

- Trail Traffic (*Marissa Dolin - Active Transportation Alliance, Tim Jeffries - Friends of the Parks*)

Chicago's Lakefront Trail is one of the country's busiest non-motorized transportation thoroughfares, with at least 60,000 people per day using the trail in the peak season. As one of the few exclusively car-free routes in Chicago, it stretches 18 miles along Lake Michigan from Ardmore Avenue on the north to 71st Street on the south. The trail serves as both a destination for recreational users, a training facility for athletes, and a transportation route for commuters. It also must safely accommodate all users, from slow moving pedestrians to speedy skaters and cyclists.

With such a high volume of traffic, the Lakefront Trail experiences many of the same types of issues motorized roadways experience: traffic congestion, issues with merging, speeding and obstructions on the travelway. Yet, unlike a roadway, data such as traffic counts, crashes and congestion reports are unavailable.

To better understand the issues facing trail users and opportunities for improvement, Friends of the Lakefront Trail, a partnership between Active Transportation Alliance, Friends of the Parks and Chicago Area Runner's Association (CARA) reached out to the public and surveyed regular users of the Lakefront Trail. The more than 1,500 respondents included people from throughout the Chicago region and trail users of all modes. Survey results were used to identify perceptions of trail design and areas in highest need of improvement. The survey results identified locations along the trail and access points with the highest and lowest instances of crashes, congestion and conflicts.

