

**Pedestrian + Roadway**

**Campus Safety Initiative**

**Illinois State University + Town of Normal**

**Engagement  
Summary  
PHASE ONE**

**June 2025**

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## **Engagement Summary: Phase One**

*June 2025*

**All  
Together.** TYLin

Prepared for the Town of Normal and Illinois State University by All Together and TYLin, Chicago, IL



# Engagement Overview

In response to recent crashes and growing safety concerns, the Town of Normal and Illinois State University have established the Pedestrian & Roadway Campus Safety Initiative. This partnership integrates community input with data-driven strategies and pilot projects to foster a safer environment for pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and all who travel through the area. Recognizing that the people who live, work, and study in the campus area have valuable insight into challenges and opportunities, the Town and Illinois State consider community engagement a top priority. Listening to diverse perspectives ensures the final plan reflects real needs and builds long-term support for implementation.

During the initiative's first phase, the project team actively engaged Illinois State University students, staff, faculty, and Normal residents, encouraging them to share their input through stakeholder discussions, pop-up events, and an online survey. These efforts resulted in **over 1,572 interactions** with community members. This summary underscores the key engagement activities and the valuable community feedback gathered between March and May 2025, which are central to shaping the initiative's direction.

## Key Takeaways

- **Distracted Behaviors Are a Top Concern:** Community members consistently pointed to distractions—especially phone use and wearing earbuds—among drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians as a major contributor to unsafe conditions. Participants perceived these behaviors as linked to slower reaction times and reduced awareness at intersections and crossings.
- **Frequent Conflicts Between Roadway Users:** There were many reports about ongoing tensions and near-misses between pedestrians, cyclists, scooters, and motorists due to shared spaces, unclear signage, and lack of separation. The absence of a clearly designated path of travel for each mode often left users uncertain about the right-of-way, especially during high-traffic periods.
- **Drivers Frequently Fail to Yield to Pedestrians:** Many community members noted that drivers often do not stop or yield to pedestrians at marked crosswalks with and without traffic signals or flashing beacons. This pattern creates a persistent sense of vulnerability for those on foot and undermines trust in the safety of crossing infrastructure.
- **Unpredictable Pedestrian Crossing Behavior Adds Risk:** Community members reported that pedestrians frequently cross mid-block, against signals, or outside of designated crosswalks, making it difficult for drivers and cyclists to anticipate their movements. This was especially noted in congested areas or near student housing, where walking paths are informal or inconsistent.
- **Strong Support for Infrastructure Upgrades:** Community members expressed a clear desire for infrastructure improvements to the campus, such as raised crosswalks, improved lighting, longer crossing times, and protected bike lanes. These enhancements were viewed as essential to improving visibility and reducing conflicts among users.
- **Calls for Better Enforcement and Public Education:** Many participants believed that inconsistent enforcement of traffic laws, such as speeding, failure to yield, and improper use of dismount zones, contributed to a culture of noncompliance. They also emphasized the need for clearer signage and public education campaigns to promote shared responsibility and safe travel behaviors.

# Project Website

A project webpage was developed in collaboration with the project team and the Town of Normal communications staff. Integrated into the Normal Forum website at [normalil.gov/CampusSafety](http://normalil.gov/CampusSafety), this online hub served as a primary source for project information, contact details, and updates on ongoing engagement opportunities.

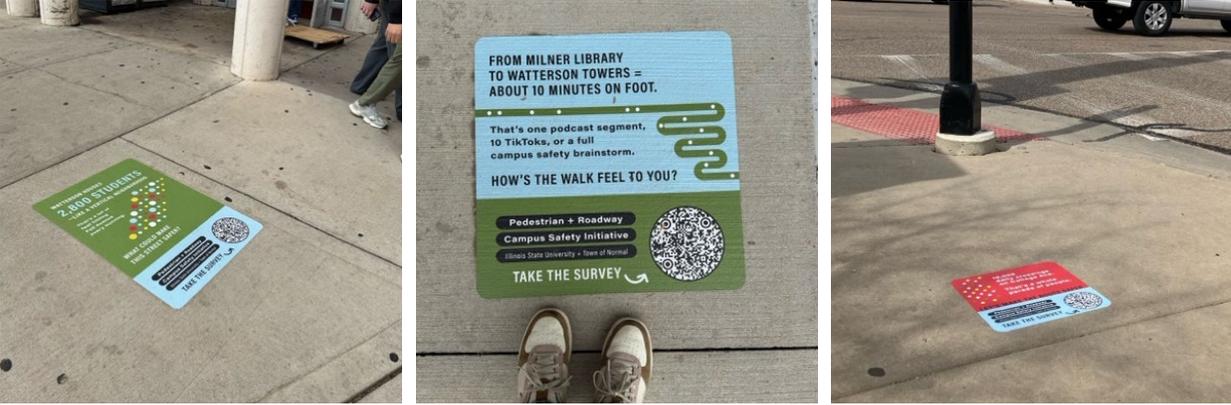
- **Email sign-ups:** 158

# Storytelling Activation

Communicating through a storytelling activation to spark interest and engagement with the initiative, the project team installed sidewalk decals in the project area with the assistance of the Illinois State University Safe Redbird Ambassadors. Designed to make people stop, think, and engage, the decals shared quick facts about campus travel patterns—like how many people cross major streets each day—and highlighted the shared responsibility of navigating campus safely, whether on foot, by bike, or by car.

Each decal featured a QR code linking directly to the initiative’s first community survey. The decals helped connect everyday moments of campus movement to the larger goals of the project: raising awareness, encouraging input, and inspiring collective action toward a safer campus environment.

Between April and May 2025, the strategy resulted in **302 QR code scans** recorded during the campaign, helping drive student participation and elevate transportation safety as a visible, community-wide conversation.



Various storytelling activation decals were displayed on campus sidewalks.

# Stakeholder Discussions

The project team facilitated four stakeholder discussions and collaborated with the Town and Illinois State staff to identify key participants. Stakeholders included representatives from the Illinois State Student Government Association, Connect Transit, Friends of the Constitution Trail, State Farm, Town Departments, and other local organizations. Tailored questions were developed for each group, reflecting their unique experiences, local insights, areas of influence, and community networks. The stakeholder engagement sessions were held virtually as follows:

- **Townwide/Community Organizations** (March 31, 2025)
- **Town of Normal** (April 1, 2025)
- **Illinois State University Student Organizations** (April 3, 2025)
- **Life CIL** (May 12, 2025)

Each discussion focused on gathering participants' perspectives regarding transportation safety challenges, locations of concern, and potential improvements to safety and mobility.

## Top Pedestrian and Roadway Safety Challenges

- **Distracted Behaviors:** Across all discussions, distracted behavior was cited as the top safety concern. Stakeholders shared that many drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians are engaged with phones, earbuds, or other devices, reducing their situational awareness and reaction time. This behavior is especially concerning near busy intersections and crossings.
- **Conflicts Between Modes:** Bicycles, scooters, pedestrians, buses, and motorists often share the same spaces without clear demarcation leading to frequent near-misses and confusion about right-of-way. Instances of poor etiquette and behavior by pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers exacerbate the issue.
- **Unpredictable Crossing Behavior:** Pedestrians often cross streets mid-block or against signals, while drivers and cyclists sometimes fail to anticipate these behaviors, increasing collision risks in both high-traffic and low-visibility areas.
- **Congestion and Crowding:** During peak periods (class changes, lunch hours, etc.), sidewalks, crosswalks, trails, and roads become overcrowded with pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, making it difficult to maintain safe distances and clear lines of movement between different modes of transportation.
- **Lack of Enforcement:** Low levels of traffic law enforcement related to yielding at crosswalks, speeding near campus areas, and distracted driving behaviors contribute to a culture where risky actions go unchecked.

## Locations of Concern

During the discussions, participants identified the following locations as top locations of concern:

- **College Avenue and University Street Intersection:** Both College Avenue and University Street hold high traffic volumes and multiple lanes of travel. Participants shared that the intersection was

hazardous for all road users, and distracted pedestrians crossing at the intersection heightened safety concerns.

- **Mulberry Street, College Avenue, and School Street Intersections:** Conflicts frequently arose at these intersections due to high pedestrian volumes at multi-stage crossings without adequate crossing time, audible signals, and pedestrian island accommodations.
- **Osage Street and Main Street Intersection:** Left-turning vehicles from Osage Street to Main Street, heavy pedestrian presence, and multiple driveways create confusion and dangerous conditions.
- **University Street and Beaufort Street Intersection:** This busy 4-way intersection presents ongoing safety concerns for pedestrians. Participants noted that drivers frequently fail to yield, and the absence of dedicated pedestrian signals contributes to uncertainty and risk. Multiple travel lanes in each direction make crossings more challenging for pedestrians, while the irregular movement of pedestrians and inadequate signage create confusion for both pedestrians and drivers.
- **Fell Avenue and Broadway in Uptown Normal:** Distracted drivers searching for parking near the intersection of Uptown Normal and Illinois State often fail to notice pedestrians, especially those who are jaywalking.
- **College Avenue and Kingsley Street Intersection:** This intersection was identified as a hotspot for pedestrian/motorist conflicts, including a fatal crash in which a pedestrian crossing College Avenue was struck by a motorist.

## Suggested Safety and Mobility Improvements

Participants shared the following suggestions to improve transportation safety and mobility around the Illinois State campus:

- **Pedestrian Crossing Enhancements:** Participants recommended installing audible pedestrian signals, high-visibility crosswalk markings, longer walk intervals, pedestrian refuge islands, raised crosswalks, or narrower streets with reduced crosswalk lengths at key intersections to increase safety and support users with disabilities.
- **Trail and Shared Path Upgrades:** Participants advocated for clearly delineating lanes for pedestrians, cyclists, and personal transportation devices through striping, signage, and surface treatments and creating buffer zones where possible to reduce close encounters between fast and slow users.
- **Traffic Calming Measures:** Participants encouraged implementing features like raised intersections, narrowed vehicle lanes, and lower posted speed limits (e.g., 20 mph zones) in high pedestrian areas; consider pedestrian-priority zones that restrict vehicle access during peak periods.
- **Lighting and Visibility Improvements:** Participants suggested upgrading lighting along major paths, intersections, and crossing points with LED fixtures. Address areas of poor visibility to reduce nighttime collision risks for all users, especially in trail areas and parking lots. More pedestrians and cyclists could also wear reflectors on their bikes or clothing at night.

- **Education and Awareness Campaigns:** Participants called for launching targeted campaigns (both physical signage and digital media) to raise awareness about pedestrian priority policies and laws, promote safe trail-sharing behaviors, and discourage phone use while traveling.
- **Transit Service Improvements:** Participants recommended improving the frequency and reliability of Connect Transit routes to reduce travel time and minimize the need for multiple transfers. They encouraged prioritizing enhancements that increase accessibility and convenience for all users, particularly individuals with disabilities.
- **Technology and Data Collection Opportunities:** Several participants proposed using new technologies like traffic sensors, mobile app alerts, and near-miss data collection to better identify risk patterns and monitor safety outcomes. They also noted the importance of addressing underreporting of near-miss incidents.

## Pop-Up Events

The project team organized two pop-up events on the Illinois State campus in April 2025. The pop-ups aimed to raise awareness about the project, promote Survey #1, and engage the community through a mapping exercise to identify priorities and issues related to transportation safety within the study area. To encourage participation and feedback, the team offered transportation safety-themed swag, including reflector lights and bumper stickers, and snacks as incentives.



The project team engaged with the Illinois State community during pop-up events on campus.

### Milner Plaza

- **Date:** Monday, April 14, 2025 (12:30-3:30 PM)
- **Attendance:** Approximately 30 people

### Schroeder Plaza

- **Date:** Wednesday, April 30, 2025 (12:30-3:30 PM)
- **Attendance:** Approximately 70 people

## Map Activity

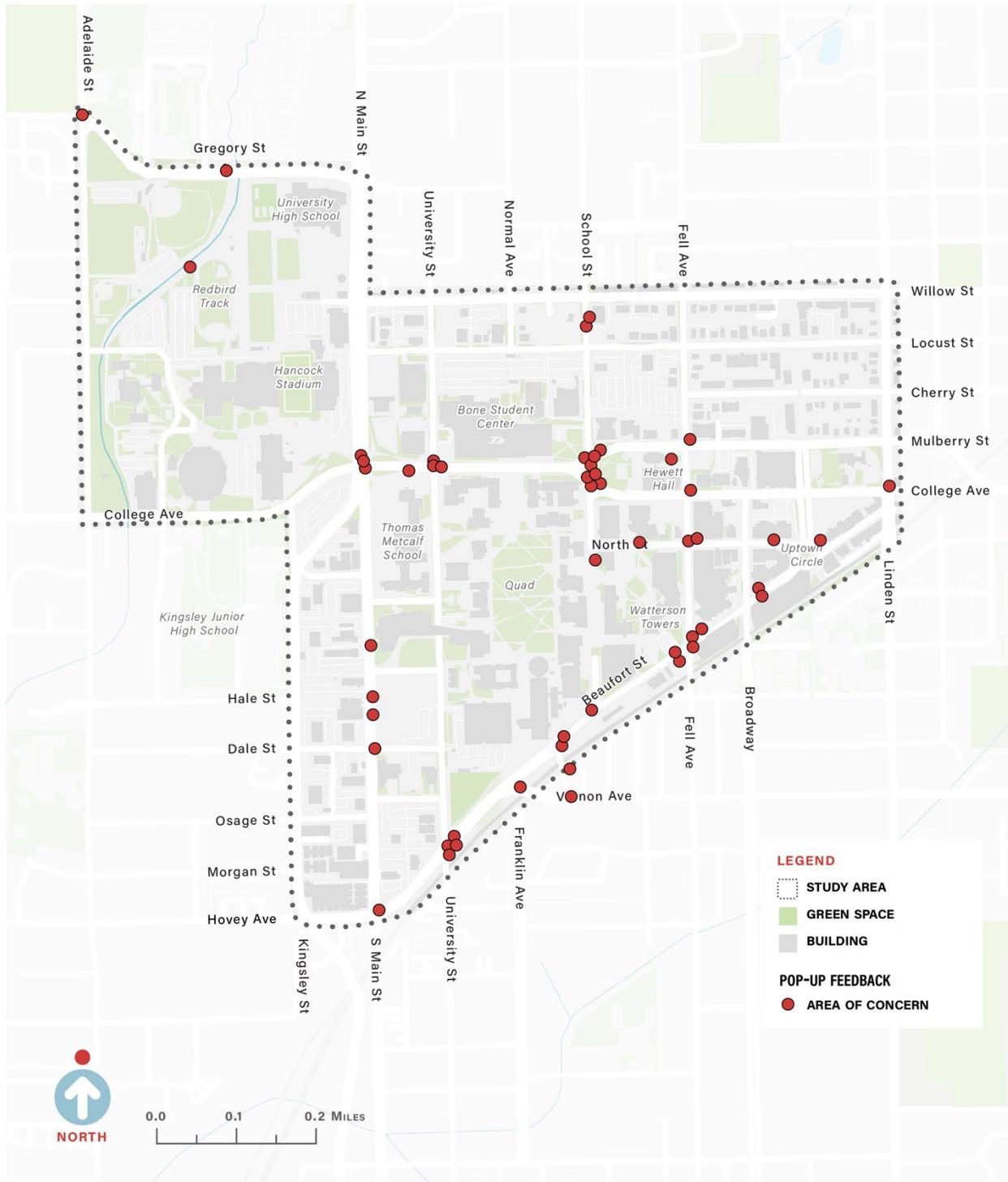
Participants identified locations within the study area where they had experienced safety concerns by placing numbered stickers on a map. Each participant then recorded the corresponding sticker number on a notecard, along with detailed comments describing the specific safety issues or observations related to that location.

- 52 Map Pins
- 55 Comments

## Top Locations of Concern

- Mulberry Street, College Avenue, and School Street Intersections
- Fell Avenue and Beaufort Street Intersection
- University Street and Beaufort Street Intersection
- College Avenue and University Street Intersection
- Main Street

**Figure 1. Pop-up Participants' Locations of Concern**



A map indicating pop-up participants' areas of concern in the study area.

# Survey #1

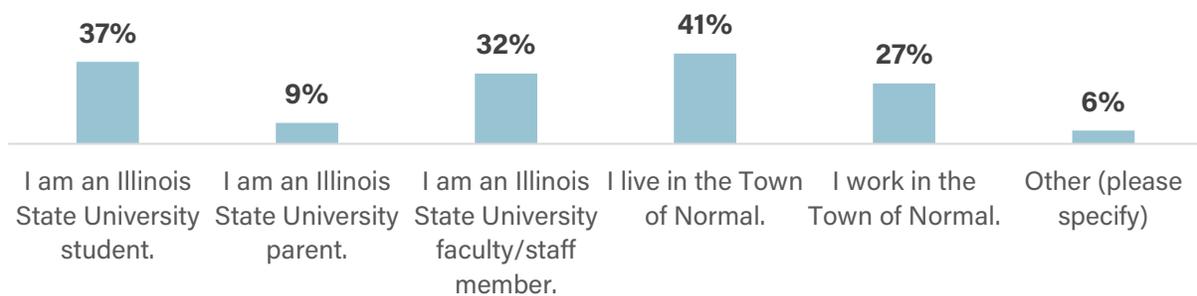
The primary goal of the first community survey was to gather insights about transportation safety experiences on campus, including specific locations of concern and personal accounts of “near misses” that are often absent from official crash data. The survey was promoted through storytelling activation decals featuring QR codes and digital signage within Illinois State buildings, as well as coordinated marketing and communications efforts by both Illinois State University and the Town of Normal.

## Overview

- **Number of completed submissions:** 1459
- **Survey availability:** April 10 - May 16, 2025

## Background

Figure 2. Please select all options that apply to you.



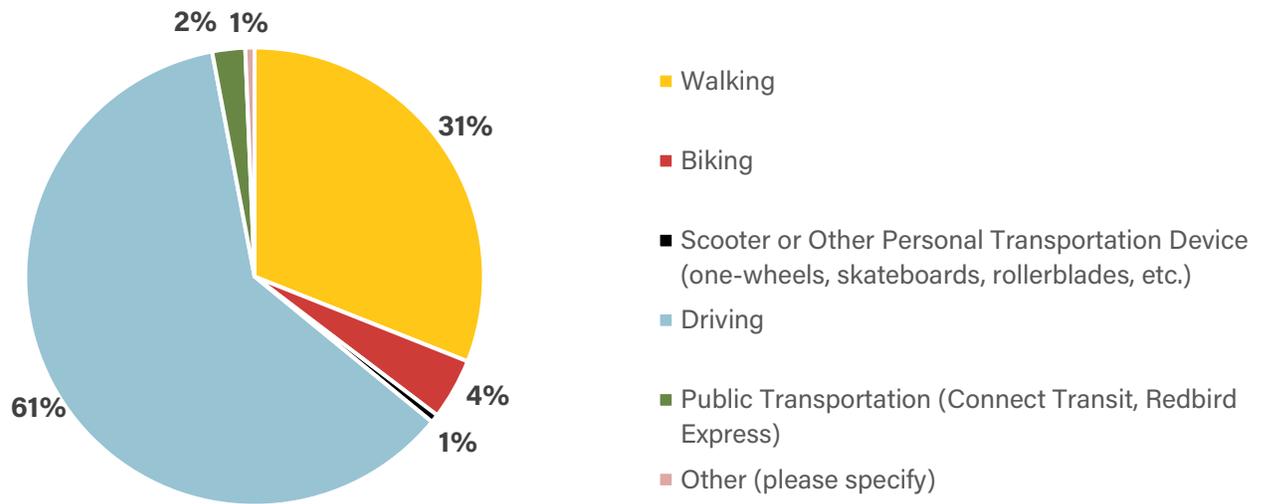
A bar chart shows the distribution of survey respondents by affiliation or residence. The percentages for each category are:

- 37% are Illinois State University students.
- 9% are Illinois State University parents.
- 32% are Illinois State University faculty or staff members.
- 41% live in the Town of Normal.
- 27% work in the Town of Normal
- 6% selected "Other (please specify).

Among respondents who selected “Other,” many indicated that they were Illinois State alumni, retired or former Illinois State staff members, parents of a student attending a K-12 school in the campus area, or City of Bloomington residents who frequently travel to the campus area.

**Figure 3. On a typical day, what is your primary mode of transportation to get to the campus area?**

The majority of survey respondents drove to the campus area (61%), followed by walking (31%).



A pie chart shows the distribution of survey respondents by their primary mode of transportation to get to the campus area:

- 31% walk.
- 4% bike.
- 1% use scooters or other personal transportation devices.
- 61% drive.
- 2% take public transportation.
- 1% selected "Other (please specify)".

## General Transportation Safety Perceptions

**Table 1. How safe do you feel navigating the campus area using the following modes of transportation?**

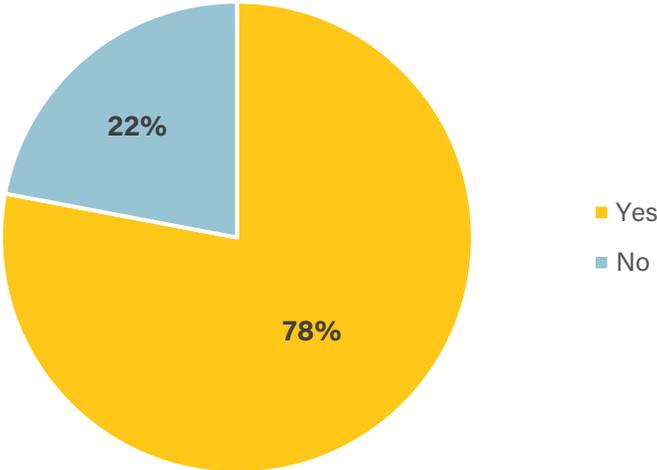
Of the modes of transportation, respondents reported feeling most unsafe or very unsafe walking in the campus area, followed by biking, driving, and then taking the bus.

Mode	Very unsafe	Unsafe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Safe	Very safe	I don't use this option
Walking	2.6%	17.0%	18.2%	44.3%	13.7%	4.2%
Biking/Scootering/Other PTDs	3.5%	13.5%	9.8%	12.8%	2.7%	57.7%
Driving	1.5%	12.5%	15.9%	45.4%	16.0%	8.7%
Bus	0.5%	2.0%	6.0%	18.3%	11.1%	62.1%

# Key Issues & Locations of Concern

**Figure 4. Have you experienced or witnessed any near-misses, crashes, or other transportation safety incidents in the campus area involving people walking, biking, riding scooters, or driving?**

Most respondents (78%) have experienced or witnessed a transportation safety incident involving walking, biking, scootering, or driving in the campus area.



A pie chart showing that 78% of respondents answered "Yes" and 22% answered "No".

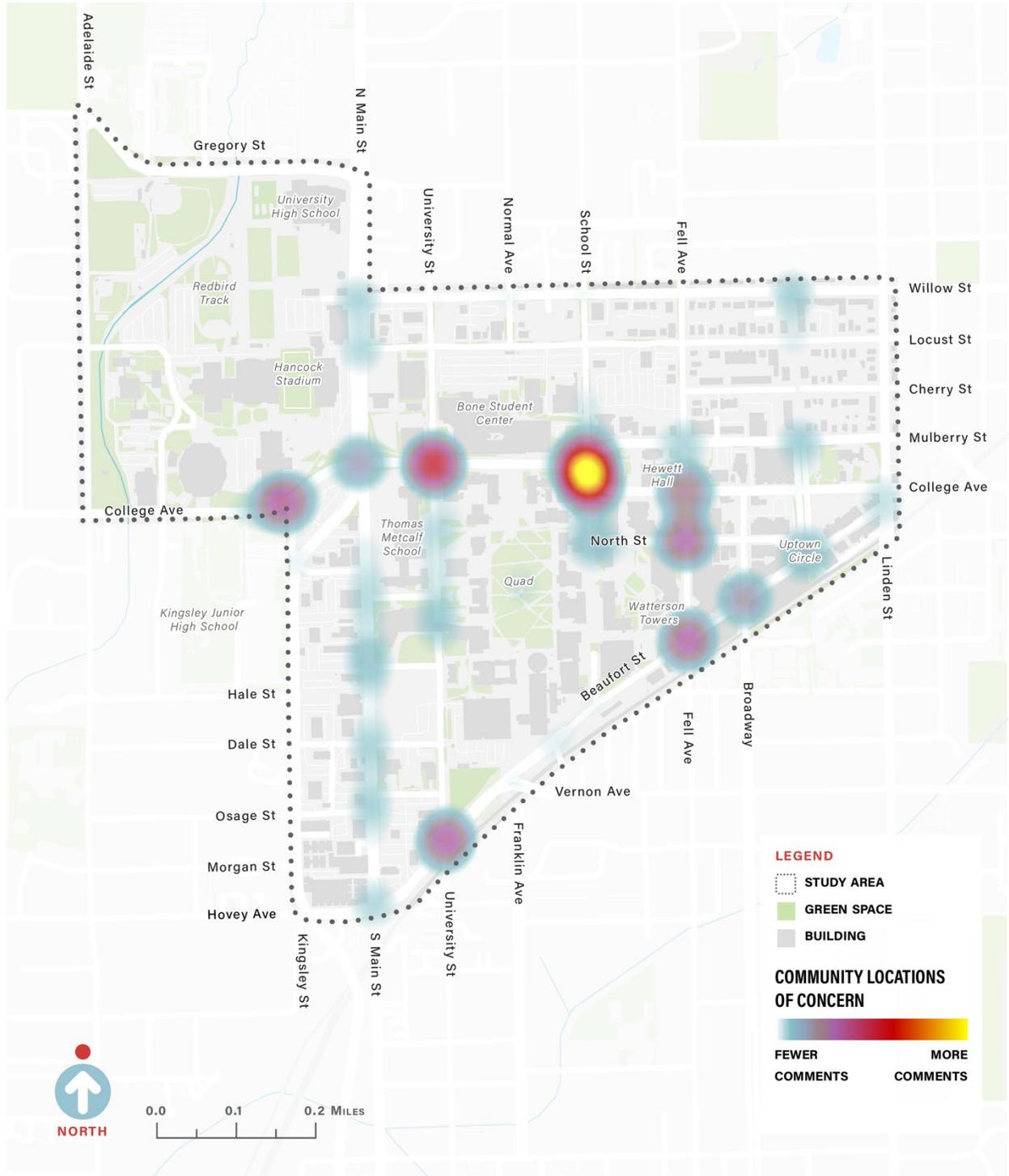
Respondents who indicated they had experienced or witnessed a transportation safety incident were invited to provide additional details about the event and its location. From the compiled responses, five key themes emerged as the most common:

- **Drivers Not Yielding to Pedestrians:** A consistent issue was drivers failing to stop for or yield to pedestrians in marked crosswalks, even when pedestrian signals are active.
- **Unsafe Pedestrian Practices:** This included jaywalking, not using crosswalks, ignoring traffic signals, and being distracted by phones, leading pedestrians to enter roadways unsafely.
- **Dangerous Intersections:** Specific locations like Fell Avenue/College Avenue, Uptown Circle, Mulberry Street/College Avenue/School Street, and Constitution Trail crossings were repeatedly identified as high-risk areas for near misses and accidents involving both pedestrians and vehicles.
- **Risky Behavior of Cyclists and Scooter Riders:** This included not obeying traffic laws (running stop signs/red lights), riding on sidewalks at speeds that make it challenging to react or stop quickly, and a general lack of awareness of traffic.
- **Perceived Lack of Traffic Law Enforcement:** Numerous respondents felt that there was insufficient enforcement of traffic laws for both drivers and pedestrians, contributing to an unsafe environment.

Respondents identified specific campus-area locations they felt were unsafe or in need of improvement. They placed pins on a map and provided comments for each location. **Nearly 2,700 map comments** were submitted, and all pinned locations were visualized in a heat map to highlight areas with the highest concentration of concerns. Many frequently cited locations aligned with feedback from pop-up

participants, most notably the **intersection of Mulberry Street, College Avenue, and School Street**, which received the highest number of comments.

**Figure 5. What specific locations on or near campus do you feel are the most unsafe and should be addressed through this Pedestrian & Roadway Campus Safety Initiative?**



A map of the campus area indicating locations where survey participants felt were the most unsafe and should be addressed through the project.

● Pedestrian + Roadway Campus Safety Initiative ● Engagement Summary

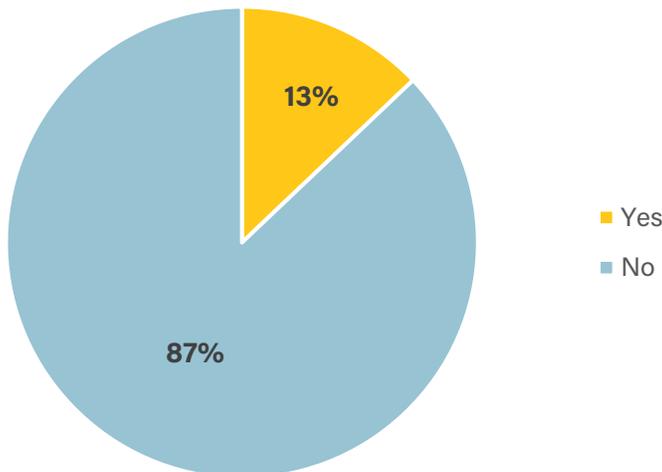
Respondents were also asked to identify the top three factors they believe most contribute to transportation safety issues in the campus area. Across all responses, the five most frequently cited factors were:

1. **Pedestrians failing to use crosswalks or follow crossing signals** (40.8%)
2. **Distracted walking or biking** (38.2%)
3. **Drivers failing to yield to pedestrians or cyclists** (37.3%)
4. **Speeding or aggressive driving** (35.5%)
5. **Lack of safe crossings for pedestrians and/or cyclists** (29.7%)

## Potential Solutions & Feedback

**Figure 6. Have you used any existing campus safety resources (e.g., Safe Redbirds App, Redbird Safe Walk, etc.)?**

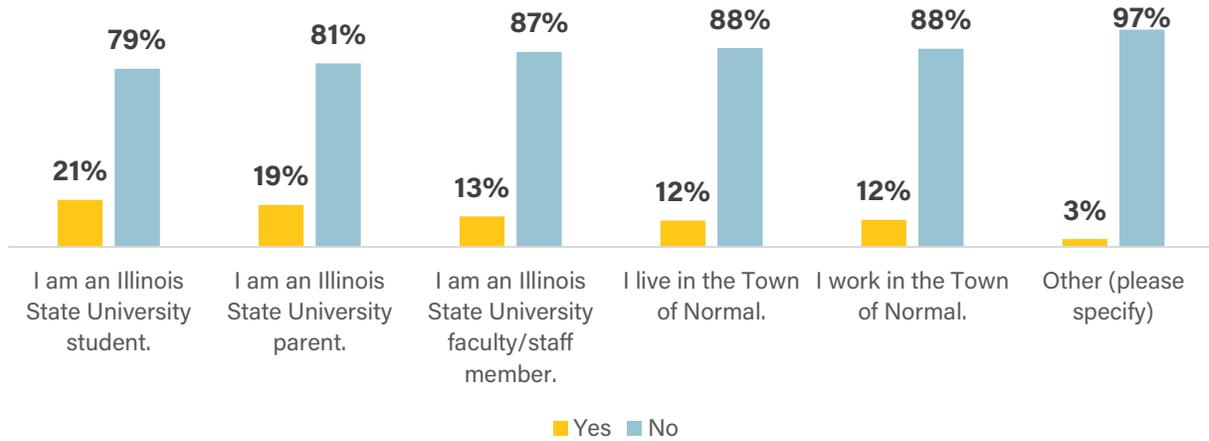
The majority of respondents (87%) have not used existing campus safety resources.



A pie chart showing that 13% of respondents answered "Yes" and 87% answered "No".

Utilization of existing campus safety resources differed among stakeholder groups who responded to the survey. Although Illinois State University affiliates reported slightly higher engagement, overall usage remained low. The chart below provides a breakdown of resource use by each stakeholder group.

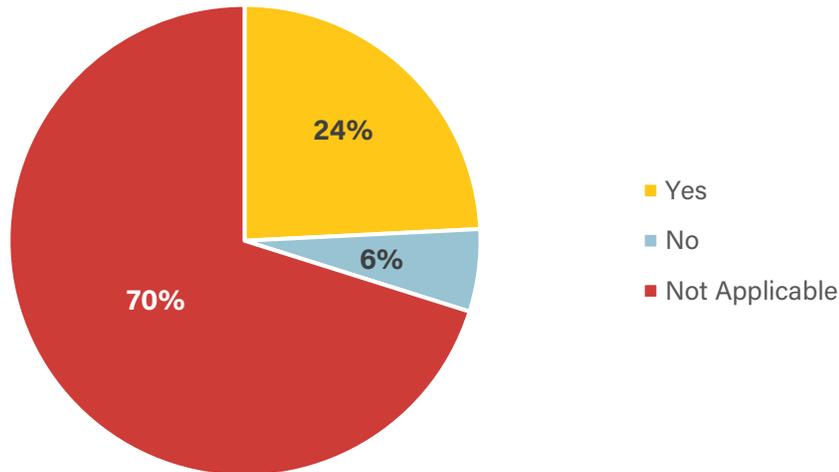
**Figure 7. Use of existing campus safety resources by stakeholder group**



A bar chart shows the percentage of respondents who reported using campus safety resources, broken down by stakeholder group. The percentages of "Yes" responses are as follows:

- Illinois State University students: 21%
- Illinois State University parents: 19%
- Illinois State University faculty/staff: 13%
- Residents of the Town of Normal: 12%
- Employees in the Town of Normal: 12%
- "Other (please specify)": 3%

**Figure 8. When using a bike, scooter, or other personal transportation device, do you comply with campus dismount zones?**



A pie chart showing that 24% of respondents answered "Yes", 6% answered "No", and 70% answered "Not Applicable".

Respondents who indicated they do not comply with campus dismount zones were asked what changes might encourage better adherence. The top five recurring themes from their responses are listed below.

1. **Dedicated Bike Lanes and Infrastructure:** This was the most frequent suggestion, emphasizing the need for separate pathways for bikes and pedestrians to avoid conflicts.
2. **Increased Enforcement and Consequences:** Many respondents believed that compliance would remain low without clear repercussions. Suggestions included more security personnel, ticket or fine issuing, and a visible police presence to deter non-compliance.
3. **Improved Signage and Awareness:** A significant number of responses indicated a lack of knowledge about dismount zones or where they are located, suggesting that better communication is needed.
4. **Rethink or Modify Dismount Zones:** There was a strong sentiment that the dismount zones are overly restrictive, unnecessary, or poorly implemented. Some suggested eliminating them entirely, while others proposed limiting them to peak hours or high-traffic areas, or only applying them to motorized vehicles.
5. **Reasonable Alternative Routes:** If dismount zones are to remain, respondents emphasized the need for safe and convenient alternative paths for those on wheels.

In a separate question, respondents were asked to select up to three measures, drawn from a list of physical and behavioral interventions, that they felt would most improve transportation safety in the campus area. The top five priorities identified were:

1. **Safe crosswalks** (42.2%)
2. **Safer pedestrian behaviors** (39.5%)
3. **More traffic calming** (physical design to reduce speeds and improve safety for road users) (38.7%)
4. **Safer driving behaviors** (38.2%)
5. **Better enforcement of the rules of the road** (25.7%)

## Next Steps

During the initial phase of the Pedestrian & Roadway Campus Safety Initiative, the team gathered valuable input from community members on opportunities and challenges surrounding Illinois State University. Key themes included distracted behaviors, transportation safety conflicts and concerns, and a strong desire for infrastructure improvements. This feedback will play a central role in shaping the next phases of the project, including the design, installation, and evaluation of pilot projects planned for fall 2025.

Ongoing community engagement will remain a cornerstone of the process, with multiple opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and Normal residents to share their perspectives. Combined with continued research and analysis of transportation safety in the study area, this input will guide the development of long-term policies and infrastructure strategies aimed at fostering a safer, more accessible campus environment for everyone.