

Mobility in and Beyond Communities: A Qualitative Study of Mobility Justice Issues on the South and Southwest Sides of Chicago

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Executive Summary

Transportation provides essential access to a wide range of activities that support individual and collective well-being—from employment opportunities and other economic activities to health care, social ties, and civic engagement. Yet the benefits and burdens of transportation systems are highly inequitable by race and income (Bullard, Johnson & Torres, 2004). With some exceptions (e.g., Boschmann, 2011), studies on transportation inequities by income or race focus on quantitative data and models without centering the perspectives of those experiencing economic hardship and/or structural racism. This report adopts a qualitative approach to examine transportation experiences and perspectives about how transportation unfolds in lived experiences and intersects with individual and community dynamics and ideas, including solutions.

In 2019 and 2020, the research team conducted 11 focus groups and brief surveys with participants (n=120) at five sites on the South and Southwest sides of Chicago. Ten focus groups were conducted in English, and one was conducted in Spanish. Most respondents identified as Black (68%), while 27 percent identified as Latinx and less than 3 percent reported another racial/ethnic identity. Most participants were female (71%) and did not have a four-year college degree (82%). Results demonstrate that low- and moderate-income Black and Latinx residents on the South and Southwest sides of Chicago experience a complex web of transportation and intersecting barriers that make it difficult to travel within and outside of their neighborhoods.

Respondents provided community and transportation system context by discussing the inadequacy of neighborhood transportation infrastructure, concerns with the public transit system's design, reliability, and customer experience, and issues surrounding the proximity of grocery stores and other opportunity sites. They identified transportation barriers, including time and financial costs and personal security concerns, for several different modes. Respondents described how their intersectional identities further shape their mobility experiences. They also explained the individual adaptations they make to overcome their transportation barriers and proposed solutions that address the causes of barriers. Finally, respondents expressed a desire for more input and control over transportation solutions in their communities and described the role that community building and civic engagement can play at bringing about comprehensive change.

Increased transportation investment across modes is vital to address currently inadequate and inequitable transportation systems. However, many of the transportation burdens that respondents identified are hard to capture in conventional models and require non-transportation solutions. Supporting new and existing businesses on the South and Southwest sides that could provide employment opportunities and access to essential goods and services would help shorten the distance that respondents need to travel on a daily basis. In addition, to address the personal security concerns that inhibit mobility, racial and social justice tenets around just systems transformations must inform security solutions. This study concludes that transportation solutions must look beyond technical transportation interventions alone and focus instead on holistic policies and neighborhood investments.

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Introduction

Transportation provides essential accessibility to a wide range of activities that support individual and collective well-being—from employment opportunities and other economic activities to health care, social ties, and civic engagement. While the advent of information and communications technologies has shifted much online, accessibility to opportunities of all sorts, enabled by transportation systems and services, remains vital for many activities. Transportation is not the only factor that determines accessibility to activities; the spatial distribution of activity sites also fundamentally shapes barriers to and levels of accessibility. As such, how people experience accessibility is embedded in complex spatial, developmental, and transportation policies and decisions that are rooted in both historical and contemporary practices that create the built environment and transportation systems.

Some federal provisions (the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 1994's Executive Order 12898 and the U.S. Department of Transportation's environmental justice regulations) protect people of color and low-income populations from disproportionate harm by federal policies or by entities receiving federal transportation dollars. Yet, the benefits and burdens of transportation systems are highly inequitable by race and income (Bullard, Johnson & Torres, 2004). With some exceptions (e.g., Boschmann, 2011), studies on transportation inequity by income or race focus on quantitative data and models, without centering the perspective of those experiencing economic hardship and/or structural racism.

This report adopts a qualitative perspective to examine transportation experiences and perspectives of residents ($n = 120$) in low- and moderate-income Black and Latinx communities in Chicago to identify how transportation unfolds in lived experiences and intersects with individual and community dynamics, including generating solutions. Of course, inequitable transportation is by no means limited to racial and income disparities, as accessibility to opportunities is also highly inequitable by a range of community and individual characteristics, including, but not limited to, gender identity and disability status. This report, however, uses the experiences of those in low- and moderate-income Black and Latinx communities as a starting point to identify intersecting issues related to transportation experiences, adaptations, and interventions. The project focused on expanding understandings of the problems, challenges, and broad strategies, rather than weighing specific action steps. Focus group participants described the inadequacy of local transportation infrastructure, concerns with the public transit system's design, reliability, and customer experience, and issues surrounding the proximity of grocery stores and other important destinations. They identified transportation barriers, including time and financial costs and personal security concerns, for several different modes and described how their intersectional identities further shape their mobility experiences. They also explained the individual adaptations they made to overcome their transportation barriers and proposed solutions that address the root causes of barriers. Finally, respondents expressed a desire for more input and control over transportation solutions in their communities and described the role that further community building and civic engagement could play at bringing about comprehensive change.

The following section describes the Chicago context for our research. We then follow with a discussion of focus group themes, and in the final section, identify crosscutting themes and policy implications.

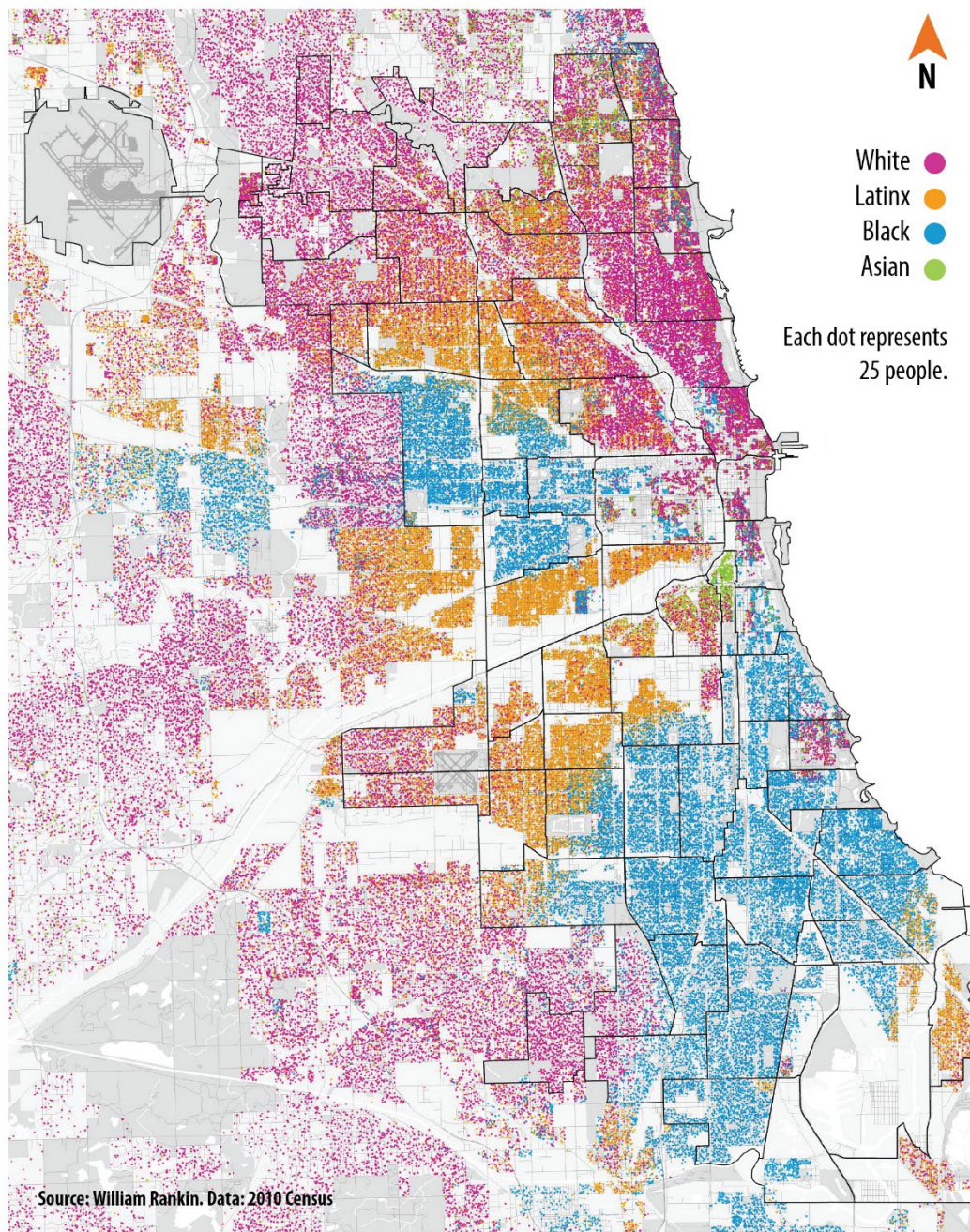
Chicago Context

Like other U.S. cities, stark racial and economic spatial divides characterize Chicago. Among the largest 100 U.S. regions, Chicagoland ranks 5th for combined racial and economic spatial segregation (MPC, 2017). Although some individuals and neighborhoods do not fit into such a broad description, the North side—especially along the Lakeshore—has large concentrations of White, non-Latinx residents, while the South, Southwest, and West sides have large concentrations of Black and Latinx residents. The racial distribution of residents in Chicago, of course, is more nuanced than this simple description (Figure 1).

The City of Chicago has a population of approximately 2.7 million residents, with no single racial/ethnic group as the majority. While most residents are people of color, White, non-Latinx residents account for the largest share of population (33%), followed by Black residents (30%), Latinx residents (29%), Asian residents (6%), and all other groups (2%) (CMAP, 2019). Like numerous other industrial, northern cities, Chicago saw significant growth in its Black population during the 20th century. However, Chicago's Black population peaked in 1980 and has been in decline since. While Latinx residents grew significantly in the last decades of the 20th century, most recently, the fastest growth in population has been among Asian residents (Scarborough et. al, 2020).

In the words of the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy, “racial and ethnic inequities in Chicago remain *pervasive, persistent, and consequential*” (Hendricks, et al., 2017, emphasis original). These inequities cross all realms, including the areas of housing, income, education, justice, and health, as the cited report details. Like other policy areas, racial inequities persist within transportation and accessibility, which links transportation and the distribution of destinations. For example, in Chicago, average commute time by public transit is 51.6 minutes for Black workers, 44.1 for Latinx commuters, and 37.7 for White workers (Henricks et al., 2017). Although the CTA's speediest service, the L, reaches past the North and West boundaries of Chicago, its line serving the majority Black South Side of Chicago currently stops 5 miles north of the southern municipal boundary, leaving a large portion of the area without rail service. Across all modes of travel, the average commute time differential between Black and White workers in the city aggregates to about one extra workweek in lost time per year for Black commuters (Henricks et al., 2017). Police stop Black drivers at a dramatically higher rate than White drivers relative to their share of the population (ACLU Illinois, 2019). Non-motorized racial disparities in Chicago include racialized policing (Wisniewski, 2019, September 23) and inequitable pedestrian fatality rates by race (City of Chicago, 2017).

THE RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF CHICAGOLAND, 2010



irrpp.uic.edu

Kasey Henricks, Amanda E. Lewis, Iván Arenas, and Deana G. Lewis. 2017. *A Tale of Three Cities: The State of Racial Justice in Chicago*. Chicago, IL: Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy.



**Institute for Research on
Race and Public Policy**

Research that Makes a Difference

Figure 1: Chicago's population by race (courtesy of the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy and William Rankin). Boundaries denote Chicago Community Areas and City of Chicago boundaries.

Methods and Participants

This project sought to understand the transportation barriers and priorities of residents on Chicago's South and Southwest sides, prioritizing the perspectives of low- to moderate-income Black and Latinx residents. The team collected data through focus groups, which were recorded and transcribed, and a brief written survey, which asked demographic and closed-ended questions (see appendices for instruments and survey results). As qualitative research, the project went in-depth with a moderate number of participants, rather than collected closed-ended question data from a large sample. To ensure that the results were consistent with the categories that participants used, the team used an iterative coding approach. Project partners from Equiticity, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the Metropolitan Planning Council collaborated with the authors to identify 12 themes that emerged from the focus group transcriptions, rather than using pre-determined categories. Transcriptions were then coded line by line in the cloud-based qualitative software program Dedoose. Next, codes were queried, reviewed, and summarized to generate the findings. The team used a three-digit code for each focus group, numbered in the 300s, which are used to identify the focus group session for each quotation in the subsequent sections.

The research team recruited participants in partnership with four community-based organizations: Greater Southwest Development Corporation, Sacred Keepers Sustainability Lab, We Keep You Rollin' Bike & Wellness Group, and Claretian Associates. The team held the 11 focus groups in the South Chicago, Riverdale, Bronzeville, and Marquette Park neighborhoods of Chicago (see sites in Figure 7 and reference Appendix D for demographic information about the communities surrounding each site). The facilitators led most groups in English but conducted one focus group with 10 participants in Spanish. The focus groups were held from October 2019 through February 2020. There was a total of 120 participants, with groups ranging in size from 5 to 15 and an average group size of 10.9. Participants received a \$50 debit card for their participation.

Participants ranged in age from 18 to 86, with a mean of 51.8 and a median of 54.5 (Figure 2). Most participants identified as female (71%), and no participants reported a non-binary gender identity. Participants were 68 percent Black/African American and 27 percent Latinx, with less than 3 percent reporting a race/ethnicity of White/Caucasian, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, bi- or multi-racial, or Other (Figure 3). Respondents were instructed to "mark all that apply," but only two respondents chose more than one racial/ethnic category.

Figure 2: Age of Community Focus Group Participants

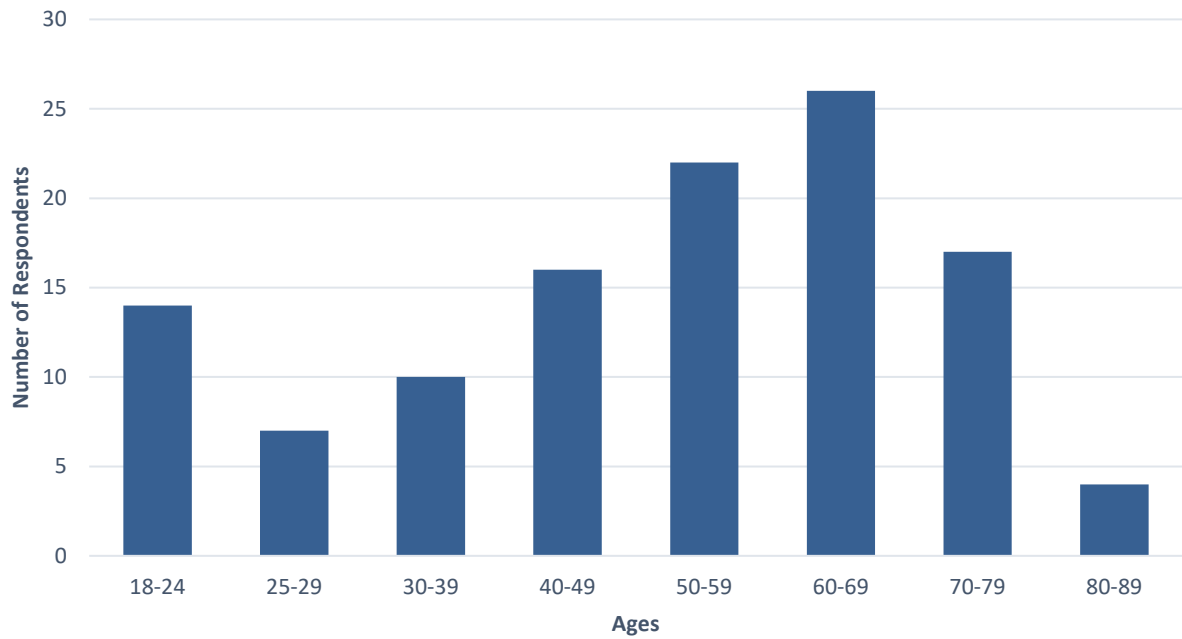
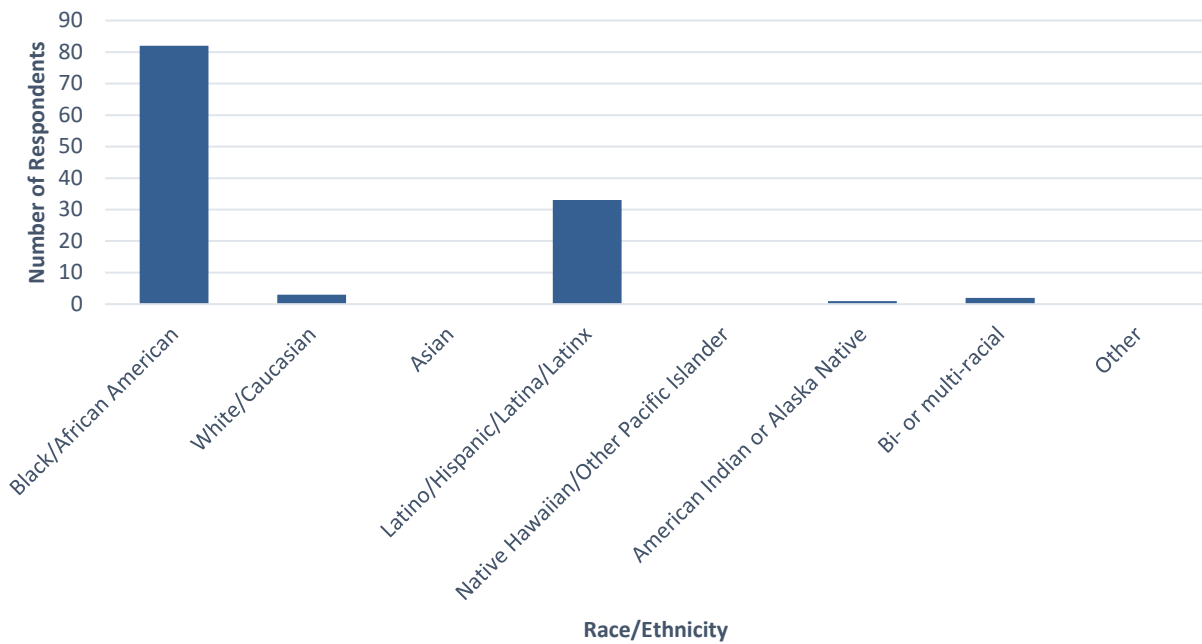


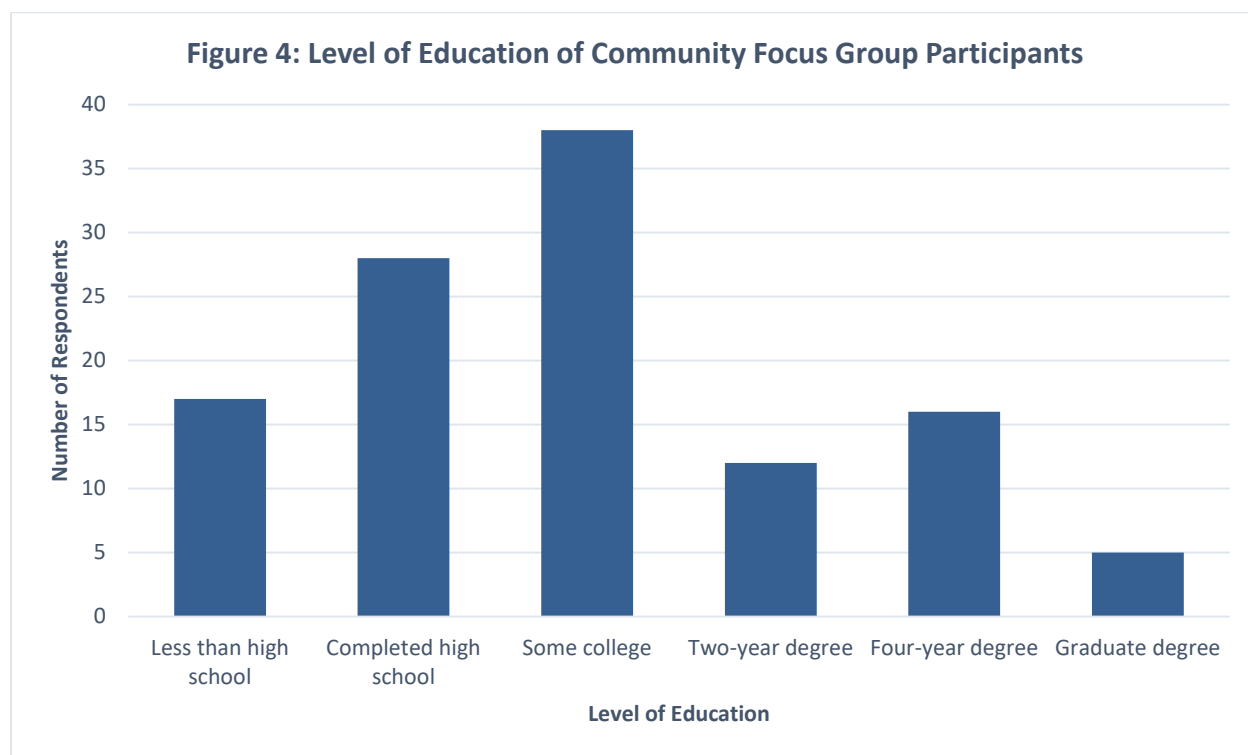
Figure 3: Race/Ethnicity of Community Focus Group Participants

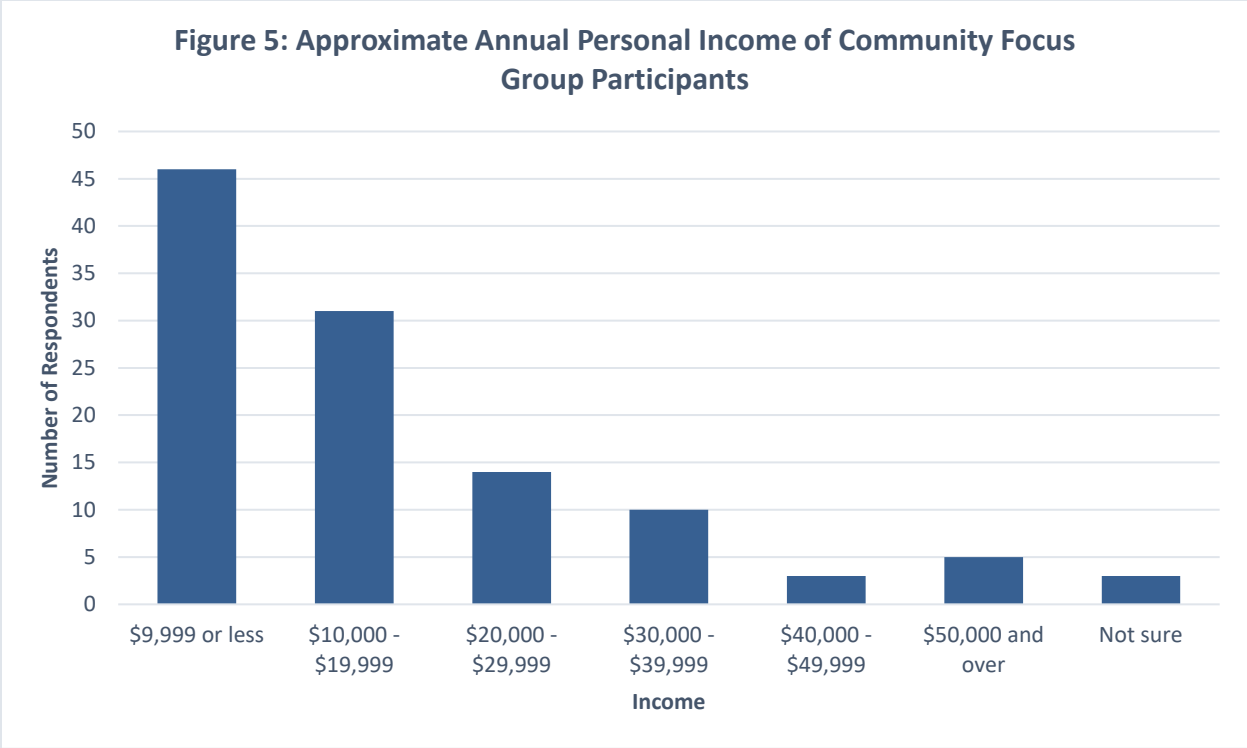


Many respondents lived alone (33%); the mean number of people in respondents' households was 2.8, and the median number of people in their households was 2. Most respondents reported that there were no people under 18 living in their household (63%), although 37.3 percent did report at least 1 person under 18. English was the most common primary language (89%); 8.6 percent reported Spanish as the primary language spoken in the household and 3 percent reported that both English and Spanish were spoken as primary languages.

In terms of education, 15 percent of participants reported less than a high school degree and 24 percent reported high school as the highest degree completed (Figure 4). Thirty-three percent of participants reported some college, 10 percent reported completing a two-year degree, 13.8 percent reported completing a four-year degree, and 4 percent reported completing a graduate degree. In total, 81.9 percent of participants reported completing less than a four-year degree.

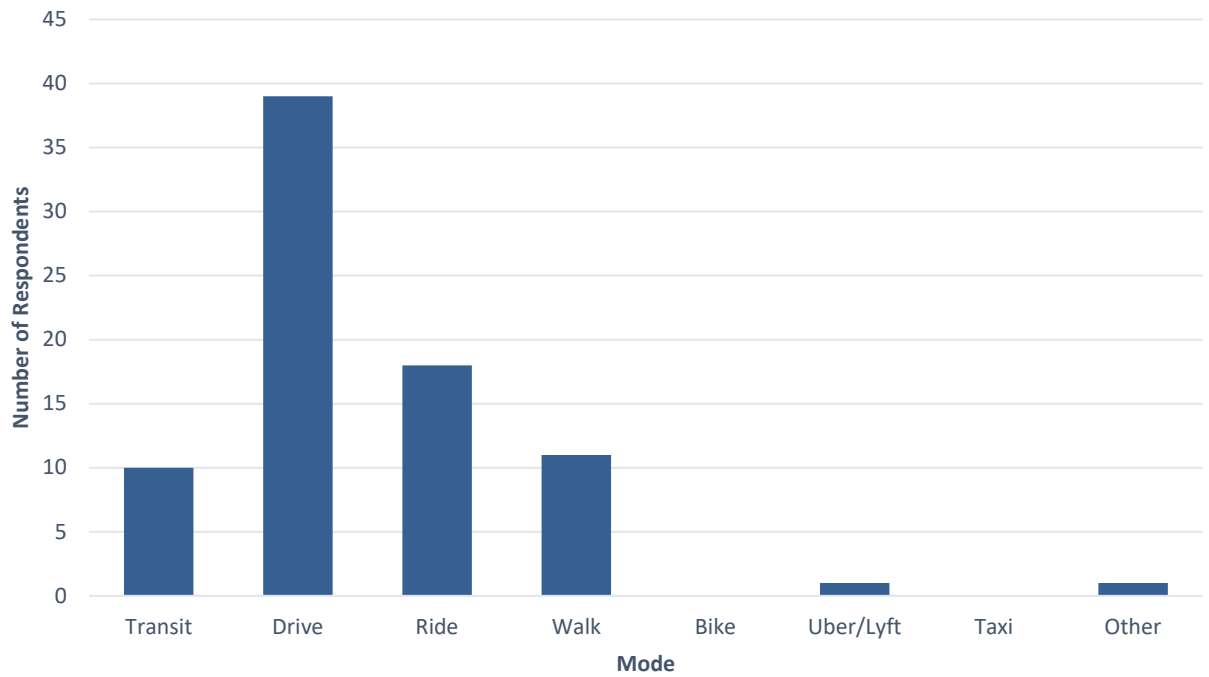
Most respondents reported that they were not currently working (58%); 24 percent reported working full-time, and 18 percent reported working part-time. Most respondents reported an annual personal income of \$19,999 or less (69%) and only 5 percent reported an income of \$50,000 or more (Figure 5). Most respondents did own a smartphone (86%) and credit or debit card (82%); 62 percent reported at least one working car, truck, or van in their household.

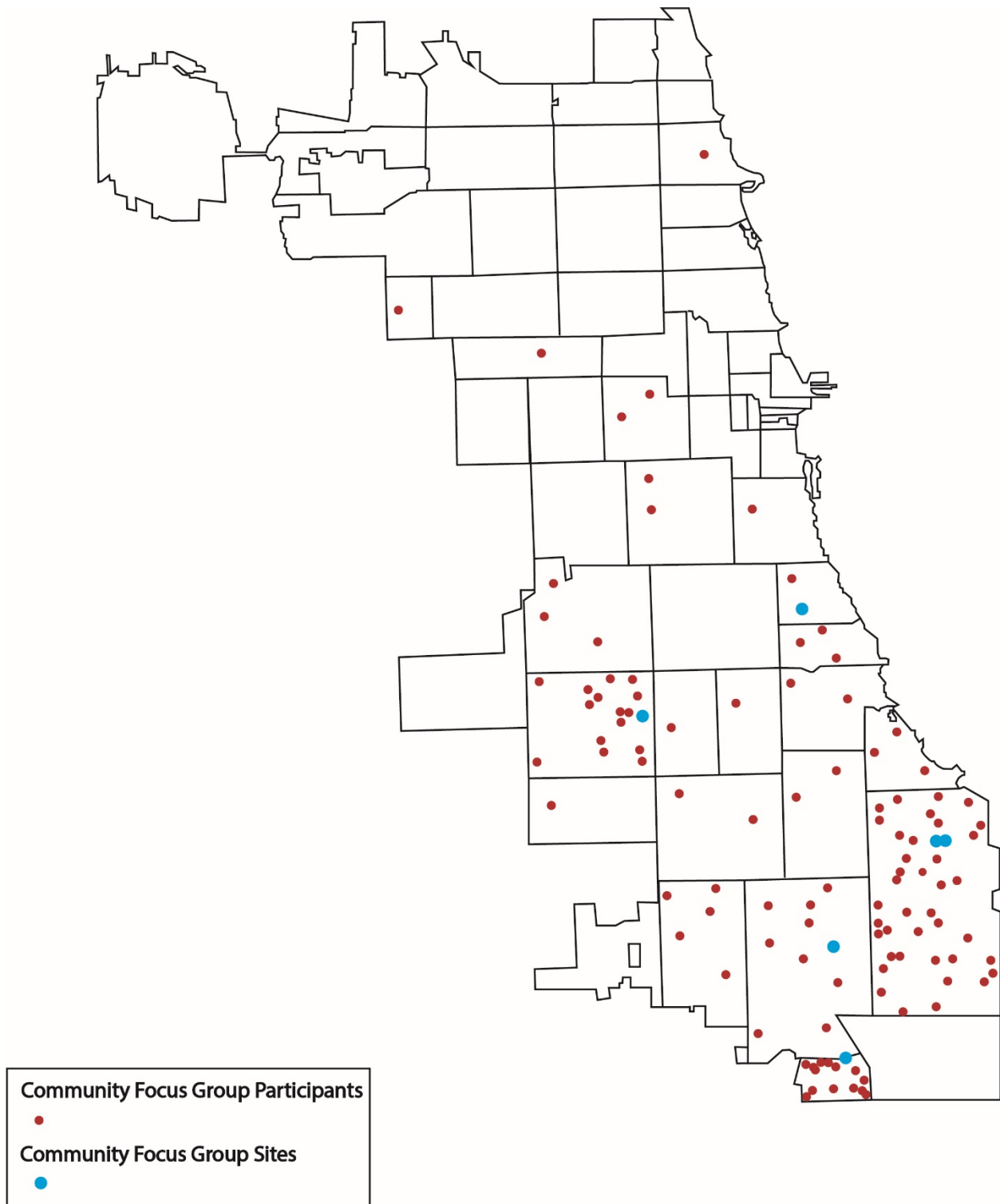




Community focus group participants came from across the city (Figure 7) and traveled to the focus group sites using a variety of modes, with 2 respondents using multiple modes. Three focus groups (301, 302, and 303) were held at residential buildings where many participants lived on-site. Excluding these groups, to get to the focus group site, 49 percent of respondents reported driving, 23 percent reported getting a ride, 14 percent reported walking, 13 percent reported using transit, 1 percent reported using Uber or Lyft, and 1 percent reported Other. No participants reported using a bike or taxi to travel to the focus group.

Figure 6: Mode of Travel to Focus Group (Excluding 301, 302, and 303)





Zip Code Boundaries Retrieved from City of Chicago Shapefile Database
* Dots represent occurrence in zip codes, not precise locations

Figure 7: Dot Density Map of Community Focus Group Participants with Sites

Focus Group Findings

This section details the coded themes from the community focus groups, examining community and transportation systems context, challenges and burdens, inequities, experiences, and identities, and responses.

Community and transportation systems context

Inadequate infrastructure

The theme of inadequate infrastructure came up in all 11 community focus groups. It included issues such as a lack of bicycle lanes, potholes, and the poor condition of sidewalks. The community focus group guide did not ask any questions directly related to this theme, but inadequate infrastructure came up often as a transportation barrier.

Many respondents identified potholes as a transportation barrier. Potholes can make riding the bus and driving uncomfortable: “We have craters. I mean, really. Really. It's serious, and I have a car that's close to the ground so I immediately feel anything I hit” (309). They can also cause serious damage to a car or a bicycle: “With the potholes, you'll mess your bike up. I'm trying not to cuss, but you'll mess your bike up” (309). The salt used to treat the roads in the winter was thought to contribute to the formation of potholes and also contributed directly to the damage of cars: “And not only is the potholes tearing up the car, but the way they treat the road, the salt and stuff they use. I see they're getting a little better now, but that stuff eats up the car” (309).

Another transportation barrier that came up for multiple modes is seemingly endless and unfinished construction: “They only got two seasons: winter and construction.” (309). Another respondent stated: “Unfinished work, where there's the little thing with the stripes on it and the beeping, with the rocks covering it, and sometimes it's half covered. It's just half-done work, and it'll sit there for months on end until somebody gets the permission to finish it” (309).

Broken streetlights were also discussed: “And in the South side I feel like you don't want to walk five blocks to the park because you have to go through the small street and guess what? The lights don't work. The streetlights are off” (310). One respondent expressed frustration that despite the security concerns, streetlights seemed to be a low priority for their¹ local alderman: “You've got to call the alderman fifty times to get them to even come and see if the light is working, and then it takes another gazillion years before they fix it” (305).

In terms of bicycling, many respondents reported that there were not enough bicycle lanes in their communities to make it a reasonable mode choice, especially since getting caught riding on the sidewalk can warrant a ticket and fine. Others felt unsafe, even in a bicycle lane, because cars and buses would often cross the lane to turn or stop:

¹ This report will use the generic, gender neutral third-person pronoun “they” when referring to particular respondents, in line with American Psychological Association Style guidelines. Direct quotations have not been altered.

The large streets, like 63rd or Archer, they have a bike lane but it is not protected and that entails a big risk. Especially, since some people are in a hurry and the roads are single lane, cars turn into the bike lane and don't look to see if any bicycle is coming. (311)

The condition of sidewalks and the complete lack of sidewalks in some areas are transportation barriers for pedestrians. One respondent pointed out that some bus stops are located on streets without sidewalks, making them impossible to access for those with limited mobility, or for everyone in the winter when snow and ice are piled high on the grass (306). Even on streets with sidewalks, the delay in clearing sidewalks after a snowfall or failing to remove overgrown weeds and trim trees could make them inaccessible and contribute to pedestrians walking in the street (304). One respondent shared: "I'm sorry, on the South side, the city doesn't do anything about the sidewalks. They don't come out and put snow and salt or come with the plowers... The rest of the block is like I'm walking in the street or I'm like tripping over mounds of snow" (305).

Many respondents compared the infrastructure in different parts of the city: "I know there's so many places that just literally don't have sidewalks, don't have streets, compared to other parts of the city that have bike lanes and double sidewalks and all types of bridges" (307). In terms of the location of bicycle lanes, a respondent shared: "And then also, there aren't a lot of bike lanes in the city. They're only in the trendy parts of the city, like the Wicker Parks or maybe some parts of downtown" (307). Discussing the condition of the roads and lack of sidewalks, one respondent mentioned:

So I've been South, I've been to Hegewisch, and I've been to Little Village and Pilsen [west and southwest of downtown], and I've been on the North side. So yeah, it's a difference between what I see on the South side and what I see on the North side, and if we're basing it on TIF [tax increment financing] or if we're basing it on income, yeah, it's different. The North side has their challenges, but not to the same level as anyone on the South side. And it's annoying, confusing, and it's irritating. (309)

A participant responded:

Oh, I just want to counter something that you mentioned earlier about this. I was up on the North side sometime this summer, and they do have potholes, because I hit one and the bottom that shields the car from the snow and the weather, came off. I was like, 'But I'm on the North side, this ain't supposed to happen.' But it did. So yeah, they do have potholes. (309)

Although this respondent pointed out that North side streets are in poor condition as well, their feeling that "this ain't supposed to happen" reflects assumed inequities. Not only are the distribution and quality of streetscape features, like lights and bicycle lanes, inequitable, but so is the entire street system itself:

Respondent 1: Back in the day in New York, they talked about how they made sure the bridges, so that the public, the buses couldn't get to the beach. They kept them too low.

So the, those bus lines had to stop far enough away. That was their way of keeping folks traveling to where they didn't want you to go. So that's their version now.

Respondent 2: I think it was Daley who make the expressway in the middle to sit here. Because you literally got to go to a main street to cross the bridge to get to the other side of town. (305)

Several respondents told stories about themselves and their neighbors advocating for infrastructure improvements, from installing a stop sign in front of a school for slowing traffic to improving the condition of sidewalks and curbs on a main commercial strip (304, 306). Respondents cautioned, however, that infrastructure improvements could be a sign that gentrification has occurred or will occur:

But as a person on my side of town, like since you know gentrification and all this other stuff, these like new developments that are coming up in our neighborhood, they just started making like enough room for bike lanes. But a couple of years back we didn't even have room to actually bike. (305)

Transit system design and reliability

The theme of transit system design and reliability came up in all 11 community focus groups. This code captured issues related to the coverage, schedule, and frequency of Chicago's transit systems. While the community focus group guide did not ask any direct questions about this theme, it came up often as respondents described the barriers of taking public transportation to different destinations.

Many respondents felt that buses and trains came too infrequently to make public transportation a reliable mode. One respondent explained that the express bus that they used to commute to work each morning was extremely overcrowded, to the point where it might not even stop to pick up new passengers, and this has made them late for work:

And if you're talking about a bus, a J14 bus, which takes you straight downtown via Lake Shore Drive, all of the South siderers in Chicago are trying to get on that bus. I've been late to work four times already. And I've had to call my boss like, Hey, a bus just rolled past me because it's full. Please don't write me up, please. Cause it's just like ridiculous. There's not enough buses coming on that route for the amount of commuters that are trying to get downtown or back from downtown. (305)

Respondents talked about the infrequency of Metra service, especially on the weekends: "I will do Metra to Evanston and back. That's limiting to some degree, because especially on the weekend there's a big gap where the train doesn't run. So you can get up there but then at 11:30, 12 o'clock, but you can't come home until five o'clock" (310). They also noted that CTA schedules were cut back in the evenings and on weekends: "The 26 is the only bus that run downtown here. But on weekends it don't run at all" (301). Another respondent shared:

Also, if I have a doctor's appointment at county hospital, or if I need to go to the emergency room either there or to Rush, certain buses don't run on the weekend and that's in the medical district, so how can people get medical service if they can't afford to call a cab or a Uber? (310)

Cutting back service in the evenings or on weekends fails to serve those who do not have a 9-to-5 work schedule: “This is a 24-hour world now, and once upon a time that weren’t that many people working on the night graveyard shift as they call it. Whole bunch of people are working overnight” (310). It also fails to serve those who use public transportation for activities outside of a commute, like visiting family and friends:

I think one of the challenges of like, when you’re going places or when you go and visit family, is you got to consider what time the bus stop running. So, you may not be ready to leave, but you will have to leave at a certain time. And then certain days, certain bus routes are not operating like some only operate during the weekdays. So, if during a weekday it takes you two buses to get some specific place, if you have to go to that place on the weekend when they don’t have that route running, you may have to take three or four buses instead, which, if you take a third or fourth bus, you’ll have to pay again for the transfer. (306)

Public transportation was also thought to be unreliable due to unexpected problems that could delay a trip: “And depending on how the signal switches work, you might be sitting on that for about 45 minutes waiting” (309). Weather could also cause long delays: “So on days like today we had, what? Two, three inches of snow, which is nothing for Chicago, but there were less buses on the routes and they were all bunched together” (310). Respondents described having to leave early to account for these unexpected challenges.

Several respondents that use Pace paratransit complained that the service is unreliable: “You can’t really rely on Pace to get you there on time and to pick you up and take you where you want to go” (303). This could include rides showing up late, taking them to the wrong destination, or cancelling at the last minute: “They come when they want to. You miss your appointment. And then when they come back to pick you up, you be sitting there an hour or two waiting for them to come back for you. And you already had a scheduled time for them to pick you up” (301). Even though Pace was thought to be unreliable, it was often the only mode that respondents who have disabilities could use if they could not get a ride from family or friends (301, 303).

The geographic coverage of bus and train routes was also discussed. One respondent shared:

And then also like, just having better routes, like having better routes for transportation because like sometimes I have to get off at like, you know, somewhere that’s not even really near my destination, but I have to get off cause that’s the only way that I can transfer over until I get to where I actually need to be. So I think like having better routes and like, just places like, you know, sometimes they don’t even actually stop in the neighborhood that you want to be in. Like they stopped ahead of it or like before it and then you have to walk. (305)

One respondent often chose not to take the bus because it could not drop them off close enough to their home: “I drove, and why I drove, because it didn’t make sense to get on the bus, because buses don’t go down the residential streets” (308). The limited geographic coverage of bus and train routes necessarily require that users walk to a designated stop, but in communities facing infrastructure,

personal security, and other challenges, that walk could be a major burden. One respondent thought that closer bus stops could help address this issue: “I say more bus stops. We need more bus stops. Yeah. Closer” (308). Several respondents called for better L train coverage on the South and Southwest sides, starting with the planned Red Line expansion (311).

Respondents also pointed out the differences between the transit system design and reliability on the North side and on the South and Southwest sides: “And because I take the bus, public trans[it], the bus all over the city, I have seen the difference in connecting routes. On the North side and the frequency, they're much better than on the South side” (310). One respondent explained that they do not like to take public transportation any further South than 55th Street because it feels “a little bit like desert-ish, like they stopped developing the rest of it” (309). Other respondents explained that train and bus stops felt closer together and the system felt more established on the North side. Another respondent shared:

And the same way the bus is on time, on the North side, it should be on time on the South side. We shouldn't be sitting at red lights killing lights because we running too fast because we're running behind. On the North side, they run just as smooth and they have even more traffic actually than we have. (308)

While there were certainly many concerns raised about the transit system design and reliability, one respondent pointed out: “I think we have the best transportation system, people say, so I think we should be a little proud of that too” (306). Another shared: “I have lived in other cities but in Chicago, the truth is we are lucky because the bus stops in every corner, vertically as well as at the main horizontal streets” (311). Several respondents spoke positively about the variety of transportation options in their neighborhood:

Yeah, for me, there is a bus that goes pretty much everywhere. There's a westbound, the westbound 47 bus that will take you as far west down 47th to Midway Airport or to Lake Park, whereas the 3 bus, which will take you as far south to 95th, or all the way downtown to Randolph. And then there's also the green line, which takes you down to 63rd up to, yeah, further north. So generally, it can take, pretty much get to all sides of the city with public transportation. There's also a red line, which is pretty close as well too. (307)

You got the Metra, you got the 87, you got 26, everything comes to 71st, so this is like the connection right here. You can go wherever direction, you're going West side or wherever. So that's one of the great things about living over here. You do have that option to ride wherever you may want. (302)

Transit customer experience and amenities

The theme of transit customer experience and amenities came up in all 11 community focus groups. It sought to capture the reasons why users might experience added stress on public transportation or why they might choose an entirely different mode, including interactions with other customers or with transit staff, the condition and location of shelters, and cleanliness. While the community focus group guide did not ask any direct questions about this theme, it came up often as respondents described the barriers of taking public transportation to different destinations.

Crowding came up as a concern in many focus groups: “The main barrier would probably be how crowded the buses can be, and delays, but really how crowded the bus and trains can be is crazy” (307). Another respondent mentioned: “They got to have more buses, more trains because they are overcrowded and that’s ridiculous. I don’t know how they could pack people in like sardines” (303). Transit riders with limited mobility and those with children were identified as populations that are most affected by the crowding, but many respondents saw wheelchairs, carts, and strollers as the reason for the crowding. Others saw poor bus and train design as the reason it felt so crowded: “We just have two front seats for handicapped. And there’s a lot of handicapped people.” (301). Crowding also limits the number of items users can bring on board, which made activities like grocery shopping more difficult to accomplish on public transportation: “If you got a shopping cart, because I used to have to go grocery shopping all the time, you don’t have enough space to put the cart and sit down. And then you got to think about other people on the bus too” (301).

Hostile interactions with transit employees, as well as with other customers, was another negative aspect of transit experiences. Several respondents brought up that bus drivers might not wait for passengers to sit down before driving off, which can be especially dangerous for older users: “One other thing too is sometimes when you’re on the bus, the bus doesn’t wait for you to get a seat, so next thing you know, you’re thrown all the way to the back of the bus and can’t hang on” (302). Another respondent shared:

I want to explain why I stopped riding the bus. I stopped riding the bus because the bus drivers were rude, they stop at the stops whenever they want, they skip stops and another reason is because on one occasion, a disabled person got on the bus and as you know, the driver should wait until the person’s wheelchair is secure before driving off. Well on this occasion the driver I think was in a bad mood and he took off before the person’s chair was secured and the wheelchair shot forward. (311)

Respondents that used Pace paratransit service complained that the drivers were sometimes poorly trained for meeting the needs of older riders and riders with disabilities: “But everybody don’t know how to treat you and they’re not trained properly whether they are young or old” (304). Sometimes heated interactions entirely stop the bus or train, delaying everyone on board (309). Other times, the interactions are more subtle, and simply make for a more uncomfortable ride: “I’ve seen it. Like people not giving up the seat for the elderly or for people with kids” (310).

Teenagers were thought to be especially troublesome:

Using profane language, they know it, to the elderly, like you know the priority seats they won’t get up. They’re sitting in a place they know they should give to the elderly. It’s just rude. They don’t even pay attention when they’re coming on the bus, bumping into you and take their backpacks and put it on your face. Things like that. (306)

Cleanliness was another factor that made public transportation undesirable. Asked why they choose to travel to work by car, a respondent shared: “You don’t get bothered, you know, you ain’t got to sit in a stinky area, which in trains are nasty, especially Pink Line is horrible” (310). Another respondent expressed:

I'm not getting on public transportation. Only way I was doing that was to go to work and even then I was carpooling with people because I don't like public transportation. It's filthy. People cough, and sneeze, and rub, and touch things, and I just get real creeped out real easily when it comes to that. (305)

The condition of bus stops was yet another discouraging feature:

When I go on 95th near Jeffrey, there's a whole one side of the street that has no sidewalk at all but there's bus stops there. They won't clean it if it's, you know, snow. They won't shovel or anything like that. It could be up to your knees but you have to stand there to wait for the bus. There's no benches or anything like that. (306)

Another element that impacted the customer experience was personal safety. Lighting around bus stops was repeatedly discussed: “The bus stop that's on 131st and Roseland don't have any lights. It's dark on that bus stop and it's dangerous, because my daughter have to leave and go to work at 1:30 in the morning, and it's dark, I mean no lights” (308). Overgrown landscaping around bus stops, especially on adjacent vacant lots, also impacted visibility and feelings of personal safety at bus stops (302).

Several respondents expressed frustration that the customer experience and amenities of public transportation seemed to differ between the North side and the South and Southwest sides: “You're going to have to excuse the language, but I get pissed at the fact that the Purple Line has clean cars, we don't. The Purple Line has policemen, we don't. Why? Who are they, that we are not?” (302). Respondents thought that the buses and trains that serviced the North side were cleaner than those on the South side: “They're cleaner up North” (310). Even the location and condition of bus shelters were seen to be worse: “On the South side, I mean, all up the road ain't no shelters. You got one on 119th, but no seats” (308). Another respondent shared:

The glass be broke, broken bottles and everything. There's people sleeping on the bus stop outside...You go get on the bus, you can't sit down because of Billy Bob right there laying down, so it's a little different. Up North, the police will take them off the bus stop in heartbeat. (310)

One respondent pointed out that there were fewer digital signs that share the estimated time of arrival of buses and trains on the South side: “Up North, there's one at every damn bus stop. Not every bus stop, but at every major street, at Halsted, Diversey. At the L station, they got them at every L station... Up North, but not South” (308).

Respondents also noted that there was less economic activity around bus and train stations on the South side:

There are no stores in our train stations. And that's a crime mitigator when you have activity. I also don't see, supervised public transportation employees in train stations on South side the way I see that up North. They're there all night hanging out, making sure people are going where they need to be. Our stations are unmanned. No commerce and stores, unmanned, poor lighting. (305)

There were also elements of public transportation that respondents liked: “What I like about the train is that you have time for yourself, you can read a book or if you are going with a friend, you can talk and when I take the car, I have to pay attention to the road and avoid being distracted” (311). Respondents spoke favorably about bicycle racks on the buses, which gave riders more flexibility (306). One respondent complained, however, that bicycles could not be taken on trains during rush hour (307).

Some respondents who depend on public transportation preferred to use Metra, even though it was more expensive: “I like riding the Metra better than the CTA, because it's a more comfortable ride to me” (308). Another respondent mentioned: “It's safer for me. You don't have to worry about getting robbed, getting your phone taken or getting jumped on, getting beat up. You'll have your purse when you get home. You don't have to worry about seeing fights and guns, and all that old crazy stuff” (302). One respondent shared that their wife even prefers Metra over driving: “It helped out my wife to catch the Metra and she saw how convenient it was because the driving, compared to public transportation, she would come in the house and be irritated. A lot of cussing. Within a month of riding the Metra, barely hear it” (306).

Sometimes, the customer experience was impacted by elements that are outside the direct control of transportation agencies, like feelings of personal safety in a neighborhood:

And I think my biggest issue is really like walking to the bus stop and like getting to where I have to, like, it's not even being on a train. All that stuff like just happens. But it's like actually getting to like the bus stop, getting to the train station. (305)

Food and opportunity sites proximity

The theme of food and opportunity sites proximity came up in 9 of the 11 community focus groups. This theme came up most often in response to being asked about the barriers of traveling to a grocery store. Respondents discussed where they lived compared to grocery stores and other sites that provided essential goods and services, employment, or education. In general, respondents agreed that “the difference from the South side to the North side, they have a lot of stuff closer” (310).

When asked which mode of transportation they use to go grocery shopping, it was common for respondents to bring up the lack of grocery stores in their neighborhood: “We're in a food desert. There's no way, you can't walk around the corner or two blocks to a store. There is no store” (306). Another respondent mentioned: “We have to walk long distances or get a ride or bus to get groceries” (304). On top of this, the bus routes to grocery stores might only run at rush hour, when they are most crowded and least accommodating for riders with bags, or might not stop close to the entrance: “Yeah, the bus stop gets you to Walmart, but okay, to get to Walmart you got to ride to 115th, get off at 115th, and catch the 111A, which gone drop you on Doty Road, you got another half a mile” (308). The food retail outlets that are available in food deserts, like corner stores and gas stations, tend to charge more and offer a limited selection:

A man was saying that the corner stores don't sell the same thing as the big grocery stores have. So now you're limited to the products that you can have and they might not be as good... So that's probably the way it is with a lot of products that if you have to go into these little convenience stores you end up paying twice the amount straight across the board. So whether it's milk or bread you need or whatever, you're going to pay

through the nose because you can't go outside the community if you don't have transportation. (304)

Besides the distance, many respondents shared that the decision to drive to the grocery store also had to do with the problem of carrying heavy groceries: "But, I drove because the store's pretty far. I mean, I'm not going to walk that far, and then you gotta carry - no. I wouldn't feel safe nor comfortable, and I just, no. No. I have cases of water to carry!" (305).

Some respondents did live close to a grocery store, which gave them more flexibility when choosing a mode to do their shopping: "We're lucky enough to have a grocery store that was just put up right across the street from where I live which is great because now I can just walk to the grocery store back and forth" (310). But even with a grocery store nearby, some respondent still preferred to drive: "To go grocery shopping is about a block. I just drive there. To go shopping I do drive" (310).

One older respondent described why they travel downtown to go grocery shopping, instead of walking to a neighborhood store:

When leaving home I go from the South side downtown, because I'm lucky to be on a bus route, so it's just easier for me to get off and go downtown to do what I need to do at Target or Walgreens and then bring it all the way back to the South side rather than walk a round trip of 8 to 12 blocks in the neighborhood...I live approximately 5500 South so I go all the way down to State and Madison [likely at least 55 blocks], because it shortens my walking distance. So as I said, if I do it in the neighborhood, which is fine in the summertime, but I have to go round trip 10 to 12 blocks and that's just too much - So several times a week I'll get on the bus and go downtown and get what I need and bring it back. (310)

A few respondents mentioned that because of their dietary restrictions or preferences, including being vegetarian or vegan, they have to travel further to find grocery stores that have an adequate selection of items that can meet their needs (307). Other respondents mentioned that even though there may be stores located in their neighborhood, their preferred stores are located further away:

I wish I felt more comfortable shopping in my neighborhood instead of going outside of my neighborhood. Only because when I do shop for personal items, things of that nature, I could take my time and to look, see what I want, to read this, that and the other. But when I go to some stores within where I live, I have to call people to unlock the cabinets and hand it to me. I don't feel comfortable shopping. Because I read the bottle and it's like they're standing here and watching me to determine whether or not if I want it or not so they can put it back in the cabinet. So I prefer to go outside of the neighborhood. (310)

Instead of going to the closest grocery store, I'll drive to Costco, because I know that's one stop. I can get everything I need in bulk and I won't have to go back for a month or two. If there was a place to buy in bulk closer, or at least if the prices were lower, then I'd probably shop locally more, instead of just going for convenience. (305)

One respondent pointed out that improving transportation without addressing food and opportunity sites proximity would still leave people with an unfair transportation burden: “So the better transportation really is not the work. It’s not going to solve anything. Because then he goes and spends two hours to go shopping. So I think to help with transportation, open the stores back up so people can walk to good food” (304).

Challenges and burdens

Financial costs

The theme of financial costs came up in all 11 community focus groups. Several respondents commented on the high cost of living in Chicago, in which transportation costs, associated with driving, ride-hailing services, public transportation, and bicycling, are just part of the expense. The community focus group guide did not ask any questions directly related to monetary constraints, but financial costs came up often as a consideration and barrier.

In terms of driving a personal vehicle, respondents brought up the costs of tolls, municipal vehicle registrations, maintenance, repairs, insurance, tickets, gas, and parking, especially downtown: “So I would love to be able to drive, but I work on Michigan and Lake and parking is \$57 a day. I mean, not gonna pay that” (305). The cost of parking downtown led many respondents to choose other modes: “And if you going downtown, driving is just almost like no, because it’ll cost you more to park than whatever you were going to do down there” (306). The cost of maintaining a car in the city was often discussed in conjunction with the poor condition of streets: “I don’t make a lot of money to be spending it on repairing the car...There are a lot of potholes on the streets” (311).

Respondents also mentioned the cost of ride-hailing services: “Uber and Lyft can get expensive. I mean you’re talking about a whole meal that you cook for one way. At least” (310). Another respondent described that while ride-hailing services might be convenient and affordable for short, local trips, longer trips would be too expensive: “And me personally, my family’s in Oak Park, so it’s a 20 minute drive for me to get there. But yeah, I couldn’t - Ubering there just is a hassle. I couldn’t do it. It’d be too much” (307). Because of the higher cost, ride-hailing services were often seen as more of a late-night or emergency option: “But if it’s an emergency and I need to get somewhere, if I ain’t got no gas to get where I go. Okay, I’ll just use that little \$14 to get where I got to go” (308).

Participants also discussed the cost of public transportation, with many feeling that the fares were too high, especially for seniors and young adults. Respondents expressed that it was unfair that users without a Ventra card had to pay a full fare each time they transferred, ultimately paying double what Ventra card users paid if they transferred once during their trip, and triple if they transferred twice (310). Another respondent thought it was unfair that all Chicago residents paid the same fare: “But for Chicago, like you said, it’s \$2.50 no matter where you live. Somebody in Lincoln Park who can easily afford it can get on versus somebody who’s in Archer Heights who is struggling to pay \$2.50. It’s really unfair” (307). In response to this comment, a respondent added: “Yeah, I feel like if you ask somebody to take a third of their hourly wage and put it towards transportation in any other part of the city, they’ll probably be like, ‘No’” (307).

While respondents acknowledged that enforcement was inconsistent, not having enough money to cover the fare could lead to a rider being refused service: “Another time a person got on the bus and

needed just \$0.05 to pay for the ride and did not have a credit card with him. The driver made the person get off the bus in the middle of winter” (311). Another respondent shared an experience of paying for a child who did not have enough money to pay the bus fare.

Still, many respondents relied on public transportation, or made the switch from driving, because it cost less: “I use public transportation a lot, my license was suspended maybe 4 years ago. Once I started using it...I saw how easy it was and saved a lot of money on gas” (306). A student respondent shared that the U-Pass they receive from their college influences their choice to take public transportation:

Yeah, so I do take public transportation just because I have the U-Pass as a student. So it's absolutely free. Why not use it when I have it? So I do rely, like I said, a lot on public transportation because of that, so I have it. Every quarter that I have school it's active, so even on the weekends, in the morning. So I use it because of that. (310)

Some respondents commented on bicycling as an affordable transportation mode in terms of maintenance costs, parking, and fees (309). However, one respondent brought up that ticketing was a problem: “And they give you a \$150 ticket if your bike is on the sidewalk” (310). Another respondent pointed out that without a personal bicycle, renting one can be expensive: “I feel like I've never gotten on a Divvy bike, because I just had this idea that they cost a lot of money. No one had ever told me, ‘Oh yeah, you could totally get on a Divvy, it's very affordable’” (307).

A few respondents also gave insight into the quick cost benefit analysis they do when considering whether a trip is worth the cost. One respondent considered whether a trip to the park with their daughter was worth the bus fare: “So should I spend 2.50 on myself and on my daughter just to take her to the park. And instead you feel like, ‘No, that's fine.’ For 30 minutes or 40 minutes you’re gonna be at the park, you know?” (310). Another respondent considered whether visiting friends was worth the gas money: “Or just having to drive a really long distance, having to drive 40 minutes up north to see a friend, and then being like, ‘Oh, we didn't even do nothing. I could have stayed home and saved all this gas money.’ It's actually like, the financial barrier” (307).

While financial costs weighed, sometimes heavily, on a respondent’s mode choice, other factors mattered, too. Respondents in several focus groups commented on their preference to ride Metra over Pace or CTA because of the comfort and security it provided, despite the higher cost. One respondent described: “And to me, yeah, I have a car, I pay my car note, pay my insurance, but it still balance out for me pretty well, because I don't like walking around the streets like that. It's very very dangerous I think” (308). Explaining how cost factors into their mode choice, a student respondent described:

But trying to go to Columbia in a car, I was doing that for a while. I was driving and paying for parking during my classes, and realizing I'm spending almost \$100 a week on parking. And well, that doesn't work, because I don't make that much money. But it was a safety thing. I don't feel safe on the train. And finding out like, oh, all my classes now next semester are going to be at night, so I have to figure out how, at 10 o'clock, I'm supposed to be getting home. If he can't pick me up, what am I, how am I going to navigate that, and do I take the Uber and spend another large amount of money? (307)

Time costs

The theme of time costs came up in all 11 community focus groups. Respondents focused on the relative time costs of driving and using public transportation. The community focus group guide did not ask any questions directly related to this theme, but time costs came up often as a consideration and barrier. While time was one factor that respondents considered when choosing a transportation mode, other factors, like financial costs, security, and convenience, seemed to weigh more heavily. For example, asked why they take public transportation to go grocery shopping, one respondent shared: “I didn't have another option, it's very time consuming but it's more cost efficient to do that” (306).

Generally, driving was thought to be the fastest transportation mode, cutting travel times significantly: “I used to work out West and it took me almost an hour and a half to get to Pulaski and Ogden on the train and a bus, but when I drive it takes me 45 minutes. So I cut the train out altogether just to drive” (310). However, traffic caused by construction, weather, and rush hour were identified as some of the biggest time costs when driving. One respondent shared: “But during rush hour, it's crazy the number of people who are now crowding our main artery streets” (309). Another respondent described: “I am one of those that look at my phone to see what the weather is like and automatically, there is snow on the ground. I leave one hour early because I would like to drive at the usual speed but it is not possible if it has snowed” (311).

Public transportation was thought to take more time than driving and several respondents told stories of excessively long commutes on public transportation. A respondent described their commute home after a second shift: “So if you got off work at 11 o'clock, you get to 95th Street about 12, you'd miss the 12 o'clock bus. The next bus not till one o'clock, which means you're not getting out there until like two something” (308). A younger respondent mentioned: “But I know when I was in high school, like there's some of my friends that would have to get up at like five o'clock in the morning just to be in school at eight o'clock because it's like so much like to actually get to the station” (305). Others shared:

Once I worked in Oak Brook, and I would take public transportation because I wasn't driving then. I would take the Red Line, well I was living on 103rd and Halsted. I would take that to the Red Line to the Blue Line, end of the line Blue Line, get on that bus and it was a 30 more minute ride from there. And I did that for a while. Then I found out about the 877, which is downtown Harvey. Take one hour to get to Oak Brook from there. Yeah, it took me two hours to get to work every day and two hours to get back, right. Unless I wanted to stay overnight. (306)

I think especially the distance itself, like if you have to go from the South side all the way to the North side, just that alone. If you take the train, that's probably an hour and a half. And then you have to make sure if you miss the bus, that's another 30 minutes that you'll have to wait. (307)

One respondent described how a train or bus getting off schedule by just a couple of minutes could entirely throw off a commute:

Like where I was living before, I lived in Edgewater, but I worked in North Lawndale. So like I had to be there at 7:15 and I would have to leave the house by 5:45. And if don't

leave the house by 5:45, I missed the 6:45 bus at Roosevelt, which means I'm not getting to school by 7:15. Which sometimes, like the bus is there 6:43 and so it leaves me anyways, and sometimes it doesn't leave till 6:49 and I'm going to be late anyways. (305)

Respondents described long wait times for buses and trains, especially when traveling on the weekends:

Sometimes on the weekend, as mentioned before, I believe that Monday through Friday is when public transportation is used the most because people are working, but also on Saturdays and Sundays, public transportation is cut back way too much and there are not a lot of options available, the intervals are every 45 minutes to an hour. (311)

Long wait times are especially challenging in the winter: "So if you miss the 63rd Street bus, you're standing out there in the cold wind for another 20, 25 minutes" (310). Another respondent mentioned:

When I had to go to work and I had to catch the bus on Sundays and the weekends and stuff, it takes like 45 minutes, have me sitting at the bus stop 45 min to an hour waiting. And it's snowing and cold. Oh my god. I remember those days. (301)

Many respondents use applications on their phones to track the estimated time of arrival for a bus or train to minimize time spent waiting outdoors (310). However, these applications were not always reliable: "It says it'll be there in 10 minutes and you waiting there two hours" (303).

Respondents who depend on public transportation often have to budget extra time to ensure that they do not arrive to their destination late: "Well if you want to get to something on time you have leave out kind of early because sometimes your bus or train can be delayed" (306). Unexpected issues, like problems with signal switches on the L train, could cause major delays, sometimes of 45 minutes or longer (309). Older respondents who use Pace paratransit services complained of wait times of several hours, even though the ride is scheduled in advance.

Security

The theme of security came up in all 11 community focus groups. It captured respondents' comments on the perceived and actual threat of violence while using any transportation mode. The community focus group guide did not ask any questions directly related to this theme, but security came up as a main transportation barrier. The threat of violence from police was a dominant sub-theme and is discussed more thoroughly in the section on Mobility Experiences Shaped by Racial, Age, Disability, Gender Identities.

Personal security factored into decisions on when to travel and which route to take: "I know people who would take the bus to go to a further train stop than walking to the train, which could be the same amount of time as that bus ride, walking" (307).

Many respondents felt that public transportation was unsafe, especially the L train. One respondent described an experience of getting robbed on the L train:

I was on the train and actually got robbed. I was on the train and they both came - one came from this side and one came from this side. And they pulled out guns and they said give us your wallet and whatever and I said, I aint got no wallet. I got nothing. The guy just told me to shut up and sit down. They started pulling ladies' chains off, and phones, purses. They took everything and got away with it. (301)

The Metra train was sometimes considered a safer option: "So we got like one route, basically, the Metra train station, which I feel safe on" (308).

Another respondent explained how shopping bags can increase the chance of being targeted for robbery: "Then you don't want your packages to attract attention. You know, you don't want people to know, 'Oh she went to Target and then she went over here to Marshalls,' because you got these bags" (306).

Some respondents took precautions to avoid being targeted while on public transportation or to be able to respond if attacked: "I'm not on public transportation much anymore, but when I was, I carried mace with me before, or did my fancy keys through my fingers just in case I had to swipe, and had a crazy look on my face all the time" (305). Another respondent shared:

I won't wear my ear pods, the more expensive ones. I just wear the regular ones. I watch the type of clothes I wear. Things that ask for it...You don't want to attract the wrong type of person, you know? You work hard for the things you have so I wear nothing that's going to draw attention to me. Nothing. I don't wear my Apple watch, because they just prey on the simplest thing, you know? (310)

Participants discussed cameras as a potential security intervention for public transportation, but were skeptical that they would actually deter crime: "And then they say they have a camera as if they watching and seeing everything. But you don't end up - people have been shot and dead by the time you get there" (304). Some respondents thought that additional police or security personnel on buses and trains would help deter crime, but others asked: "What police officer you know make you safe?" (308). Respondents in one focus group rejected the idea that more police would make the community safer, instead advocating for community and economic development investments, and reflected nostalgically on the Guardian Angels: "They weren't the police, they were just dudes in the neighborhood who volunteer their time and they rode all the trains and it just felt safer" (305).

Other respondents thought that while riding buses and trains did pose a threat, the bigger threat came when walking through neighborhoods to get to a destination: "But when you go on public transportation you usually can get dropped off a bus stop within a block or so, but then walking in the neighborhood it's not as safe" (310). An older respondent shared: "Actually in this neighborhood it's hard to walk. I wouldn't walk from here to the store. I was robbed already. And so I am scared. I would go with someone, if someone was gonna walk with me I'd say alright come on" (301). Another respondent explained the difference between walking on the North side or downtown and the South side:

It's just safer to have a car on the South side. North side you don't mind walking, or downtown you don't mind walking...You just skipping, you got a smile on your face. And down South you're looking over your shoulder. Meanwhile you got your hands on your wallet. Somebody say hi, you're like, 'Why are you looking at me?' Things just look different. (310)

Respondents who drove or used ride-hailing services did so, in part, to avoid unwanted confrontations and threats of violence that they considered to be more prevalent when using other modes: "It is easier and safer for me to take the car rather than using public transportation" (311). Another respondent shared: "I drive. I'm scared to get on buses. Too much stuff be happening on buses, and I be scared. And plus sometimes by our house, our street lights don't be on, so I'm a have to run to the bus stop. I can't do it. I've got to drive" (308). Several other respondents shared similar views:

And there is a lot of shooting that happens around where we live...Like just last night. So there's always, we always try to stay in more. We definitely feel like cars are a necessity for our lives, personally. Yeah, I think that was our safety piece. You know that it's definitely hot, even in the wintertime. (307)

Yeah, generally for me, if I'm away from home, and it's late, and I'm not maybe within like 15 minutes, I'll just get a Uber, because it's generally just better to avoid the risk of having to walk from the bus, walk from the train. Yeah, so usually ride services are the most safe option for being away from home at later hours. (307)

While this respondent considered ride-hailing services a safe option after dark, another respondent rejected this claim: "These new Ubers and Lyfts been participating in this human trafficking project. This lady just was in the Uber and they tried to kidnap her two days ago, and she had to bust her way out. So I wouldn't trust no lady getting in no Lyft or no Uber" (308).

Some respondents felt that personal security was a major concern "anytime of the day and night" (308). Others felt that the threat increased after dark. Poor lighting came up as reason why walking and bicycling, as well as waiting at bus or train stations, can feel unsafe: "And in the South side I feel like you don't want to walk five blocks to the park because you have to go through the small street and guess what? The lights don't work. The streetlights are off" (310).

One older participant explained that they watch out for their neighbors by monitoring what goes on in the neighborhood from their window:

Well, if I can't wait for you or help you or whatever, you can bet I will have my eye on you. So then if something happened I can help you...Because you know why? By me not helping you or helping you, I'm jeopardizing myself, because I could be a target as well. (308)

Several respondents shared that their main transportation barrier was the fear of gun violence: "But my main concern when I'm traveling is that I'm going to get shot by crossfire, even on a train, bus, bike or whatever" (308). Many respondents blamed youth for the violence, but one respondent shared a call to action for adults to stop villainizing youth and start working to make the community safer:

So like yeah we can look at the youth in an enemy way, we can say they dress in black, they only come out at a certain time. But what are we as adults doing to change our youth? It's all us too. We are passing the torch off to them, but we have to pass it along the right way. (304)

Inequities, experiences, and identities

Mobility experiences shaped by racial, age, disability, gender identities

The theme of mobility experiences shaped by racial, age, disability, and gender identities came up in all 11 community focus groups. This theme captures how participants' intersectional identities informed their transportation mode choices and identifies unique transportation barriers people face, including policing practices. The community focus group guide did not ask any questions directly related to this theme.

Respondents presented age as a major influence on transportation mode choice for both older and younger adults. A few older participants used a personal vehicle as their primary mode of transportation, but many depended on rides from family and friends or on public transportation to complete their daily tasks, like going to the grocery store or a doctor's appointment. One respondent mentioned: "Well, I used to walk to the grocery store and ride the bus also. And I didn't have any problems but now that I've gotten older, I've gotten accident-prone. I fall. I cannot walk by myself" (301). Many used Pace paratransit, though a negative opinion of this service was common. One respondent mentioned that Pace paratransit rarely comes at its scheduled time: "Like yesterday my ride was at 6:51 AM, they came at 6:15 AM and then they left me and that's not fair" (304). They also complained about the way they are treated by Pace drivers:

And because what they fail to realize, people with disabilities can't move like them. People with disabilities can't see like them. People with disabilities, they, you don't know what type of condition they have or whether it's a heart condition or cancer or whatever it is. They ought to be able to treat people right. (304)

Older participants also felt more vulnerable in terms of personal safety: "Well, I think everybody is a prey but I think once you get up in age it's more likely because people don't feel like you can defend yourself" (310). They also had a harder time finding an accessible seat on the bus or train, especially at rush hour, and with a walker or cart (308). One respondent shared: "Sometimes it's not full and you struggle to get on a bus and people sitting there looking at you struggling and don't help. Do not assist. Know you're a senior, know you're struggling and they just sit there and look at you" (302). Older participants also brought up that working elevators at train stations were increasingly rare, and that bus drivers often gave them attitude when they asked for help:

I'd have to beg them to bring that lift down. Because they'll come up to you, they'll see you with a Rollator and they'll sit there and you have to say, 'Can you let it down?' Because the bus on the side says, 'This bus kneels.' Well, could you kneel it please? And then they get an attitude to find the button. Like you're the problem. (302)

For these reasons, among others, some respondents called for the CTA to dispatch senior buses, just like some universities have student buses (302, 305).

Young people also had transportation barriers, including the high cost of transportation. One respondent pointed out that some young people do not leave their neighborhood because of personal security concerns:

He said they are not going anywhere. That problem of fear and violence is upset to nature that some of these young people don't leave their block. Don't. Some of them can't leave Altgeld Gardens and come into Concordia Apartments or come into Golden Gates or vice versa because there's so much different gang affiliation. (304)

Another respondent described a situation where they were touched on the train, which informed their decision never to ride the train again: "I don't take the train at all, because it just seems like the craziest people get on the train, and I've had a man physically just walk up to me and pat me down on the Red Line, and so I'm like, last time on the train. Never again" (305).

Race, however, was the identity that dominated the discussion, both informing transportation mode choice and creating several transportation barriers. One African American respondent explained why they prefer to drive:

You try to limit your walking in neighborhoods as much as possible while in Chicago, especially on any side of Chicago, especially being an African American in Chicago, because you never know what or who, you could be misidentified, you could just be just at the wrong place at the wrong time. So you'd rather just get to your destination, in the house, and back in your car and back to your house. (308)

Another respondent suggested that driving and ride-hailing services offer Black and Brown people a sense of control that they may not have in other aspects of their life:

One thing for people who drive and who take Lyft and Uber and so on and so forth, as African Americans, Black and Brown people, right? We feel that we're dictated to all the time, right? And so when we take transportation, meaning Uber, Lyft or we're driving, we're in control. (308)

Respondents described the threat of violence from police: "Because there's a difference in probable cause in Black neighborhoods than it is in White neighborhoods" (308). Driving, the mode that some respondents said offered the most control, still came with this threat:

Respondent 1: When you driving, a lot of problems that you'll have too, is you got CPD. They got attitude problems and they will pull you over for God's sake and for nothing. And then that could escalate to something else, like either they could kill you, they could stop you for no reason. Your taillight is working, you got license and insurance. So you got to worry about CPD and they problems and them not trying to solve crime. They're trying to do a traffic stop, you know? You ain't going to catch them in no urban cities looking for no dangerous stuff, but they'll just stop you for, "I thought this wasn't your car."

Respondent 2: Driving while Black.

Respondent 1: Or, "I thought you didn't have no insurance." (308)

One respondent clarified that when it comes to police acting hostile, it is less about the neighborhood they are patrolling than it is about race:

But like you said, when you're in the car when you're driving, and honestly, from my, like you said, in our neighborhoods, mostly the police seem hostile. But when I'm in more affluent neighborhoods, I think the police are just as hostile to me. I can't say for other people, but I can say for me that I think it's not no variation. They just be hostile for the most part. (305)

Something as basic as driving a nice car can make Black men a target as well: "That also plays into how nice your car is also. As a darker skinned male driving a nice car, police or people target you, you seem like a drug dealer. You seem like doing something illegal" (305). One parent shared their logic for purchasing an older car for their Black son:

I live north, you know, and I live in a, I guess affluent-ish neighborhood. And it's not predominantly Black or Brown, so for me and my son who's, you know, almost an adult, I worry about him driving. You know, it's like, well, I don't want to get a nicer car. I get an okay car. So the likelihood of him being stopped, may be less likely. (305)

Another African American respondent reflected on how exhausting it is to be hyper-visible during their long commute on public transportation:

To feed off that too, after you brought that up, just being African-American, especially when you have certain look, then you're not as call it clean cut how they want you to be, and you see different races and stuff like that. A lot of people kind of just gravitate their eyes towards you, and you can feel that. And sometimes it's like whatever, the other times it's like you have to be very self-aware, just because it's like I said, I was, same thing like you said, I was commuting literally across the city, like southwest, northeast, it doesn't really matter, and you see all types of different people. So if that's three, four hours out of every day of your life, you just have to, like I said, you have to factor in a lot of things basically. (307)

In a discussion about taking public transportation on the West side, one respondent discussed race and other riders' behaviors around perceived safety. The participant noted: "But people live in Oak Park² and they take the train. But I think they get on cars together, they feel safer in masses, non-people of color" (309). In response, someone stated: "The Green Line going west, when you're on there at rush hour with a lot of Oak Parkians, is like coming from Harlem to Manhattan" (309).

² Oak Park is a western suburb with service on two L lines. Non-Latinx White residents are the majority of residents, and the median income and educational attainment of the residents is higher than the region as a whole. It borders the majority Black Chicago neighborhood Austin. More details available at <https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/data/community-snapshots>.

One respondent suggested that the city should reopen the train stations that have closed on the South and West sides,³ but others in the group were skeptical that any improvement would benefit current residents:

Respondent 1: Exactly. So why wouldn't they spend money to do that?

Respondent 2: Because Black and Brown people live over there.

Respondent 3: So when it gets gentrified, guess what? It's gone come back. Just like the Western stop on the Green Line. (309)

Being stopped by police while riding a bicycle presented another barrier, particularly in overpoliced areas on the South and Southwest sides: "Black people are more apt to be stopped" (309). One respondent mentioned:

I don't ride bikes at all, but I know people have had issues with like being stopped by the police to check and see if that's their bike. Is it registered? So it's like, you know, note to everybody who has a bicycle, make sure you register your bike. So you get stopped and it doesn't happen up North. It doesn't happen. It happens mainly in, you know, predominantly Black and Brown neighborhoods where more people are stopped on their bicycles and asked if those bikes belong to them and where is it registered. (305)

Another respondent described the gendered differences of bicycling while Black:

But now I have a freedom, despite me being a female, that I don't have in a car riding with a Black guy. Black guys on bikes, it's a different story, in the hood wearing a jacket or looking a certain type of way. Those are the guys that get stopped, because they look a certain type of way. It's that ethnic, cultural, "What you doing on a bike, bro? What's in your bag bro?" It's different than being a female riding a bike in the winter or riding a bike period. I might get harassed on a bike because I'm wearing tights and leg wear or whatever, but it's different. (309)

One respondent shared their personal experience being stopped by a police officer for riding on the sidewalk and expressed frustration at the fact that he was stopped in an area with no bicycle lanes:

The police has stopped me several times, I'm on the sidewalk. I just got out the street to get somewhere. I was trying to get to somebody's house. They stopped me like, 'Come here. You know you're not supposed to be riding on the sidewalk.' 'I'm just riding to somebody's house. Why do you need my ID if I'm going to somebody's house? I could ride my bike to the house right there and put the bike.' 'No, you should have walked it then.' 'What you stop me for? We don't have nothing to ride on.' (306)

³ The respondent may have been referring to one of several stations where service was terminated in 1992, due to CTA budget cuts. These include Laramie (Pink Line) and California (Green Line) on the West Side, as well as Harvard and Wentworth, which are also on the Green Line but on the South Side ("CTA's cuts," 1992).

Reflecting on the reasons for the lack of bicycle culture on the South and Southwest sides of Chicago, a respondent pointed out: “Sorry to bring it up in here y’all, because it’s a lot of tension. But the police officers, they’re on bikes” (309). With this statement, they implied that if police officers are the only population riding bicycles in the community, residents are unlikely to see it as an acceptable mode. Building bicycle culture, then, is not just about improving access and education, but also about who is enacting a behavior.

Responses

Adaptations

The theme of adaptations came up in all 11 community focus groups. This theme covered social negotiation and community context around mobility mode and destination choice, including suppressed trips, the impact of weather, and the appeal of driving. The community focus group guide asked about how respondents traveled to a variety of destinations, like the grocery store, to visit family and friends, and to work, school, or church. These questions revealed that respondents weigh several factors when deciding which mode to take and when, including cost, convenience, safety, time, and comfort.

Discussing the challenges they face when traveling around their neighborhood, one respondent stated: “Now you know the reasons we don’t go shopping” (301). Suppressed trips included cases where respondents choose not to travel at certain times, on certain routes, or using certain modes. While most respondents had a positive association with cars and driving, factors that could lead to a suppressed trip using this mode included traffic caused by construction or rush hour, the lack of parking, and the cost of gas. One respondent explained that the anxiety produced by driving for much of the day and the trauma associated with car crashes led them to choose bicycling and public transportation over driving (306). Cars and heavy traffic themselves, without proper pedestrian infrastructure, could also lead to a suppressed trip for walkers: “I sometimes think that I need to go the Bank of America and I say to myself ‘I am not going’ and it’s across the street but cars go so fast and there is no stop sign” (311).

Certain aspects of public transportation could lead to a suppressed trip, including crowding, hostile interactions with staff or other customers, and bunching, delays, and long wait times. Another factor that could discourage the use of public transportation was the cost, especially when a trip involves multiple stops (310). It was common for respondents, especially students, to mention that they chose to use public transportation when traveling downtown due to traffic and high parking costs, but some respondents still preferred to drive downtown (309). Capturing this sentiment, one respondent stated: “So yeah, it’s convenient to do so, but you’re kind of like [sigh], but you have to do it” (310). Even if a particular route was faster, some respondents had a preferred route to travel downtown: “I would take more time and take, go out of my way to take the 6 to go downtown instead of take the Red just because I wanted to be on, see some greenery, not be exposed to the Red Line” (305).

Respondents felt that taking public transportation requires more planning in order to align a trip with the train or bus schedules and to avoid crowding at rush hour: “Make sure you plan out your route before you leave out... A, B, and C routes too” (306). Several respondents expressed frustration at the limits public transportation schedules put on their plans and the additional burdens placed when the most direct route stops running. One student explained that if they got out of class before 5:30, they could catch a bus straight home, but if class got out late or they had to stay for activities, they had to take a train and bus that drops them off several blocks from their house. And while they expressed that

they did not mind walking this distance, “it’s kind of sketchy, especially at that time” (310). Similarly, another student respondent described that they often had to call an Uber if they stay after class for extracurricular activities or to use the library because of how infrequently the Orange Line runs: “So yeah, I’ll just have to call Uber, because I stay on the Southwest side. Nothing really runs over there after 11:00. So it’s just no other way around it” (307). Another respondent explained that the extensive time it takes them to travel to visit friends in different neighborhoods could be an obstacle to going out at all (306).

Some respondents used information on social media to help choose a mode or route, or to delay travel:

Sometimes I've seen the benefit of some people on social medias so they can find out, oh there's a shot on 39th Street, it's like okay I've seen it, it'd be on there faster than it'll be on the news, faster than somebody calling you. So you're like, "Okay, I'm going to switch over to this line. Switch over to that." So as much as there's bad in social media, there's some good in it that let's you know, don't come home yet. (306)

Personal security was a major concern for respondents using any mode that led to suppressed trips:

And like I say, that all of a sudden violence, like the trains, it might be shooting off the expressway or on the train and it might hesitate you a little bit and you might have to pick what day to go to which block or go down what street. (306)

Ride-hail services were identified as a safer alternative at night, but cost was often brought up as a prohibiting factor.

One respondent highlighted the importance of staying on major thoroughfares, rather than traveling through residential areas, to avoid unwanted confrontations using any mode: “It’s an unfamiliar neighborhood. Now you get everybody looking at you coming up the block. Don’t know what you got going through your mind. You don’t know what they got going in theirs” (306). Another respondent mentioned that main thoroughfares are also more likely to be well paved and shoveled than residential streets (311).

Chicago’s weather was also a factor that impacted travel mode and destination choice. Respondents reported that wait times for trains and buses after a snowfall were longer, and there tended to be more bunching, which could contribute to a suppressed trip. In terms of walking, one respondent mentioned: “When it’s warm I can do the walk for exercise but when the weather changes, they pick me up” (301). Respondents also explained that bicycling might be an acceptable mode in the warmer months, but as cold, snow, and ice appear, it becomes an unsafe and undesirable option. Even driving becomes more challenging with snow and ice, as the risk of accidents increased (310). A respondent shared: “Right, and with winter coming, it's worse, because if you shovel yourself out, people like to do the save thing in Chicago. I try not to do that. I shovel. I shovel a lot, but if you've worked so hard, it's really hard to leave that spot” (305). But regardless of whether service was affected by the weather, respondents seemed likely to choose driving in the winter because it was more comfortable and convenient: “But in the event that the weather is not permitting, I try to go into a vehicle as much as possible, because Chicago is

bitterly cold, so I don't want to be standing at the bus stop cold waiting two or three hours to get there and back" (308).

The appeal of driving was a dominant sub-theme. Referring to their car as a "second home" (310), justifying purchasing a car by stating "Because I've worked 40-something years and I wanted to buy me a car! I've paid my dues!" (308), and expressing that "my feet is for gas pedal and brakes, so it's not for pavements, especially in Chicago" (308) were common sentiments. In general, respondents felt that a car was more convenient, comfortable, and safe. Some respondents with a car mentioned that it allows them to be an important asset and resource in the community, since family and neighbors can depend on them for a ride to get to the grocery store or a doctor's appointment (304). Many older respondents shared that they relied on family members, neighbors, or other helpers for rides.

Several respondents shared the feeling that having your own car "creates this sense of independency, and whether it's real or not, control" (309). This was a feeling that many respondents did not have on public transportation:

So it's just a lot of stuff you can't really factor in when you're getting on public transportation. You really just have to keep to yourself and chill and hope everything's okay. But when you get in the car, it's like A, you cut down the waiting, and then B, it's just you in the car. (307)

Challenging the idea that ride-hail services offer a sense of control, a respondent described: "I prefer to drive. And the reason why I prefer to drive is because I want to be able to depend on myself leaving when I'm ready to go. I don't want to have to depend on track the bus or track the L, or even the Uber" (306).

Respondents preferred to drive especially when grocery shopping in bulk, purchasing heavy items like bottled water, or traveling further to a preferred or full-service grocery store (309). One respondent mentioned: "And also the amount of groceries I buy, I wouldn't want to be on the train with that, because you know it's not a lot of nice people in the city," highlighting security concerns (307). Those who do choose public transportation or walking to go shopping mentioned that they might have to go shopping more frequently because of their limited capacity to carry everything they need (310).

Respondents also explained that while a car may not be necessary on the North side, because the built environment is denser and residents have more access to goods and services, it was a necessity on the South side:

To me, it's a different world. I was born out South. I was raised out South right on 69th so I'm from the hood, hood... That's where I'm from, so everybody I know drive. And if you don't drive you're asking somebody for a ride. They're going to give you a ride. If they don't give you a ride, Uber and Lyft to the rescue. (310)

Long commutes to school and work also contributed to a preference for driving. Some respondents had jobs that required them to travel quickly from location to location: "So I'm in my car quite early going from whatever location I'm being sent to another one" (309). Another respondent explained that they rely on public transportation for work, "unless I happen to be lucky enough to make the money where I

can do the Lyft or the Uber, or get a ride. One of my family members might be gracious enough to take me from time to time” (309). This shows that even though the respondent relied on public transportation as their dominant mode, they preferred to travel by car.

Parents felt that cars were also more convenient when traveling with kids: “But when you have kids, my opinion is that it’s a lot easier if you have a car, to go in the car with them, you know?” (310). A car allowed parents to carry more gear and ensures that their younger kids will have a seat. Another parent shared: “And I have a 18 year old daughter who thinks I’m her Lyft or Uber, so she always has somewhere for me to go” (310).

Driving was described as the only mode of transportation respondents could use to make trips to nearby northwest Indiana, since most public transportation does not cross state lines: “I use my car because mostly people I’m visiting are in Indiana. Most of my family is there, so I have no choice” (303).

Even though many respondents depended on and preferred driving in a car, one respondent expressed regret:

Unfortunately everywhere I go, I drive. The reason I say that’s unfortunate is because, the environment is of such a nature where I feel safer in my car, going to wherever I need to go. But I wish sometimes that the culture of transportation would reach down to the point where there were more of us riding bicycles and walking and jogging. (304)

Other adaptations included choosing to live close to work and retail (306), planning to meet with family and friends in a central, accessible location (307), and combining errands to avoid having to travel often (308). Despite these challenges, one respondent stated: “But I will not be caged in the community because I know the City of Chicago is still beautiful to me” (306).

Solutions

The community focus group guide asked three questions related to solutions: What could you and your neighbors do to improve transportation in your community? What do you think transportation agencies should consider when deciding whether transportation is fair? What are the most important two or three improvements that would help you and your neighbors get where you want to go? While many solutions are direct suggestions for transportation agencies, many others have to do with community building, civic engagement, police reform, and other structural inequities.

Some respondents saw acquiring a car as the most immediate solution to their transportation problems: “Y’all can buy me a car, how about that one?” (308). Fixing potholes was also a common request: “And fix these potholes, man!” (309). Respondents suggested that the city use a more durable material to pave roads so they can withstand winter weather and salt: “Whatever roads you fix, if you got to go and study the north pole then do that, or Alaska or something like that” (309).

To grow public transportation ridership, one respondent suggested providing more park and ride opportunities near transit hubs: “I would put more places for people to park in the neighborhoods by train stations” (309). Adding more buses and increasing frequency, especially on the weekends, was also proposed: “More on the weekend, there needs to be more transportation on the weekend” (301). This was thought to be a solution not just for long wait times, but for crowding as well. Respondents brought

up expanding the hours of service on several lines: “Increase the hours of service on some of the lines and the days. That would be a big help” (310). They also suggested implementing more express routes: “I love straight shots, you only have to take one bus to go there and one bus to come back, and I can do it on the same transfer, so we definitely need more buses with express routes” (306). Expanding the geographic coverage of the L train was also requested: “A new line to service the South side” (311).

Others called for a new design for buses and trains to provide more seating for seniors and people with disabilities (301). Another respondent thought a new design could provide more space for people to bring carts, making it a viable mode for grocery shopping: “Make the aisles a little, where the seating, a little bit more so you could at least bring the cart in front of you” (301). A new design could also make the ride more comfortable for more body types:

And I think on the bus they should have more handles for you to hold on to because when it gets crowded, sometimes you could fall. I'm kind of short so I sometimes can't reach the thing that you have to hold on to. So it'd be better if we had something that was just right there that we could be able to latch on to. (306)

Many respondents brought up providing shelters at more bus stops with adequate lighting and benches: “I thought of something that would be good. At every bus stop, if they could have benches and coverings that would be great if every bus stop would have that” (303). Respondents also called for better cleaning procedures on buses and trains: “You know, it shouldn't be something that happens, I don't know if they do it once a day. But they should do that several times a day” (306). One respondent called for the removal of cloth seats:

But also just no cloth seats. I am so baffled by that. New York, all the seats are just plastic. Chicago, there's bed bugs, there's all sorts of things, like what are we doing? So if they could just have, which I think they started to do on some newer buses or trains, maybe, it's just plastic seating. (305)

Respondents also requested better customer service training for public transportation employees: “What I think that can change is service, and I don't mean service as in the bus service, service as in the transportation team. The drivers need to take more customer service classes one on one” (308). Respondents thought training was needed especially for Pace paratransit drivers: “And what about the training. Teach the drivers, young and old how to handle or treat people with disability or any other kind of handicap when they driving para-transit or if they volunteering with para-transit or Pace because they need to know what they don't know” (304). To improve bus etiquette, transportation agencies or community leaders can lead educational and advertising campaigns to model good behavior: “Maybe if they do type of commercials or type of like CTA etiquette” (309).

Some older adults felt that improving the reliability of Pace paratransit would allow them to depend on that service more, rather than CTA buses and trains. Others thought that CTA should provide senior-only buses or trolleys: “But that would be really nice if certain neighborhoods had a bus designated as senior bus on that route at say 10 o'clock in the morning, you know that bus is coming and at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, you know that bus is coming” (302). Another respondent considered a door-to-door, on-call service the best strategy for seniors:

Ideally if I could have transportation for seniors, it would be what the Pace has with instead of having to wait all that time or not get somebody, you can actually call a cab and the cab can come and get you, and it's a one on one, but it costs. So ideally for me, it would be nice if a senior could call a cab, get where they need to go, get back when they need to get back and it not cost them an arm and a leg. That to me, is ideal. (302)

One respondent stated that multiple strategies should be pursued simultaneously, in order to give older riders options: "So you got to have more than one system that overlaps and it's going to solve the problem" (310).

Respondents urged public transportation agencies not to raise fares any higher, and to offer larger discounts for seniors and for high school and college students. One respondent described programs in other cities that charge different rates at different stations, depending on the socioeconomic condition of the neighborhood, and even charge a higher rate for tourists as a strategy keep costs down for low-income residents (307).

In terms of improving active modes, respondents were clear: "All communities need to have bike paths" (306). One respondent called for better integration of trails with bicycle lanes and public transportation hubs to provide greater access to different parts of the city (304). Another respondent called for the city to develop an "affordable biking plan" that addresses bicycle sharing programs, bicycle ownership and maintenance, and education (307). One respondent pointed out that students are required to take driver's education in high school, but this neglects to teach them about alternative modes of transportation, including active modes: "It would be interesting to have a class about other modes of transportation" (304).

To improve security, respondents called for more functional lights on residential streets and at bus stops: "I think we need more light at more stops, especially at the high school because it's dark" (310). Some respondents called for additional police or security personnel patrolling at bus and train stations: "Safety ambassadors like at some of the main stops, that'd be great" (306). Another respondent said:

And that'll keep the bus driver in line too, they'll be more nice because the police is on the bus. People get kind of nice when they see people of authority. They change their attitude. So if they would put the police back on the bus like they used to. They used to have them on the L too. Put those back in place, you can stop a lot of crime, a lot of everything. (302)

Others rejected this idea, instead calling for more investment in economic and community development initiatives to build a deeper sense of community: "And the one thing that would not only solve a lot of these problems, but a lot of problems that have nothing to do with transportation. It's for us to really get back to community somehow" (305). One respondent described a local biking program that brings together youth from different neighborhoods to lower tensions and reduce the risk of violence (304). Neighborhood beautification was identified as another strategy that could not only improve visibility, especially around vacant lots, but also create more community connections and pride (308).

One respondent echoed this call for local economic development, pointing out that even if transportation networks became more efficient, some communities would still be inequitably burdened with traveling further to access essential goods and services. Another respondent connected this call for a denser urban environment, where residents can access the essential goods and services they need in their own neighborhood, to other goals like community building and security:

But also our cities are designed where people have to travel so far. We don't really live in walkable cities where no matter where you live really kind of supports what you need. So if we had that more people could walk. You probably feel safer cause you'd be in a type of community where you tend to know people, like even, you know, police well enough that they're cool with you. They know you...You tend to know people, you're not like, I live here, but I work there and then I shop here and everybody's just crossing paths. So, a genuine sense of community would be created. You'd be able to walk more places and that'd be more environmentally and economically sound. And then a little further places, you bike. And then of course for longer distances you would have better public transportation, which we actually have, as far as getting places, not bad, for like longer distances. So, I think if they really integrated things better and designed the cities in terms of our living and working needs, that would make a difference. (305)

While respondents did identify some solutions they could implement themselves, like building carpool networks or starting a neighborhood watch, some suggested interventions that are likely to have the biggest impact on their transportation experience would need to happen at a higher level:

It's up to the officials. Because how could we as members of the community, what are we supposed to do? You expect us to go out there, get a pole and put it up? Right there, that's a bus stop? Or go out there, I'll take the time to shovel the snow and something that people is getting paid to do? These people are really getting, we're paying them with our taxes to do this and they won't. What are they doing? (306).

Electing leaders that are "community oriented or minded" is another way to ensure local transportation needs are met (309). One respondent brought up Chicago's reputation as politically corrupt and called for a new era of honest leadership: "Better bosses, better people who run the system to run it right. Everybody's a crook" (303). Talking about local officials, one respondent mentioned: "We need to see you each and every day doing something in the community, helping out the community and not just giving lip service" (304).

Respondents suggested putting more public pressure on current elected officials to listen to the community: "So I think we need to speak up to the officials that are in charge of all these different projects and then they'll make changes" (310). One respondent emphasized the importance of knowing who occupies certain positions of power: "First of all, see who's in charge, who's the chairman of the Transportation committee? ...I will look it up. But let's go talk to him" (306). Similarly, another respondent stated: "We should know who our alderman is because that is what he is there for, to help solve city problems, to help us" (311). Residents also need to know which forums currently exist to have their voices heard: "There's like the LAC board and the PAC. People is not, like I said, they not informed. So if they don't know what they don't know to have their input, then how can you reach them?" (304).

Shifting investment priorities away from “tourist attractions” and towards “neighborhoods” was also addressed (307). One respondent recognized that implementing any meaningful transportation solution would require a share of the city budget, and called out former Mayor Daley’s privatization of a potential source of revenue:

So one thing would be nice if we had, if there was a way to possibly change a mindset from the dumb shit to the common sense shit, because when Daley signed that contract for the parking meters, he completely gave away all the income that could have been used to fix some of the roads. (309)

Another respondent suggested that city officials look at other cities to solicit ideas for transportation interventions that have worked in practice:

But there are some common sense things that other cities are doing, like Denver. Let's take some ideas from some urban metropolises that are actually thinking forward, without going as backwards in terms of funding, to fix things. There are common sense bike lanes only, bus lanes only, Japan, what is it? Yellow cars on one street. I mean, it's just, not that that makes sense, but there are just some things that can actually be done to accomplish whatever the urban city needs. (309)

One respondent cautioned against implementing transportation solutions without considering the effects of gentrification:

Accessibility is in tension a lot, because a lot of things - when you bring something new to the neighborhood, it all depends, because you also, at the same time, you could be providing them with something, but you also could be gentrifying them. So what are you going to do to counteract that and make sure that you're not already gentrifying a neighborhood that's already being gentrified, and actually going to the root of the cause of the problem and go for it, and then maybe, I don't know. (307)

There was, ultimately, a desire for the community to have a greater voice and more opportunities for input:

It's like anything, whatever community that you're in, ask the people in the community what they would like, like you're asking us. I know part of what we're saying is not part of what you're asking, but if there was a, where we could say, ‘This would make life easier for us if we had this and this.’ (302)

Respondents even requested more focus groups run by transportation agencies and the city, so that they can hear community voices firsthand: “Do exactly what you guys are doing but make it through CTA and Pace. Focus group and do exactly what you're doing and televise it so people can chime in wherever they are” (306).

Community connections, action, and power

The theme of community connections, action, and power came up in 10 of the 11 community focus groups. This theme included respondents’ thoughts on how their communities currently do and

potentially could respond to transportation challenges by implementing their own solutions or by organizing and demanding change from transportation agencies and government officials. The community focus group guide included one question that asked what the community could do itself to improve transportation.

Building a stronger sense of community at the grassroots level came up as a solution to transportation barriers in several focus groups. It was recognized as a solution that could help address poor bus etiquette (309), improve safety on public transportation (304, 308), create a more robust bicycle culture (304), and build the political will to petition for public transportation route expansions and other infrastructure improvements (310). Several participants reflected nostalgically on an earlier time when there once was a stronger sense of community. As noted above, participants in one focus group brought up the Guardian Angels as one example.

Still, many respondents explained that they are currently active participants in their community. During one focus group (304), attendees talked about contacting a local advocate to learn more about an abandoned grocery store on a main commercial strip, to work with staff at a nearby park to start a violence prevention and bicycling education program, and to contact the mayor, governor, and other officials to invite them to a community bicycle ride. Some respondents explained that bicycling and walking made them more visible in the community and allowed them to meet and maintain relationships with more neighbors (306). One respondent shared: “I’m not officially Uber/Lyft, but I am an Uber/Lyft because I’m Uber/Lyfting everybody, assisting everybody in my community, those that need a ride” (304).

Other respondents felt that it would be difficult to foster a sense of community because “people only work towards their benefit when it’s for their benefit” (309). Another respondent shared: “Like the man said, communication is important but unfortunately not all neighbors want to work together. I don’t know if there are people willing to work for the community, other people” (311).

Another factor that could make it difficult to foster a sense of community was how far people had to travel to access employment, education, goods, and services. Connecting transportation burdens to school closures, another respondent shared: “And they just closed a lot of schools a few years ago, and that added a whole added piece of, now transportation is much harder, because my district is a bigger space. My child’s over here, but the school’s all these miles over here” (307). Because of the different built environments of each neighborhood, a respondent shared that transportation solutions must be tailored to the community:

Yeah, I think, off of all those points, I think a big thing that plays into why the experience is different in different neighborhoods, is because the density of those neighborhoods, for some neighborhoods, it’s easier for all of the neighbors to walk and it’s easier for all the neighbors to bike to their destinations. Because if you live in Lincoln Park or you live downtown, chances are you’re close to your workplace. But I think for a lot of neighborhoods, those options just aren’t really presented or realistic. So that just changes up the experience. So I do think that more community specific and community oriented transportation programs could be helpful, and so that kind of ties into all of that. (307)

One respondent called for more equitable investment and treatment: “You have to make it equitable for everybody so that people can feel safe and have the resources that they need in order to be comfortable in their neighborhoods” (310). Respondents shared that some demographics may have better infrastructure than others because they are more likely to call and demand repairs or additional resources: “...but usually you've got a street where a lot of elderly folk, they usually have a better street. I don't know if that's maybe because those people are always calling in and telling people about it, but a lot of times that might be the reason” (309). Similarly, a respondent mentioned:

Well, I know some people that live up North and they complain. They go to their city officials, they go to whoever is in charge or whatever project's going on...So I think we need to speak up to the officials that are in charge of all these different projects and then they'll make changes. But that's why they make changes for them and they don't make changes for us. (310)

They also pointed out that transportation improvements often came as a precursor to or because of gentrification (309). One respondent mentioned that entrepreneurship and local economic development could help the community implement their own transportation solutions and shared the example of Black Wall Street from Tulsa, Oklahoma (304). Another respondent emphasized the importance of finding ways for the community to come together to ensure their own needs are being met:

So for me, how can I be proactive? What is it that I'm not knowing? Ultimately, it's a game that I didn't create, so y'all gone keep some secrets from me, but I need some people that's concerned about what's happening over here, whether they look like me or not, to give me what I need to know so that I can be more proactive in my community. Whether it's who I'm putting in office over here, to make sure they pushing this or whatever, just beat the streets so that you know that the people that don't usually hear this stuff are hearing it. (309)

Demanding more accountability from public officials was another topic that emerged: “We would actually have to see what our politicians that we voted in, what are they actually doing for us?” (306). One respondent told the story of an effort to get stop signs installed in front of a neighborhood school to slow down traffic. After contacting the alderman and gathering the necessary signatures, they were told there was no money to pursue the project because of other transportation priorities, including getting a direct bus route to the nearby Walmart (306).

One respondent expressed frustration that the interventions that would improve their transportation experience, including re-opening a train station that had been closed on the South side, cannot be implemented by the community alone (309). Emphasizing that meaningful solutions must involve a diverse set of stakeholders, a respondent argued:

And most of all get everybody, not just the community. Get the mayor, get the aldermen, ward captains or whoever, police. Everybody needs to be involved because if they just only come out when it's around election time, then we don't need that. (304)

On the topic of organizing the community to demand equitable investment, one respondent mentioned:

Having these round tables, educating us individually on our civic duty. For me, everybody should know who their alderman is, who they senators are, and then the CTA boards, we talked about transportation, CTA and Pace. We should be following the newsletters. We have to speak up. That's one of the last things that I've heard over the last couple of weeks that funding is going to the other side cause we don't speak up enough. We don't call 311, we don't complain. So from this, that's what I would say, that we get more organized and complaining and advocate for what we know we deserve. And you said taxpayers, we need to be accountable, make those that be accountable and not wait for them to distribute. (304)

There was also a desire for more opportunities to share feedback directly with transportation agencies, as stated above (306).

Discussion and Policy Implications

This section summarizes main themes from the focus groups that cross across transportation system inadequacies and inequities, neighborhood and geographic context, structural inequities, burdens and costs, as well as solutions. As stated in the introduction, our purpose was to understand problems more deeply and frame broad policy approaches, rather than prescribe specific action steps.

Inadequate and inequitable transportation systems

Respondents compared how moving around neighborhoods on the South and Southwest sides differs from moving around on the North side. Some of these differences are conventionally defined as transportation problems, such as the lack of L train infrastructure on the far South and Southwest sides, the absence of bicycle lanes, or the infrequent service on certain bus routes. Other differences, discussed in the following section, are broader in scope but impact the ability of transportation systems to get people to destinations, such as personal security concerns and limited grocery stores. As qualitative research, this study does not conclusively define or rank transportation solutions, but instead identifies a range of desired interventions. As findings demonstrate, respondents use a variety of transportation modes. They suggested improvements in roadway quality, protected bicycling infrastructure, and pedestrian features, as well as across multiple dimensions of transit service—geographic and temporal coverage, frequency, reliability, and the customer experience. While some participants identified public transit as an asset in Chicago relative to other cities and some instances of inadequate infrastructure in affluent neighborhoods, respondents commonly were cognizant of inequities in transportation systems and service. Given persistent inequities, equivalent investment across city neighborhoods will continue to perpetuate inequitable transportation systems and services; increased, targeted investment is needed to address historic and current inequities.

Neighborhood and geographic context

As discussed above, respondents wanted an improved and equitable transportation system, but at the same time highlighted how Black and Brown communities would still be inequitably burdened with traveling further and longer to access essential goods and services, with greater personal security concerns. This is why we conclude violence prevention and community and economic development—not just transportation infrastructure and service disparities—are all central transportation issues. Supporting business development and services in respondents' communities will enable them to travel shorter distances to more easily and frequently access destinations that support their economic, social,

political, and health priorities. Addressing transportation barriers for low- and moderate-income Black and Brown communities in Chicago thus will require looking beyond technical transportation interventions alone. Instead, solutions must focus on holistic policies and neighborhood investments, given that the goal of transportation should not just be movement, but also providing equitable access. Just as for transportation conditions, equivalent investment across city neighborhoods will still result in inequitable access to opportunity sites; more targeted investment is needed to address these spatial disparities.

Security, including safety from police violence, was a common topic. As a transportation study, this report does not outline specific strategies to address security but asserts the need to work with social justice movements that are leading socially and racially just systems transformation more broadly to address violence, which greatly inhibits mobility. We recommend against criminal justice system strategies, given institutional racism and these strategies' failure to address the root social and policy causes of violence (see Lugalia-Hollon & Cooper, 2018). Specifically, in Chicago, the U.S. Department of Justice (2017) has documented multiple, severe problems with policing, including around use of force. In addition, media (Wisniewski, 2019, September 23) and non-profits (ACLU Illinois, 2019) have documented racism in transportation policing more specifically. Critics of the current criminal justice system (e.g., Michelle Alexander; Ruth Wilson Gilmore) and local organizations (e.g., Assata's Daughters, Southsiders Organizing for Unity and Liberation, Chicago Community Bond Fund, The People's Lobby, BYP100, and Chicago Community Bond Fund) point to the racial inequities in policing. Social justice movements are pushing for systems transformations to reduce violence as alternatives to policing and incarceration. Stated directly, we do not recommend increased policing and criminal justice system involvement as strategies to improve transportation, but instead raise the importance of partnerships, funding, and policy changes to address security.

Structural inequities, identities, and experiences

Because age, gender identity, disability, race, immigration status, language, and other identity categories influence how people use transportation, and the barriers they face while doing so, transportation issues must be understood from an intersectional perspective. Transportation planning and investments have actively produced and continue to produce inequities in transportation system provision, sometimes with explicit racist intent. In addition, transportation challenges and barriers that are obvious to some may be personally unknown to many transportation professionals who are not adequately representative of the City of Chicago's population. Some frequently overlooked issues identified in this research include discriminatory policing, a transportation barrier for Black and Brown respondents (particularly Black men), and cost, a transportation barrier especially for transit riders on a fixed income. While analysts can certainly view some transportation data by isolating race, gender, and socioeconomic variables, these kinds of abstractions, especially when through the lens of relatively privileged professionals, risk misunderstanding or distorting lived transportation experiences. Thus, transforming transportation systems to be more equitable will require transformed processes, including but not limited to a redistribution of power and attention to more voices from diverse perspectives, especially those that are currently structurally disadvantaged.

Respondents expressed a desire for more input and control over which transportation solutions are pursued in their communities. A first step would be engagement processes with meaningful, influential participation by diverse stakeholders, in affected communities, with trusted community partners.

Transportation agencies and the public sector more broadly could work to address as many transportation barriers as the community deems pertinent, even, and perhaps especially, if the issues seem outside of the scope of a single agency.

Burdens and costs

Respondents identified several burdens and costs for different transportation modes. Driving a personal vehicle or using ride-hailing services had lower time costs and fewer security concerns, but high financial costs. Active modes like bicycling and walking presented lower financial costs, but higher time costs and security concerns. While biking and walking seemed pleasant for local trips, they were not frequently seen as viable modes for all transportation needs. Public transportation, especially Pace paratransit, had high time costs, and certain routes presented significant personal security concerns. Financial costs were relatively low on public transportation, but were still high for low-income riders, especially youth and older adults. These barriers not only led to respondents seeing transportation as a burden and source of stress but also led to suppressed trips. This means fewer trips to the park with children, fewer trips to a full-service grocery store to purchase fresh produce, and fewer trips to visit family and friends. Given Chicago's long-standing inequitable public and private investments, these suppressed trips are occurring, and their associated well-being costs are accruing, more often on the South, West and Southwest sides in low- and moderate-income Black and Latinx communities.

As discussed earlier, the transportation barriers that respondents brought up were based on their intersectional identities and on the kinds of trips they take. The transportation barriers faced by an older adult who travels primarily to the local grocery store and a doctor's office are different than the transportation barriers faced by a parent with children in different schools and a job outside of their neighborhood. The transportation interventions that would best serve these two respondents are also different. There are certainly supply-side actions that transportation agencies should take to improve infrastructure and the quality of service, but we suggest that user-side subsidies present an important opportunity for giving residents latitude to best address their priorities.

Solutions and adaptations

Respondents described the individual adaptations they make to overcome their transportation barriers and proposed solutions for multiple stakeholders. Driving was, for many respondents, the preferred transportation mode, even if it was not their primary one. Lowering the cost of a personal vehicle or of ride-hailing services was identified as a solution that would immediately improve respondents' transportation experience by offering a greater sense of control over their mobility and reduced concern about violence exposure. Supporting car use runs counter to transportation discourses that emphasize the high costs of cars in terms of traffic safety, livability, and sustainability. These costs are well documented and important but must be weighed against the other transportation barriers and associated consequences that low- and moderate-income Black and Brown communities face when considering rational adaptations.

Many respondents also called for more community organizing and advocacy to identify common transportation issues and to hold elected officials accountable. While some respondents reflected nostalgically on a past when they felt there was a greater sense of community, others shared examples of how they have recently worked with their neighbors to campaign for a stop sign to be installed in front of a school or for curb cuts on sidewalks to be made accessible. Respondents acknowledged that because so many residents must leave their neighborhoods to find work, attend school, and access

goods and services, community organizing could be difficult. But still, they imagined a future where their neighborhood has more of the employment, educational opportunities, and resources they need, and where residents feel more empowered to get involved in addressing local issues. More investment in community organizing would give residents additional capacity in advocating and negotiating with elected officials and transportation agencies in and beyond their communities to address both conventionally defined and broader transportation and accessibility priorities.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Community Survey

Transportation

We will talk about transportation issues more in the group, but want individual responses to the questions below. Your responses are confidential and anonymous. We will not connect this information to specific things you say in the group or your identity.

1. How did you get to this group today?

☐ Transit (CTA, Pace, Metra)
☐ Drove
☐ Got a ride
☐ Walked
☐ Biked
☐ Uber or Lyft
☐ Taxi
☐ Other, Please specify _____

Household and Personal information

1. What is your age? _____

2. What is your gender?

☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Other

3. What is your race or ethnicity? Please mark all that apply.

☐ Black/African-American
☐ White/Caucasian
☐ Asian
☐ Latino/Hispanic/Latina/Latinx
☐ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
☐ Bi- or multi-racial
☐ Other, Please specify _____

4. What is the primary language spoken in your household? _____

5. How many people live in your household? _____

6. How many people under 18 live in your household? _____
7. How many working cars, trucks, or vans do you have in your household? Please write 0 if you have none. _____
8. How many working bicycles do you have in your household? Please write 0 if you have none. _____
9. Do you have a smartphone, like an iPhone or Android?
Please circle YES NO
10. Do you have a credit or debit card?
Please circle YES NO
11. What is your home ZIP code? _____
12. What is the highest level of school you have completed?
____ Less than high school
____ Completed high school
____ Some college
____ Two-year degree
____ Four-year degree
____ Graduate degree
13. Are you currently working?
____ Yes, full-time
____ Yes, part-time, if so how many hours per week on average? ____
____ No
14. What is your approximate annual personal income?
____ \$9,999 or less
____ \$10,000-\$19,999
____ \$20,000-\$29,999
____ \$30,000-\$39,999
____ \$40,000-\$49,999
____ \$50,000 and over
____ Not sure
If not sure please indicate hourly rate \$ ____
and ____ hours/week

Appendix B: Community Survey Results

120 participants completed surveys, though some were partially incomplete.

Question 1.1: How did you get to this group today?

| Mode | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Transit | 14 | 11.7% |
| Drive | 41 | 34.2% |
| Ride | 19 | 15.8% |
| Walk | 32 | 26.7% |
| Bike | 1 | 0.8% |
| Uber/Lyft | 1 | 0.8% |
| Taxi | 0 | 0.0% |
| Other | 12 | 10.0% |
| TOTAL | 120 | 100.0% |

3 respondents chose 2 modes.

Question 1.1: How did you get to this group today?

(Without groups 301, 302, & 303, where most participants lived on-site.)

| Mode | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Transit | 10 | 12.5% |
| Drive | 39 | 48.8% |
| Ride | 18 | 22.5% |
| Walk | 11 | 13.8% |
| Bike | 0 | 0.0% |
| Uber/Lyft | 1 | 1.3% |
| Taxi | 0 | 0.0% |
| Other | 1 | 1.3% |
| TOTAL | 80 | 100.0% |

2 respondents chose 2 modes.

Question 2.1: What is your age?

| Age | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 18 – 24 | 14 | 12.1% |
| 25 – 29 | 7 | 6.0% |
| 30 – 39 | 10 | 8.6% |
| 40 – 49 | 16 | 13.8% |
| 50 – 59 | 22 | 19.0% |
| 60 – 69 | 26 | 22.4% |
| 70 – 79 | 17 | 14.7% |
| 80 – 89 | 4 | 3.4% |
| TOTAL | 116 | 100.0% |

The youngest age reported is 18, while the oldest age reported is 86. The mean age is 51.8 and the median age is 54.5.

Question 2.2: What is your gender?

| Gender | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Female | 83 | 70.9% |
| Male | 34 | 29.1% |
| Other | 0 | 0.0% |
| TOTAL | 117 | 100.0% |

Question 2.3: What is your race or ethnicity?

| Race/Ethnicity | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|--|-----------------------|---------------|
| Black/African American | 82 | 67.8% |
| White/Caucasian | 3 | 2.5% |
| Asian | 0 | 0.0% |
| Latino/Hispanic/Latina/Latinx | 33 | 27.3% |
| Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander | 0 | 0.0% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 1 | 0.8% |
| Bi- or Multi-Racial | 2 | 1.7% |
| Other | 0 | 0.0% |
| TOTAL | 121 | 100.0% |

2 respondents chose 2 options.

Question 2.4: What is the primary language spoken in your household?

| Language | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| English | 103 | 88.8% |
| Spanish | 10 | 8.6% |
| Both | 3 | 2.6% |
| TOTAL | 116 | 100.0% |

Question 2.5: How many people live in your household?

| Number of People | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1 | 39 | 33.1% |
| 2 | 28 | 23.7% |
| 3 | 15 | 12.7% |
| 4 | 17 | 14.4% |
| 5 | 3 | 2.5% |
| 6 | 8 | 6.8% |
| 7 | 2 | 1.7% |
| 8 | 3 | 2.5% |
| 9 | 2 | 1.7% |
| 10 | 1 | 0.8% |
| TOTAL | 118 | 100.0% |

The mean number of people per household is 2.8 and the median number of people per household is 2.

Question 2.6: How many people under 18 live in your household?

| Number of People | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 0 | 74 | 62.7% |
| 1 | 21 | 17.8% |
| 2 | 11 | 9.3% |
| 3 | 4 | 3.4% |
| 4 | 6 | 5.1% |
| 5 | 1 | 0.8% |
| 6 | 0 | 0.0% |
| 7 | 1 | 0.8% |
| TOTAL | 118 | 100.0% |

The mean number of people under 18 per household is 0.8 and the median number of people under 18 per household is 0. The total share of households with at least 1 person under 18 is 37.3%.

Question 2.7: How many working cars, trucks, or vans do you have in your household?

| Number of Vehicles | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 0 | 45 | 38.1% |
| 1 | 39 | 33.1% |
| 2 | 26 | 22.0% |
| 3 | 6 | 5.1% |
| 4 | 1 | 0.8% |
| 5 | 0 | 0.0% |
| 6 | 1 | 0.8% |
| TOTAL | 118 | 100.0% |

The mean number of vehicles per household is 1.0 and the median number of vehicles per household is 1.

Question 2.8: How many working bicycles do you have in your household?

| Number of Bicycles | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 0 | 67 | 57.8% |
| 1 | 22 | 19.0% |
| 2 | 15 | 12.9% |
| 3 | 5 | 4.3% |
| 4 | 5 | 4.3% |
| 5 | 0 | 0.0% |
| 6 | 2 | 1.7% |
| TOTAL | 116 | 100.0% |

The mean number of bicycles per household is 0.9 and the median number of bicycles per household is 0.

Question 2.9: Do you have a smartphone, like an iPhone or Android?

| Response | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| No | 17 | 14.5% |
| Yes | 100 | 85.5% |
| TOTAL | 117 | 100.0% |

Question 2.10: Do you have a credit or debit card?

| Response | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| No | 21 | 17.8% |
| Yes | 97 | 82.2% |
| TOTAL | 118 | 100.0% |

Question 2.11: What is your home ZIP code?

| Region | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Far North Side | 1 | 0.9% |
| Northwest Side | 1 | 0.9% |
| North Side | 1 | 0.9% |
| West Side | 6 | 5.1% |
| Central | 0 | 0.0% |
| South Side | 10 | 8.5% |
| Southwest Side | 21 | 17.9% |
| Far Southwest Side | 8 | 6.8% |
| Far Southeast Side | 69 | 59.0% |
| TOTAL | 117 | 100.0% |

Question 2.12: What is the highest level of school you have completed?

| Level of School | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Less than high school | 17 | 14.7% |
| Completed high school | 28 | 24.1% |
| Some college | 38 | 32.8% |
| Two-year degree | 12 | 10.3% |
| Four-year degree | 16 | 13.8% |
| Graduate degree | 5 | 4.3% |
| TOTAL | 116 | 100.0% |

Question 2.13: Are you currently working?

| Response | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Yes (Full-Time) | 28 | 23.9% |
| Yes (Part-Time) | 21 | 17.9% |
| No | 68 | 58.1% |
| TOTAL | 117 | 100.0% |

Question 2.14: What is your approximate annual personal income?

| Income | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| \$9,999 or less | 46 | 41.1% |
| \$10,000 - \$19,999 | 31 | 27.7% |
| \$20,000 - \$29,999 | 14 | 12.5% |
| \$30,000 - \$39,999 | 10 | 8.9% |
| \$40,000 - \$49,999 | 3 | 2.7% |
| \$50,000 and over | 5 | 4.5% |
| Not sure | 3 | 2.7% |
| TOTAL | 112 | 100.0% |

Appendix C: Community Focus Group Guide

Introduction

1. Let's go around and share a little about our household and household responsibilities, like child and elder care.

Transportation barriers

Now, I'd like to talk more about getting around and barriers. Let's think about getting to the grocery or other store.

2. Last time you went, how did you get there, like walking, biking, bus, train or driving, and why did you choose that way to go?
3. What challenges or barriers do you and your neighbors face getting to the store?

Let's think about seeing family or friends.

4. Last time you went, how did you go to see family and friends and why did you choose that way to go?
5. What challenges or barriers do you and your neighbors face when going to see family and friends?

Let's think about the last time you went to work, school, or church.

6. Last time you went to work, school or church, how did you get there and why did you choose that way to go?
7. What challenges or barriers do you and your neighbors face when going to work, school or church?

Let's think about getting to all types of places.

8. What other challenges or barriers do you and your neighbors face in getting places?
9. How does getting around in your neighborhood compare to getting around in other neighborhoods?

Transportation priorities

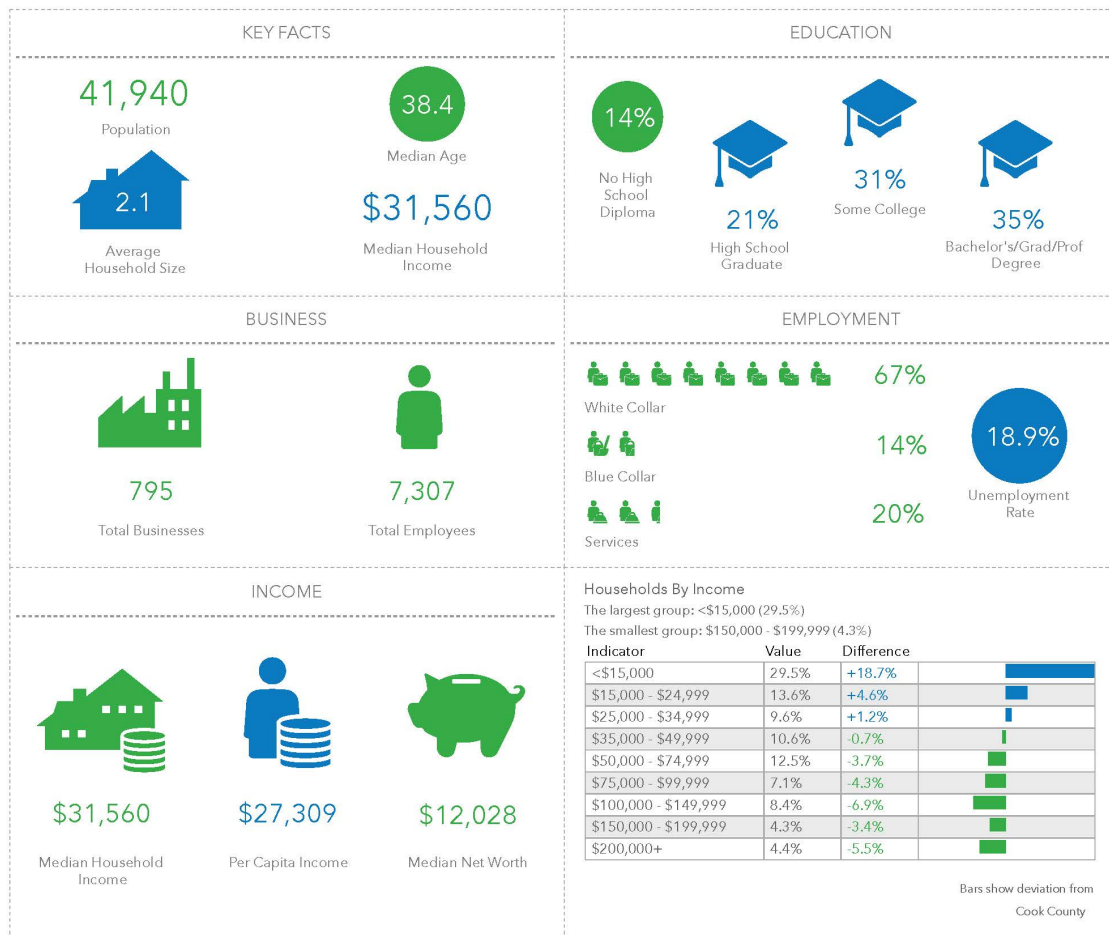
Next, I'd like for you to think about transportation in general. Imagine what a good, fair transportation system would look like.

10. What could you and your neighbors do to improve transportation in your community?
11. What do you think transportation agencies should consider when deciding whether transportation is fair?

For the last part of our discussion, I'd like you to think about all the different ways of getting around that you and your neighbors might use. These different ways of getting around include walking, biking, driving, the bus and the train.

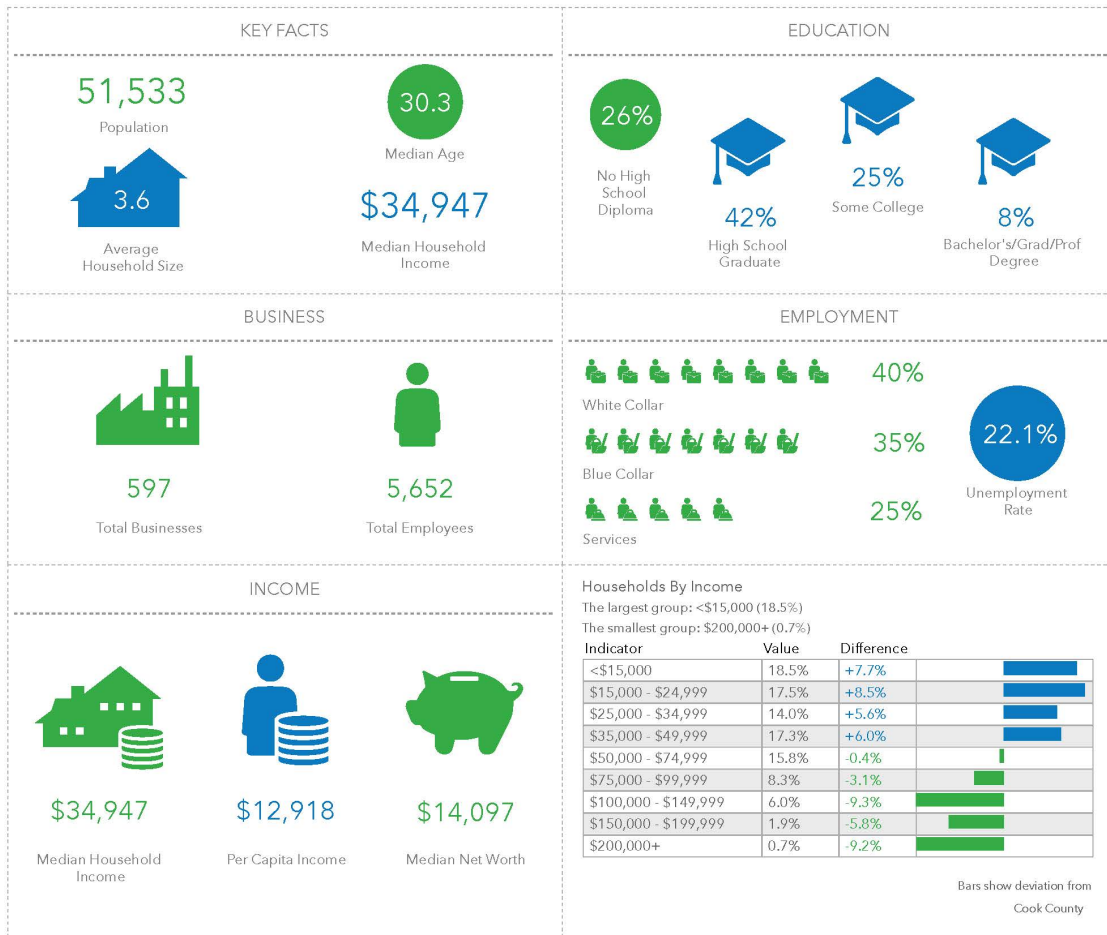
12. What are the most important two or three improvements that would help you and your neighbors get where you want to go?

Appendix D: Community Profiles for Focus Group Sites (1 Mile Radius)



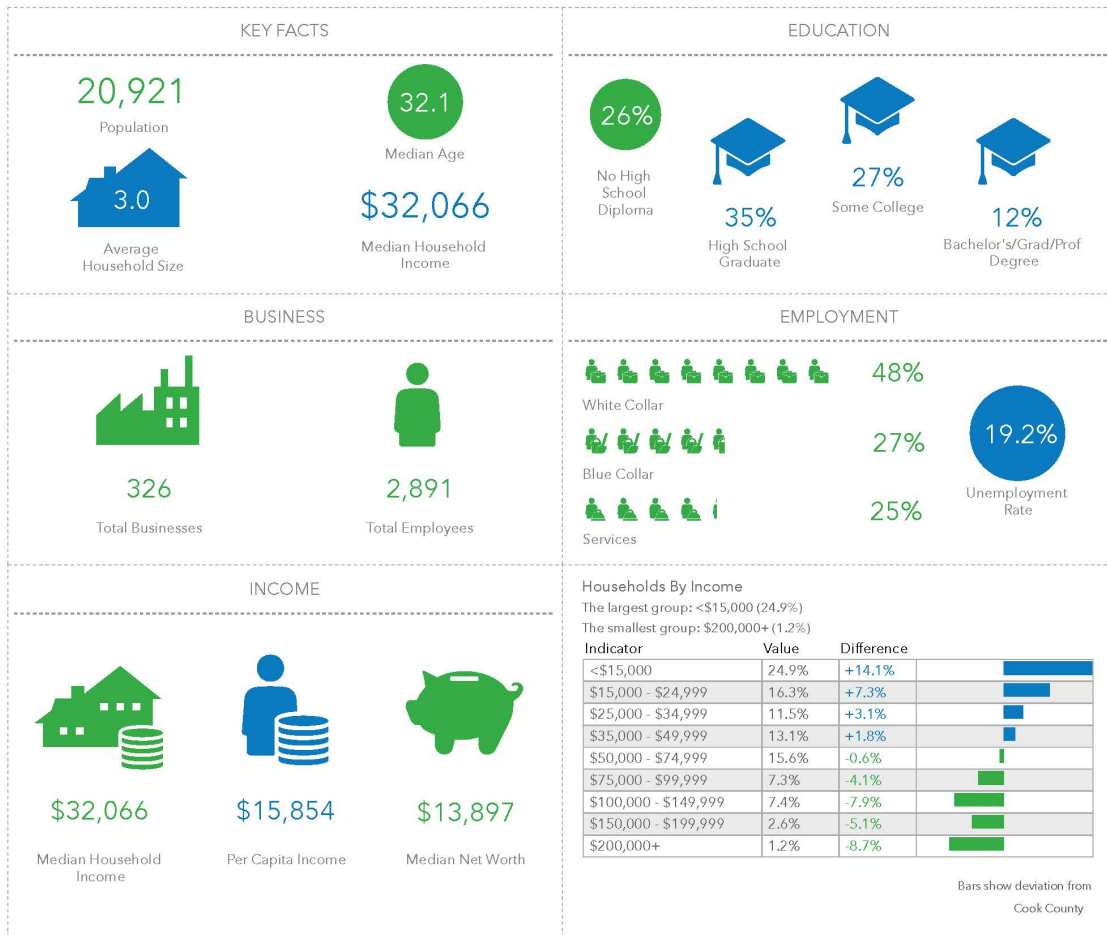
Sacred Keepers, 4445 South King Drive

Generated using Esri's Community Analyst (<https://communityanalyst.arcgis.com/>), July 2020



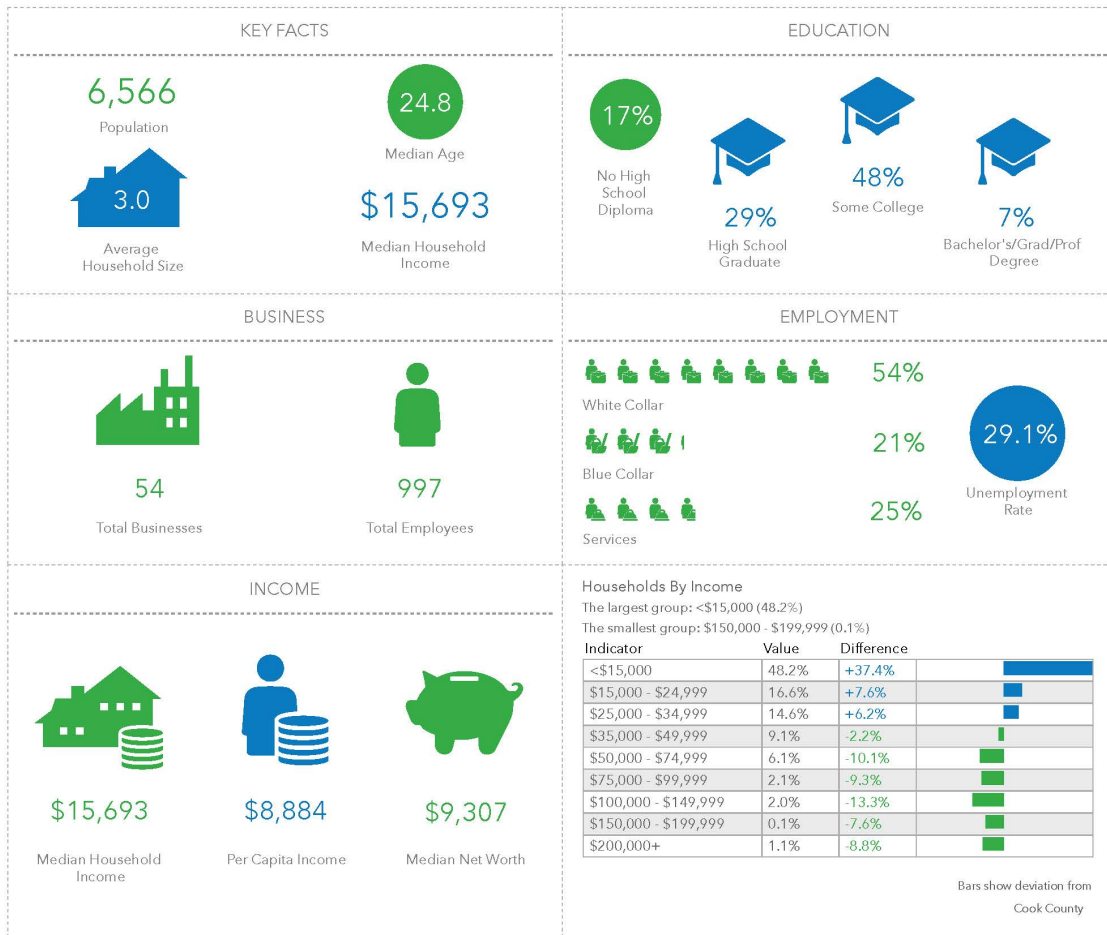
Greater Southwest Development Corporation, 2601 West 63rd Street

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Claretian Associates, 3201 East 91st Street

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We Keep You Rollin', 13015 South Ellis Avenue

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