

DATE: September 18, 2024

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Jim Derwinski, CEO/Executive Director

SUBJECT: August 2024 Ridership Trends

This memo describes ridership patterns in 2024, including ridership and service recovery by line and service period. Data in this report is preliminary.

The 2024 Democratic National Convention took place the week of August 18th, which caused a significant decrease in trips on the system due to an increased rate of remote work. In August 2024, Metra provided 3.0 million passenger trips, a -8% decrease from July. Compared to July, August had the same number of weekdays, one additional Saturday, and one less Sunday/holidays. Compared to August 2023, August 2024 ridership decreased -5%. August 2024 had one less weekday, one more Saturday, and the same number of Sunday/holidays as the prior year.

Trips by Month

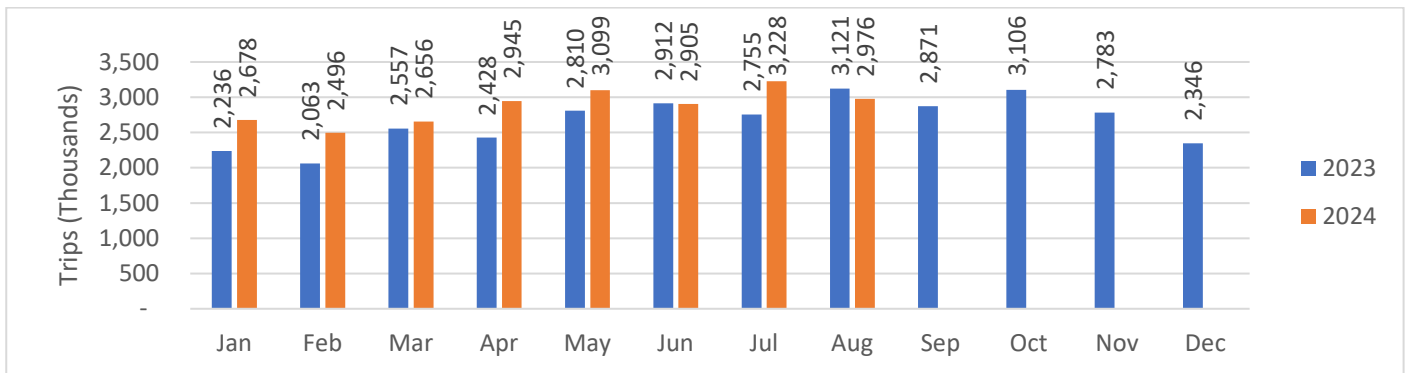


Exhibit 1

Trips by Line (August 2023 vs August 2024)

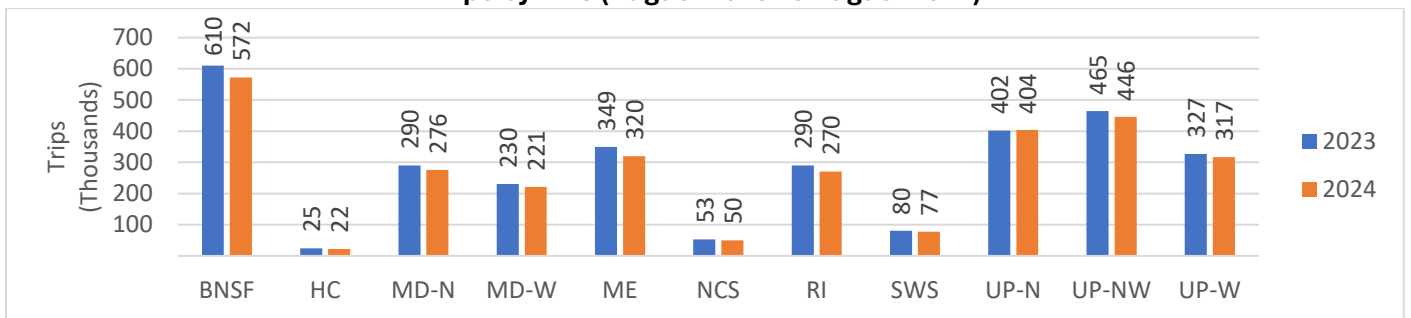


Exhibit 2

Weekday Passenger Loads

August average weekday passenger loads were 158,000, which was 55% of 2019 levels. Weekday passenger loads were negatively impacted by the Democratic National Convention (DNC) which took place in Chicago from August 19-23.

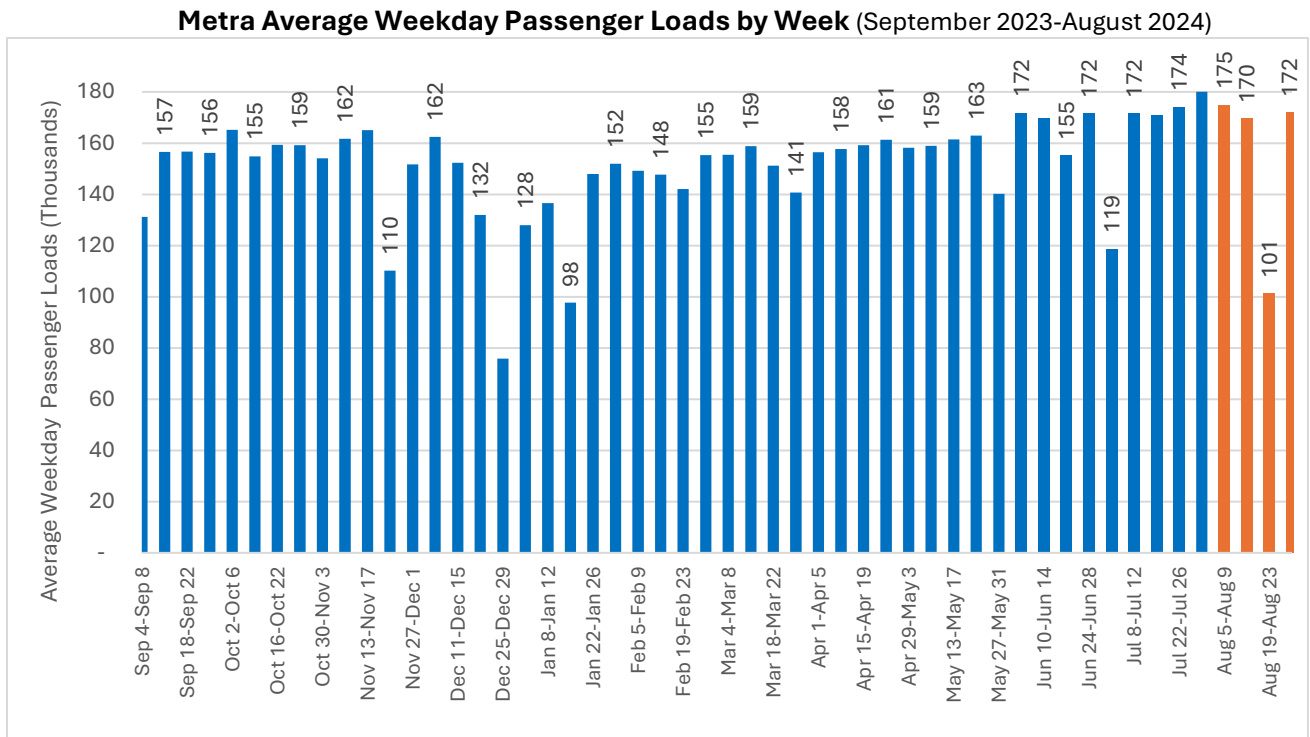


Exhibit 3

	2023				2024							
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Avg Weekday Passenger Loads Chg. from Prior Month	-2%	+3%	-4%	-13%	0%	+13%	0%	+6%	+1%	+4%	0%	-6%

Daily Passenger Loads for Month (Fridays shown with grey bars)

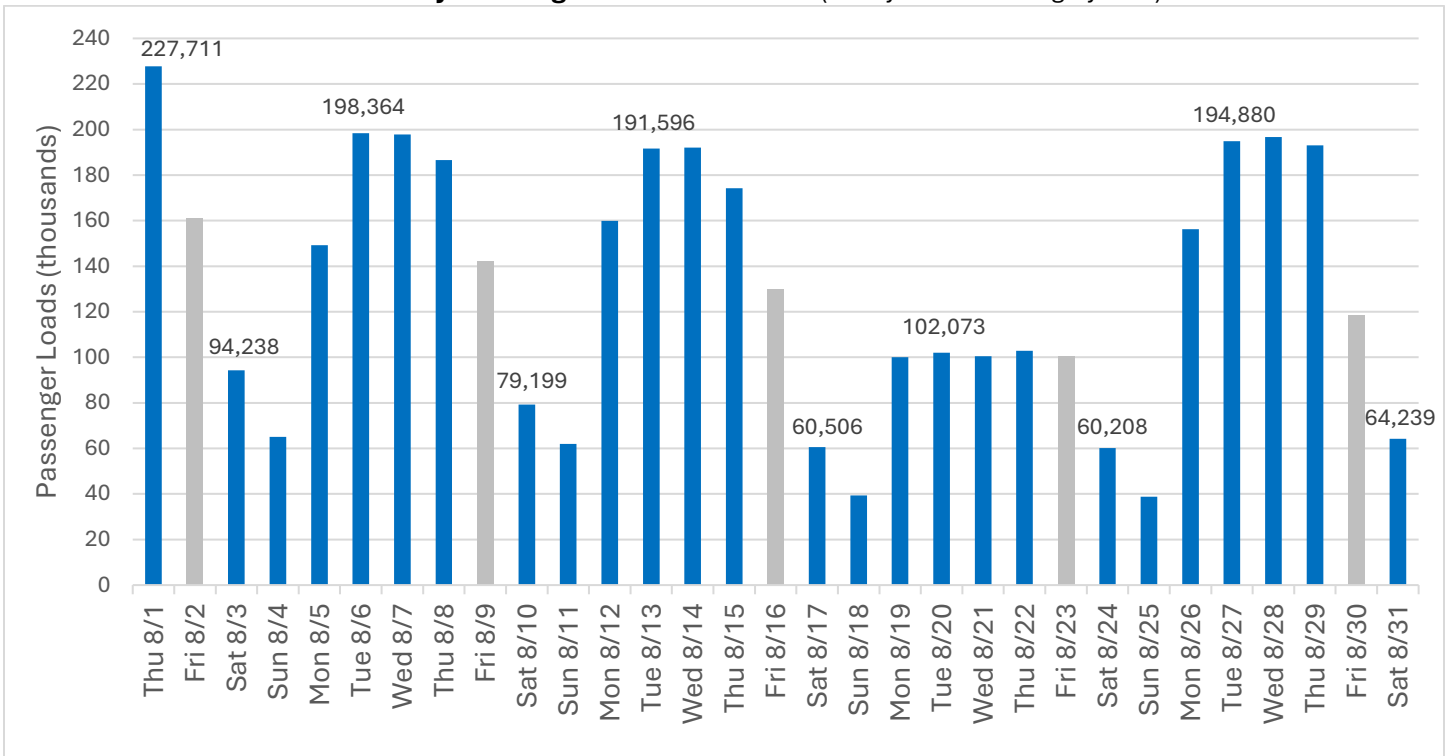


Exhibit 4

August Ridership Highlights

- On Thursday August 1 (first day of Lollapalooza) Metra provided over 227,000 trips, which became Metra’s highest ridership day since the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The BNSF, MD-N, MD-W, RI, and UP-N lines ran eight extra trains on Thursday and Friday, 11 extra trains on Saturday, and 12 extra trains on Sunday for the music festival. Ridership over this four-day period was 16% higher compared to last year.
- The Democratic National Convention (DNC) took place in Chicago from August 19-23. With heightened security measures taken in the downtown area, employers allowed increased work from home during this week, resulting in an estimated loss of 285,000 trips on Metra.
- Metra piloted O’Hare shuttle service from Aug 12-30. O’Hare shuttle trains provided a total of 2,400 trips during this time period, which averaged about 130 trips per day.
- On August 18, Metra distributed over 3,900 passes to UIC as part of the UPASS program. Nearly 29,000 trips were recorded on these passes. Students can continue to opt in each month to receive a new pass. Metra staff will continue to monitor the results of the program.

Staff continues to monitor new policies related to fares and changes to ticket purchasing that went into effect in February. The table below provides a summary of the changes along with initial observations.

Long Term Policy Changes

Initial Observations

Day Pass 5-Pack replaces 10-Ride Ticket	The Day Pass 5-Pack made up about 13% of ridership in August 2024, compared to the 10-Ride Ticket share of 17% in August 2023.
Ticket Windows Close	August marked the eighth month since Metra closed ticket windows. The Ventra app was used for 79% of all rides and vending machines were used for 11% of all rides.
Bicycles always allowed on trains after Feb 1, provided space is available	Metra carried 20% more bikes in August 2024 compared to last year.
Access Card	In August, the Access Card program recorded 11,900 trips, accounting for 6% of all Metra reduced fare trips.

Service Status

Metra continuously evaluates its service to improve operations and ridership outcomes as well as to move toward a regional rail service model as described in Metra’s 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, [My Metra, Our Future](#). Over the past two years, Metra has looked for opportunities to enhance schedules to standardize stopping patterns and to increase midday service levels, as has been done for five lines (BNSF, Metra Electric, Rock Island, Union Pacific North, and Union Pacific Northwest). These lines have demonstrated a stronger midday recovery than other lines. In May 2024, Metra implemented a new weekend schedule for the BNSF Line to achieve near hourly service in both directions on both Saturday and Sunday. Having the same level of service for both Saturday and Sunday is a first for Metra and something that will be considered for other lines going forward when feasible.

Ridership Recovery by Line & Service Period (August 2024 as a percentage of August 2019)

Line	Peak	Rev Peak	Midday	Evening	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
BNSF	47%	67%	76%	85%	54%	85%	101%
HC	43%	-	-	-	41%	-	-
MD-N	47%	49%	59%	57%	49%	82%	73%
MD-W	38%	57%	59%	67%	43%	80%	91%
ME	36%	120%	78%	84%	48%	103%	104%
NCS	35%	39%	78%	-	39%	-	-
RI	40%	109%	73%	61%	45%	87%	75%
SWS	38%	30%	43%	23%	38%	-	-
UP-N	61%	83%	105%	121%	76%	93%	108%
UP-NW	54%	88%	77%	77%	61%	87%	107%
UP-W	57%	83%	68%	68%	61%	93%	95%
Total	47%	76%	76%	79%	55%	88%	98%

Exhibit 5

Monthly Pass Sales

In August, Monthly Pass sales were 36% higher compared to last year.

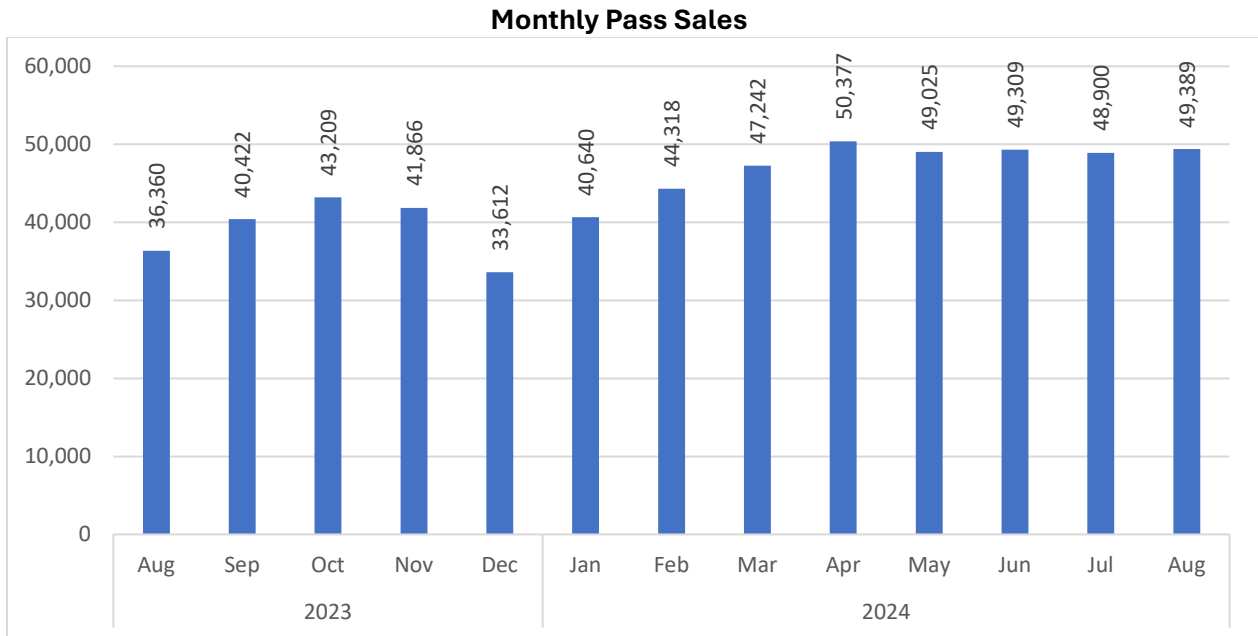


Exhibit 6

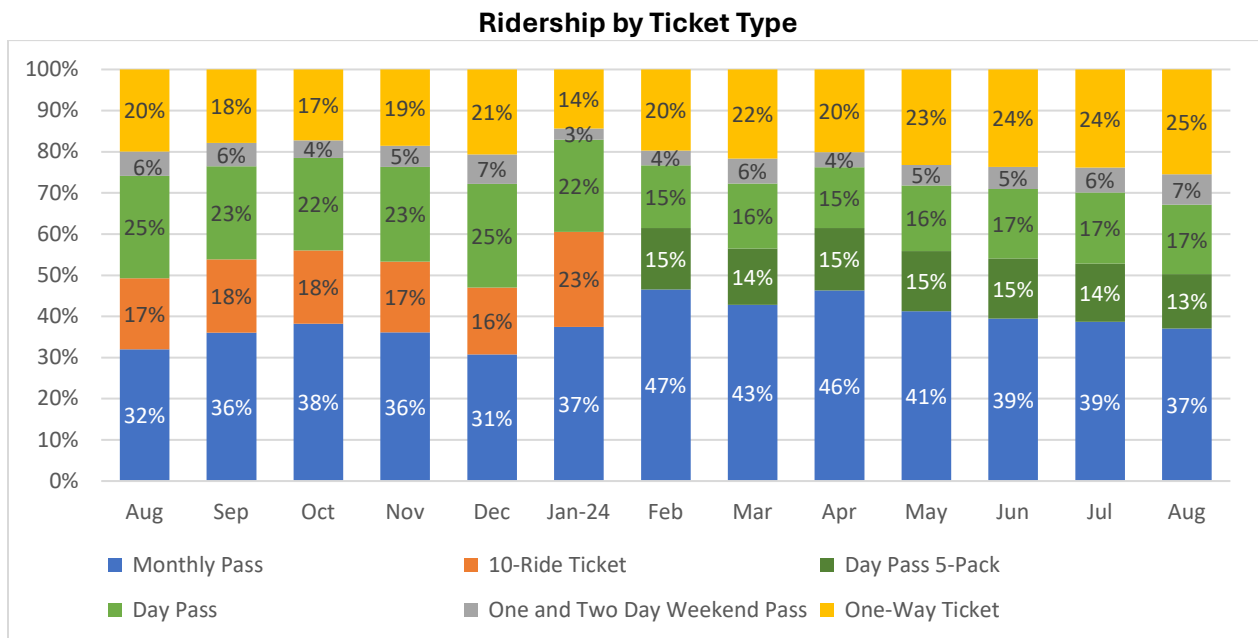


Exhibit 7

Note: Exhibit 7 excludes RTA ride free trips

Ticket Sales

The following tables show ticket sales and ridership by ticket type and sales channel.

Ticket Sales and Ridership by Ticket Type (thousands)

Ticket Type	Ticket Sales				Ridership			
	Aug 2023	Aug 2024	Aug 2023 Share	Aug 2024 Share	Aug 2023	Aug 2024	Aug 2023 Share	Aug 2024 Share
Monthly Pass	36	49	3%	4%	982	1,081	31%	36%
10-Ride Ticket	53	-	4%	0%	531	-	17%	0%
Day Pass 5-Pack	-	41	0%	3%	-	387	0%	13%
Day Pass	403	262	33%	22%	763	492	24%	17%
One Way	616	744	51%	61%	616	744	20%	25%
One Day Weekend Pass	82	98	7%	8%	137	169	4%	6%
Two Day Weekend Pass	21	21	2%	2%	45	47	1%	2%
RTA Ride Free Permit	-	-	0%	0%	47	56	1%	2%
Total	1,211	1,215	100%	100%	3,121	2,976	100%	100%

Exhibit 8

Ridership by Sales Channel (thousands)

Sales Channel	Ticket Sales				Ridership			
	Aug 2023	Aug 2024	Aug 2023 Share	Aug 2024 Share	Aug 2023	Aug 2024	Aug 2023 Share	Aug 2024 Share
Conductor	112	111	9%	9%	126	120	4%	4%
Commuter Benefit	6	5	0%	0.4%	114	111	4%	4%
Ventra App	949	957	78%	79%	2,404	2,364	77%	79%
Ticket Agent	125	-	10%	0%	399	-	13%	0%
Vending Machine	18	142	2%	12%	29	325	1%	11%
RTA Ride Free Permit	-	-	0%	0%	47	56	1%	2%
Total	1,210	1,215	100%	100%	3,120	2,976	100%	100%

Exhibit 9

Note: Values in Exhibits 8 and 9 do not add to total ridership due to Group Sales, Marketing Sales, and Refund Adjustments, 2024 data are preliminary and subject to revision as data are continuously reviewed throughout the year.

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