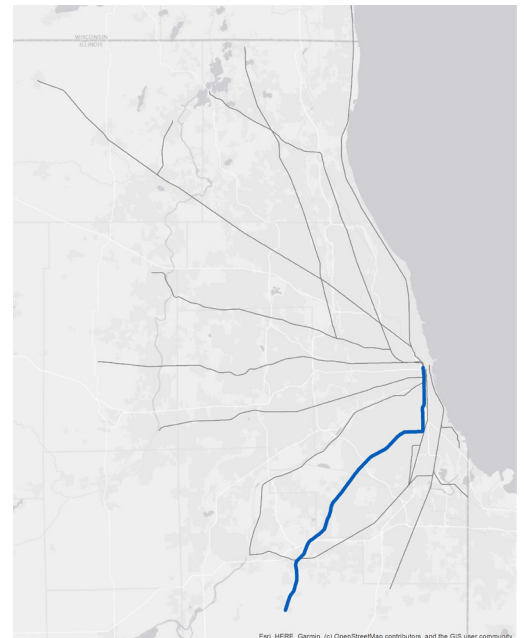




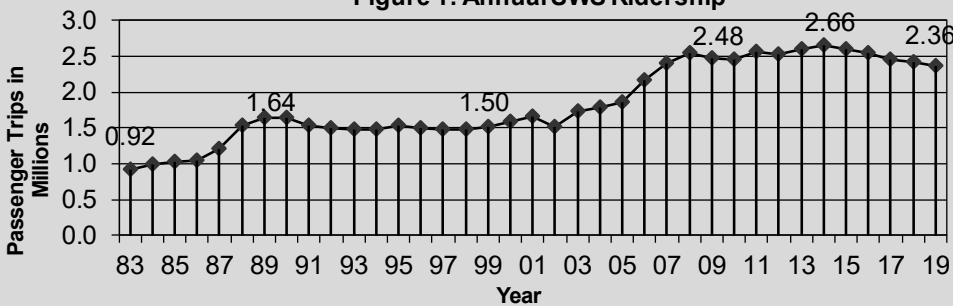
SouthWest Service Line



Line at a Glance

- › Average Trip Length (2019) : 18.8 miles
- › Average Fare Paid (2019) : \$4.74
- › Number of Stations: 12
- › Route Length: 40.8 miles
- › Number of Weekday Trains (Dec 2019): 30
- › On-Time Performance (2019): 94%
- › 68% of SWS riders drive to their boarding station.
- › 4% more people live along the SWS than did in 2010.
- › 17% more people work along the SWS than did in 2010.

Figure 1: Annual SWS Ridership



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Schedules as of Dec 2019

- › 9 trains in the AM Peak
- › 6 trains in the Midday
- › 8 trains in the PM Peak
- › 7 trains in the Evening
- › 6 trains on Saturdays
- › 0 trains on Sundays



- › 9th lowest ridership line
- › Oak Lawn is the 31st busiest outlying station
- › Ridership is limited by limited service



- › 2nd highest share of female riders in the system

Chicago to Manhattan

	SWS (\$m)	System (\$m)
Rolling stock	\$93	\$2,978
Track and structure	\$35	\$1,567
Signal, electrical, and communications	\$42	\$1,137
Facilities and equipment	\$23	\$685
Stations and parking	\$33	\$1,120
Acquisitions, extensions, and expansions	\$152	\$603
Support activities	\$19	\$431
TOTAL	\$397	\$8,521
PERCENTAGE	4.6%	100.0%

Notes: 1) Excludes South Shore, preventative maintenance, new lines, and pending grants. 2) Prior expenses not adjusted for inflation. 3) Data subject to budget revisions, audit adjustments, etc. 4) Project costs without specific locations have been allocated to entire lines where appropriate

Time of Day	Inbound	Outbound
AM Peak	3,983	30
Midday	362	361
PM Peak	97	3,502
Evening	16	467
TOTAL	4,458	4,360

Source: 2018 Weekday Station Boardings and Alightings by Time-of-Day and Direction

ON COVID-19 AND HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The information presented in this chapter is representative of Metra's operations prior to the onset of COVID-19, which upended almost every aspect of daily life. While Metra's pre-COVID services may not be replicated in the same manner going forward, the transportation services Metra continues to provide are essential to the vitality of the Chicago region.

There are certain elements of Metra's situational and operational environment that are unlikely to change in the short or medium term. These are: the location and capacity of each rail line, the location and physical characteristics of each station, the general characteristics of the communities around each station, Metra's history in each community, and Metra's mission to provide safe, reliable, efficient commuter rail service that enhances the economic and environmental health of northeast Illinois. On the other hand, there are operational and situational factors that are likely to be quite different. These may be: the number of riders, the time and duration of peak travel demand, the public's perception of the relative safety of various transportation modes, the way riders access and depart from stations, and the location preferences of people and businesses.

The challenges posed by the pandemic were significant and likely will result in the emergence of a very different operational environment. Even so, understanding Metra's past performance, pre-COVID service levels, and established community baselines is vital to making informed decisions about the reality that is taking shape. Through this process Metra will continue to achieve Metra's mission, realizing its vision, and pursuing its strategic goals.

In this section

- 1 – Annual Passenger Trips
- 2 – SWS Overview
- 3 – Present and Future Demand
- 4 – Station Characteristics
- 4 – Mode of Access and Parking
- 5 – Reverse Commute and Non-Downtown Markets
- 6 – Major Capital Projects
- 6 – ADA Accessibility
- 7 – SWS Corridor Demographics
- 8 – SWS Corridor Household Data
- 8 – SWS Corridor Employment Data
- 8 – Major Trip Generators

As part of a regional transportation network, Metra provides safe, reliable, efficient commuter rail service that enhances the economic and environmental health of northeast Illinois.

- Metra's Mission Statement

SWS OVERVIEW

Metra's SouthWest Service (SWS) Line extends 40.8 miles southwest from Chicago Union Station (CUS, or "Union Station") in downtown Chicago to Manhattan, in Will County. It serves 11 intermediate stations in southwest Cook County and north-central Will County (see Figure 2). The service is operated by Metra personnel under a trackage lease agreement with Norfolk Southern (NS), which owns and dispatches the railroad south of 74th Street in Chicago. In 2019, passenger trips on the SWS totaled 2.3 million, ranking ninth among the 11 Metra lines.

Two segments of single track limit the operation of more trains on the SWS: a two-mile segment following the Forest Hill interlocking and a 17-mile segment between the 143rd Street and Manhattan stations.

PRESENT AND FUTURE DEMAND

In 2018, over 8,800 boardings took place each weekday on the SWS, with 84% of boardings occurring on peak-period, peak-direction trains. On the SWS, ridership has more than doubled since 1983 (see Figure 1). Significant ridership gains have occurred at nearly every station along the line.

A number of indicators suggest that demand for commuter rail service will continue to rise in the SWS corridor. The burgeoning southwest suburbs, and in particular, suburbs in Will County, have seen phenomenal growth in population and employment. As shown in Tables 3, 4, and 5, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) 2050 forecasts illustrate this continued trend. All outlying SWS station marketsheds are forecast to see increases in population, households and employment, with a 22% increase in population expected between 2020 to 2050. In the southernmost SWS marketsheds, from Laraway Road to Manhattan, CMAP projects a greater than 75% increase in population.

Figure 3 shows the origins of SWS riders boarding at stations outside of downtown Chicago. Overall passenger ridership on the SWS totaled 2.36 million in 2019.

Approximately 5,500 parking spaces serve the riders of the SWS. According to Metra’s 2018 parking counts, the line’s effective parking rate is 52%.

FIGURE 2: METRA STATIONS ON THE SWS LINE

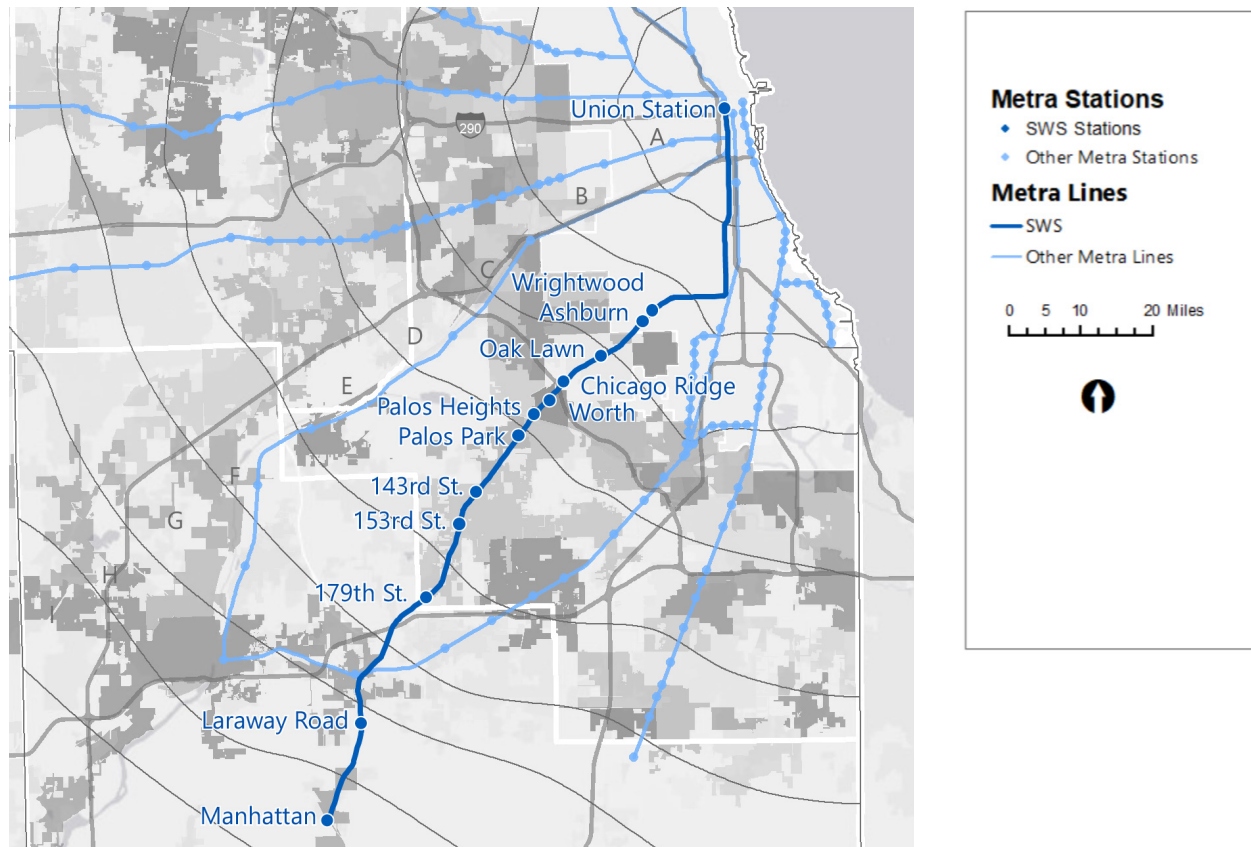


TABLE 3: SWS STATION CHARACTERISTICS

Station	Accessibility ¹	Fare Zone	Mile Post	Responsibility and Maintenance			Boardings				Weekday trains serving each station as of Dec 2019
				Platform	Depot	Parking	1983	2006	2016	2018	
Union Station	●	A	0.0	Metra	Metra	n/a	1,437	4,327	4,503	4,327	30
Wrightwood	●	C	11.9	Multiple	Metra	Metra	130	296	226	261	29
Ashburn	●	C	12.6	Multiple	Metra	Multiple	244	321	218	229	29
Oak Lawn	●	D	15.2	Metra	Muni	Muni	443	1,157	1,329	1,186	30
Chicago Ridge	●	D	16.8	Metra	Multiple	Multiple	227	406	339	372	30
Worth	●	D	18.2	Metra	Multiple	Multiple	204	445	419	406	30
Palos Heights ²	●	D	19.2	NS	Multiple	Multiple	--	281	238	232	30
Palos Park	●	E	20.3	NS	Multiple	Multiple	63	387	432	424	30
143rd St./Orland Park	●	E	23.6	Metra	Multiple	Multiple	135	234	548	591	30
153rd St./Orland Park ³	●	E	25.2	Metra	Muni	Muni	--	715	604	544	30
179th St./Orland Park ⁴	●	F	28.9	Metra	Metra	Metra	--	209	201	208	28
Laraway Road ⁵	●	H	35.8	Metra	Multiple	Multiple	--	11	24	19	4
Manhattan ⁵	●	I	40.8	Metra	Multiple	Multiple	--	22	22	19	4
TOTAL SWS							2,883	8,811	9,103	8,818	30

TABLE 4: 2019 MODE OF ACCESS AND 2018 COMMUTER PARKING AT SWS METRA STATIONS

Station Name	Mode of Access (2019)					Station Parking (2018)		
	Walk/Bike	Drive ⁶	Dropped Off ⁷	Transit	Other	Capacity	Effective Use ⁸	Observed Use ⁹
Union Station ¹⁰	42%	5%	9%	28%	16%	0	n/a	n/a
Wrightwood	13%	68%	14%	3%	1%	180	73%	73%
Ashburn	32%	53%	15%	0%	0%	142	49%	49%
Oak Lawn	17%	68%	14%	0%	1%	773	100%	96%
Chicago Ridge	31%	45%	23%	0%	1%	439	49%	28%
Worth	11%	77%	11%	0%	1%	467	52%	52%
Palos Heights	3%	83%	14%	0%	0%	500	32%	32%
Palos Park	7%	74%	18%	0%	0%	350	81%	81%
143rd St./Orland Park	16%	67%	16%	0%	1%	417	69%	69%
153rd St./Orland Park	5%	79%	15%	0%	1%	1364	41%	41%
179th St./Orland Park	17%	56%	26%	0%	1%	319	34%	34%
Laraway Road	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%	299	5%	5%
Manhattan	8%	69%	23%	0%	0%	248	4%	4%
TOTAL SWS¹¹	15%	68%	16%	0%	1%	5,498	52%	50%
SYSTEM TOTAL	26%	54%	16%	4%	1%			

¹ Accessibility information is displayed using a three dot system. A complete dot means the station is fully accessible. No dot means that the station is inaccessible. A hollow dot means the station is partially accessible. Customers who use wheelchairs at partially accessible stations will be able to access train platforms from the street. However, ramps, ticket windows, buildings and shelters may not fully conform to ADA guidelines.

² Station opened in 2004

³ Station opened in 1990

⁴ Station opened in 1995

⁵ Stations opened in 2006

⁶ Includes carpool drivers

⁷ Includes carpool passengers

⁸ Effective use: all sold permit spaces are assumed to be used, even if unoccupied during parking survey

⁹ Observed use: spaces physically occupied during parking survey

¹⁰ Includes riders boarding on all Metra lines departing from station

¹¹ Line total does not include downtown terminal

Sources: Metra 1983 Boarding/Alighting Counts, Metra, "Commuter Rail System Station Boarding/Alighting Counts," Fall 2006, Spring 2014, and Fall 2018. Metra, Origin-Destination Survey, Fall 2019; Metra Station and Parking Capacity and Use Survey, 2018

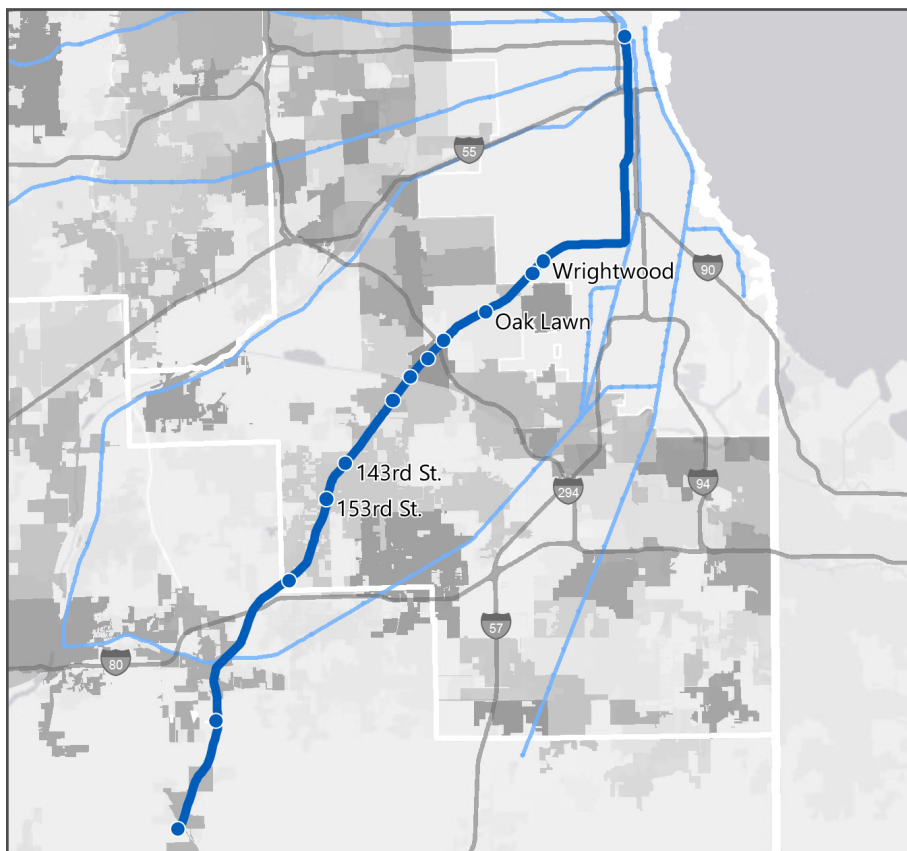
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REVERSE-COMMUTE AND NON-DOWNTOWN MARKETS

Although Metra’s primary market involves commuters who follow the traditional suburb-to-CBD trip pattern, many lines Metra have seen some demand for city-to-suburb reverse-commute options (Metra’s primary commuter market is discussed in the Central Business District chapter). However, the SWS is dominated by traditional suburb-to-CBD commuters and has not experienced the volume of reverse-commute ridership that has been seen on some Metra lines. According to Metra’s 2018 Boarding and Alighting Count, less than 1% of AM peak boardings on the SWS are in the reverse (outbound) direction, far below the system average of 5.8%. Very few AM alightings take place at non-CBD, SWS stations, as shown in Figure 3.

Factors that increase reverse-commute trip patterns are the growth of population in the city and inner suburbs as well as the growth of employment in the suburbs (see Tables 3, 4, and 5). These trends may change as employment growth in the suburbs along the SWS is projected to be strong during this between now and 2050. These opportunities may draw commuters from beyond the immediate downtown Chicago station area as well. Employment along the entire SWS is expected to increase an additional 21% by 2050 after increasing 17% between 2010 and 2020. The most substantial growth was and will be concentrated near the southern end of the corridor.

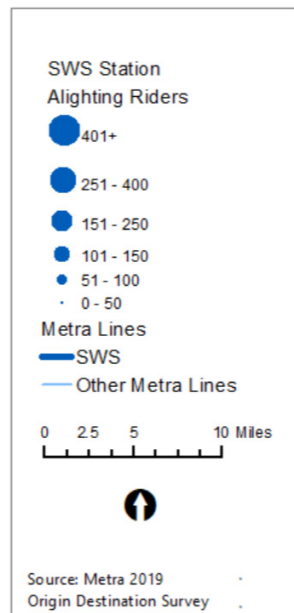
FIGURE 3: NON-DOWNTOWN DESTINATIONS DURING AM PEAK



Terms Defined

“Reverse-commuters” are those who travel in the opposite direction of the majority of riders in a particular service period.”

“Alighting Riders” are those who get off the train. They are the opposite of a “boarding rider.”



Note: Given low alighting numbers for the entire line. The highest are labeled.

MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS ALONG THE SWS

Since 1985, Metra has invested \$397 million (in year of expenditure dollars) in improvements to the SWS corridor. Table 1 indicates the amount of investment in different asset categories. This amount includes the 1990 and 1995 extensions, as well as the 2006 line upgrade and extension to Manhattan. Over the years, Metra has partnered with Amtrak, owner of CUS, to complete a number of upgrades to the terminal's commuter facilities. For more information on proposed CUS improvements, see the CBD chapter of this report.

The 2006 upgrade project, which cost a total of \$198 million, was funded in large part with a New Starts grant from the Federal Transit Administration. The project included extension of the route to Manhattan with an intermediate station at Laraway Road/New Lenox, doubling of service to 30 trains per day, a new coach yard in Manhattan to supplement the existing yard at 179th Street in Orland Park, installation of a second track between Palos Park and 143rd Street in Orland Park, and other track and signal improvements. The project also included the extension of station platforms with significant improvements at several stations, major parking expansion, and two new trainsets. As part of the project, the 143rd Street, 153rd Street, Ashburn, Oak Lawn, and Palos Park stations were rehabilitated and expanded to accommodate the ridership growth projected to follow the doubling in service.

All SWS stations comply with the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Metra's station compliance program started with designating four of the busiest SWS stations, including CUS in downtown Chicago, as "key stations", all of which were made fully accessible by 2001.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP) is the largest project in the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program, a package of 70 projects designed to improve the efficiency of passenger and freight rail operations in the region. Using a combination of bridges and embankment, a new track segment would be built. In conjunction with the installation of two rail-rail grade separations, conflicts between Metra and freight traffic will be reduced, improving reliability for both types of rail service. The CREATE Program estimates that when the project is completed in 2025, it will eliminate 32,000 annual passenger hours of delay from rail travel in the region.

Metra, along with its CREATE Program partners, have prioritized the 75th St. CIP project, which is the largest in the CREATE Program. In 2018, the project received a \$132 million federal grant, but additional funding will be required to complete the project, which is projected to cost nearly \$1 billion.

Metra is exploring a reroute of SWS trains to RI tracks, which would allow SWS trains to access the LaSalle Street Station rather than CUS, relieving congestion and releasing capacity for expanded intercity rail service. The project would significantly reduce travel times for SWS riders, but additional funding will be needed to accomplish this reroute.

FIGURE 4 ORIGINS OF RIDERS USING NON-CBD SWS STATIONS

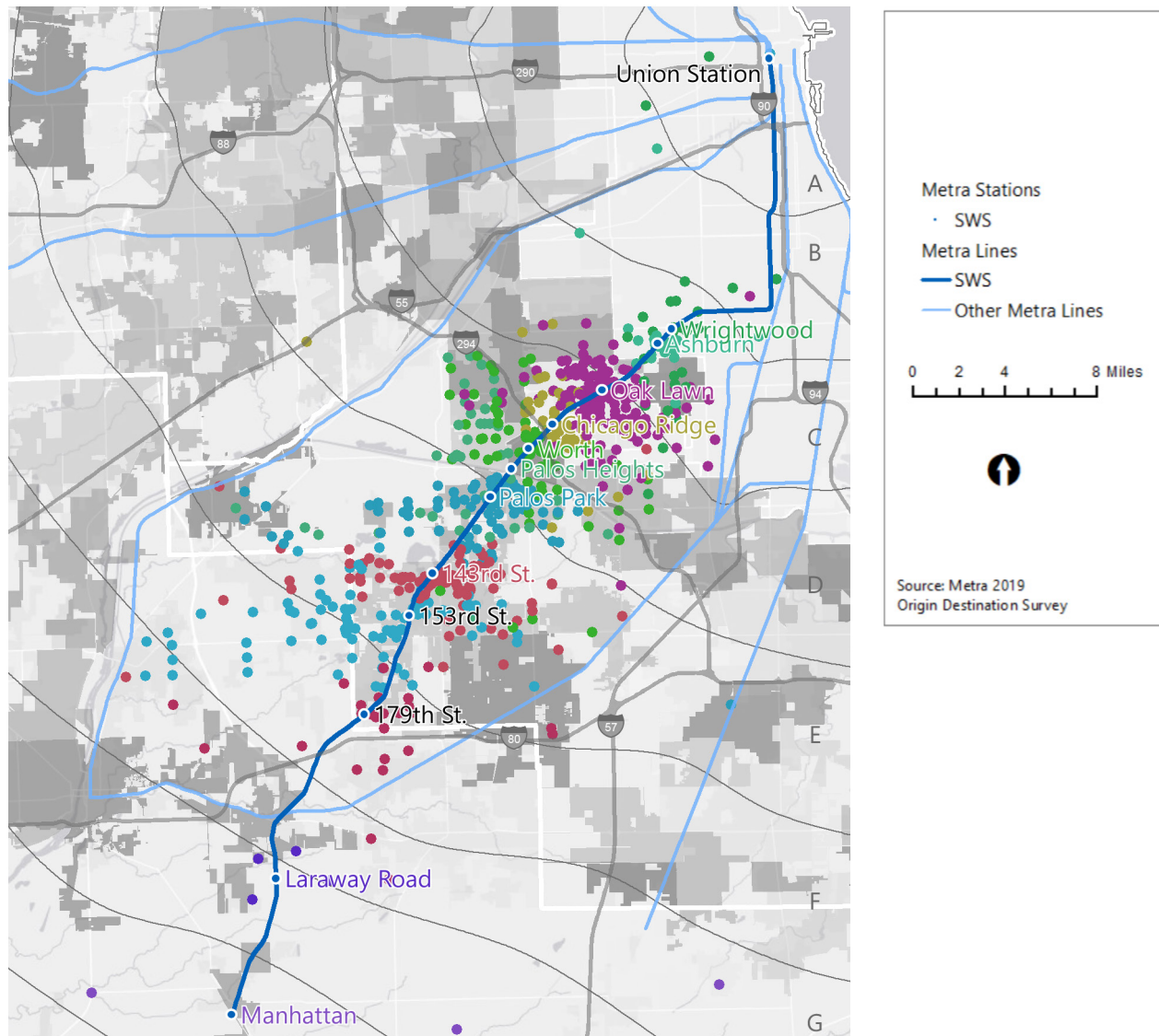


TABLE 5: SWS CORRIDOR POPULATION

Station	Fare Zone	Area Sq. Mi.	Population in Zone			Percent Change	
			2010	2020	2050	2010 vs 2020	2020 vs 2050
Union Station	A	0.3	2,895	4,834	4,851	67%	0%
Wrightwood, Ashburn	C	20.3	223,409	231,939	259,964	4%	12%
Oak Lawn, Chicago Ridge, Worth, Palos Hts	D	33.2	153,971	170,060	195,181	10%	15%
Palos Park, 143rd St., 153rd St.	E	47.6	82,697	81,505	96,552	-1%	18%
179th St.	F	19.4	22,772	23,713	33,671	4%	42%
Laraway Road	H	31.2	19,807	17,654	31,028	-11%	76%
Manhattan	I	276.2	37,831	36,012	66,702	-5%	85%
SWS TOTAL		428.2	543,382	565,717	687,949	4%	22%
REGION TOTAL		3,748.0	8,523,863	8,672,509	10,354,840	2%	19%

TABLE 6: SWS CORRIDOR HOUSEHOLDS

Station	Fare Zone	Area Sq. Mi.	Households in Zone			Percent Change	
			2010	2020	2050	2010 vs 2020	2020 vs 2050
Union Station	A	0.3	1,859	2,872	2,642	54%	-8%
Wrightwood, Ashburn	C	20.3	65,439	67,013	77,960	2%	16%
Oak Lawn, Chicago Ridge, Worth, Palos Hts	D	33.2	59,589	67,184	81,464	13%	21%
Palos Park, 143rd St., 153rd St.	E	47.6	29,078	31,712	40,259	9%	27%
179th St.	F	19.4	7,629	8,929	13,710	17%	54%
Laraway Road	H	31.2	6,365	6,055	11,968	-5%	98%
Manhattan	I	276.2	13,444	14,068	29,276	5%	108%
SWS TOTAL		428.2	183,403	197,833	257,279	8%	30%
REGION TOTAL		3,748.0	3,100,987	3,341,064	4,140,227	8%	24%

TABLE 7: SWS CORRIDOR EMPLOYMENT

Station	Fare Zone	Area Sq. Mi.	Employment in Zone			Percent Change	
			2010	2020	2050	2010 vs 2020	2020 vs 2050
Union Station	A	0.3	67,495	82,500	89,365	22%	8%
Wrightwood, Ashburn	C	20.3	39,141	45,211	55,084	16%	22%
Oak Lawn, Chicago Ridge, Worth, Palos Hts	D	33.2	57,787	69,998	83,277	21%	19%
Palos Park, 143rd St., 153rd St.	E	47.6	35,554	33,833	40,032	-5%	18%
179th St.	F	19.4	3,765	5,714	8,720	52%	53%
Laraway Road	H	31.2	2,899	3,106	6,991	7%	125%
Manhattan	I	276.2	7,406	11,087	20,874	50%	88%
SWS TOTAL		428.2	214,047	251,449	304,343	17%	21%
REGION TOTAL		3,748.0	4,141,355	4,231,961	4,945,892	2%	17%

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TABLE 8: MAJOR TRIP GENERATORS ACCESSIBLE ALONG THE UP-W CORRIDOR

Generator Type	Name	Comments	Municipality
Airports	Midway Airport	Commercial aviation; second-busiest airport in Illinois	Chicago
Colleges and Universities	Moraine Valley Community College	15,000 students	Palos Hills
	Robert Morris University	One of seven Illinois campuses	Orland Park
Culture and Entertainment	Children's Museum in Oak Lawn	Children's museum	Oak Lawn
	SeatGeek Stadium	Hosts Chicago Red Stars soccer games & other events	Bridgeview
Shopping	Ford City Mall	Super-regional mall	Chicago
	Chicago Ridge Mall	Super-regional mall	Chicago Ridge
	Orland Square Mall	Super-regional mall	Orland Park