

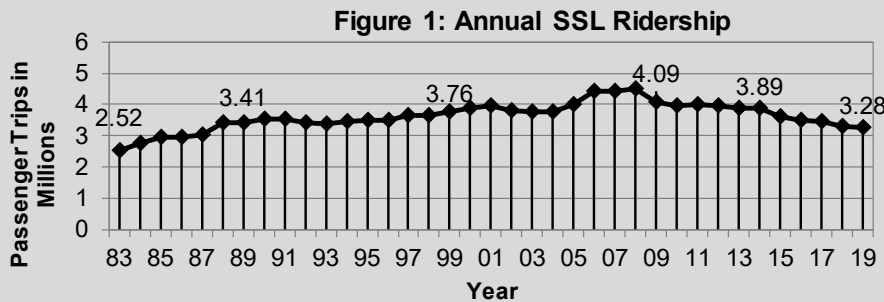
# South Shore Line

## Line at a Glance

- › Average Trip Length (2019) : 32.6 miles
- › Average Fare Paid (2019) : \$6.70
- › Number of Stations: 19
- › Route Length: 89.9 miles
- › Number of Weekday Trains (Dec 2019): 43
- › On-Time Performance (2019): 90.7% (rush-hour); 80.4% (all)

## In this section

- 1 – Annual Passenger Trips
- 2 – SSL Overview
- 2– Major Capital Projects
- 4– Station Characteristics



*The data included in this document predates the onset of COVID-19, which has greatly impacted NICTD's riders and operations. This information is presented to inform the public about NICTD's historic and recent operational environment but may not be illustrative of NICTD's current or future operations. For the latest information about South Shore Trains, visit NICTD's website at: [mysouthshoreline.com](http://mysouthshoreline.com)*

**Table 2: SSL 2019 Boardings**

Time of Day	Passengers
Weekday	10,964
Peak	8,020
Off-Peak	2,942
Weekend	4,438
<b>Total Weekday</b>	<b>21,926</b>

Source: 2019 Monthly Ridership and 2019 Year-End Performance Report

## SSL INTRODUCTION

Commuter rail service on the South Shore Line (SSL) between downtown Chicago and South Bend, Indiana is operated by the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD). The SSL serves 19 stations along its 90-mile route, including six stations on the 14.5-mile segment shared with the ME. To avoid competition with Metra service, passengers may not board inbound SSL trains from 63rd Street to Millennium Station, and outbound SSL passengers may not disembark at these stations. Metra sets the fare structure for passengers traveling between Hegewisch and other stations in Chicago.



## ON COVID-19 AND HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The information presented in this chapter is representative of NICTD’s operations prior to the onset of COVID-19, which upended almost every aspect of daily life. The challenges posed by the pandemic were significant and likely will result in the emergence of a very different operational environment than previously existed. Even so, understanding Metra and NICTD’s past performance, pre-COVID service levels, and established community baselines, is vital to making informed decisions about the emergent reality that is taking shape.

## SSL OVERVIEW

Like the Metra Electric (ME) Line, the SSL is powered by an overhead catenary wire system, and the two services operate on ME track from Millennium Station to Kensington Interlocking at 115th Street in Chicago. The SSL then diverges onto its own tracks, extending across northern Indiana to the line’s eastern terminal at South Bend International Airport. In 2019, passenger trips on the SSL totaled 3.28 million.

Since the station is located within the Regional Transportation Authority’s (RTA) service area, Metra funded construction of new station buildings and a parking lot at Hegewisch in 1992, and retains ownership of these facilities. Meanwhile, NICTD owns the land and other parking lots at the station, and is responsible for platform maintenance. NICTD’s administrative offices are located in Chesterton, Indiana, with the SSLs dispatching office and main rail yard in Michigan City, Indiana.

## MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS ALONG THE SSL

Since its creation, NICTD has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in maintaining and upgrading the SSL. Among NICTD’s first activities was the acquisition of new rolling stock in the early 1980s, which allowed the line’s oldest vehicles—dating from the 1920s—to be retired. The RTA contributed funding towards the purchase, and eight single-level cars used on the SSL are still owned by Metra, though they are operated, stored, and maintained by NICTD. Other rolling stock purchases have been made in the following years. The SSL fleet consists of 72 electric self-propelled coaches and 10 unpowered trailer cars that are placed between cab cars in a trainset. Most SSL cars are single-level; however, the most recent railcar purchase added 14 bi-level gallery cars—similar to the newer ME cars—that entered service in 2009. NICTD is currently reviewing bids to add an additional 26 railcars to its fleet.

By the end of 2020 NICTD anticipates to be operating passenger service implementing the latest safety technology known as positive train control (PTC). PTC is the result of a federal mandate implemented back in 2015. Since then NICTD has been working with contractors and partnering railroads to develop, install, and test the new technology. Ultimately this new system is an overlay to the existing system that monitors train locations

and speeds to reduce the possibility of accidents. While the project will be fully operational by December 2020, this system will require continuous monitoring and updating. This project would not be possible without the partnering relationship with Metra for the system interoperability mechanisms.

For years now NICTD has been pursuing two new starts projects to be funded through the Federal Transit Administration. On October 28, 2020 the first of these two projects received a full funding grant agreement for the design and construction of the West Lake Corridor. This expansion project will add an eight mile route that will run from Dyer, Indiana, north and meet up with the existing SSL in Hammond, Indiana. As part of this project four new stations will be constructed. NICTD is also pursuing a Double Track NWI project. This project proposes adding a second track through a 25-mile stretch that is currently single-track territory. A portion of this existing track in Michigan City, Indiana, includes track that currently is embedded in the middle of the roadway shared with traffic. Many improvements are planned within this project, including station upgrades, the addition of elevated platforms, and reducing curves in the track to improve travel times. At this time NICTD anticipates receiving a full funding grant agreement in early 2021.


**FIGURE 2: STATIONS ON THE SOUTH SHORE LINE**



The SSL is also working through engineering currently for a jointly funded project with Metra for work within the shared segment of the ME line in the vicinity of Millennium and Van Buren Stations. This project would ultimately provide an additional through track in that vicinity as well as an additional boarding platform at Millennium Station and another island platform at the Van Buren St. Station. This work would allow for a better flow of trains throughout that area, reducing train wait times as well as opening up the potential for additional through train traffic for any future potential additions to service.

NICTD is also working with the city of South Bend, Indiana, to identify potential station relocations. This anticipated project would include a track realignment that would accommodate a proposed runway expansion at the South Bend International Airport. The potential track realignments could offer a reduction in travel time for South Bend passengers.

TABLE 3: SSL STATION CHARACTERISTICS

Station	 <sup>1</sup>	Fare Zone	Mile Post	Boardings		
				1983 <sup>2</sup>	2015 <sup>3</sup>	2019 <sup>3</sup>
Millennium <sup>4</sup>	●	1	0.0	3,180	4,072	4,227
Van Buren <sup>4</sup>	●	1	0.8	715	1,431	977
Museum Campus <sup>4</sup>	●	1	1.4	45	119	166
McCormick Place <sup>5</sup>	●	1	2.7	171	0 <sup>5</sup>	0 <sup>5</sup>
57th St <sup>4</sup>	●	2	7.0	143	234	271
63rd St <sup>4</sup>		2	7.9	30	3	3
Hegewisch	●	3	19.0	38	1,029	862
Hammond	●	4	20.9	1,042	1,157	1,345
East Chicago	●	4	23.4	-	1,698	1,493
Chicago Airport/Clark Rd		5	28.0	-	129	80
Gary Metro	●	5	30.9	-	412	426
Miller		5	34.7	-	463	339
Portage/Ogden Dunes	●	6	38.9	-	234	237
Dune Park	●	6	46.0	-	520	474
Beverly Shores		7	50.4	-	33	47
Michigan City/11th St		8	55.8	-	83	102
Carroll Ave	●	8	57.5	-	241	172
Hudson Lake		10	74.6	-	5	1
South Bend Airport	●	11	90.1	-	186	227
<b>TOTAL SSL</b>				<b>5,364</b>	<b>12,049</b>	<b>11,449</b>

<sup>1</sup> South Shore Line Schedule, effective 9/2020

<sup>2</sup> Metra, 1983 Boarding/Alighting Counts; Indiana SS stations not counted in 1983.

<sup>3</sup> NICTD, 2015 South Shore Passenger Count; NICTD, 2019 South Shore Passenger Count

<sup>4</sup> Station shared with Metra service; inbound SS trains stop to discharge passengers only and outbound SS trains stop to pick up passengers only.

<sup>5</sup> SS does not serve McCormick Place on weekdays, when 2015 and 2019 South Shore counts were conducted.