

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Metra Board approves fare pilot programs

Day pass, outer zone consolidation to be tested for a year

CHICAGO (May 10, 2018) – The Metra Board of Directors has agreed to test a new day pass, the consolidation of Metra’s outer zones and the reassignment of certain stations to a closer zone as part of an effort to attract riders and simplify its fare structure. The ideas were among recommendations that emerged from a fare policy study that began in 2016.

The pilot programs will:

- Introduce “Round Trip Plus,” a day pass for unlimited travel between any two zones, available only on the Ventra App, priced at twice the cost of a One-Way Ticket.
 - The pass will increase customer convenience, simplify fare payment, save time and encourage use of the Ventra App.
 - 75 percent of riders in a survey said they were likely or very likely to use such a product.
 - Pilot will begin with the introduction of a new Ventra App in late summer.

- Consolidate Zones K and M (there is no Zone L) into Zone J, thereby capping fares for trips that exceed 45 miles (about 1 percent of Metra riders come from those zones). This will consolidate four Zone K stations (Kenosha, Antioch, McHenry and Woodstock) and one Zone M station (Harvard) with five existing Zone J stations (Round Lake Beach, Lake Villa, Long Lake, Ingleside and Fox Lake).
 - Consolidating Zones J, K and M will cap the fares to stations in those zones and potentially mitigate ridership declines for trips that are currently the most expensive for riders from stations that have less service.
 - Pilot will begin in July.
 - About 110 additional round-trip riders per day will be needed to recover the estimated revenue impact of \$380,000.

- Reassign some stations to different zones to adjust perceived inconsistencies between lines where nearby stations are in different zones. Specifically, on the Metra Electric Blue Island Branch, move Ashland, Racine, West Pullman, Stewart Ridge and State Street from Zone D to C. On the Metra Electric mainline, move 83rd Street and 87th Street from Zone C to B. On the Rock Island Beverly Branch, move 123rd Street from Zone D to C.
 - Station reassignments will provide more similar fares for customers who board at Metra stations on different lines, but with similar distances to downtown, and may encourage more local use of these stations.
 - Pilot will begin in July.

- About 60 additional round-trip riders per day will be needed to recover the estimated revenue impact of \$120,000.

The pilot programs will be evaluated after a year to determine if they resulted in ridership gains and if the changes should remain in place. Other recommendations from the fare study, including off-peak pricing, are still being evaluated for possible future action.

The fare study effort started in the summer of 2016, when Metra hired California-based Four Nines Technologies to study Metra's fare structure, determine opportunities for changes and develop a model to help Metra evaluate the potential changes.

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About Metra

Metra is one of the largest and most complex commuter rail systems in North America, serving Cook, DuPage, Will, Lake, Kane and McHenry counties in northeastern Illinois. The agency provides service to and from downtown Chicago with 242 stations over 11 routes totaling nearly 500 route miles and approximately 1,200 miles of track. Metra operates nearly 700 trains and provides nearly 290,000 passenger trips each weekday.

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