

**DATE: December 11, 2024**

**TO: Board of Directors**

**FROM: Jim Derwinski, CEO/Executive Director**

**SUBJECT: November 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.

In November 2024, Metra provided 2.8 million passenger trips. Compared to October, November had three fewer weekdays, one additional Saturday, and one additional Sunday/holiday. Compared to November 2023, November 2024 ridership remained relatively unchanged. November 2024 had one less weekday, the same number of Saturdays, and the same number of Sunday/holidays compared to last year. Additionally, November 2024 had one additional Friday and two less midweek days compared to last year, which depressed the overall number of trips for the month.

**Trips by Month**

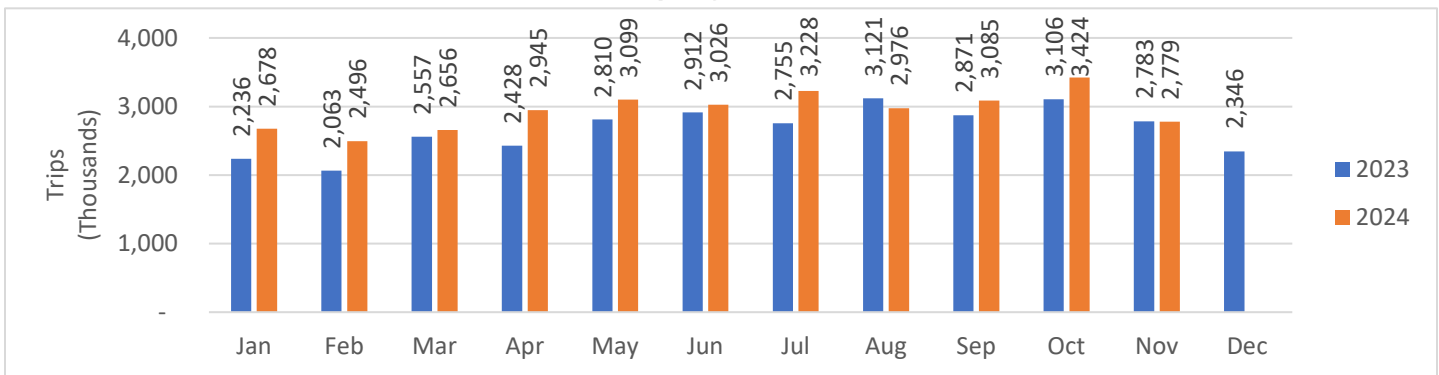


Exhibit 1

**Trips by Line (November 2023 vs November 2024)**

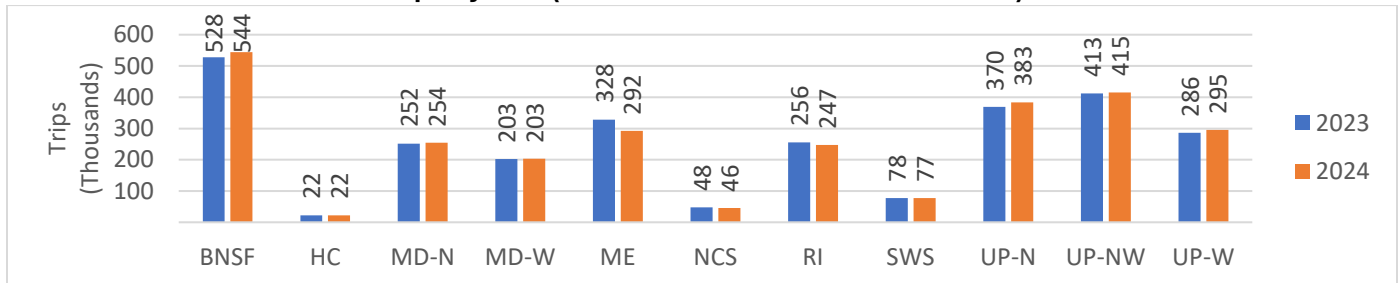


Exhibit 2

## Weekday Passenger Loads

November average weekday passenger loads were 161,700, which was 60% of 2019 levels.

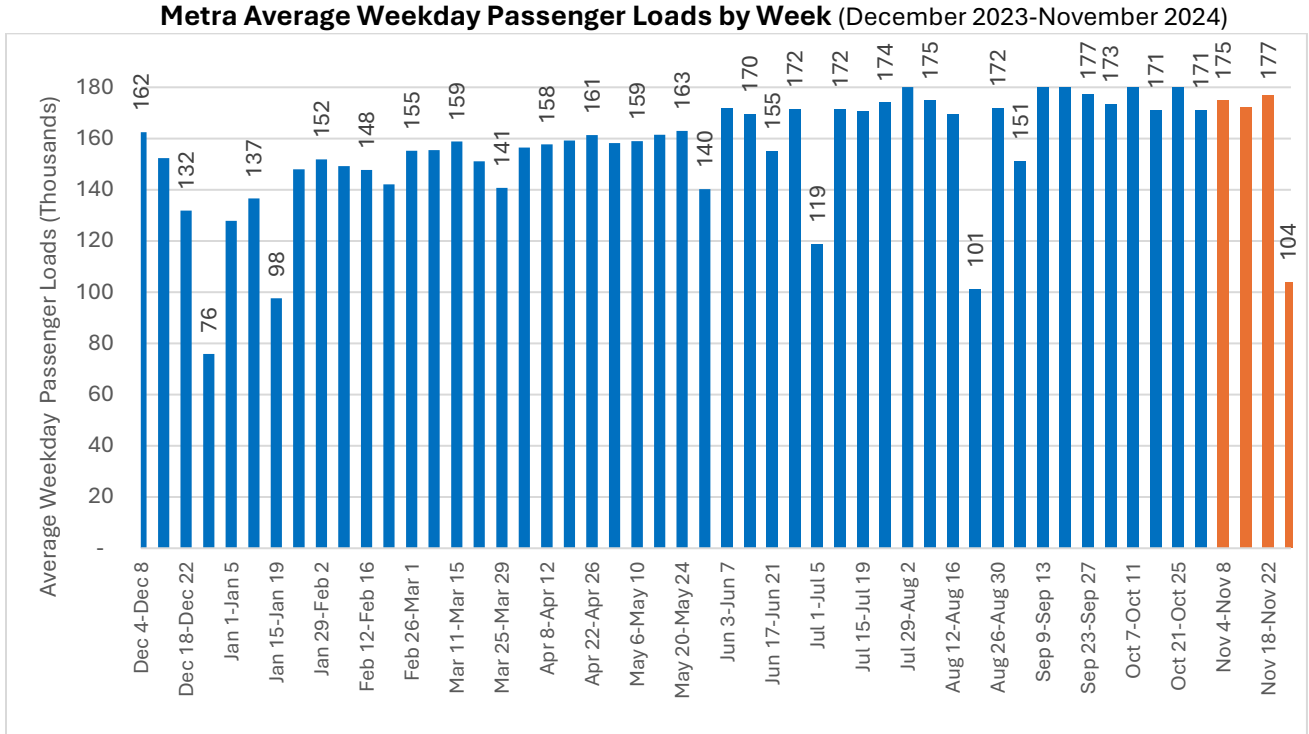


Exhibit 3

|   | 2023 | 2024 |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |      |
|---|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|------|
|   | Dec  | Jan  | Feb  | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep  | Oct | Nov  |
| Avg Weekday Passenger Loads Chg. from Prior Month | -13% | 0%   | +13% | 0%  | +6% | +1% | +4% | 0%  | -6% | +13% | 0%  | -10% |

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

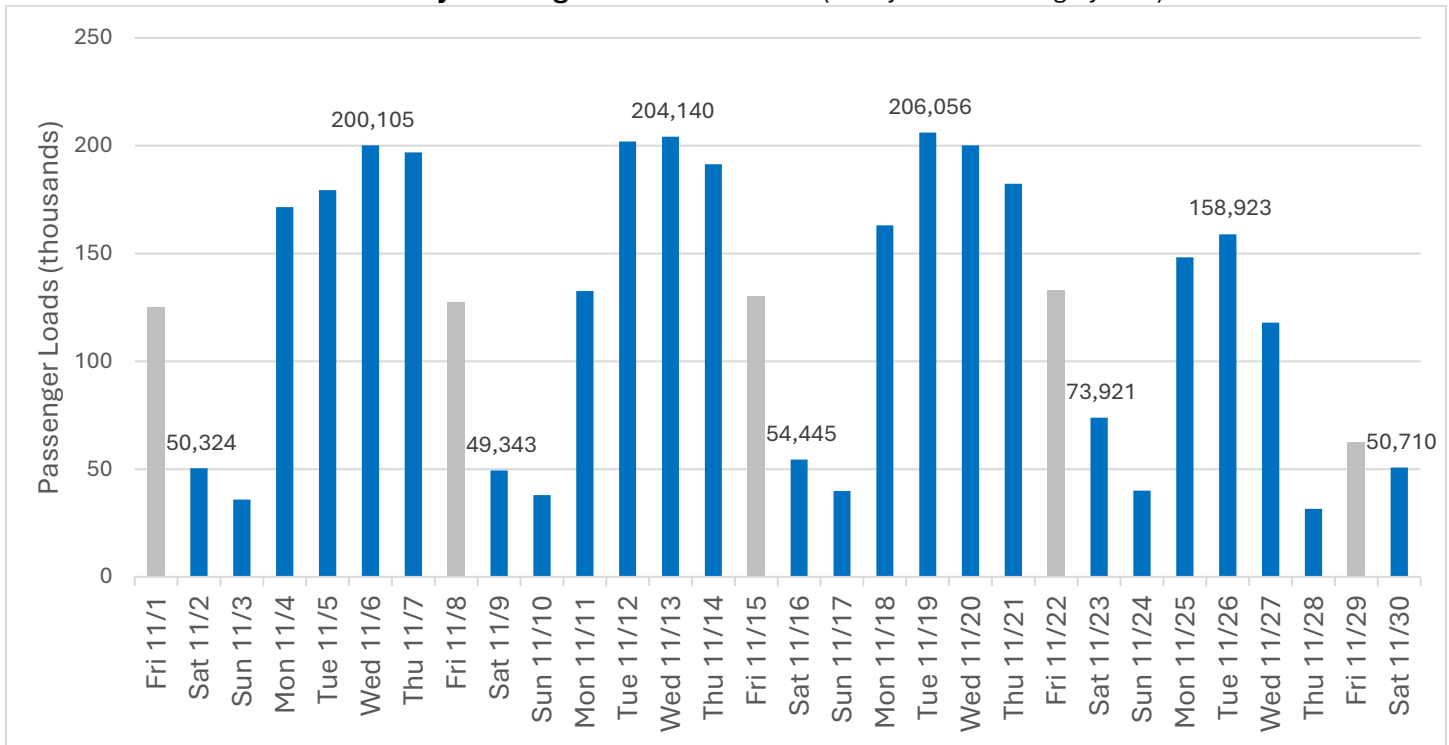


Exhibit 4

**November Ridership Highlights**

- November was the first full month of operation for the recently reopened 147<sup>th</sup> St/Sibley Boulevard Station, with a high of 103 riders per day using the station.
- Metra offered a \$7 special event pass for Thanksgiving and a \$7 special event pass for Black Friday
- Metra offered three additional trains for Chicago Bears games on three Sundays in November. The Metra Electric extra trains provided 1,000 trips, and the UP-N extra trains provided 1,200 trips.

Staff continue to monitor new policies related to fares and ticket purchasing changes. The table below provides a summary of the changes along with initial observations.

| Long Term Policy Changes   | Initial Observations   |
|--|--|
| UIC UPASS+   | Over 4,100 students continued enrollment in the UPASS+ program in November, recording 85,800 rides.  |
| Day Pass 5-Pack replaces 10-Ride Ticket                                    | The Day Pass 5-Pack made up about 14% of ridership in November 2024, compared to the 10-Ride Ticket share of 17% in November 2023.                           |
| Ticket Windows Close   | Metra closed ticket windows in February 2024. In November, the Ventra app was used for 82% 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 19% more bikes in November 2024 compared to last year.   |
| Access Card  | In November, the Access Card program recorded 15,000 trips, accounting for 7% of all Metra reduced fare trips.   |
| Discount for Outer Zone Trips  | The share of Metra trips not going downtown increased to 9% in November 2024, up from 8% compared to November of 2023.                                       |

### **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 (November 2024 as a percentage of November 2019)**

| Line         | Peak       | Rev Peak   | Midday     | Evening    | <b>Weekday</b> | Saturday   | Sunday      |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| BNSF         | 57%        | 80%        | 88%        | 60%        | <b>62%</b>     | 95%        | 135%        |
| HC           | 52%        | -          | -          | -          | <b>49%</b>     | -          | -           |
| MD-N         | 54%        | 48%        | 72%        | 52%        | <b>55%</b>     | 93%        | 94%         |
| MD-W         | 43%        | 63%        | 74%        | 66%        | <b>49%</b>     | 83%        | 79%         |
| ME           | 38%        | 152%       | 87%        | 88%        | <b>53%</b>     | 113%       | 128%        |
| NCS          | 36%        | 37%        | 91%        | -          | <b>40%</b>     | -          | -           |
| RI           | 45%        | 100%       | 80%        | 55%        | <b>49%</b>     | 80%        | 86%         |
| SWS          | 46%        | 43%        | 51%        | 23%        | <b>45%</b>     | -          | -           |
| UP-N         | 66%        | 87%        | 111%       | 115%       | <b>79%</b>     | 113%       | 118%        |
| UP-NW        | 55%        | 81%        | 96%        | 93%        | <b>64%</b>     | 99%        | 105%        |
| UP-W         | 62%        | 97%        | 75%        | 77%        | <b>67%</b>     | 106%       | 99%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>53%</b> | <b>83%</b> | <b>87%</b> | <b>73%</b> | <b>60%</b>     | <b>99%</b> | <b>111%</b> |

Exhibit 5

## Monthly Pass and UPass Sales

In August 2024, Metra began a pilot program with the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), introducing a new mobile-only UPass ticket. The ticket allows for unlimited rides during the designated month, delivered monthly to student devices, with a validity period aligned to the academic calendar. The chart below shows the quantity of each pass type. Staff will continue to monitor this new program and report results as more data becomes available.

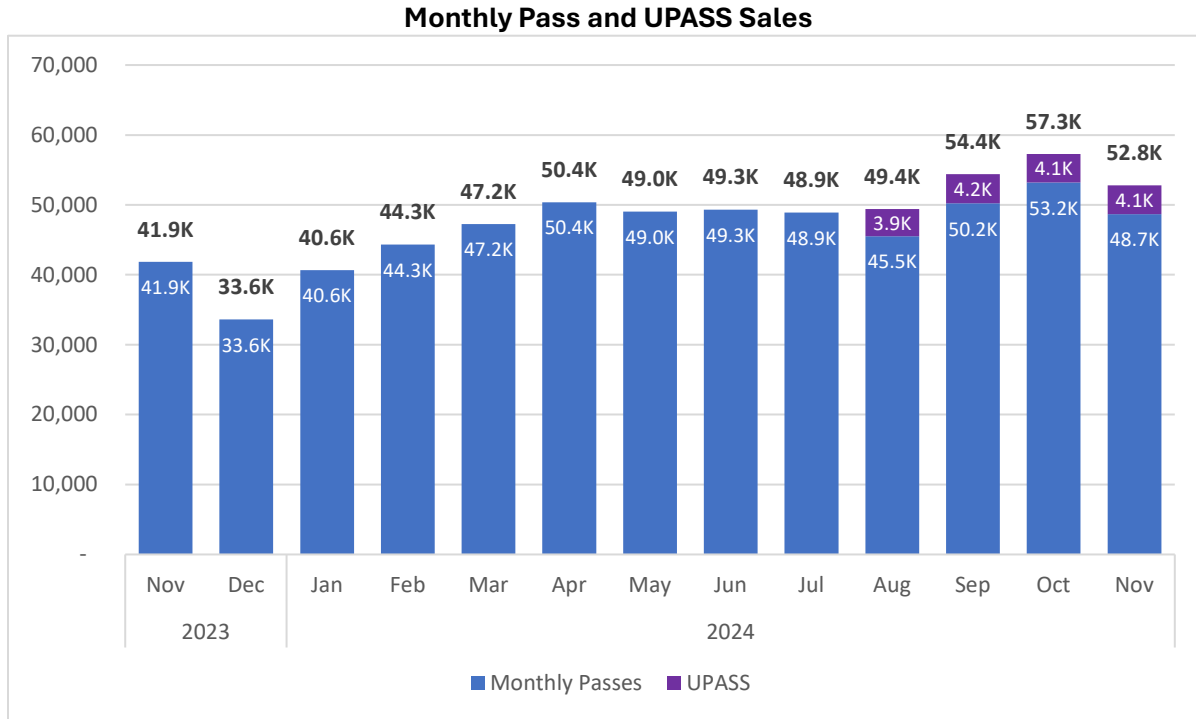


Exhibit 6

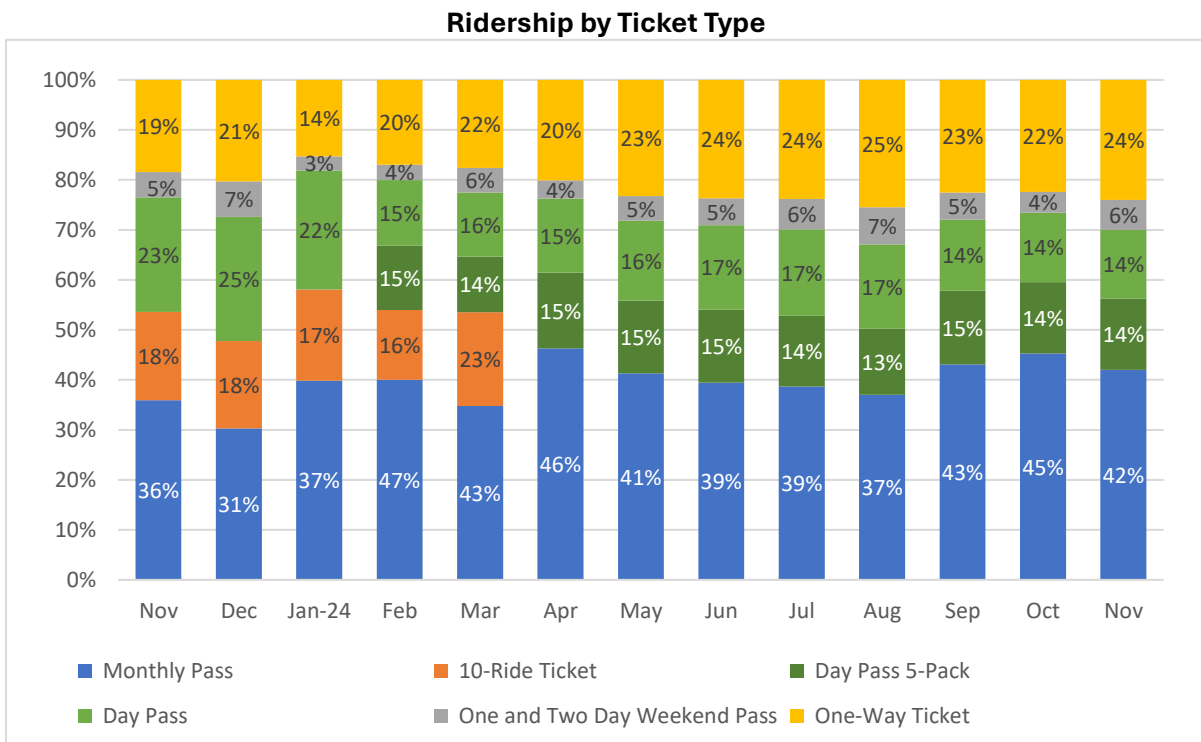


Exhibit 7

Note: Exhibit 7 excludes RTA ride free trips. UPASS tickets are included with Monthly Pass.

## 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    |              |                |                |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
|                      | Nov 2023     | Nov 2024     | Nov 2023 Share | Nov 2024 Share | Nov 2023     | Nov 2024     | Nov 2023 Share | Nov 2024 Share |
| Monthly Pass         | 42           | 53           | 4%             | 5%             | 993          | 1,149        | 36%            | 41%            |
| 10-Ride Ticket       | 47           | -            | 5%             | 0%             | 470          | -            | 17%            | 0%             |
| Day Pass 5-Pack      | -            | 41           | 0%             | 4%             | -            | 390          | 0%             | 14%            |
| Day Pass             | 333          | 196          | 33%            | 19%            | 633          | 376          | 23%            | 14%            |
| One Way              | 513          | 657          | 50%            | 63%            | 513          | 657          | 18%            | 24%            |
| One Day Weekend Pass | 71           | 83           | 7%             | 8%             | 116          | 145          | 4%             | 5%             |
| Two Day Weekend Pass | 13           | 12           | 1%             | 1%             | 26           | 25           | 1%             | 1%             |
| RTA Ride Free Permit | -            | -            | 0%             | 0%             | 44           | 38           | 2%             | 1%             |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>1,018</b> | <b>1,041</b> | <b>100%</b>    | <b>100%</b>    | <b>2,794</b> | <b>2,779</b> | <b>100%</b>    | <b>100%</b>    |

Exhibit 8

**Ridership by Sales Channel (thousands)**

| Sales Channel        | Ticket Sales |              |                |                | Ridership    |              |                |                |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
|                      | Nov 2023     | Nov 2024     | Nov 2023 Share | Nov 2024 Share | Nov 2023     | Nov 2024     | Nov 2023 Share | Nov 2024 Share |
| Conductor            | 86           | 79           | 9%             | 8%             | 97           | 84           | 4%             | 3%             |
| Commuter Benefit     | 6            | 5            | 1%             | 0.5%           | 113          | 109          | 4%             | 4%             |
| Ventra App           | 801          | 838          | 82%            | 82%            | 2,164        | 2,270        | 79%            | 82%            |
| Ticket Agent         | 82           | -            | 8%             | 0%             | 311          | -            | 11%            | 0%             |
| Vending Machine      | 5            | 105          | 1%             | 10%            | 6            | 263          | 0%             | 10%            |
| RTA Ride Free Permit | -            | -            | 0%             | 0%             | 44           | 38           | 2%             | 1%             |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>980</b>   | <b>1,027</b> | <b>100%</b>    | <b>100%</b>    | <b>2,735</b> | <b>2,765</b> | <b>100%</b>    | <b>100%</b>    |

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. UPASS tickets are included with Monthly Pass.

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