

DATE: October 10, 2024

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Jim Derwinski, CEO/Executive Director

SUBJECT: September 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 September 2024, Metra provided 3.1 million passenger trips, a 4% increase from August. Compared to August, September had two fewer weekdays, one less Saturday, and two additional Sunday/holidays. Compared to September 2023, September 2024 ridership increased 7%. September 2024 had the same number of weekdays, one less Saturday, and additional Sunday/holiday compared to the prior year.

Trips by Month

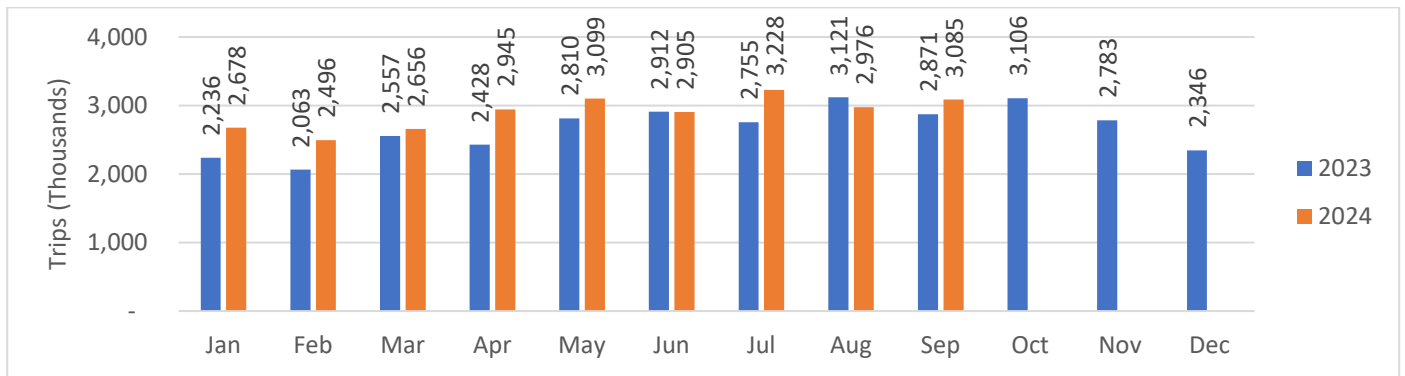


Exhibit 1

Trips by Line (September 2023 vs September 2024)

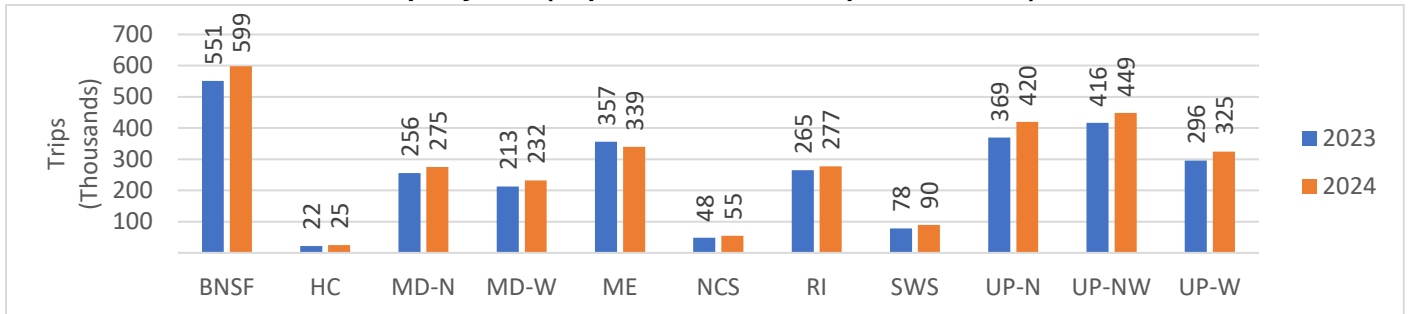


Exhibit 2

Weekday Passenger Loads

September average weekday passenger loads were 178,800, which was 62% of 2019 levels.

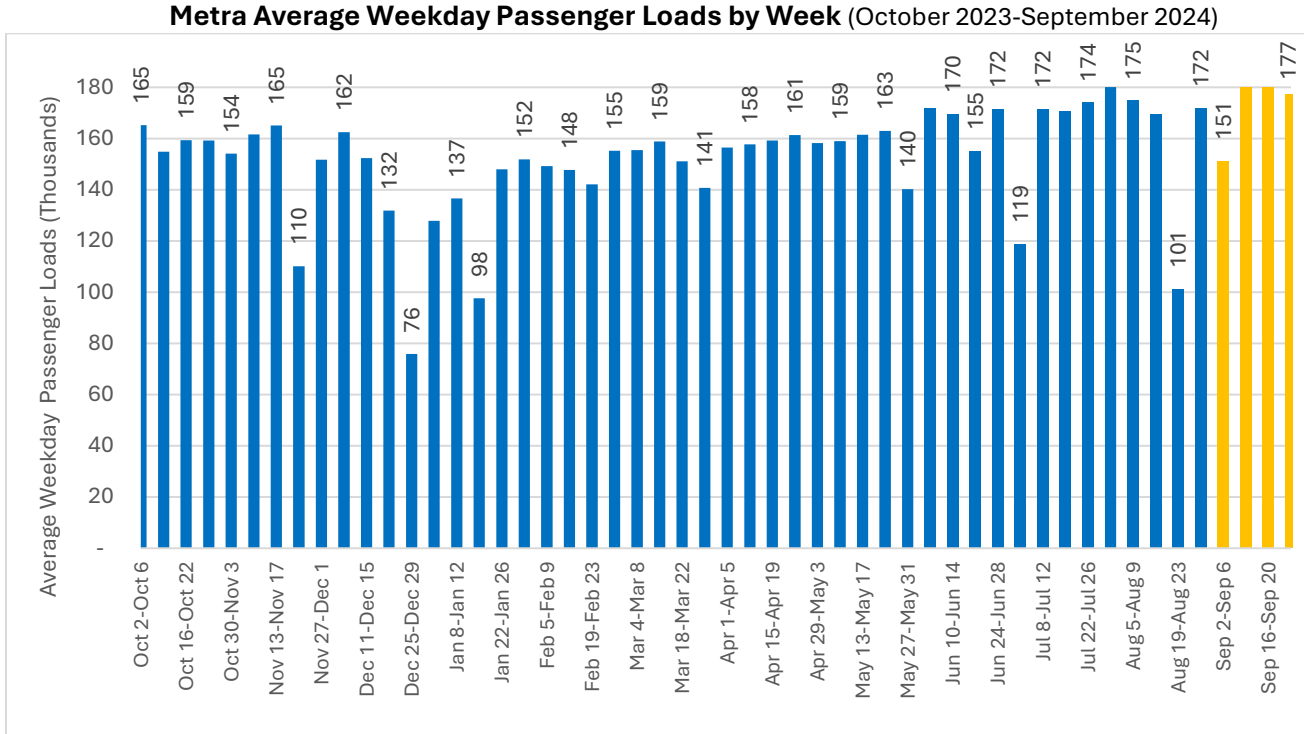


Exhibit 3

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

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

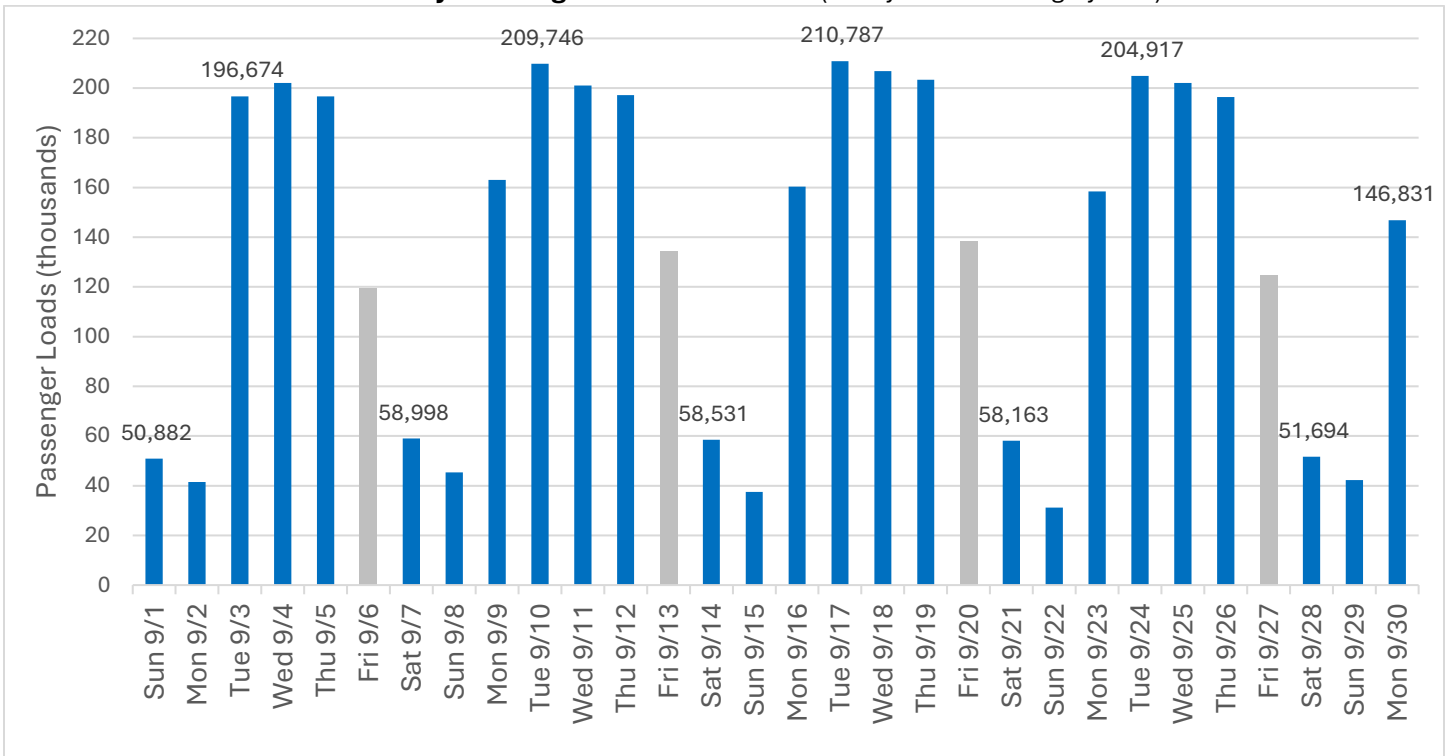


Exhibit 4

September Ridership Highlights

- Metra’s weekday ridership continues to grow, exceeding 200,000 passengers per day eight times in September and surpassing 210,000 passengers on Tuesday, September 17. Average weekday ridership reached 178,800, which is the highest recorded monthly average since the start of the pandemic.
- Metra’s UPass+ pilot with the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) completed its first full calendar month. Metra distributed nearly 4,200 monthly passes to students, valid for September, generating 103,600 trips.
- Metra added one extra inbound and outbound train for Bears home games in September on the ME and UP-N lines. Metra carried an average 2,400 additional passengers on game days compared to a typical Sunday in September.

Staff continues to monitor new policies related to fares and ticket purchasing changes 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
UIC UPASS+	September marked the first full month of UPASS+ availability, with UIC students taking 103,600 rides throughout the month.
Day Pass 5-Pack replaces 10-Ride Ticket	The Day Pass 5-Pack made up about 14% of ridership in September 2024, compared to the 10-Ride Ticket share of 17% in September 2023.
Ticket Windows Close	Metra closed ticket windows in February 2024. By September, 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 26% more bikes in September 2024 compared to last year.
Access Card	In September, the Access Card program recorded 13,100 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 Q3, up from 8% compared to Q3 of 2024.

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 (September 2024 as a percentage of September 2019)

Line	Peak	Rev Peak	Midday	Evening	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
BNSF	56%	71%	93%	89%	63%	93%	121%
HC	52%	-	-	-	50%	-	-
MD-N	56%	45%	72%	52%	56%	69%	88%
MD-W	46%	61%	76%	72%	51%	92%	92%
ME	40%	153%	92%	92%	55%	111%	120%
NCS	41%	40%	109%	-	45%	-	-
RI	47%	92%	88%	46%	51%	85%	85%
SWS	48%	53%	61%	22%	48%	-	-
UP-N	69%	90%	122%	123%	82%	111%	113%
UP-NW	59%	83%	97%	81%	66%	89%	98%
UP-W	70%	83%	81%	74%	72%	109%	106%
Total	55%	81%	92%	80%	62%	96%	107%

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 is the equivalent of a monthly pass, delivered monthly to student devices, with a validity period aligned to the academic calendar. The chart below shows the quantity of each pass type for September. Staff will continue to monitor this new program and report results as more data becomes available.

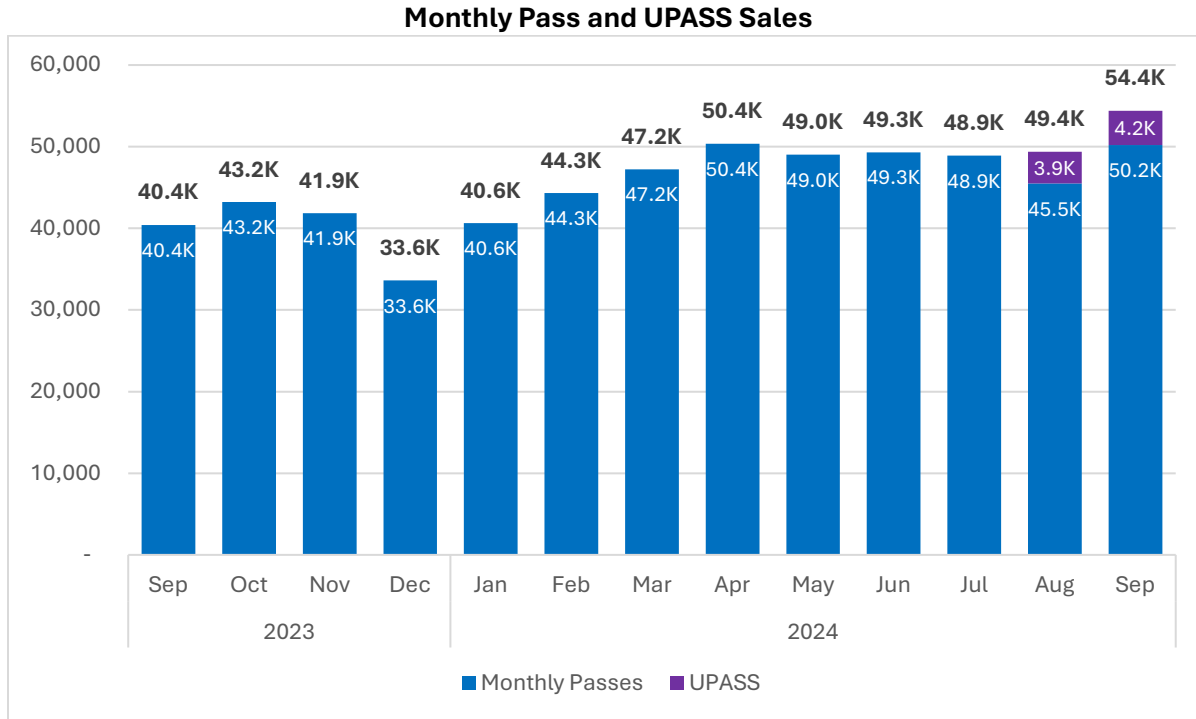


Exhibit 6

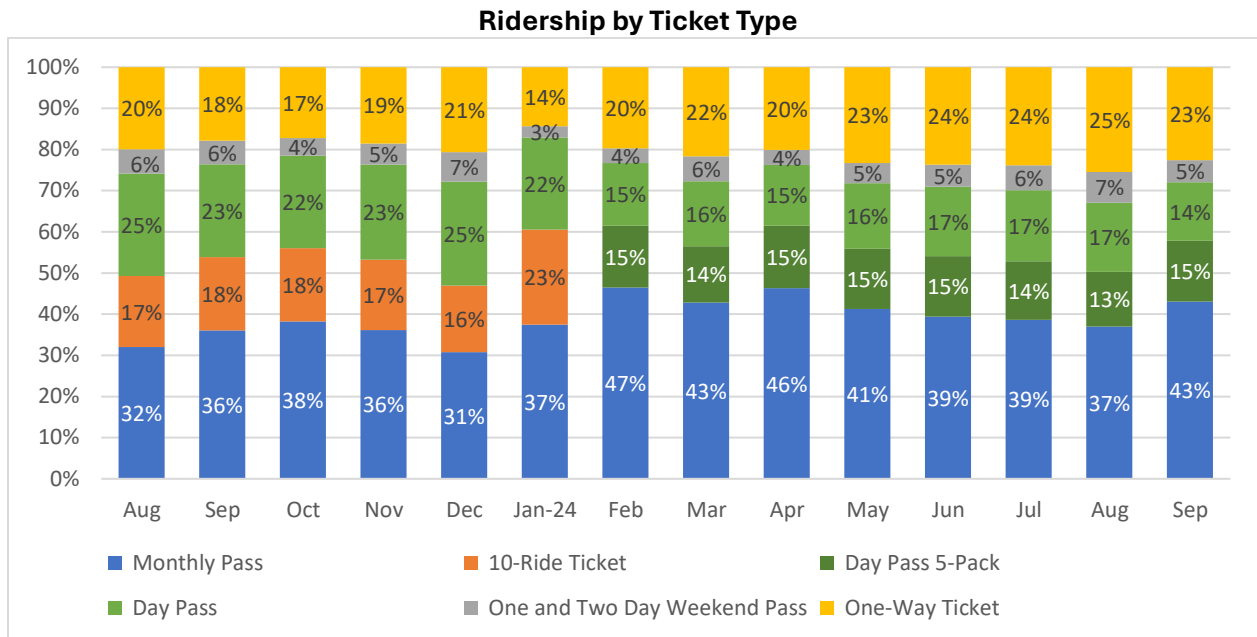


Exhibit 7

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			
	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2023 Share	Sep 2024 Share	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2023 Share	Sep 2024 Share
Monthly Pass	40	54	4%	5%	1,012	1,308	35%	42%
10-Ride Ticket	50	-	5%	0%	500	-	17%	0%
Day Pass 5-Pack	-	48	0%	4%	-	447	0%	14%
Day Pass	333	227	32%	21%	635	432	22%	14%
One Way	515	685	50%	62%	515	685	18%	22%
One Day Weekend Pass	78	79	7%	7%	129	140	5%	5%
Two Day Weekend Pass	18	12	2%	1%	37	25	1%	1%
RTA Ride Free Permit	-	-	0%	0%	44	50	2%	2%
Total	1,034	1,105	100%	100%	2,871	3,085	100%	100%

Exhibit 8

Ridership by Sales Channel (thousands)

Sales Channel	Ticket Sales				Ridership			
	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2023 Share	Sep 2024 Share	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2023 Share	Sep 2024 Share
Conductor	102	88	10%	8%	117	96	4%	3%
Commuter Benefit	6	5	1%	0.4%	111	119	4%	4%
Ventra App	817	895	79%	81%	2,230	2,525	78%	82%
Ticket Agent	93	-	9%	0%	344	-	12%	0%
Vending Machine	12	117	1%	11%	19	295	1%	10%
RTA Ride Free Permit	-	-	0%	0%	44	50	2%	2%
Total	1,030	1,104	100%	100%	2,865	3,084	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. UPASS tickets are included with Monthly Pass.

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