for supporting economic development, both for the local and the state and nation in general, but this appears to have all the trappings of a giant money pit. My suggestion would be to allocate effort to identifying potentially legitimate projects which have the potential for actual success.
- This is long overdue to grow the Winnebago County area economy.
- Rockford and the surrounding areas is very mass transit averse. The setup is one that does not lend itself to walking or mass transit use for shopping and work. It is very spread out and our bus system is very limited. I didn't know if the community would use it enough on a weekday basis to justify building it. I would use it to go into Chicago for events but that is about it.
- If rail service were installed, I would be able to keep my job here and commute for work rather than having to find a new job when I have to move next year. Also, I need to visit family regularly in the Chicago area. Weekend rail service would be a necessity, and would probably increase the number of riders. Most leisure travel occurs weekends. Also, the rail service would promote the regrowth of industry and business in the area. Our city needs any help we can get.
- This service is long overdue and should have been done a long time ago. God Bless.
- I think bringing the train to this area would be great, it would better enable outside money to come to this area.
- Most commuter rails are safe, the City of Rockford need rail service to increase inter-commercial must need it for many years. I am retired from Chicago transit and RTA company, the need is paramount for this city, don't let it go by. Thank you.
- Right now when I do go to Chicago, I usually drive from Rockford to Harvard, get on the Metra, so much better than driving in there. There are quite a few stops on the way but I still prefer to take the Metra.
- We use the Elburn line and Harvard line all the time and enjoy the \$5.00 roundtrip per person on the weekends. Our daughter attends college in River Forest/Oak Park, Illinois.
- Would there be a close drop-off point to the Chicago lakefront, Navy Pier?
- This seems like a good idea, but I don't want another layer of government or a taxing body that just soaks up money like those in Chicago. Local control is better.
- Would create jobs. Other cities may come into Rockford to use our facilities (Metro Centre, Coronado, Anderson Gardens, etc.). Bring life to area.
- Good idea.
- Would consider a job in Chicagoland area if railway was reasonable. I use to live in Chicago area for 29 years.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- I commute to Chicago 4-5 times a year from Woodstock via Metra. It is only 30 minutes from my home. Belvidere is closer to home, but the trip to Chicago would be longer. I'm concerned that the commuter rail will simulate more development of prime farmland and add to sprawl.
- Stop dang studies and implement this plan. If rail runs with profit to Harvard/Woodstock, it will to Rockford. If this program were a patient, the patient would have died. Study is done. Start doing! End the strike of "Almost" for Rockford, is this strong enough?
- We are being taxed to death! No more taxes of any kind! We drive a car? No rail service needed at our (the taxpayers) expense.
- If this were to happen, the fare to ride this train would have to be reasonable enough so it would attract riders from all sectors of the county and not just the wealthy.
- I'm tired of all the talk for several years. Let's get it done.
- I'm very excited about the train coming here! My son goes to college in Chicago, maybe he'd come home more often if it were easier to get there! Thanks.
- Driving is not an option. Need service to downtown Chicago and O'Hare.
- I would have many more career opportunities if I could get on a high speed train and go to Chicago. I am a nursing professor and I would love to teach at UIC, Loyola, Rush, etc. Also, all five of my grandchildren are in Chicago. Do it please.
- If we got rail service in Belvidere, I would use it to go to Chicago's Union Station as I had for 28 years living in Highland Park (Ravinia). I would need Belvidere to host a station. I loved riding the train. My husband and I would go into the City of Chicago more often. Thank you for asking our opinions.
- Weekends should go to Galena, daily as well.
- The rail service needs to stop at or near CherryVale Mall, Greater Rockford Airport, and probably near the Wal-Mart in Belvidere.
- Build it.
- What does a commuter rail system have to do with health care? Why is UIC medicine involved with this survey? Will I be getting a health care survey from Amtrak?
- It is my belief that in order for Metra or Amtrak to serve this area, they would need a commitment from the citizens of Winnebago and Boone Counties. A commitment that in fact the people of Winnebago and Boone Counties will use the service of Metra or Amtrak on a regular basis. Otherwise, the railroad companies are just wasting time and resources. An ideal location for a station in Rockford would be on Mulford Road between the Canadian National and Union Pacific tracks. There is a large vacant lot there for a station and small rail yard for Metra. Or put to use the vacant ex-Illinois Central Station in downtown Rockford.
- Regarding funding Q. 8., Rockford is already 20¢ more per gallon than anyplace we have traveled to in the past 2 years.
- Commuter rail would increase job opportunities in so far as working in Chicago. People from the Chicagoland might consider using Rockford's Airport more with rail service. Young people who go away to college would find rail service a plus to the quality of life in the Rockford area. Thank you.
- Great idea, but not a necessity.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- 1) Start teaching train safety in the schools now!
- 2) Train vs human = death, same with car crossing marked with gates, more signage.
- 3) Interconnect work, school, entertainment, social events into marketing.
- 4) One train engine can pull/push more tonnage than trucks, clean air, less traffic, less noise.
- 5) I grew up in Bartlett, IL we have trains there. I miss not being able to catch a train to go to Chicago for the day.
Good luck. Gods speed.
- Rail service went out in the 1980's. Amtrack don't want to service this area. Today, some fly, some take the bus, others drive. If liberals go back to high fuel cost then walk. Trains are like the horse, a thing of the past.
- I would like to be able to take a train from Rockford to connections going outside the state.
- Remember the mayor of Chicago gives the people who get out of jail a one way ticket to Rockford by bus. When they closed the Federal Housing in Chicago, the mayor of Chicago made a deal and we got bus loads of families (moms and children) to go to our housing. Thus, we have gangs, drugs, families without fathers, and schools full of uneducated learners. Think how fast we can bus everyone we don't want in Chicago out to Rockford with a TRAIN!
- Train time would be very important issue.
- Best way there is to boost the Rockford Airport. People from the Chicago west will use train to fly out of Rockford.
- Please, we are begging for a fast train to Chicago!
- I'm retried now and it would be nice to pick up a train in Rockford to go see Cubs, Bears, eat, and etc.
- If you go with rail the cost would never stop.
- My family would be more inclined to go to Chicago for entertainment and shopping if there were a way to avoid the congestion of driving and parking.
- Needs to have low travel time to downtown Chicago.
- Make sure to provide escort services for those of us who are disabled! From station to station until departure site.
- It would be great personally to travel back and forth to Chicago. Also, make Rockford more accessible to Chicago people or others to come here.
- No new property or sales taxes! Should be paid for by the users. This will turn into a long-term subsidy by non using taxpayers. This is not needed.
- I would like to see stations located at the airport, downtown Rockford, and east & west side. I think commuter rail would bring development to these areas. I wish the best of success to bringing rail to Rockford.
- I am currently in college for an ADN degree, once I achieve this, I plan to commute to Chicago for employment. I totally support passenger rail service for my choice of vehicle to make it to Chicago for work. I hope and pray that it makes it to Rockford - Chicago by Spring 2011. Thank you.
- Very bad timing. Not needed.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- Rockford's bus service is limited. There is no national holiday service. Parking problems and traffic problems could be minimized if there was rail service here for those commuting here from outlying areas for events. It would be a great shame if there was no safe area for passengers to wait, use bathroom facilities, have access to safe area pay phones, and could commute to the Metro Center via shuttle buses, etc. There are no 5 Star hotels downtown and taxi service can be a joke, in that you could wait 45 minutes to 1½ hours and suggest a new focus on transportation needs from the train station to passenger destinations.
- It's about time. We really need a commuting service which would also attract other nearby cities like Chicago to come to Rockford with a train service that will help them commute to work. Overall, it would bring more business for the Rockford Airport and many more attractions. Hopefully, this project come through since we are in need of a commuting train service.
- Larger job market in Chicago area would be more available with an affordable commuter service.
- Regional train service must be established with a mission statement that would read something like this: the NAME exists to ensure that the most effective transportation system is established and administered to satisfy the riding public expectation.
- We need to stop studying this and just do it. Stop wasting taxpayer money on multiple studies which arrive at the same conclusion. This is a no brainer. We need to get moving on this.
- Be nice for shopping entertainment but most important to O'Hare Field.
- Over 800 billion dollars has been, in my opinion and many others, pushed through both houses that in no way is going to help our economy. The last thing our local government needs to do is raise any tax, as the federal government will surely do so to pay for its bogus programs of wasting money. Once again, a program where few will actually use but everyone will pay for, not to mention that crime will surely rise in our areas, DUH! Don't you people realize you lie in one of the most taxed states in the country? Is there not any rational thinking people left that care enough about their future, and of those that follow, to stop this unfair movement to socialism. I work hard for my money, I'm sure most people do. Let's try to keep some of it. These programs don't work, look at the history and you will see. I would support a revolution on the policy's our elected officials and local and federal have undertaken in the last 40 years. No holds barred!
- I am retired and so is my wife. We simply wouldn't use a rail service very often.
- High speed rail, parking area for commuters express.
- No more costs to taxpayers!
- Our grandson goes to school at UIC so instead of traveling to Harvard this would be great.
- Great idea, long overdue. I hope plans also will link Rockford to O'Hare and separately a decent hotel with overnight stay and parking and shuttle comes to Rockford. Would help people from Iowa taking early Rockford flights who I sat next to.
- Q. 11., taxing options, in today's economy, we can't stretch the dollar any further.
- I would support rail service Rockford to Dubuque.
- Thank you for asking our opinions.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- Would be able to visit friends in Elgin much more. Also be able to connect to Amtrack to travel more. Will offer much more opportunity to all Rockford residents for work and leisure. We had this at one time. Think it's terrible that a few that probably never use something like this have the power to take a needed thing away from so many. Could also travel to Chicago to enjoy things offered there much more.
- I believe it is imperative to the development and growth of Rockford and surrounding communities to connect to the rail.
- I would use the rail service if it went from Rockford to the rail station in downtown Chicago. The map shows the route only going as far as Elgin. Would I need to change trains or hop on a bus for the rest of the trip to downtown Chicago? If that would be the case, I'll take the train from Harvard, IL to downtown Chicago. Also, if the rail service becomes a reality, the terminal should be between Rockford and Belvidere, not South Rockford.
- I travel frequently for work and leisure and would use the new commuter rail service daily. Also, I have a background in urban planning and real estate development and feel confident that adding commuter rail service would be the most important economic development choice we as a community could make at this time.
- I work in the southern suburbs so a train to Elgin does not help me. Cross suburb trains are a good idea, as currently, the only trains lead to Chicago. In order to use a rail service for work, which I would if available, a train would have to connect to the Aurora/Lisle area. I do, however, believe a railway in the northwest suburbs is a good idea and important to the Boone County area.
- Since I do not like to drive a car or fly in airplanes when I go on vacation, a train would be perfect to visit other states. I could use the rail to visit Chicago for the theater or to shop, see Springfield as well.
- To pay for this there should be enough money from state taxes. Manage your money better. Cut overhead like the rest of us have to do. Look, this is a great idea, but don't break the bank. Pay the people that actually do the work and not the corporate types who just point their fingers. Of course this is a state function, and based on that, you have your work cut out for you.
- Having a commuter rail service between Rockford and Chicago would be great for our area. It would help to connect us to reaching doctor's office in Chicago when we have appointments there and no way to get there to it. I am all for commuter rail service, we just need to find a way of funding it without having to tax the taxpayers for it, until the economy improves.
- I am a nurse and see the potential for families to visit patients in Chicago hospitals. I also have a son living downtown, and though we drive it easily, parking is not easy or cheap. I'd take the train.
- I drive a car and all you want to do is make it harder for me to pay my bills and raise my taxes on everything but my pay. Rockford is trying to run out the poor and middle income people!
- Needed this years ago when I had to commute 64 miles for 8 years. Now am self-employed so not a priority for me.
- I think this issue is something that needs to get done some time in the near future. It can provide a new tool or asset to the area, and its potential to succeed in this area is very good.
- Keep the roads repaired.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- More interested in weekend leisure travel to Chicago.
- I think it would be a real good thing.
- Cut taxes! Cut taxes! Cut taxes!
- It would help alleviate congestion on I-90! Allow seniors to travel into the city.
- Are we not taxed enough? This service will be used by only a select few. This will ultimately cost my family more in taxes. I vote no for rail service.
- I've attended meetings on this subject in the past. Those of us in northern Winnebago County already have access to Metra via Harvard and I wouldn't anticipate changing to Rockford.
- I use to work with United Airlines and would have used mass transit if it was available. I still have call back rights to the airline. I would use this system if it is available.
- Good for community but make sure the cost is worth the trouble.
- There are far more pressing regional issues which need to be addressed before a commuter rail service! We are being taxed to death already.
- Don't use my tax dollars. I don't want to provide my tax money so those that don't pay taxes can ride for free!
Another venture by government either local or federal would only be a losing proposition! We don't need more taxpayer money wasted. Look what has happened to the Chicago Trans. Auth.
- I think it's a good idea but with the economy the way it is, we need to address bigger issues. Maybe somewhere down the line, I would support the idea.
- I feel a railroad connecting us to Chicago would give Rockford an economic boost.
- Don't do it half assed. Make it fast and comfortable. Stops should be 20-25 miles apart. Maybe even make it monorail. Most important - user pays.
- This survey seemed to emphasize commuting from Belv/Rockford to downtown Chicago. It ignores those who commute to west or northwest Chicago suburbs for work. To get the most use out of the proposed rail service there would need to be coordination with Pace Bus service from Metra stations to office parks and complexes. Also, getting to O'Hare via rail and Pace should be evaluated.
- I commute to O'Hare Airport everyday. Would like to see a rail system to airport (high speed). The Amtrak station in Milwaukee, WI is very nice. Seen that station, very well lit. Felt very safe there. No undesirables hanging around or homeless people.
- Commuter rail to Chicago should be self-supporting with no taxes on area communities. Let the commuters pay for it. It would be mostly for their use anyway.
- All the Winnebago/Boone County would benefit from train service to Chicago area. It would help congestion on I-90 and possibly increase economy. We need this.
- My wife and/or I travel to Chicago and/or suburbs upwards of 30 times a year. Practically all of these trips would be faster, more comfortable, and less costly by train than by private auto. Count on us for regular patronage.
- The survey lacks two important info elements. I have assumed a RT fare of \$30-\$35 and efficient O'Hare to RFD air terminal connections.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- Commuter rail stations can be funded through parking lot fees. Structure would also show economic development taken place around rail stations. NIU must be linked in order for this to be a true service to Rockford-Chicago.
- I have a problem understanding why, when there was rail service available in this area, the previous rail service was abandoned. All the money spent years ago purchasing land, building a rail line, were somebody, somewhere, somehow, screwed up big time. Now, you're starting all over again - dah!
- I feel we need a balance between improving commuter transportation and better development and planning locally to attract a more diverse job market and new companies. In this economy, it is not wise to spend so much on upgrades to our rail system or increase everyone's taxes, etc., to pay for operating costs. While there will always be those who choose to commute to Chicago, there are many, many more who would welcome better and more diverse local opportunities.
- I have lived in and used public and rail transportation in DuPage, Kane, and McHenry Counties for 40 years. My dad and friends commuted every day from the suburbs to downtown Chicago. My husband and I currently drive to Elgin to catch the train to downtown several times a year. What we really need in this country is high speed rail, however, if the train was more convenient, we would use it more.
- Instead of upgrading old rail lines, the state or counties should move towards high speed rail along the interstate. If I could take a train that would get me to Chicago in 20 min on a con/tram in 90 min, of course, I would always take the high speed train. Instead of spending millions on this, let's do it right the first time.
- Only interest is for leisure weekend trips but when it comes to funding, keep in mind we already pay outrageous property taxes. We have seen a couple of sales tax increases over the last few years in addition to a ridiculous increase of electric rates and gouged on gasoline prices that already are double taxed in Illinois. Tired of having everyone's hands in my pockets.
- Great idea that would also bring jobs to the area.
- I feel it would ease traffic, ease congestion, less pollution.
- Having a hard enough time paying what I already have. Don't need or want any tax increase at all!
- Rail link from Rockford Airport to O'Hare Airport makes more sense.
- This is 20 years too late. The local political and civic leaders are myopic and not especially capable - their involvement in running the rail should be limited.
- We should take better care of our inner city roads and highways before anything else. Thanks.
- If cities like Harvard and Crystal Lake have Metra rail, Rockford should have Metra. If Rockford should get Metra rail that should increase home sales in Boone and Winnebago County. People with good income will be looking to locate in the area. I have been using the Metra rail since 1984, from Elgin to Chicago area.
- We are not terribly happy in Rockford. This may help us to stay here happily.
- My use would be for personal reasons.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- Us Chicago working people out here in Boone County and McHenry County are in great need of this service. I work for Union Pacific Railroad in Chicago and drive 150 miles a day! It's terrible, especially when we have existing RR tracks (Belvidere Line) currently in place! It goes to west Chicago, then we could take another train from there to Chicago on the Geneva Line (west line). Help us.
- This will help this community open up and expand into part of the megalopolis it should be. It will most definitely help our property values increase. GO TRAIN. I will work in Chicago if a train is available.
- My husband works in downtown Chicago and I work in Deerfield. We own a home in Rockford but because of the cost of gas, we have an apartment in Chicago (in the end it's worth it). If there was a train in Rockford we wouldn't need a place in the city, we would save so much money. This would not only be great for us but it would be good for Winnebago and Boone Counties. It's a great way to get Rockford connected to the rest of Chicagoland. We desperately need this.
- I gave up an excellent opportunity to work in Chicago because I was unable to manage my need for transportation with job requirements. My potential employer negotiated very generously with me, but I was unable to make it work. Rail service would have allowed me to double my income.
- We already have rail service from Harvard to Ogilvie. What we do not have is a rail line extending across the outermost portions of the existing Metra system. As a result, to go from Harvard to Lake Forest, one would have to go all the way to Clyborne or Ogilvie, transfer, then go all the way back North to Lake Forest. Totally not acceptable.
- Great opportunity by extending rail service to Winnebago and Boone Counties to bring population to downtown Chicago without vehicular traffic adding congestion issues. Believe in corridor logic between Chicago, Rockford, Madison. It is filling in with development and populace to utilize rail service. Thank you.
- Commuter rail service would dramatically increase growth and economic health in the area. It would particularly benefit middle and lower income workers by providing access to Chicagoland jobs at Rock River Valley housing costs. Furthermore, mass transit of any kind, including rail, helps to preserve the environment.
- You need to look at your math, 48 weeks x 5 days x 12 trips = 2,880 run/yr. $\$10,000,000 \div 2,880 = \$3,472.00 \div 100$ riders (if you're real lucky). You would need to charge \$35 each way or \$70 for around trip = \$16,800 yr even at \$10 a gallon you could buy a car and fuel cheaper. Riders must pay the full burden or it will never work!
- It should be connected to the Rockford Airport to make it the most successful option. Any station should be on the south or east only. Putting it at the old station by Tinker Cottage will destroy use.
- I go to Rockford 2-3 times a day for appointments and I live in Belvidere. It's very hard to deal with when I have no vehicle. It would be very helpful to the community and I'm very glad someone is thinking of Boone County.
- I work for Union Pacific RR and would like to see more use of rail in this area, both freight and commuter.
- I think this would be great for our area, but am a senior and would seldom use it.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- I think that we should work on the present problems of the economy for now. Fix what's wrong, then look at new projects.
- This would make Rockford a viable city for anyone especially those living in the Chicago suburbs.
- Not out of my pocket. Only the people using it should pay. Sometimes bringing more people here isn't the solution. This was such a nicer place to live before all the building, all the traffic. I grew up in the suburbs. Look at the mess out there now. Efforts should be made to keep the hometown feel/status. I would pay more taxes for that. If people want to work in Chicago, then they should live there, not come out here and build great big houses and commute. Economic development doesn't help everyone, no matter what you say. The rich get richer.
- I would like to see rail services to other cities for job opportunities.
- I would use the train to go to Union Station in Chicago and also to shop and sightsee and go to restaurants.
- The area roads are much more needed. Upgrading of Winnebago/Boone roads actually most of Illinois roads should be the top priority.
- Although I currently would use the train occasionally, it would expand the job market if it were to become available.
- Would save me \$ on gas. Would go to Chicago entertainment more often (Cubs, Bears, shows).
- I've always supported commuter rail and intercity rail. It's the most economic and energy efficient way to travel. If it comes to pass, I will use it whenever I can. I wish the service would have been instituted earlier. When using Amtrak service in the 1970's, I rode it frequently to Chicago. It would be nice to have both commute rail and Amtrak on the same rail line. It would be a boost to the community.
- Why is this poll conducted by the U of I College of Medicine? Of all organizations this seems a little odd! Am I wrong?
- My employment requires travel by car, but I support the rail service initiative as a way to improve Winnebago County appeal and tax base.
- Need a connection to O'Hare Airport as I work out of my home and then travel out-of-state 4 days/week.
- These answers were based on the thought that the train would not stop at ORD Airport. I would not take train, then transfer to ORD Airport.
- We go to O'Hare weekly, we love the idea of rail from Rockford, but with no connection to O'Hare it won't help us much.
- I've always thought we needed rail service from Rockford to Chicago. Right now we drive to Harvard and ride the Metra train into Chicago. How much nicer and convenient it would be if we had service. I think it would become very popular!
- We have most of our extended family living in DuPage and Cook Counties and have often wished for train service from Rockford! It would be a blessing.
- An easier route to Chicago from our area would be nice.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- Get this done! It is overdue and needed. I moved here from SF in 1996 and have watched this area/community do a lot of nothing for many years, the airport and Machesney Park are exceptions. Let's move forward for a change!
- I would love for the downtown south Rockford viaduct (which is abandoned) to be utilized to send people to Chicago. Right now it is an eyesore and I'd love to see it utilized.
- If the CTA came to Rockford and Boone County, so much easier to go to culinary school in Chicago. I wouldn't have to drive to the Cumberland Station 1 hour and 10 minutes to drive to. I could drive 20 minutes to Rockford and get the train that way.
- My husband and I would probably never use rail service to Chicago or beyond, but are not sure that it would not be a good thing for our area. We would be supportive of it if there are a lot of people that would be helped by it.
- I would like to see rail service to Rockford Airport like the CTA at O'Hare. Also, a good idea is to get rail service to Madison and Milwaukee. Also, we need at least 2 stations in Rockford with good free parking.
- Loop should include O'Hare and Chicago/Rockford Regional Airport for growth of commerce and public transportation.
- Didn't use any before now. Don't need one now. Had one once before, never used it then. Rode the one in Harvard once. I'll use my own car. No more rising taxes for seniors please.
- Needs to go to Iowa, also.
- I would use occasionally and would believe in pay as you go.
- Saving energy, less cars on the road is extremely important.
- I would be most interested in evening and weekend service for easy access to the attractions of Chicago.
- Cut government waste and tax!
- Taxes in Winnebago County are far too high now, especially property taxes, whether the economic times are good or not good. People who would use this service should be the ones who ultimately pay for it.
- Older citizens really do not like driving into Chicago or even traveling I-90 any more. Commuter service would be a wonderful way to travel on towards, into, and beyond the Chicago area.
- Even though I work in Winnebago County, I have many friends who commute to Chicago daily who cannot wait to have some sort of rail service.
- Operating costs will always need funding = not self sufficient service. Security issues. Drug trafficking issues.
- I believe a rail system would help with green house gases and reduce traffic on I-90.
- Train service would make it easier for people who do not have cars to visit family and friends. Example, my family lives in McHenry and no car makes it difficult to see them.
- I think it would draw more people to live and spend money in Boone and Winnebago Counties. They could live here and commute to work in Elgin or Chicago.
- It would be a great idea. I would use it to get to O'Hare when traveling. I would also use it to go to places such as museums, zoos, and other attractions.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- It would be nice to see Chicago-Rockford I-90 E/W bound interstate from Elgin to Rockford become a six lane highway before this commuter rail is considered. I work on various state, federal, city, and county roads throughout the Chicago metro area and notice by the day traffic is getting worse because of the number of new residents moving west of the City of Chicago.
- We need train from Rockford to Chicago. It's my dreams and thank everybody for this idea, and God Bless you all.
- My favorite way to travel is rail, which I have done cross country a number of times. I would definitely use the connection on a regular basis especially since I'm near retirement and am unable to navigate the highway system into the Chicago area. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this process.
- Easy to get to the station and safe. Not on the west/south side of Rockford, too much crime!
- We feel developing rail system in Rockford is most crucial to the future growth and development of Winnebago and surrounding Counties. In addition, with house prices lower in our counties than Chicago area housing prices, more families would flock to our areas to live because of the ability to commute more efficiently to Chicago, thus bringing in more tax revenue which could also be used to assist the cost of operating the rail system.
- Cheaper transportation but not to Chicago.
- I sometimes take my grandchildren into Chicago as a special treat and have driven into Crystal Lake to get the train.
- This service would expand job opportunities for residents of Boone and Winnebago Counties. I used to work in Wooddale, IL and had to quit a very profitable job due to transportation costs. I couldn't afford to commute daily with the rising cost of gasoline and maintenance to my vehicle. I would definitely use this service to commute daily to Chicago and surrounding area for greater employment opportunities.
- We drove to get rail travel to Chicago and Arlington Race Track closest city.
- No daily dependable public transportation (bus service) from South Beloit, Rockton, Roscoe to Machesney Park, Loves Park, and Rockford.
Regarding funding options, no other resource just tax us to death!
- Have you driven I-90 eastbound lately? I have everyday for 10 years. It has become an early morning horror. The train is so civilized and stress free. Please bring it to Boone County!
- Location to access the train would be a critical issue and what it would mean to its immediate area surrounding it.
- We have more pressing issues in Rockford/Winnebago County to worry about. Also, the lack of coverage by the fares (25%) is also a concern. We need to look locally at how we can create new jobs. No new taxes!
- I would like to see this coming. It is long overdue.
- It's about time. This is really needed, but don't count on it if we need to raise property taxes. We are taxed to the limit on our homes.
- For years we enjoyed traveling from Rockford to Chicago via South Main Station, I.C. I think. It's about time!
- Regarding #12, airport or toll road, you cannot get a good bus system in Rockford.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- Please, please get on with this project. My out of town family and friends are amazed they can't fly into Chicago and hop a train to Rockford. My young adult and teenaged kids would ride the train all summer long to attend Cubs games. Finally, how could this not be a good thing with a 2016 Olympic bid looming for Chicago? Get on Board Rockford!
- Metra should connect to Freeport. Amtrak should connect service to Dubuque, Iowa.
- Need jobs.
- Can't drive and would like to be able to rail into O'Hare area for work.
- For a project like this to work, it would need to be fast and reliable like on schedule. It would also be great to extend service north from Rockford to Beloit, Janesville, and Madison.
- Although I am too old to make use of this, I do think it's a good idea. Only if it don't take people out our area to do their shopping and spending their monies out of the city.
- It would be great to have the rail to commute into O'Hare and back.
- Economically priced such as Metra, Harvard to Chicago, \$5 for weekends.
- If I were 25 years younger, my answers would probably be different. So don't give too much weight to these replies.
- Needs to include downtown Rockford and the airport. This is long overdue. Make this happen.
- Maybe if there was less drivers with DUIs and drivers whom break the law driving with no license and/or no insurance were to stop driving and take a bus or use a rail system the rest of us that are law abiding people can be safer on the road. If it were mandated that all persons caught driving illegally would be made to use that system for all their commuting needs. But, I, myself don't go too far, no vacations. Nowhere but family, school, store once a month, doctors, and back home, all on westside of Rockford - Rockton Ave - Sharron Avenue no further. I'm a homebody mostly, but thank you for asking my thought on this.
- I currently drive to Harvard to take train to Chicago. I would like Rockford - Chicago train service.
- I would seriously consider employment in Chicago if there was a passenger rail service available in this area.
- More likely to get my Masters Degree if I didn't have to drive in Chicago and more willing to take the kids to the museums.
- I would use the service if I worked outside the area and if it was more economical than driving or car pooling. It should be paid for by the local area businesses that would benefit from the service like employers.
- Definitely desire a train coming back to Rockford from Chicago late night. Many events end late and/or there is drinking involved. It would be great to have a way home from the city. And for getting to the airport (O'Hare). Is it better than Van Galder? Maybe they would be hurt by the trains? We need more info!
- Cost to upgrade \$160M. Operating cost \$10M annually. Think about the efficient/ effective bus, road transportation that could be provided at a fraction of these costs!
- I think it would make a world of difference. Right now I have trouble hiring people from Chicago because the commute has become so long.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- I am not a commuter and while I want to improve this area I will not pay to cover others commuting costs. I had a higher paying job closer to the city, but liked living here so I transferred to get rid of the commute. I didn't ask others to pay my way. Why would you charge me \$50 to register my vehicle when the rail service wouldn't be taking me to my job 10-15 minutes away? I think this rail service is important for people who now need to look for work in and around Chicago. I believe it will help the economy. It is certainly a good idea environmentally, mass transit over individual commuters. I do work in the city or visit there occasionally and would pay a higher fare when I use it to cover the cost of my use. I would then support a slight state income tax hike.
- Every train (commuter) that runs, has at least three employees on it. So if you run three trains in the morning, that will be three crews of at least three people per crew. These same crews would also work the afternoon trains back to Rockford. It's not much, but your talking about 9 to a dozen good, high paying jobs in an area that needs as many as it can get.
- Would like to go by rail to downtown Chicago early/mid a.m. with at least 1-2 late return trips offered especially for summer events to go into Chicago mid morning and return late evening say 12 or 1 a.m. would be nice. More trips available on Saturdays would be great for summers.
- We moved here from Chicago and many friends and family like it out here, but say they would not like to drive back and forth to work because it's 60+ miles. I believe if we had a Metra they would be interested in moving out this way and that would help growth in Rockford and/or help businesses with more visitors.
- Just please get the train here ASAP.
- We need this soon!
- If Rockford wanted to attract young professionals to the area, this commuter rail service would be a big plus.
- I think that if transportation could be provided this way it would draw more businesses to the area and cut down on the traffic going into and out of the city, saving money for the people who have to commute everyday to work. I have many friends who commute into the Chicago area. I hope this would also make a less stressful commute.
- Establishing commuter rail services in Rockford would be an absolutely necessary way to stimulate the economy and connect our city to jobs and entertainment that are virtually inaccessible to many Rockfordians. Please make this happen.
- When considering train times, think about going to and returning from shows, symphony, sports events, etc., as well as just shopping or commuting to work and for people from Chicago suburbs to get out here for special events. Also I'm sure you're considering coordinating bus connections to downtown, airport, special events at different locations.
- I believe that the train should go from Dubuque, Iowa to Chicago, if not possible then Freeport, IL to Chicago. Stopping in Rockford, of course. I also believe it should stop at O'Hare Airport. I would stop in Huntley to shop, Schaumburg to shop. Of course, I would shop in Chicago, go to the clubs, and the museums, beaches in summer.
- Opens up significant employment opportunities.
- I would love to see this happen. When I go to the city, I have to drive to Harvard. This would make it a lot easier.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- There are two issues here:
 - 1) Making public transportation in the area more readily available. Included in this thought is establishing what people will use most, and making commuter train travel more appealing than driving (depot location, convenient schedules, ease of rail over driving uses).
 - 2) Making the Rockford Airport more appealing than Chicago or Milwaukee. Rail service to either airport from Rockford would help and hopefully expand air service from Rockford. Westchester County Airport in White Plains, NY is a good example of a regional airport servicing a large population. Rockford could develop a similar capacity if adequate commuter services are available.
- The state and federal government should invest in Hi-speed, Hi-Tech modes of transportation like Japan and France. The Bullet, levitation and magnetic links - Madison, Milwaukee, Rockford, Chicago. Less stops, quicker transportation. California is going to build Hi-Tech, Hi-speed transportation from Disneyland to Las Vegas, Nevada. We need to think futuristic! Create jobs! Time is everything! The future is now!
- We do need a mass transportation rail service to get cars off the roadways but why do you need to subsidize the riders as they will be saving hundreds of dollars every week, you could give all those who opt to ride the train a lower cost tag for the car which they leave home as an incentive to ride the train for those who would otherwise drive to Chicago or other city daily to work.
- No property tax hike!
- First priority should be an uninterrupted high speed rail line between RFD and ORD. No grade crossings and a target time of 45 minutes service every hour both directions. All other service is of questionable benefit. Ban over the road trucks from all Interstates in Illinois and move all such freight to the rails where it belongs. Then work on improving and getting passenger rail service.
- Rail service would serve many people who do not have automobiles and some people that do. It would cut down on pollution. I have missed the old "Land of Corn" all of these years, how nice it would have been to ride to Chicago like we used to do. I will be too old perhaps, to enjoy the train if it finally is reality.
- Every Friday I drive to Harvard from Pecatonica to take the train to Chicago. Additionally, I would be able to consider employment opportunities in Chicago, which are hard to find in Rockford. I'm a computer programmer, but most programming jobs in Rockford are for avionics, not general business processes.
- Too late to start, should have started long ago, too much money at this time, more pressing needs, how about fixing roads.
- Please get the commuter service running. This local economy cannot be self-supporting and sustaining in tough economic times. We may need to move to the suburbs in order for me to find a way to get to likely workplaces but my husband living in Rockford area driving to Harvard is very long but driving into Chicago is unthinkable and dangerous. Buses don't get to downtown Chicago in time for work.
- I think this the best idea to be passed around all my life, except the airport which they are doing a good job.
- If you do come here, then I will take the rail to see my family which is out of state.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- I would need transportation to and from the train early in the mornings 3 a.m. to about 6 p.m.
- How stupid is government at this time when money is so tight. Live within your means. Why would I want to make another government agency that spends for so few? You are idiots.
- Our son goes to college in Schaumburg and this would benefit him. If he gets a job in the Chicago area, perhaps he would be able to use this service but still live at home.
- This study needs to be carefully aligned with determining how to best bring sustainable economic development to Boone and Winnebago Counties. I would prefer to work in the area rather than commute if there were good, white-collar jobs in Rockford.
- This is not a viable option for most commuters. Once you read the destination stop, there are few to no public transportation modes to continue on. For example, there is no bus from Elgin Big Timber to Hoffman Estates or Schaumburg's Woodfield Mall. I could not use this for work commuting.
- My family and I moved to Rockford in June of 1999. Since then, I've wished that there was a train service from Rockford to Chicago, because my family and I would definitely use it.
- No more taxes! Our real estate taxes are an overburden already and the state and local sales taxes are pushing 10% already. It's enough!
- I think expanding service would be essential to continued growth. I answered never to question 2, but if the service were offered it would open opportunities for me to expand my career which could lead to increased need and use of rail service.
- Good idea, but should have been taken care of years ago! Now is not the time for more taxes, fees, or any kind of increase in \$ put out by residents of any county! You are doing too little, too late!
- I strongly support expansion of rail service in the hope it would decrease I-90 traffic, so service must support use during peak hours.
I also would want an alternative to the Harvard line that would provide a way to get to major shopping centers like Woodfield so that I would not have to go all the way downtown (loop area). Going to Big Timber offers me nothing. I wish the introduction to this survey would have included info on options beyond Elgin. Where would I be able to go besides Chicago's downtown?
- If this is a priority, then it needs to be funded by cutting funding to budget items that are not a priority, not by raising taxes during a recession.
- Reality is that you are asking 400,000 people to subsidize the weekday commute of 100-200 people. All for added rail service if those few that want it will pay for it. Otherwise, consider commuter bus/fast bus option. It's all you need.
- I realize that rail service costs money and if the federal or state government chooses to establish one from Rockford it should operate like any other business, like support itself and make a profit. In a struggling economy, the last thing taxpayers need is a new tax. This will create a larger problem, less money the consumer will have to spend and a rail system which does not need to be financially responsible.
- Rail service to the Chicago area would open a broader choice of activities for people from this area. It would help with road travel both in and out of the area.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- Rail between the Rockford Airport and Chicago Airport would make sense. Additional stops could be added if profitable. Additional state/local taxes is not an option for commuter rail. If it can be done at a profit based on ridership, then do it. Otherwise, forget it.
- I am a huge fan of the rail service. I use it a lot for my traveling needs. It's affordable and allows me to travel with ease. I feel by not having the service in this area limits our opportunities in and outside of the Chicago area. I would use this service frequently and would be grateful for the convenience it provides. I would be more likely to stay and live in Rockford if commuting needs were more accessible vs moving elsewhere to meet these requirements.
- I do not support any type of tax increase. In today's economy, we cannot afford this. We already pay some of the highest property taxes around. Taxpayers would never support a two dollar addition at this for a gold-plated train seat reserved in their name every day. If we can get some of that stimulus plan money to build the rail plan and put people in our area to work then that is a win-win for everyone.
Have you looked into a train to the airport from Rockford? There is a huge ridership already. Look at the riders daily on the Van Galder buses, probably 1000's a day or more. The infrastructure is already there at the airport for commuter trains.
- Get your head out of your ass and connect Rockford to the rest of the world in an easy to use environmentally-friendly way!
- 1) Extend the Harvard line to Roscoe. Use the bike path (old railroad line) for a 10th of the cost.
2) We don't have roads or schools, commuter rail service is a luxury. People who work in Chicago, should live in Chicago. Clean up roads and schools, and jobs will come to Rockford.
3) Commercial rail is another story, necessary for to reduce fuel use per ton mile, get trucks off the roads they are destroying.
4) Besides Rockford is only good for paying for studies. They never get the job done.
- Don't need additional property or gas taxes, both are already taxed too high. Additional tollway fees could encourage drivers to seek alternative transportation to save money = rail transportation. The stretch of interstate through Boone/Winnebago Counties is heavily traveled and those not living here continue to pollute our air anyway. Additional tolls penalize them for polluting and encourage residents to use rail system.
- Even though I may not use this proposed rail system and I do not currently work, this does not mean I'm against this rail system. I do believe the two counties in question should work together to gather more information for the taxpayers. Additionally, and at this time, I do believe there are many more pressing issues to be confronted and solved!
- I believe the only way for this to succeed is if it is a commuter rail, with stops outside of small towns. Definitely a link to the Rockford Airport and possibly downtown Rockford. I think the rail could really help the airport survive and that is very important to the area. It could help Rockford by greater opportunities for those downtown to commute. A station shouldn't be located in downtown Belvidere or Marengo as it will destroy the downtowns with traffic.
- Trains on railroad need to be used a lot more, not just in Illinois, but worldwide, get more trains back on the railroads – more trains, more jobs. I wish and it would be great if trains could come back through the little farm town in Winnebago, IL.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- I have used Rockford-O'Hare bus and Van Galder. As few as myself and one other passenger to downtown Chicago on a bus at 8:00 a.m. and standing room packed at return from O'Hare, but usually partially filled bus. Most times I bus to O'Hare and take the train from there to downtown Chicago.
Riding the train from California to Chicago, talked with a retired locomotive engineer. Passenger trains take up track that freight trains must use to make profit. Only track dedicated to passenger rail, like down the freeway center seems good. Subsidized travel seems a costly waste.
- Can't wait to get the railway system here! About time! Rockford is way behind on a lot of things. Wake up Rockford and smell the coffee! It would save on gas money, plus meeting people as well. Why go to Harvard, IL to pick up the train or Woodstock, IL when they are small towns and Rockford is a big city! Duh! Is there something wrong with this picture! Rockford needs this badly! Pure and simple!
- In order to be successful, we need to invest in high speed rail. The Metra service is painfully slow and outdated. We need to follow the examples set in Europe and Japan if we expect rail to be a viable mode of alternative transportation for current and future generations.
In regard to governance, if local revenues are supporting the service then a local authority needs to provide oversight.
- I think for commuting to the Chicago area for work, we'd need a high speed train. 2 to 2½ hours to get there and then home again would not be doable. If we're going to invest money in a train, let's for once do it right! I'd love to be able to get on the train and be able to spend the day in the city but what you're planing will take too long. Let's dream bigger!
- To get started I would suggest high speed bus service on left lane on I-90. Then look to future high speed 120-150 mph mono rail system down center of I-90 toward Chicago. Rail system is horse and buggy mentality. Senior citizen. Whatever system choose should be self-supporting or it isn't needed. Can't see a system that would take five hours to get to Chicago and back!
- I think the people of Boone and Winnebago Counties are smart enough to figure this out. Not a consulting firm from California or some other state that knows nothing about the people involved in Illinois. Get people from the two counties to see what they want, everyday people who would use the service! Everyday working people!
- I go into Chicago loop 2 to 3 times per week. I must get up at 4 a.m. to get the 5:27 at Big Timber. I feel that I would have to get up even earlier to get a train out of Rockford due to the three stops between Rockford and Big Timber. I heard approximately three years ago that only 1% of working/employed people in the Rockford area go all the way into Chicago. There may not be much of a need for this. I would like feedback if possible.
- For the past year, I went in and out of ORD once a week. I drove because even the bus schedule did not always meet needs, late flights. Rail service travel times will be important – stagger with bus times to give commuters lots of options.
- I am especially interested in attending school in Chicago and I would like to take the train. I also have family in Chicago who would visit Rockford often if rail service were available. The medical community and patients would greatly benefit from rail service connecting us to Chicago as well as to the Mayo Clinic.
- I think connecting Rockford to Chicago in any way is dangerous in every way.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- I would need train/rail service that would get me to Rolling Meadows, IL by 7:30 a.m. and return service leaving that area around 5 p.m., Monday-Friday. This could prevent me from having to move out of Rockford. If we don't get this rail service, I may have to move back to Chicago. I'm sure there are others that would have to do the same.
- I'm not sure but couldn't this route (Chicago to Rockford with points in between) be both a passenger and rail service (carry goods, etc.). This would help itself pay for the passenger rail upgrade or need a better way to pay rather than taxpayers' money like federal, commercial, or rail service \$. In light of the possible Olympics, this would be a super investment in the future, but the cost is large if Olympics, etc., don't come to help pay the upgrade costs.
- Never raise the real estate taxes. My home is smaller, less land in Rockford than St. Louis and the taxes are more than twice as high, what is the town thinking? I have tried to recruit Tech people here, and between the taxes and school, their tour is seen as the last place they want to come to. If taxes go up, I will lose my house and for what? For someone else's convenience and my 45 years of work goes down the drain.
- I am unemployed at this time, therefore, cash flow is a problem. My travel distance is a concern for me. I would like to go back to school to update my resume or seek different career options.
- We are behind our times with the population in Belvidere, Rockford, Roscoe, why shouldn't this be NI?
- I live in Rockford and work in Chicago.
- We need to get this done, like yesterday.
- Everyone should not have to pay for something only a few will use. It should be funded privately or by the railroads. Taxes are too high now and the state needs to take care of the crime and out of work before spending millions on this. This project is another get rich plan for someone in Chicago.
- 29 years ago this was a great idea, and 29 years later still no commuter rail. I think the Rock River Valley should concentrate its effort on jobs that are gone. Try concentrating on being a Bed and Breakfast community with great hospitals. Commuter rail may be a problem in this time because of high unemployment and who will be able to afford a train fare that would possibly be \$10 one-way to Chicago.
- It's only around 45 minutes to drive to Elgin. The train with all stops would (Huntley-Marengo) probably take well over one hour to 1½ hours. It's already a long commute. I drove from Poplar Grove to Dundee for 5 years, so adding an hour a day is a lot of time.
- I feel like Rockford will TOTALLY miss it if they do not get this going very soon. Myself and all of my friends would use it often.
- Ten years in Japan. Rail travel the best. Used rail most of the time. Had a car for special trips.
- Recently, I had open heart surgery and do not trust myself driving long distances so I have to depend on public transportation. Have wanted a link to Amtrak for a very long time. It's really hard and expensive to get from Rockford to Chicago whether to fly or hook up to Amtrak. Thank you.
- Thank you for sending the information in Spanish.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- I strongly believe that weekend service with a.m. and late p.m. inbound and outbound is important. Many people from our area travel into Chicago for the weekend and traffic into the city continues to increase and become more hazardous. Traffic out of the city on summer weekends can be tremendous. Rockford continues to transition into a service- and recreation-based economy and weekend rail service is as important as commuter service on weekdays.

I would support a vehicle registration fee but waive this fee for anyone purchasing an annual "travel pass" for use on train.

- I truly feel there is no need for such a commuter rail service in this area primarily because the Chicago Metra service can be boarded in Harvard, IL, which is a closer drive for much of Boone County than Rockford. The fares for that train service are reasonably inexpensive and would require no further taxation to this area. I also firmly believe if the leaders of Boone County want to move forward they must look to the future and work for growth and not continually wish for what is now firmly in the past, i.e., train service, hospitals, etc. They must find new ways to grow the economy instead of reinstating past drags on our community which is not capable of supporting them (train service, hospital). Our leaders must remember this is the reason why these things ended in the first place.
- When we retired in 2000 and moved to Rockford (to take care of grandchildren) we were very hopeful that passenger train service would be established here. Whenever we go to Chicago, we always drive to Harvard (sometimes Big Timber by Elgin) and use Metra service. We NEVER drive all the way into Chicago! We make at least 4-6 trips (sometimes more) to Chicago every month. I'm willing to help on a "grass roots project" to help this happen soon. Please do all you can to bring passenger trains to Rockford as soon as possible. Thank you.
- My husband has medical issues which sometimes require him to travel to Chicago. I have found that by going to Crystal Lake and getting the train is much easier than trying to drive there with him. It would be even easier to have the Amtrak in Rockford as he is hard to travel distances with. I, for one, think the Amtrak would be very beneficial to our entire community and our growth. Thank you.
I also feel that Amtrak is very cheap to travel on. I know I would be willing to pay more per ride just because of the convenience and comfort I would be traveling in.
- I would appreciate the rail service because I am often traveling from O'Hare Airport and for me the only viable transportation of now to O'Hare is the Greyhound bus service. However, bus service is extremely dependent on traffic issues on the highway, whereas rail service would have a more set schedule reducing the travel time and less interruption in travel. Also, for the future I can see more trips to visit sites in Chicago but with help from rail, also new opportunities for employment in suburbs of Chicago. Especially when you consider "parking unavailability" in Chicagoland, rail is great alternative.
Also, college education expanded with easy access to Elgin, Schaumburg, instead of my personal car.
- A train service from Rockford to Chicago is a good idea especially when it would free up congested highways depending on the hours the train service would run.
- My children live in Chicago and it would make it easier for me to visit them more if we had a commuting train.
- Rockford is 25 years late, as usual.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- More information is needed on this project, like prices. For example, how much would a ticket cost?
- If there is anything that could have significant economic impact on Rockford, it is rail transportation connecting us to our region. The opportunities for Rockford residents to consider jobs elsewhere while remaining here, and the additional revenue from outside residents coming in to enjoy our great city, both offer value we cannot presently imagine!
- Given that I am nearly retired, I would rarely use commuter rail, although I believe it would be valuable to the area.
- I think this is a critical piece for our future economic well-being.
- What would be the travel times?
- My family and occasionally my boss and I have traveled to Woodstock and Crystal Lake to park and take the Metra into the city rather than hassle with traffic and parking. Being able to travel via train from Rockford would be a very nice benefit! A stop near Woodfield would be great if possible. Thank you.
- Handicapped!
- Although the train can get me from Belvidere to Elgin. I would have to take a bus or cab the remaining 8 miles to work, which may not be any more cost effective than driving myself to work.
- It would be too inconvenient for us. We do not need it!
- Commuter rail service is vitally important to the sustained growth of Rockford-Belvidere. Housing is more affordable here than the Chicago suburbs or Elgin metro areas. The rail service will allow more people to relocate to the Rockford metro area if they can easily and efficiently commute to Chicago, Elgin, or their suburbs for work. More people would travel to Chicago for pleasure and shopping as well.
- I have been offered jobs in Chicago but don't take them because of the driving. I have a neighbor who works in Chicago who would really benefit from a train too.
- If it is possible to get rail service or rail/bus to ORD it would be used by several airline employees and passengers from Boone County. As a Belvidere resident, I would prefer not to drive to Rockford to take the bus to ORD (it is out of the way and expensive). Thanks!
- It would be nice to have the rail service but I am tired of taxes paying for services that most people don't use, such as Rockford Airport. All those tax subsidies going to the airlines and it does not bring tourism to Rockford. All it does is send people and their money to other airports for vacation.
- The advantages far out weigh the concerns. Personally, I feel Winnebago County is a great place and commute options such as rail would encourage many, myself included, to venture into Chicago much more. Chicago is an amazing city but the drive due to traffic (mostly) is brutal. This may be the primary reason many do not travel between these counties? The rail if extended into RFD, is a great idea and can be an even better one if it would be extended into downtown Rockford to revitalize our downtown businesses and the historic train depot here. Thank you.
- # 11., we are overtaxed as it is!
- Would be very convenient during peak traffic times.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- If Rockford feels it needs a commuter rail service it should be funded by those who feel the need for it, not those who would not be using it at all. We had rail service at one time and the powers that be saw fit to get rid of it.
We would not support any funding to support this project. You should apply for part of the outrageous stimulus package that was pushed through congress with no thought to the consequences.
The idea of increasing property taxes, sales tax, vehicle registration fees, gas tax, and state income tax are all ways of increasing taxes for the general population and helping to support Chicago further.
You should be ashamed of yourselves for wanting to start such a project when the economy is so bad and continuing to worsen by the day. Don't any of you realize that people are losing their jobs, homes, and savings with no hope in sight of recovering their loss?
You want to raise taxes on gas. Wake up, the price for crude oil is dropping and yet the price for gas continues to rise.
This is a very poor idea at this time in our economic lives. You need to be looking for some real work to bring back to Rockford and forget this tourism you continue to promote. I can't tell you how many people we have told that Rockford tries to live on tourism. THERE IS NOTHING HERE FOR TOURISM!
- Relatives in the city could take a train all the way to Belvidere/Rockford.
- Help fund traveling to Chicago to catch Amtrak train better for Rockford and Belvidere residents.
- This has been a long time coming, and look forward to rail service in Boone County! Thank you!
- I would think many working persons commuting from Rockford and Belvidere area would use rail service instead of car transportation, the tollway and other routes are really crowded at work hours.
- I travel by train several times a year (Amtrak). Several members of my family travel by this mode also. I would attend more activities in the Chicago area if transportation was more accessible. I don't want service that I would have to book in advance to travel (reserve seating). I would like service that travel weekdays and weekends several times a day.
- We think the rail should stop at Rockford Airport if possible.
- Having grown up in the Chicago area, there are certainly things that could appeal to either Rockford area residents in Chicago or Chicago and suburban residents in the Rockford area. Unfortunately, two things are missing from this equation: 1) Most people would probably want to enjoy these services on weekends or during off peak times. 2) There are other fiscal needs in the Rockford area that are currently more of a priority.
- Act quickly! A high priority.
- I believe that it would help the Chicago-Rockford airport to be connected to the burbs. I also think that if it has some sort of weekend transport it would help. It could even start with one or two trips especially in the warmer seasons.
- It would be a great boost. I use Elgin twice a week and would love to have this service.
- I would like to use this service to expand my employment possibilities. This would save wear and tear on my car and would help with the congestion on I-90.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- I believe the first step to ensure sufficient demand for such a rail extension exists would be to create a shuttle bus. This would require a much smaller capital outlay and would provide some concrete numbers in terms of the number of commuters. I currently car pool with two other commuters and we are in the process of creating a Pace van pool. We will meet at Cherryvale Mall at 6 a.m. and return to the lot around 6:50 p.m. weekdays. The Pace van pool is scheduled to consist of eight participants. Additionally, I am aware of another individual that commutes to the Big Timber Station from Rockford, but will not be participating in our van pool given his conflicting work schedule. I would be happy to put you in touch with him if that would be helpful. I can be reached M-F during normal working hours at ___.
- A Marengo stop from Belvidere would be awesome. 5 a.m., 5:15 a.m., 2:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m.
- I enjoy taking the train into downtown Chicago. It would be nice to be able to get on the train closer to home, rather than driving to Harvard or Crystal Lake. In this economic decline, I am concerned about the funding.
- I do not use commuter services/ getting rid of the toll on I-90 would be nice!
- I take the Metra from Crystal Lake to Chicago quite often. It sure beats driving and paying for parking. Service from Belvidere would be great. I think a lot more people would travel to Chicago if it was more convenient.
I work in Marengo and if travel times and work schedule coordinated, I would definitely use the service for work.
- I think commuter rail service in this area would be great, adding to the current airline services would be a great attribute for the Rockford/Belvidere area.
- I would just like to point out that if Chicago gets the 2016 Olympics, rail service could be important to bring tourists into and spend their money in Rockford.
- I use Metra from Harvard to Chicago often on weekends. Do not believe most residents should pay for train with tax increase when few use for work. Need to find alternative funding. I believe train will benefit area, but not at residents' expense.
- Could have used commuter service from Rockford to downtown Chicago in 1996. At that time, I was getting up at 4 a.m. to drive to Big Timber to catch train or leaving 30 minutes later to catch "L" at Kennedy Express and Cumberland/ 5 days a week for work.
- Have a station on eastside of Rockford by I-90. I think many people will use it if by tollway.
- I always wonder why the train did not come out to Rockford. I wish this will happen soon.
- Stop at the Rockford Airport.
- Anything to help stop taxing us on I-90; funding!
- As of 2009, I have zero interest in driving to downtown Chicago or Grant Park due to parking rates. Probably go to downtown Chicago via new rail service four times a year. Where would Rockford stations be located? One train vs 200 vehicles less pollution!
- The sooner the better.
- My work options are very limited due to the fact that we do not have a commuter rail. I fully support this project.
- The proposed rail service should serve to connect Rockford and O'Hare Airports.
- Good luck!

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- Get this done now! Unbelievable there is zero train service to Winnebago County. Hurts economic development! Hurts property values for housing!
- It not only would be great for Rockford, Belvidere, and Chicago areas, but I would love to avoid the interstate and take a train to Chicago and Belvidere. Therefore, this might decrease maintenance costs on our highways and interstates.
- This train service is desperately needed as I used to commute to the Chicago area. Traffic is very busy.
- It would be very helpful to have a train service that travels from Rockford to Chicago. It would also benefit the environment. Apart from travel time that would be gained going to Chicago, traffic would be reduced and there would be less cars on the roads and accidents. I am hopeful that this dream will become a reality.
- High quality, realistic cost, developed for growth.
- Why can't a private company do this? Inner rail service by private companies worked in the early 1900's.
Until you inform the public that the rail system will cost them in a massive tax(es) increase for the rail service, I am totally against the rail service.
It seems to me, that if the service is so needed, that the rail passenger should shoulder the entire cost, it benefits the passenger. The tracks are here, the train is in service. How much should it cost the passenger? Of course, the truth is that our tax increase is to support the Chicago rail service. I don't like that!
- What does the College of Medicine have to do with this? Where did they get the money to spend on this? What money, diverted from where, did you use? Who makes money off this and why?
- Sorry I'm 85 years old and I do not think I will use. I think it is a good idea but not for me.
- Growing up in Rockford in the 50's, we had service to Chicago by rail which we as a family enjoyed.
- I feel commuter rail would help our local economy by providing transportation to the higher salaried positions available in the Chicago area.
- I would like to have a service to the Chicago area for museums, shopping and visiting family.
- Charge enough for a ticket so that I do not have to pay for someone else's ticket. Why should I pay your way? You do not pay for my gas.
We have got along just fine without a train for about 35 years, so how much did I save not paying for others to ride cheap?
- We bicycle! Do not pollute the area with unnecessary commercial enterprise or ideas!
- Drive to park facilities very important at each rail station.
- I usually drive to Crystal Lake for Metra Train to Chicago for business and pleasure. Saves my time, gas, and travel headaches. Adding a rail to Rockford would be a tremendous benefit to me. I am sure it would for those who live in the Rockford area.
- I currently depend on RMTD for inner city transportation. Van Galder has been my choice for the suburbs and downtown Chicago area. A rail system would be nice if more multiple and convenient stops were included.
- The passenger train would be good to those who work in the Belvidere and Chicago area.

18. Anything that you would like to tell us about your commuting needs or commuter rail? (cont'd.)

- Because of the need for greater employment opportunities the train is very important. I do not believe that after I graduate from college I will have many opportunities here. I am considering selling my house and moving closer to Chicagoland, with train service that would not be necessary. Also with the train service, future employers in Rockford could have a larger pool of employees to choose from making Rockford more desirable.
- Cost of fares would be a factor in frequency of use, also how often the train would run. Current round-trip Van Galder fare is about \$40 a person. If two people are traveling, it is more economical to drive and park than to take the bus into the city.
- I would not use this service even though I frequent the suburbs for work. The passenger rail service opens the door to our area for gangs, crime, and a surge in people searching for cheaper cost of living from Chicago. I do not want Rockford and Boone County to become another congested, dirty, and crime-filled suburb. That's why I live here - to avoid that!
- I would like to see rail service to O'Hare. Besides helping O'Hare patrons, people could connect to trains going downtown.
It's unrealistic to think that the Greater Rockford Airport will ever be able to offer enough flights to become the more used airport. Having our own airport is great, but having a convenient way to O'Hare would be super. As it is now, the bus services to there is gouging everyone.
- The biggest problem with commuter rail is getting from the station to wherever it is you want to go. If you can't get out of the station, why go in the first place?
- As a senior citizen, I am afraid to drive in the Chicago area (fast pace of cars, many lane changes are necessary), yet, I have a son who lives there that I rarely get to see. Next month he will be having an operation at rush. I will have to drive to Harvard, then take the train into Union Station, and a taxi to Rush. It would be a dream for me to be able to see my son more often. That dream could be realized if there would be rail service from our area to Union Station. Thank you for taking this into consideration.
- You people never quit trying to spend our money on unneeded bullshit projects like this one. I wish I had the power to fire everyone of you.
- This is a real good idea. Many people from Capron and Poplar Grove go to Harvard for the train. However, lots of folks in Belvidere lack transportation to go to the doctor or dentist in Rockford. There is no bus and this would help a great deal.
- Rail service linking Rockford and Chicago with multiple daily trains would be an enormous economic boom to the greater Rockford area. Just think of the expansion opportunities.
- I feel rail service would bring an openness of travel - both work and enjoyment. It would also bring people from w/ to Rockford since it would take less time and is less stressful than driving.
- As a recent college graduate, rail service would expand my job search area. Fast and affordable service from Rockford to Chicago could shorten the length of my job search by allowing easy commute from work to home.
- This is most needed.
- We are retired so would use the system only for pleasure trips.