



TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Jim Derwinski, CEO/Executive Director

SUBJECT: May 2024 Ridership Trends

DATE: June 12, 2024

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

In May 2024, Metra provided 3.1 million passenger trips, a 5% increase from April. Compared to April, May had the same number of weekdays, the same number of Saturdays, and one additional Sunday/holiday. Compared to May 2023, May 2024 ridership increased 10%. May 2024 had the same number of weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays compared to the prior year.

Estimated Passenger Trips by Month

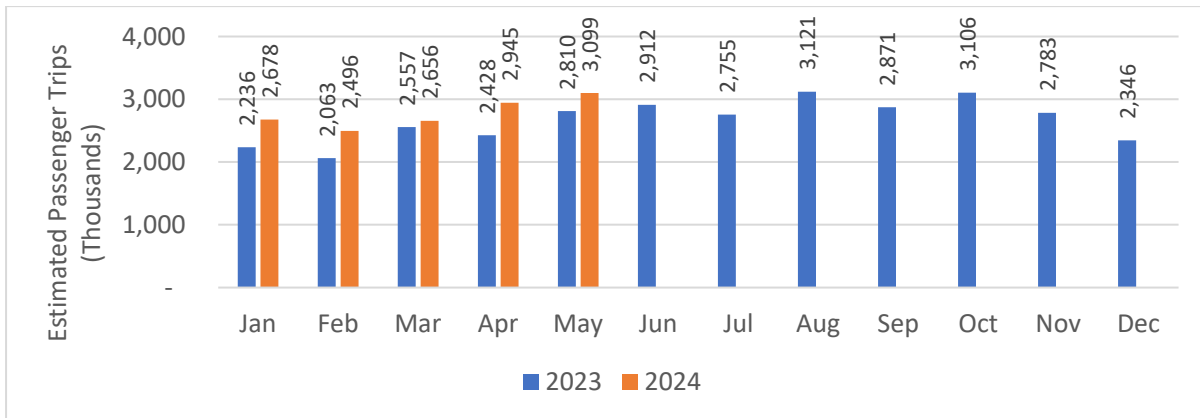


Exhibit 1

Estimated Passenger Trips by Line (May 2023 vs May 2024)

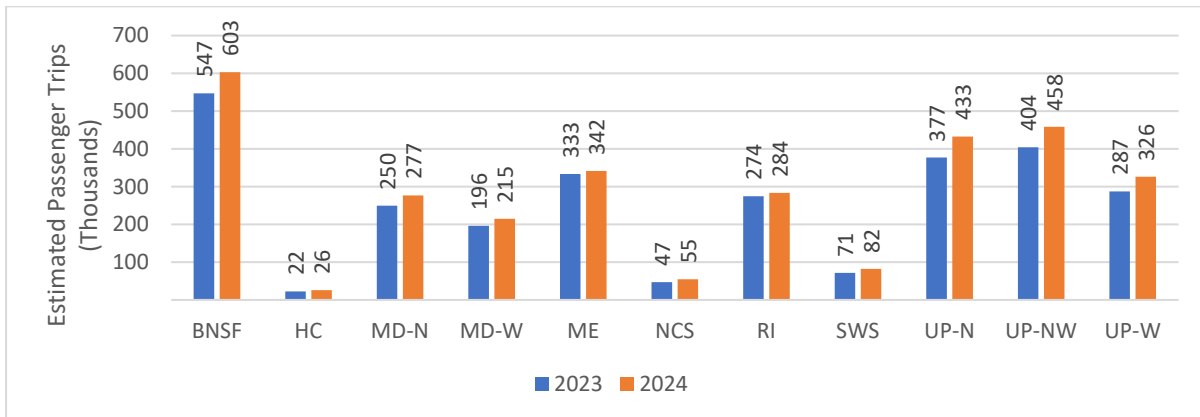


Exhibit 2

Weekday Riders

May average weekday ridership was 161,200, which was 58% of 2019 levels.

Metra Average Weekday Conductor Counts by Week (June 2023-May 2024)

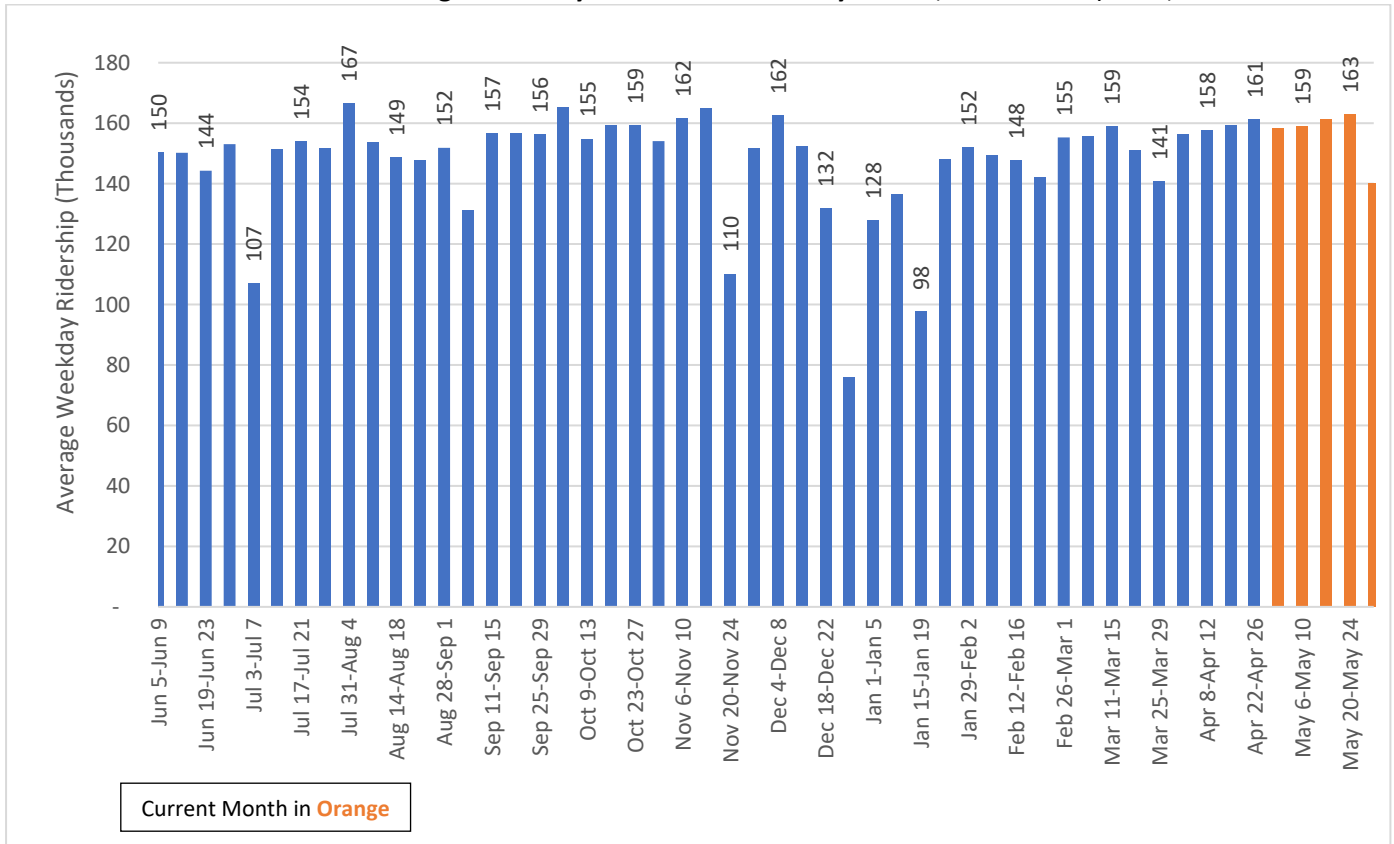


Exhibit 3

	2023							2024				
	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Avg Weekday Ridership Chg. from Prior Month	+5%	-2%	+8%	-2%	+3%	-4%	-13%	0%	+13%	0%	+6%	+1%

Daily Conductor Counts for Month (Fridays shown with grey bars)

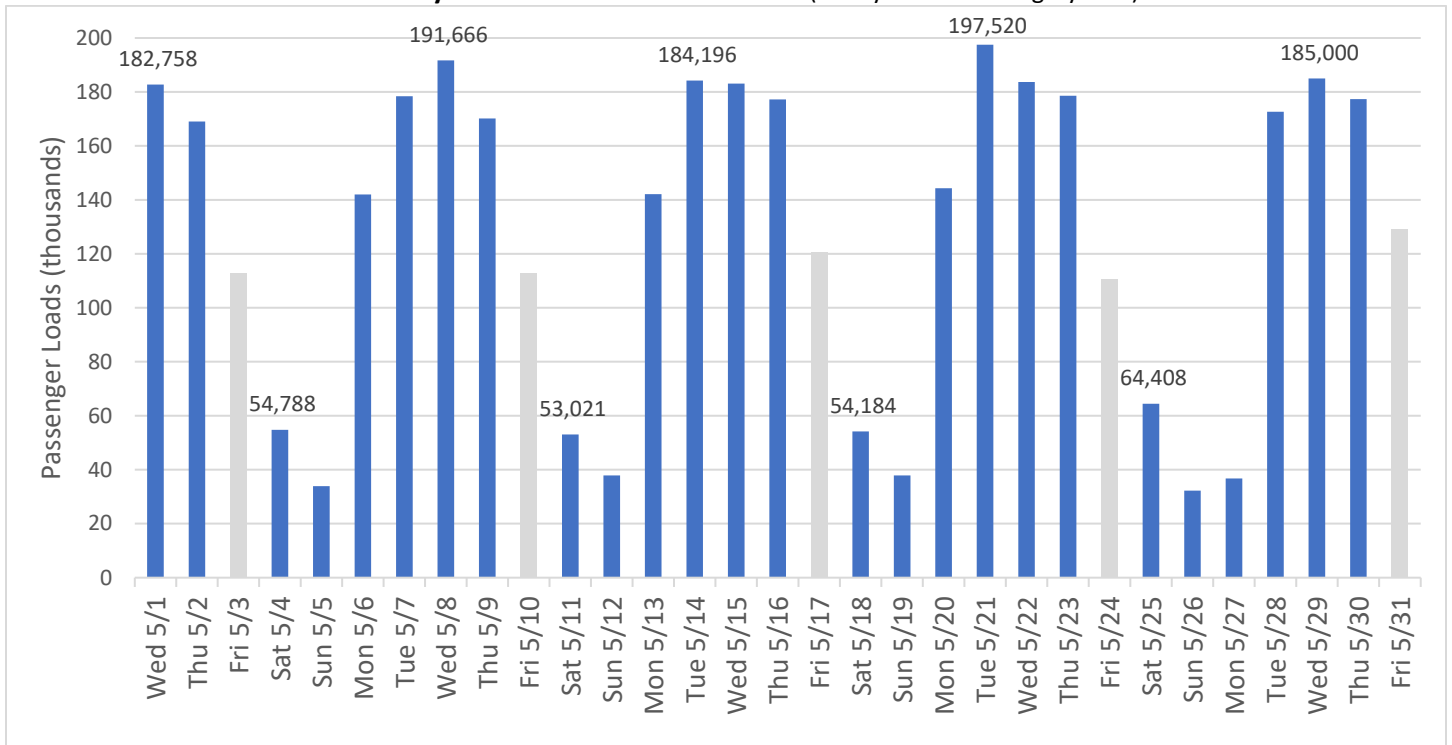


Exhibit 4

May Ridership Highlights

- Tuesday, May 21 set a record for post-pandemic Metra ridership with 197,520 riders, surpassing even the previous high set Aug 2, 2023 for Lollapalooza.
- Metra carried over 31,000 bicycles in May, nearly twice as many as in May 2019.
- The new Peterson/Ridge Station opened on the UP-N on May 20. The highest ridership day for the station was May 30, with an estimated 300 riders using the station.
- As part of the station opening, the UP-N’s schedule was adjusted, with one additional weekday train. The midweek average passenger load for the line increased by 14% in the days following the schedule change. Staff will continue to monitor ridership on the line to see if trends continue into the summer months.
- The BNSF’s new weekend schedule started Saturday, May 4. The schedule added 6 additional trains on Saturday and 16 additional trains on Sunday. Compared to last year, BNSF Saturday passenger loads increased 33% and Sunday passenger loads increased 40%.

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
Conclusion of South Cook Pilot	ME and RI ridership was underreported from February through April due to stockpiling of South Cook-priced 10-Ride Tickets that were sold in January. All remaining 10-ride tickets expired at the end of April.
Day Pass 5-Pack replaces 10-ride Ticket	The Day Pass 5-Pack made up about 14% of ridership in May 2024, compared to the 10-Ride Ticket share of 20% in May 2023.
Intermediate Trips Charged Flat Fare	From May 2023 to May 2024, the share of non-downtown trips using the Ventra app increased from 8.5% to 9.3%.

Ticket Windows Close	May marked the fourth month since Metra closed ticket windows. The Ventra app was used for 81% of all rides and vending machines were used for 10% of all rides.
Bicycles always allowed on trains after Feb 1, provided space is available	Metra carried 47% more bikes since the date of the policy change compared to the same period last year (Feb-May).
Access Card	The Access Card entered its fourth month as Metra's newest reduced fare category, making up 5% of reduced fare ticket sales in May and selling 4,326 tickets through the program.

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, Out 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. For the BNSF, the new schedule has already increased ridership on Saturday by 33% and on Sunday by 40% when compared to last year.

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

Line	Peak	Rev Peak	Midday	Evening	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
BNSF	52%	63%	68%	60%	55%	79%	115%
HC	52%	-	-	-	50%	-	-
MD-N	53%	46%	69%	45%	54%	81%	79%
MD-W	43%	55%	60%	57%	46%	82%	77%
ME	41%	131%	87%	84%	54%	120%	104%
NCS	38%	39%	84%	-	41%	-	-
RI	45%	116%	75%	64%	50%	109%	82%
SWS	45%	49%	42%	25%	44%	-	-
UP-N	66%	82%	118%	102%	77%	108%	110%
UP-NW	58%	78%	88%	70%	63%	93%	107%
UP-W	60%	79%	67%	62%	62%	95%	81%
Total	52%	75%	80%	66%	58%	93%	99%

Exhibit 5

Monthly Pass Sales

In May, Monthly Pass sales decreased by -2.7% compared to April, but were up 43% compared to last year.

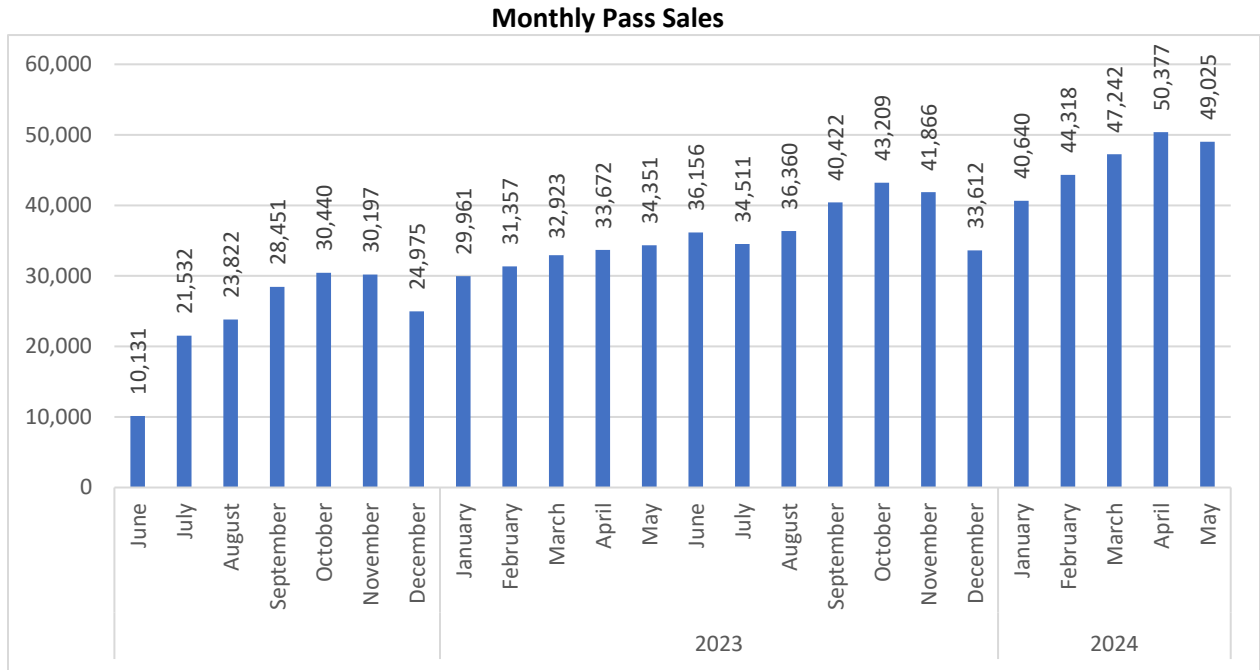


Exhibit 6

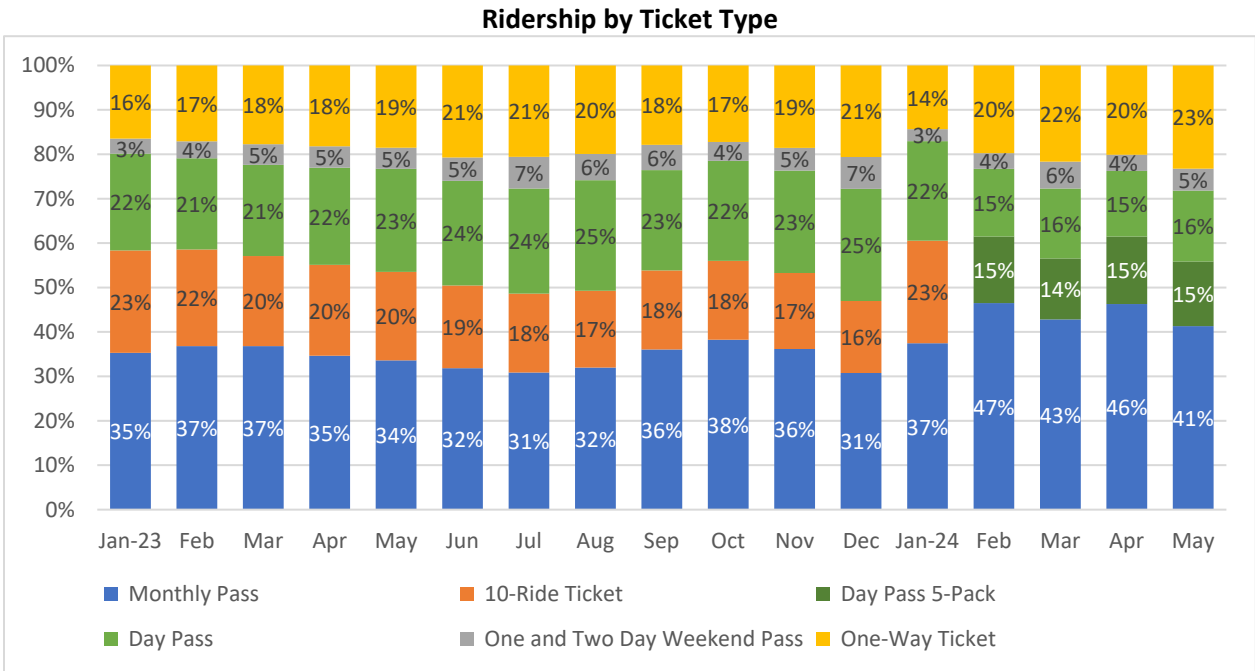


Exhibit 7

Note: Exhibit 7 excludes 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			
	May 2023	May 2024	May 2023 Share	May 2024 Share	May 2023	May 2024	May 2023 Share	May 2024 Share
Monthly Pass	34	49	3%	4%	926	1,261	33%	41%
10-Ride Ticket	55	-	5%	0%	550	-	20%	0%
Day Pass 5-Pack	-	47	0%	4%	-	445	0%	14%
Day Pass	335	255	33%	22%	640	488	23%	16%
One Way	512	710	51%	62%	511	710	18%	23%
One Day Weekend Pass	61	70	6%	6%	101	122	4%	4%
Two Day Weekend Pass	14	13	1%	1%	30	28	1%	1%
RTA Ride Free Permit	-	-	0%	0%	43	46	2%	1%
Total	1,011	1,144	100%	100%	2,800	3,099	100%	100%

Exhibit 8

Ridership by Sales Channel (thousands)

Sales Channel	Ticket Sales				Ridership			
	May 2023	May 2024	May 2023 Share	May 2024 Share	May 2023	May 2024	May 2023 Share	May 2024 Share
Conductor	91	101	9%	9%	101	110	4%	4%
Commuter Benefit	6	5	1%	0%	108	123	4%	4%
Ventra App	797	928	79%	81%	2,141	2,521	77%	81%
Ticket Agent	100	-	10%	0%	378	-	14%	0%
Ticket Vending Machine	16	107	2%	9%	27	297	1%	10%
RTA Ride Free Permit	-	-	0%	0%	43	46	2%	1%
Total	1,009	1,142	100%	100%	2,799	3,096	100%	100%

Exhibit 9

Note: Values in Exhibits 8 and 9 do not add to total ridership due to Group Sales, Marketing Sales, Refund Adjustments, and adjustments for losses in ridership due to mobile app outages; 2019 data may not match previously reported totals due to late-reporting sales and refunds; 2024 data are preliminary and subject to revision as data is continuously reviewed throughout the year. Sales of incremental tickets are not included.

Prepared by: Aaron Maertins, Director, Operations & Project Management
 Steven Mannella, Manager, Transportation Planning, Operations Planning & Analysis
 Cody Wolcott, Principal Transportation Planner, Operations Planning & Analysis