RIDERSHIP TRENDS

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Prepared by the Division of Strategic Capital Planning
February 2019

I. OVERVIEW

This report details the trends that influenced Metra system ridership in 2018. Metra is the Commuter Rail Division of the Regional Transportation Authority and provides commuter rail passenger service on eleven service lines throughout metropolitan Chicago (see Figure 1). The ridership statistics used throughout this report are for Metra services only; as such, they do not include Amtrak or NICTD South Shore (SS) passenger statistics. Ridership is estimated on a monthly basis based on the number and types of tickets sold. These tickets are assumed to be used during the month of purchase or for the valid month in the case of monthly passes.

Metra provided about 76.1 million passenger trips in 2018, which is 2.2% unfavorable to the budgeted forecast of 77.8 million passenger trips. When compared to 2017, ridership decreased 3.2 percent. The 76.1 million passenger trips reported in 2018 is comparable to ridership in 2005.

Figure 1: 2018 Passenger Trips by Line (Millions of Trips)

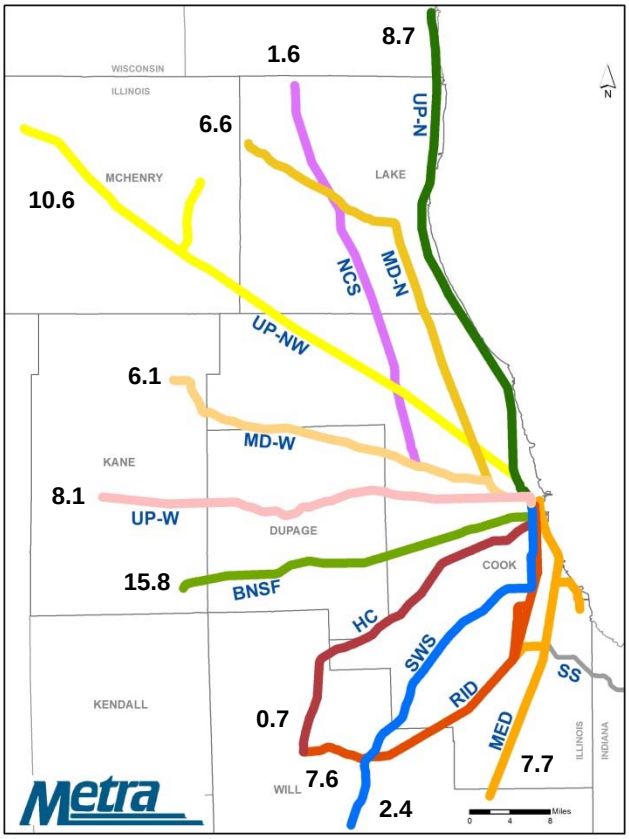
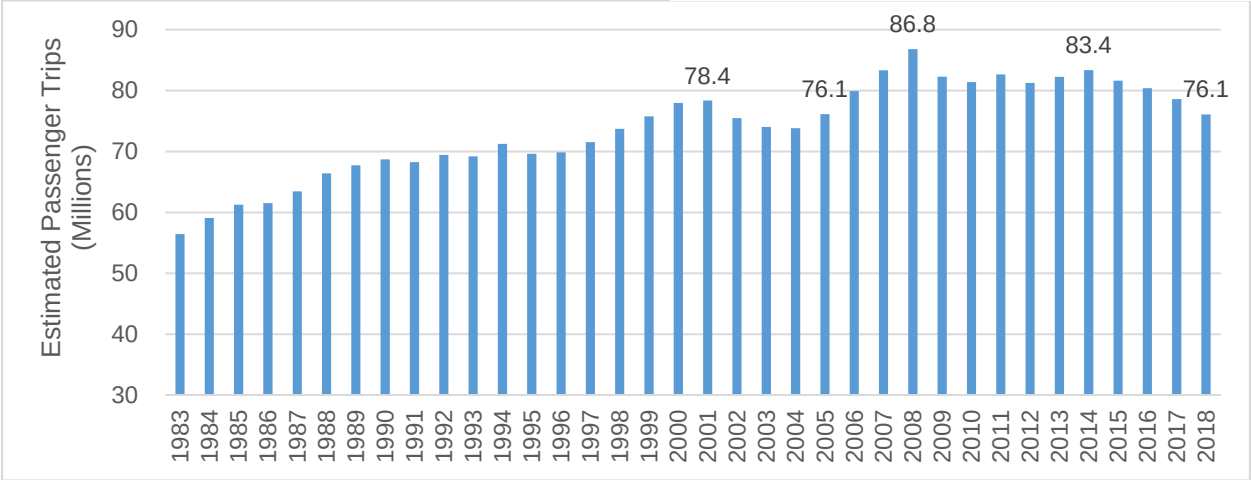


Figure 2: Metra System Annual Ridership



II. 2018 RIDERSHIP TRENDS

In 2018 estimated passenger trips were 76,088,329, a decrease of 2,532,284 (3.2 percent) and 2.2 percent unfavorable to budget.

Table 1: Estimated Passenger Trips Actual Compared to Budget

Month	2017 Actual	2018 Budget	2018 Acutal	Variance
Jan	6,761,739	6,800,000	6,660,551	-2.1%
Feb	5,984,900	5,900,000	5,651,237	-4.2%
Mar	6,473,720	6,200,000	6,175,822	-0.4%
Apr	6,305,319	6,400,000	6,162,072	-3.7%
May	6,618,294	6,500,000	6,426,184	-1.1%
Jun	6,941,185	6,600,000	6,606,512	0.1%
Jul	6,758,614	6,900,000	6,623,079	-4.0%
Aug	7,055,462	7,000,000	6,742,099	-3.7%
Sep	6,530,423	6,200,000	6,346,519	2.4%
Oct	6,740,029	6,900,000	6,693,984	-3.0%
Nov	6,474,539	6,500,000	6,260,889	-3.7%
Dec	5,976,391	5,900,000	5,739,384	-2.7%
Annual Total	**78,620,612**	**77,800,000**	**76,088,329**	**-2.2%**

Ridership by Quarter

Estimated passenger trips decreased during all four quarters of 2018. Table 2 shows the changes in ridership between 2017 and 2018.

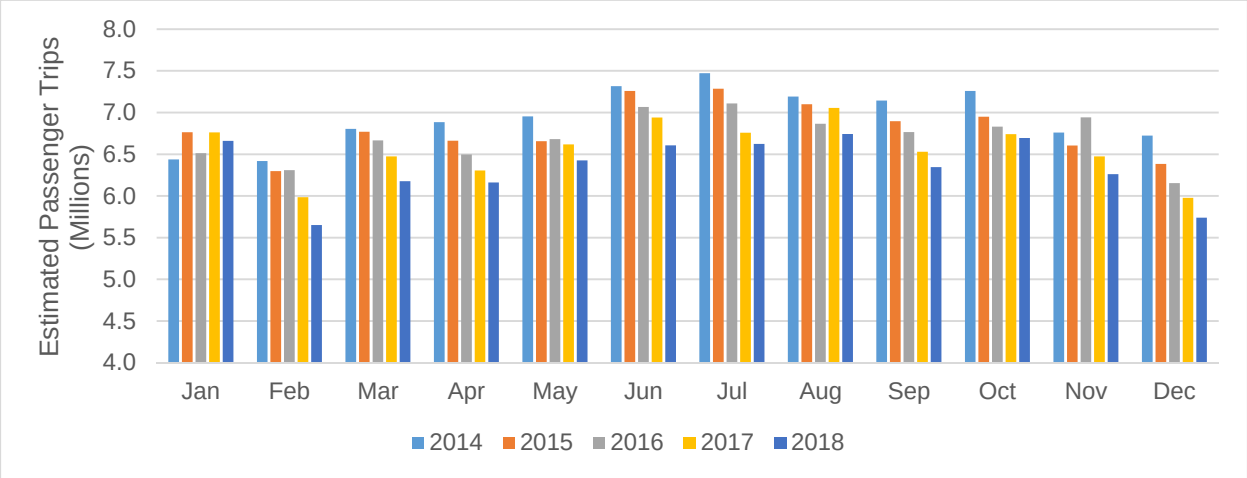
Table 2: Estimated Passenger Trips by Quarter

Quarter	2017	2018	Change
1st	19,220,359	18,487,610	-3.8%
2nd	19,864,797	19,194,767	-3.4%
3rd	20,344,498	19,711,697	-3.1%
4th	19,190,959	18,694,256	-2.6%
Annual Total	**78,620,612**	**76,088,329**	**-3.2%**

Ridership by Month

Estimated passenger trips were lower in 2018 than 2017 for every month in 2018. The trend of ridership peaking in the summer and falling in the winter remained consistent. Like in previous years with fare increases, 10-ride ticket sales increased 13.5 percent in January 2018 compared to January 2017, suggesting significant amounts of ticket stockpiling occurred prior to the February 1 fare increase. This ticket stockpiling likely depressed 10-Ride sales through April.

Figure 3: Estimated Passenger Trips by Month



Ridership by Line

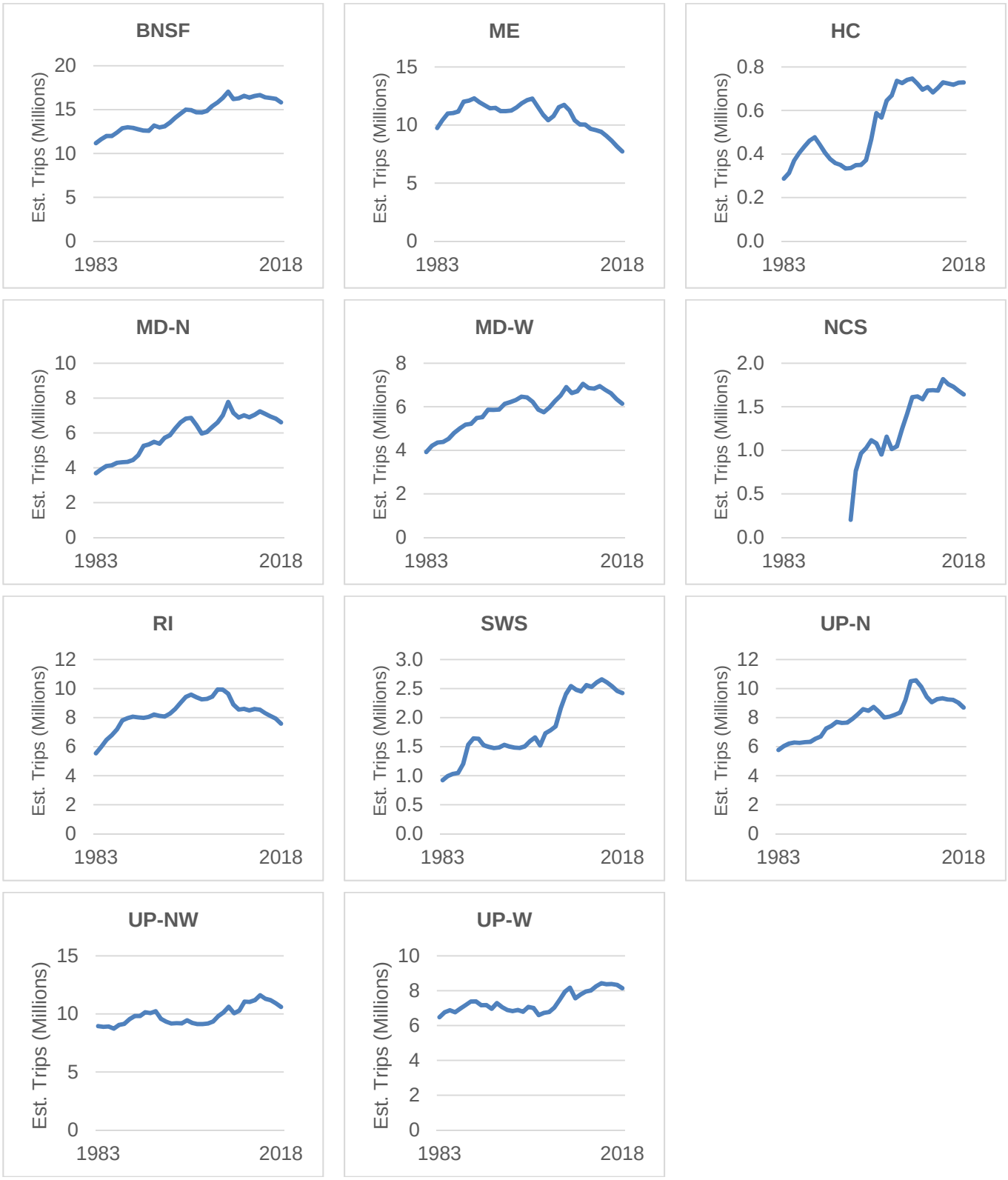
Ten of the eleven rail lines experienced decreases in ridership in 2018 compared to 2017. Ridership on the Heritage Corridor Line (HC) increased 0.2 percent. The Metra Electric Line (ME) had the largest decrease (5.3 percent). Table 3 shows estimated passenger trips by line for the last five years.

Table 3: Estimated Passenger Trips by Rail Line

Line	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Change '14-'18	Change '17-'18
BNSF	16,658,357	16,400,290	16,325,320	16,235,817	15,822,652	-5.0%	-2.5%
ME	9,415,916	9,054,649	8,642,365	8,149,977	7,716,121	-18.1%	-5.3%
HC	729,139	723,803	718,015	727,202	728,467	-0.1%	0.2%
MD-N	7,237,913	7,094,564	6,934,684	6,818,808	6,610,059	-8.7%	-3.1%
MD-W	6,946,268	6,771,637	6,621,104	6,349,963	6,143,996	-11.5%	-3.2%
NCS	1,817,335	1,758,118	1,730,494	1,684,357	1,640,984	-9.7%	-2.6%
RI	8,544,753	8,305,273	8,112,784	7,923,588	7,578,330	-11.3%	-4.4%
SWS	2,659,040	2,604,292	2,538,273	2,457,418	2,420,921	-9.0%	-1.5%
UP-N	9,328,441	9,248,834	9,220,477	9,030,120	8,689,776	-6.8%	-3.8%
UP-NW	11,609,358	11,301,755	11,183,739	10,910,882	10,597,680	-8.7%	-2.9%
UP-W	8,423,188	8,367,264	8,375,067	8,332,483	8,139,344	-3.4%	-2.3%
Annual Total	**83,369,706**	**81,630,476**	**80,402,319**	**78,620,612**	**76,088,329**	**-8.7%**	**-3.2%**

Figure 4 shows the ridership by rail line since 1983.

Figure 4: Annual Estimated Passenger Trips by Rail Line

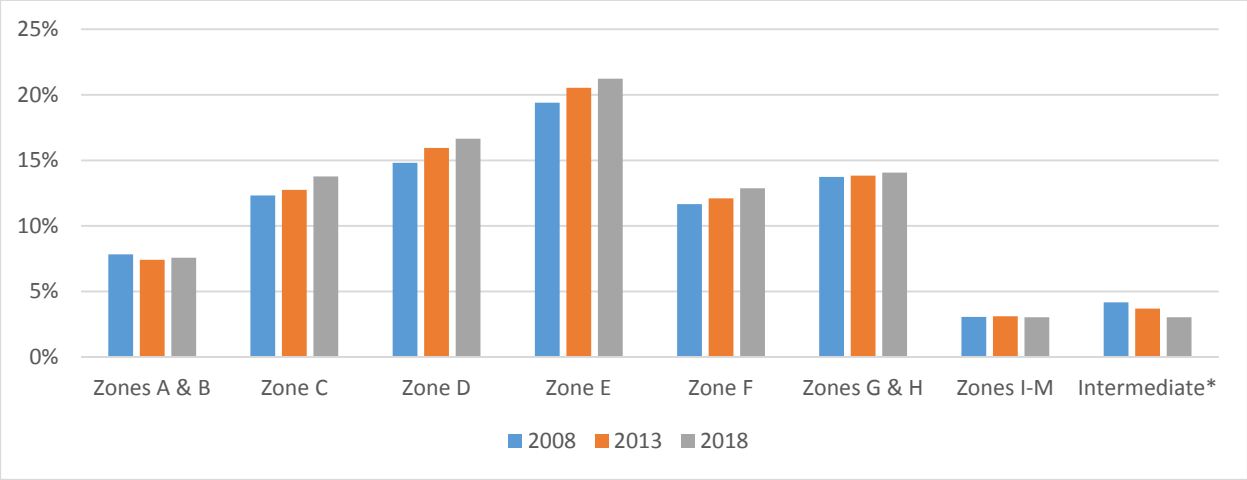


Ridership by Fare Zone

The share of system ridership by fare zone remained mostly unchanged when compared to 2008 and 2013. Slight increases were experienced in Zones C, D, E, and F; a slight decrease was seen in intermediate trips, while the remaining zones experienced little change.

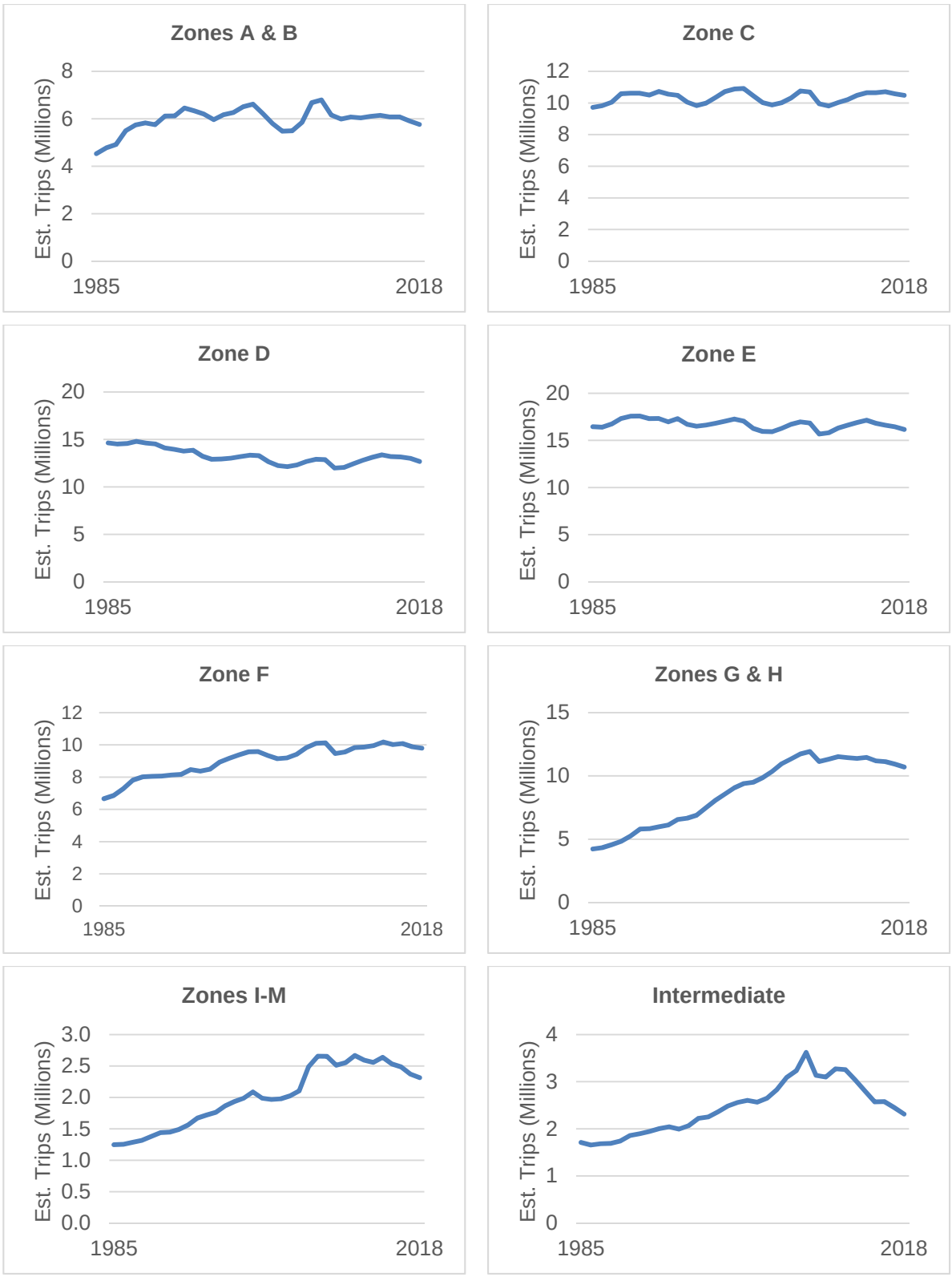
In July 2018, Metra implemented two pilot programs resulting from the 2017-2018 Fare Structure Study. Fare Zones K-M (Woodstock, McHenry, Harvard, Antioch, and Kenosha stations) were consolidated into Fare Zone J. 83rd St. and 87th St. (ME-ML) and 123rd St. (RI-Beverly) stations were reassigned from Zone C to B; State St. through Ashland stations (ME-BI) were reassigned from Zone D to C.

Figure 5: Share of Estimated Passenger Trips to and from Zone A by Fare Zone



*Intermediate trips do not begin or end in Zone A

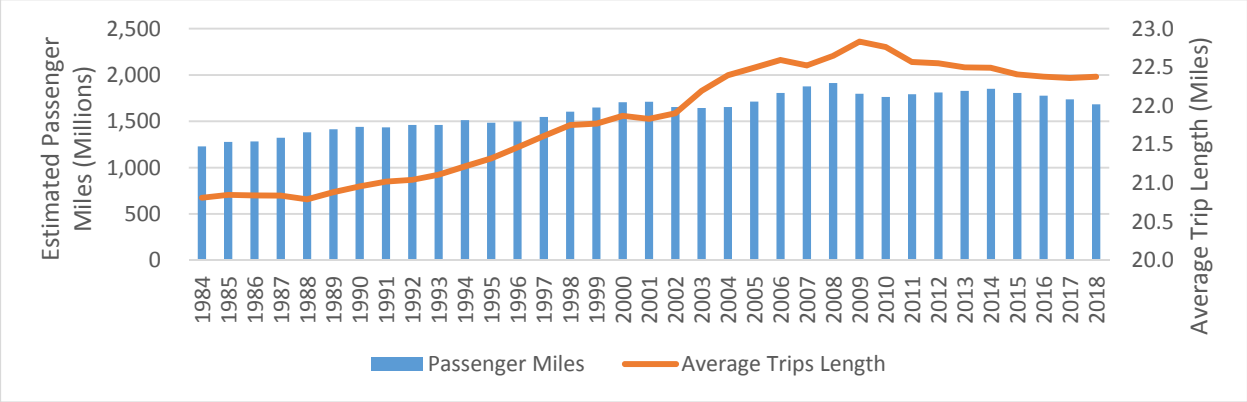
Figure 6: Estimated Passenger Trips to and From Zone A by Fare Zone



Passenger Miles

Each year, Metra calculates the number of passenger miles traveled and the average trip length by line. The total number of passenger miles decreased by 3.1 percent in 2018 when compared to 2017. Average trip length changed less than 0.1 mile in 2018 compared to 2017, remaining at 22.4.

Figure 7: Passenger Miles and Average Trip Length*



*Free RTA Ride Free Permit rides are not included.

Passenger Loads by Service Period

Peak period/peak direction remained Metra's largest market, accounting for about 76 percent of weekday trips. Figure 8 shows average daily passenger loads by service period for the last five years. Peak period/peak direction passenger loads were slightly down when compared to five years ago, while weekday off-peak, Saturday, and Sunday passenger loads have seen steeper decreases.

Figure 8: Average Daily Passenger Loads by Period

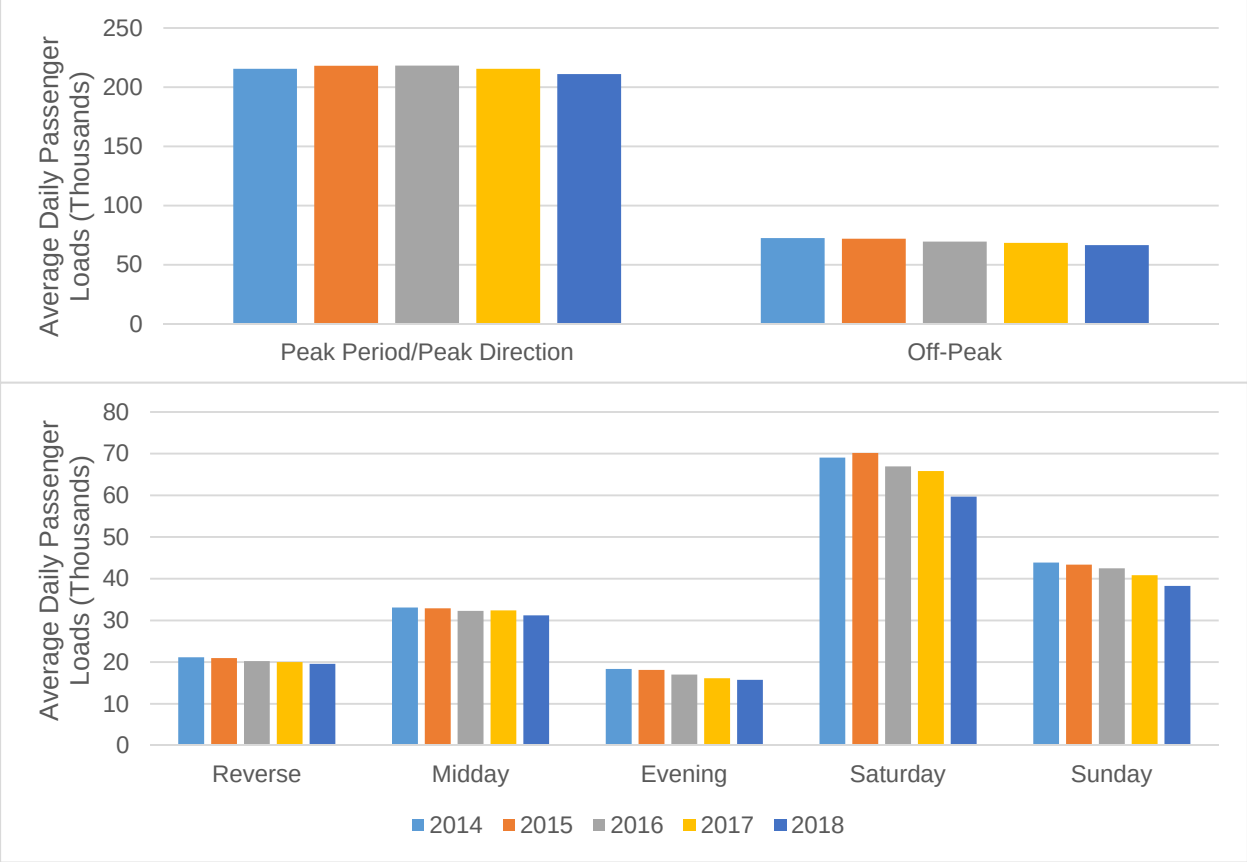
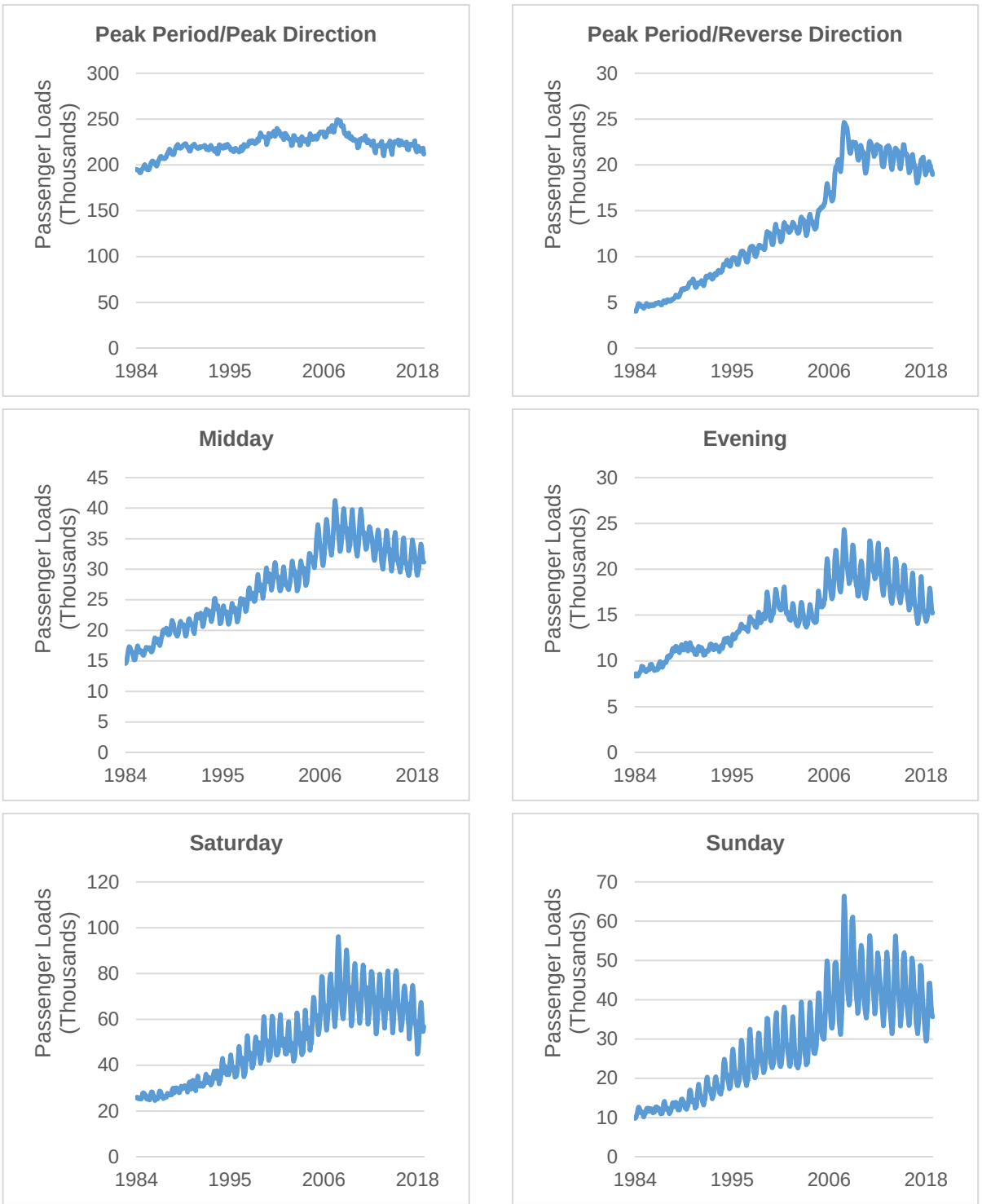


Figure 9 shows a rolling three month average of daily passenger loads by service period since 1984.

Figure 9: Passenger Loads by Service Period (3 Month Rolling Average)



RTA Ride Free Program

Senate Bill 1920 was signed into law in September 2008 granting free trips to riders with an issued Circuit Permit as part of the new People with Disabilities Ride Free Program. The legislation required free trips on fixed-route and regularly scheduled transit in the RTA's service region be made available to any Illinois resident who enrolled as a person with a disability in the Illinois Circuit Breaker Program. The People with Disabilities Ride Free Program officially began on October 24, 2008. As of September 6, 2011, the number of Circuit-Permit trips also included the low-income seniors who qualified for the program. Effective January 1, 2013, the state changed the name of the Circuit Breaker Program to the Benefit Access Program. The program is now referred to as the RTA Ride Free Program. This program grew rapidly from 2,431 trips in 2008 to over 1 million passenger trips in 2013 and 2014. In 2014, the rate of growth slowed; and in 2018 the number of free trips provided under this program was 6.8 percent lower than 2017.

Table 4: RTA Ride Free Permit Trips (2008-2018)

Month	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Jan		1,280	25,617	40,109	69,123	76,802	73,543	81,935	76,784	72,726	68,638
Feb		1,228	27,086	38,444	70,491	73,179	73,647	75,558	77,078	73,158	63,698
Mar		4,645	30,888	52,742	78,307	78,710	84,896	90,857	85,954	80,628	72,687
Apr		10,594	38,244	50,594	76,694	84,089	90,296	87,468	81,123	75,719	71,983
May		13,755	39,701	54,803	78,507	88,367	92,746	88,753	85,310	84,406	79,182
Jun		19,380	45,689	54,159	81,498	90,828	94,934	94,928	89,288	84,381	75,265
Jul		22,444	48,446	56,404	79,551	96,166	99,638	97,624	86,783	81,781	79,722
Aug		25,718	49,861	67,873	86,543	95,616	97,153	92,221	89,663	89,173	80,810
Sep		27,273	48,334	86,219	83,034	90,054	97,329	86,895	83,539	78,708	72,603
Oct	88	30,387	51,927	86,297	90,053	94,499	105,618	95,121	83,510	82,745	80,818
Nov	474	28,796	46,085	73,961	81,871	85,149	84,953	83,191	79,896	73,628	70,598
Dec	1,869	27,800	41,654	73,917	74,816	80,425	90,641	81,141	74,675	69,206	66,286
Total	**2,431**	**213,300**	**493,532**	**735,522**	**950,488**	**1,033,884**	**1,085,394**	**1,055,692**	**993,603**	**946,259**	**882,290**

Police Officer and Firefighter Free Rides

Chicago-area uniformed police officers from any municipality, including sheriff's deputies, bailiffs, corrections officers, and Chicago firefighters are allowed free transportation on Metra. These free trips are not reimbursed by the State of Illinois. Conductors began recording the number of free trips taken by these uniformed police officers and firefighters as of April 2012. The number has declined in recent years from 65,814 in 2013 to 51,354 in 2018.

Table 5: Average and Total Police Officers and Firefighters in Uniform Riding Free

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2017	Avg Wkday	199	202	209	202	182	202	212	204	209	211	191	161
	Avg Sat	11	20	26	20	20	32	20	35	22	19	13	15
	Avg Sun/Hol	12	19	14	11	11	40	23	23	14	18	3	10
	Typical week	1,018	1,049	1,087	1,041	943	1,083	1,104	1,078	1,080	1,091	973	829
	Total Reported	4,296	4,197	4,977	4,193	4,148	4,736	4,484	4,923	4,357	4,804	4,088	3,350
2018	Avg Wkday	179	190	202	200	206	212	215	211	205	198	174	166
	Avg Sat	8	5	7	10	15	14	28	22	9	9	16	16
	Avg Sun/Hol	6	8	12	3	9	17	17	14	6	5	7	3
	Typical week	910	963	1,030	1,011	1,053	1,093	1,120	1,092	1,042	1,005	892	848
	Total Reported	4,006	3,851	4,529	4,246	4,631	4,598	4,728	5,003	3,984	4,615	3,750	3,413

Reduced Fare Trips

In collaboration with the Regional Transportation Authority's Reduced Fare Permit Program, Metra allows qualified users to ride Metra at a reduced rate. The following types of users are eligible to receive a reduced-fare permit through the RTA's Reduced Fare Permit Program. Metra is eligible for reimbursement of the lost revenue by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

- All senior citizens who are within three weeks of their 65th birthday or older
- Medicare card recipients receiving Social Security benefits
- People with disabilities who receive Social Security benefits
- Veterans with disabilities who receive Service-connected disability benefits
- People with disabilities whose doctors validate their disability
- Full-time students enrolled in an accredited grade school or high school with a valid letter of certification from their school (on school stationery) or a valid school I.D. bearing the student's name, school name and authorized signature.

Metra also offers reduced-fare tickets to children ages 7 to 11 (saves 50 percent over one-way fares) and to U.S. military personnel (may purchase one-way or ten-ride tickets at a reduced fare provided they present proper military identification indicating they are on active duty). Prior to the fare change effective February 1, 2012, young adults (ages 12-17) were eligible for reduced fares on weekends and holidays. Table 6 shows all reduced-fare passenger trips (eligible and ineligible for reimbursement) by year for 2007 through 2017. In 2008, state legislation required Metra to provide free rides to seniors under the Seniors Ride Free Program. This caused a -39.9 percent drop in the number of reduced fare passenger trips in that year. This decision was reversed in September 2011 and the use of the reduced fare tickets surged 50.2 percent.

There were an estimated 3.7 million reduced fare passenger trips in 2018, a 1.8 percent decrease compared to 2017.

Table 6: Reduced Fare Passenger Trips by Year*

Year	Estimated Passenger Trips	Change
2007	3,033,277	
2008	1,822,246	-39.9%
2009	1,423,241	-21.9%
2010	1,565,633	10.0%
2011	2,352,122	50.2%
2012	3,736,638	58.9%
2013	3,677,516	-1.6%
2014	3,591,620	-2.3%
2015	3,649,846	1.6%
2016	3,809,102	4.4%
2017	3,835,018	0.7%
2018	3,741,955	-1.8%

*Includes all eligible and ineligible reduced-fare rides for reimbursement and does not include conductor or group sales

Table 7 shows total free trips and all reduced-fare passenger trips by month.

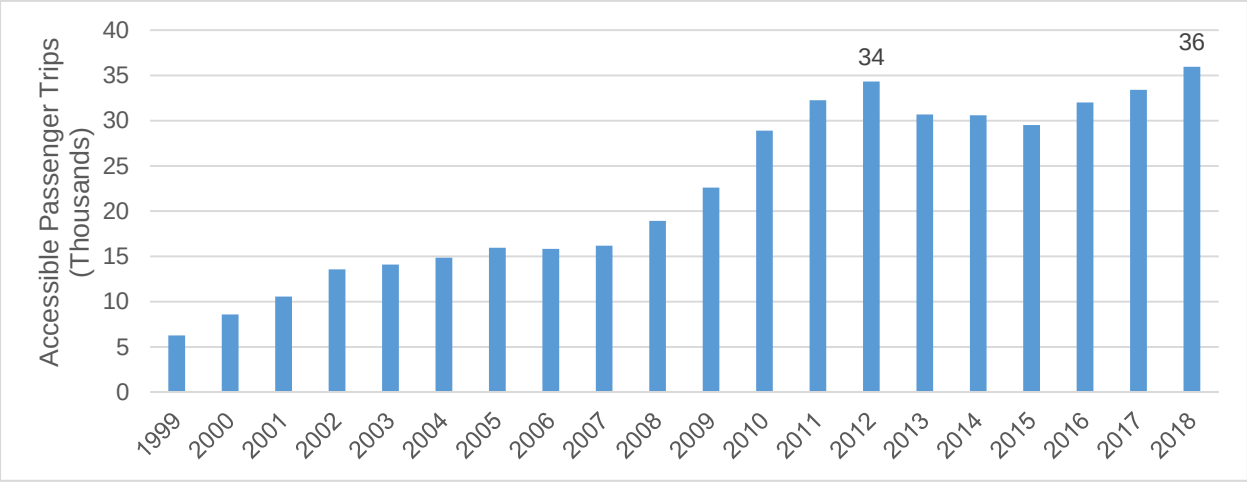
Table 7: Estimated Reduced Fare Passenger Trips by Month

	2017			2018		
	Free	Reduced	Total	Free	Reduced	Total
Jan	72,726	339,566	412,292	68,638	341,001	409,639
Feb	73,158	271,442	344,600	63,698	252,859	316,557
Mar	80,628	318,150	398,778	72,687	307,601	380,288
Apr	75,719	297,365	373,084	71,983	294,963	366,946
May	84,406	321,573	405,979	79,182	316,185	395,367
Jun	84,381	343,964	428,345	75,265	324,778	400,043
Jul	81,781	328,902	410,683	79,722	334,899	414,621
Aug	89,173	337,301	426,474	80,810	327,919	408,729
Sep	78,708	316,243	394,951	72,603	309,112	381,715
Oct	82,745	341,602	424,347	80,818	339,393	420,211
Nov	73,628	327,327	400,955	70,598	310,091	380,689
Dec	69,206	291,583	360,789	66,286	283,154	349,440
Total	946,259	3,835,018	4,781,277	882,290	3,741,955	4,624,245

Accessible Equipment Usage

Metra's trains became fully accessible in April 1998, providing at least one accessible car per train consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). On a typical weekday, over 95 percent of boardings occur at fully or partially accessible stations. In 2018, Metra provided about 36,000 passenger trips that utilized ADA equipment, the highest number recorded. Figure 10 shows the annual number of passenger trips utilizing the accessible equipment since 1999.

Figure 10: Annual Passenger Trips Utilizing Accessible Equipment

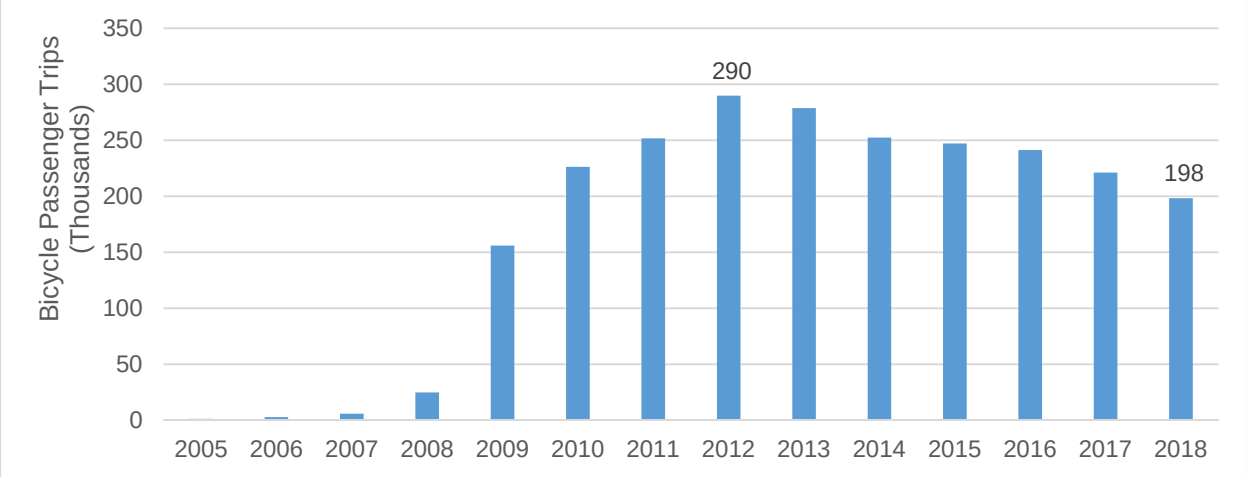


Bikes on Trains Program

Beginning in June 2005, Metra implemented the Bikes-on-Trains program, permitting a limited number of bicycles in each passenger car during weekday off-peak and weekend service periods. Since October 2014, bicycles have also been permitted on weekday inbound trains that arrive downtown before 6:30 a.m. and during special events at the discretion of the conductors. In 2018, Metra conductors reported about 198,000 bicycles brought onto Metra trains (see Figure 11).

Divvy bikeshare stations were first installed in downtown in June 2013. Since then, their use has continued to climb and docking stations were installed in Evanston and Oak Park in 2016. The valet docking service provided by Divvy at Union Station and Ogilvie Transportation Center suggests the growing demand for bicycles on Metra has been partially met by bikeshare.

Figure 11: Bikes on Trains Program Usage



III. 2018 RIDERSHIP INFLUENCES

Metra provided about 76.1 million passenger trips in 2018, a 3.2 percent decrease when compared to 2017. Many factors contribute to year-over-year ridership changes. Some of these factors are under Metra's control (fare and service changes) while others are not (changes in employment and fuel prices).

Winter Weather

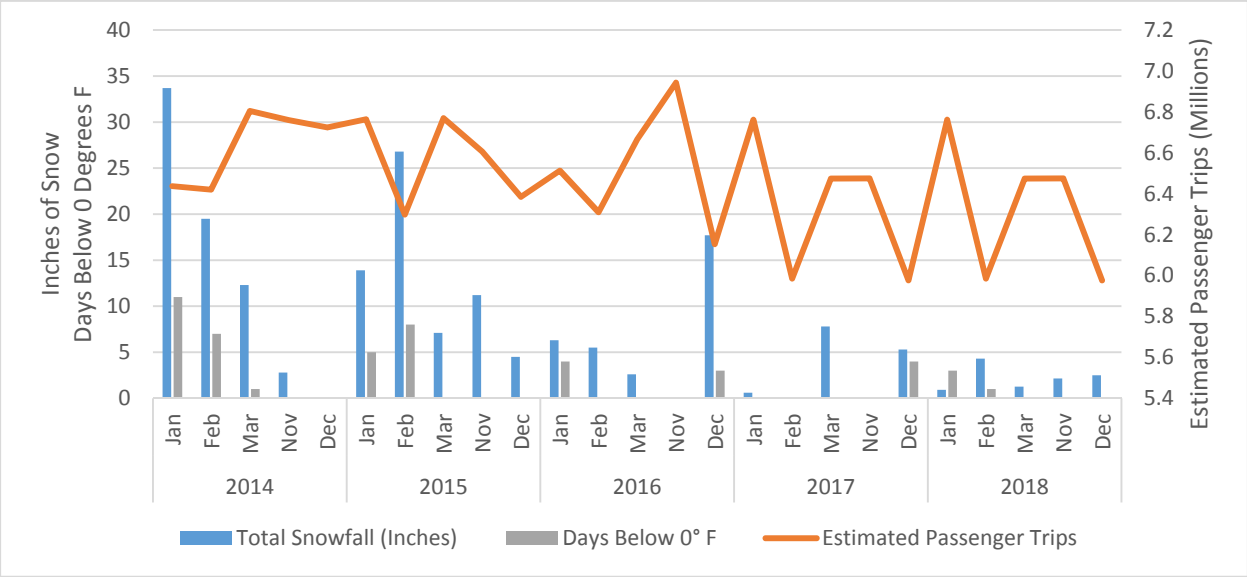
Metra ridership is generally impacted during times of severe winter weather as commuters choose whether or not to ride Metra depending on driving conditions and/or school closures. Table 8 shows total snowfall by month for the past five winter seasons (Nov-Mar). The winter of 2017-2018 had atypically low snowfall, 25.7 inches lower than the 30-year average.

Table 8: Chicago Snowfall (inches)

Season	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Nov-Mar	Difference from 30-year Average
2013-14	0.9	14.2	33.7	19.5	12.3	80.6	43.0
2014-15	2.8	0	13.9	26.8	7.1	50.6	13.0
2015-16	11.2	4.5	6.3	5.5	2.6	30.1	-7.5
2016-17	0	17.7	0.6	0	7.8	26.1	-11.5
2017-18	0.1	5.3	0.9	4.3	1.3	11.9	-25.7
2018-19	2.2	2.5					
30-year Average	**1.3**	**8.5**	**11.4**	**10.0**	**5.3**	**37.6**	

Figure 12, shows that high snow accumulations and cold temperatures contributed to lower ridership in February 2015, December 2016, and December 2017.

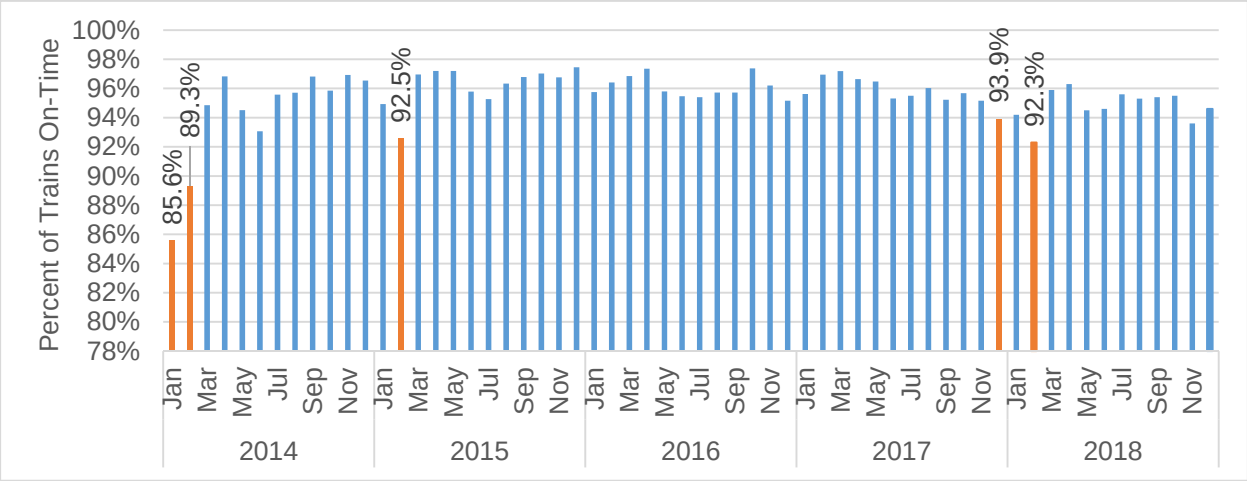
Figure 12: Monthly Ridership, Inches of Snow, and Days <0 Deg. Fahrenheit



On-Time Performance

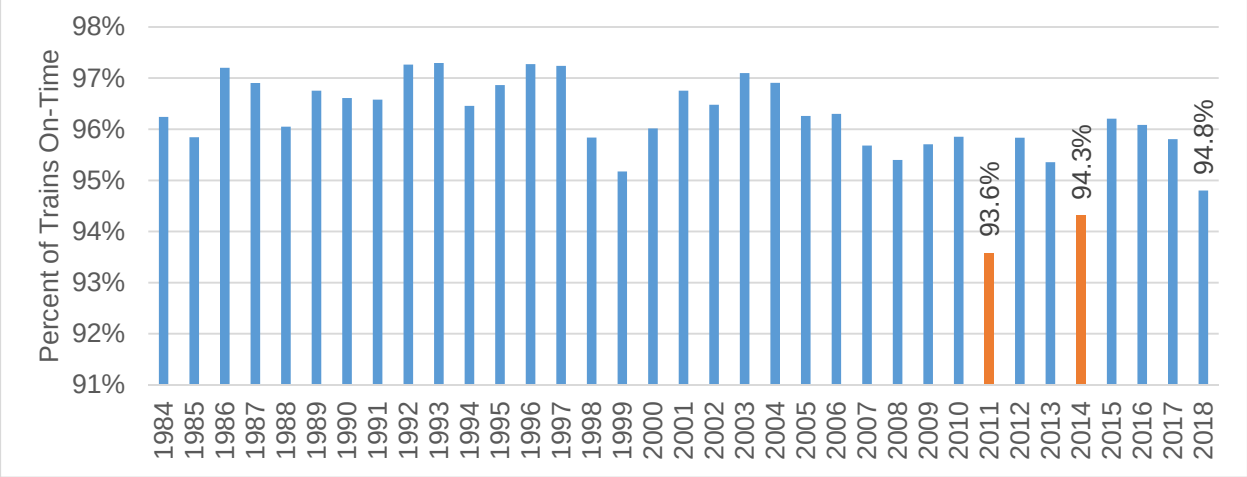
The on-time performance of the system is the percentage of scheduled trains that arrived on-time each month. Metra considers a train late if it arrives six minutes or more after its scheduled arrival at its last stop. Metra system reliability over the past several years has tracked at a very high level, usually exceeding 95 percent on-time performance in any given month. Figure 13 shows the effects of heavy snowfall and frigid temperatures in 2014-2018.

Figure 13: The Impacts of Severe Winter Weather on On-Time Performance



In 2018, on-time performance averaged 94.8 percent, which is the lowest annual average since 2014. In Figure 14, 2011 and 2014 are highlighted to indicate the impact of the Groundhog Day Blizzard and Polar Vortex, respectively.

Figure 14: Annual On-Time Performance

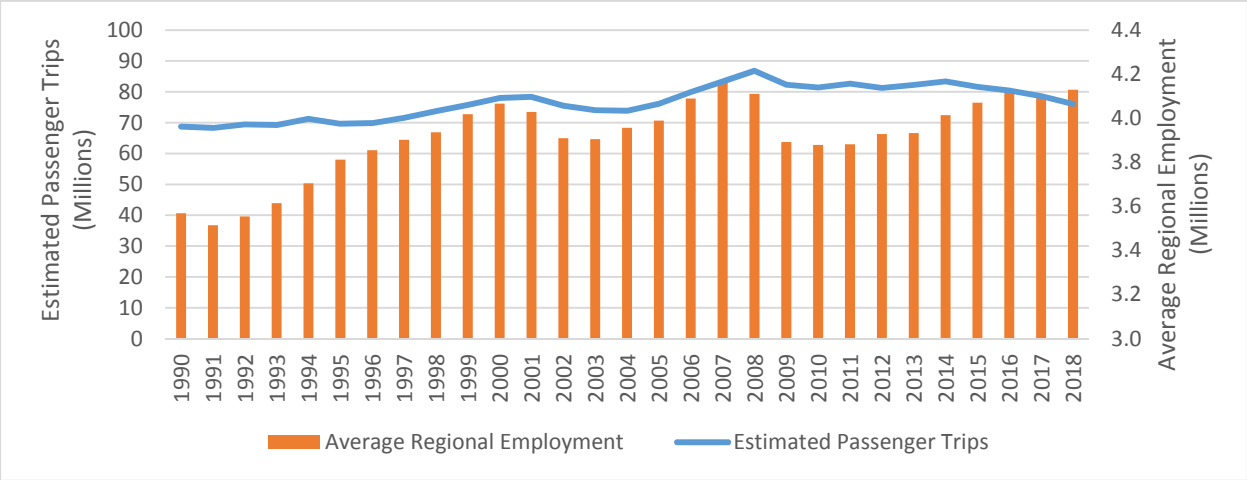


Metra's on-time performance in 2018 was adversely affected by significant increases in the number of delays due to signal/switch failures, interference from freight trains, and weather. A total of 1,739 trains were delayed due to signal/switch failures which is an increase of 42% since 2017. A total of 1,514 trains were delayed due to interference from freight trains which is an increase of 51% since 2017. A total of 1,054 trains were delayed due to weather-related issues which is an increase of 77% since 2017. These increase were only minimally offset by decreases in delays caused by accidents and track work. For the year, Metra missed its 95% on-time performance goal with an annual percentage of 94.6%. Metra achieved its on-time performance six goal out of the 12 months of the year, with a low of 93.6% in November.

Employment

Since approximately 90% of passenger trips taken on Metra are for work, the health of the regional economy, especially in terms of employment levels, greatly influences Metra ridership (see Figure 15). Regional employment has generally grown since 1990. The economic downturn following the September 11th attacks and the 2007 to 2009 economic recession (affecting 2008 through 2010 employment averages) are the exceptions. Average regional employment for 2018 was 0.8% higher compared to 2017. Employment remains slightly below pre-recession levels. In 2018, approximately 4.1 million persons were employed in the Chicago region. This is comparable to 2008 and 2016.

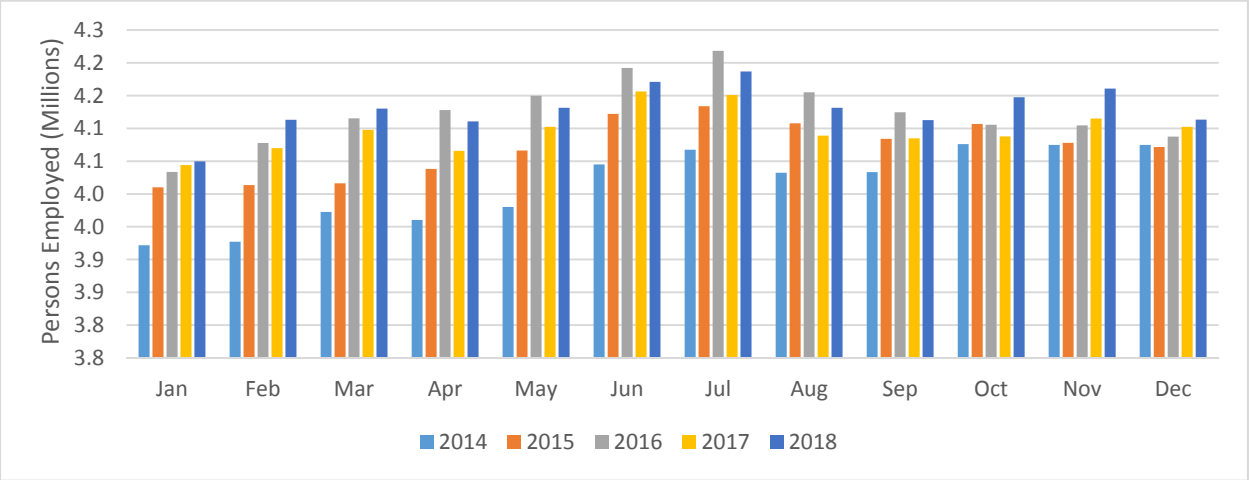
Figure 15: Annual Average Regional Employment



Source: Illinois Department of Economic Security. Includes employees covered under the State's Unemployment Insurance Act. Includes employment figures for Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will County. Government workers are not included in these estimates.

Figure 16 shows regional employment by month for 2014 through 2018. In 2018, regional employment was up for all months compared to 2017.

Figure 16: Regional Employment by Month



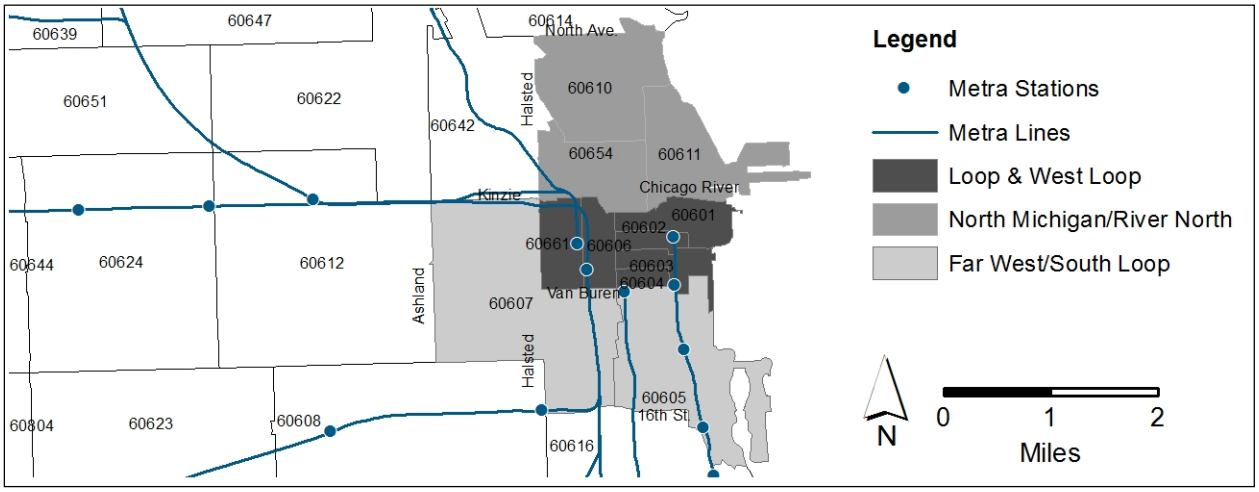
Source: Illinois Department of Economic Security. Includes employees covered under the State's Unemployment Insurance Act. Government workers are not included.

Employment in Downtown Chicago

As all of Metra's terminals are located in downtown Chicago, changes in downtown employment influence ridership more than regional trends. The Illinois Department of Economic Security publishes employment statistics by ZIP code in the Chicago region each year for the month of March. In March of 2015, non-government employment in the ZIP codes that make up downtown was 593,665, up 3.4% from 574,216 in 2016. For the fourth consecutive year, this is the highest amount recorded since these statistics have been calculated.

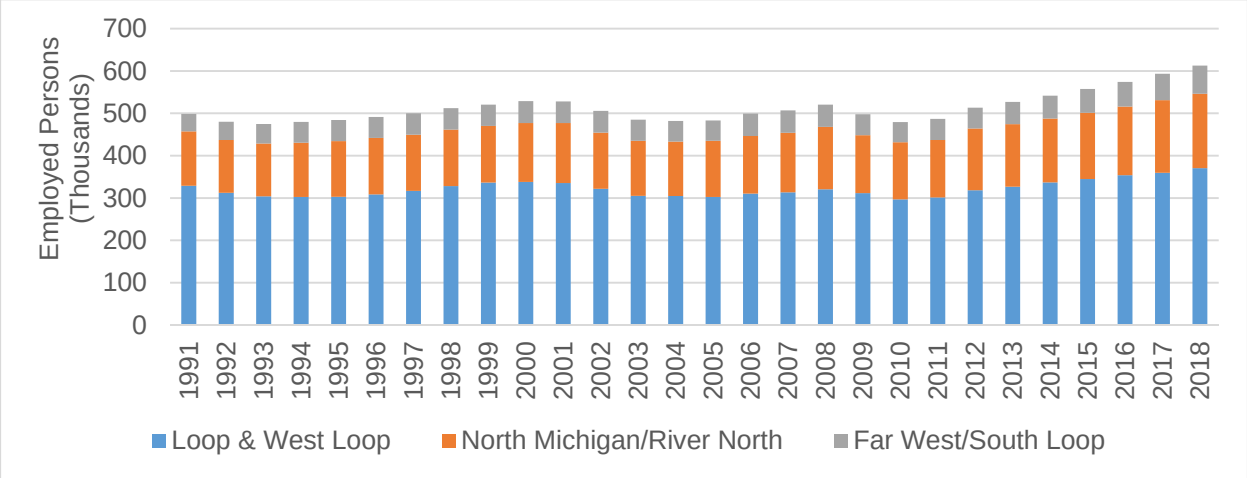
The ZIP codes for the Loop, West Loop, North Michigan/River North, Far West/South Loop areas are shown in Figure 17. The Loop & West Loop is bordered Halsted Street in the west, Lake Michigan in the east, Van Buren Street in the south, and the Chicago River in the north. The Far West/South Loop is from Ashland Avenue in the west to Halsted Street and then Lake Michigan between 16th Street and Van Buren Street. North Michigan/River North is from Halsted Street in the west to Lake Michigan in the east between the Chicago River and Kinzie Street in the south and North Avenue in the north.

Figure 17: Downtown Chicago Employment Zones by ZIP Code



Employment was higher in 2018 than 2017 in all three downtown employment zones (See Figure 18). Downtown as a whole had 19,249 more jobs in 2018 than 2017. The Loop & West Loop gained 10,951 jobs, the North Michigan/River North area gained 4,288 jobs, and the Far West/South Loop gained 4,010 jobs.

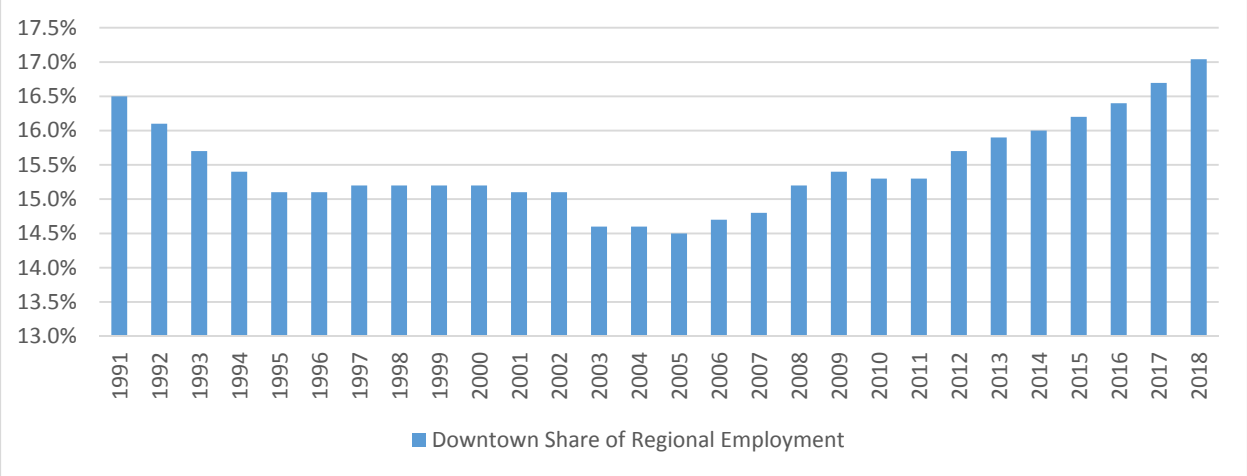
Figure 18: Downtown Chicago Employment by Downtown Employment Zone



Source: Illinois Department of Economic Security. Includes employees covered under the State's Unemployment Insurance Act. Government workers are not included.

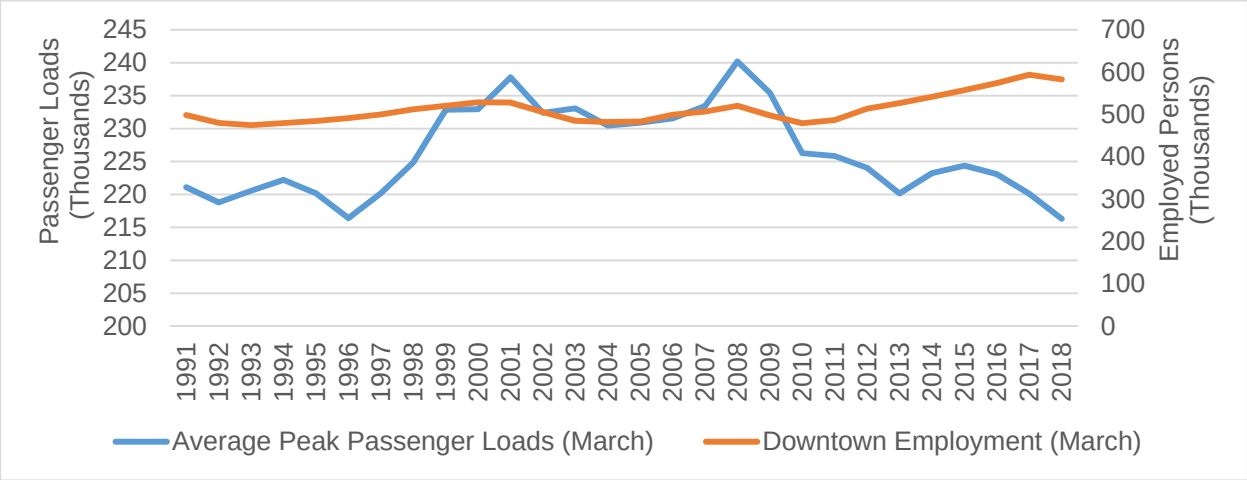
The percentage of regional jobs located in downtown grew from a low of 14.5 percent in 2005 to 17.0 percent in 2018. This is the highest percentage recorded since 1991 (16.5 percent) continuing a trend that began in 2011 (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: Downtown Share of Regional Employment



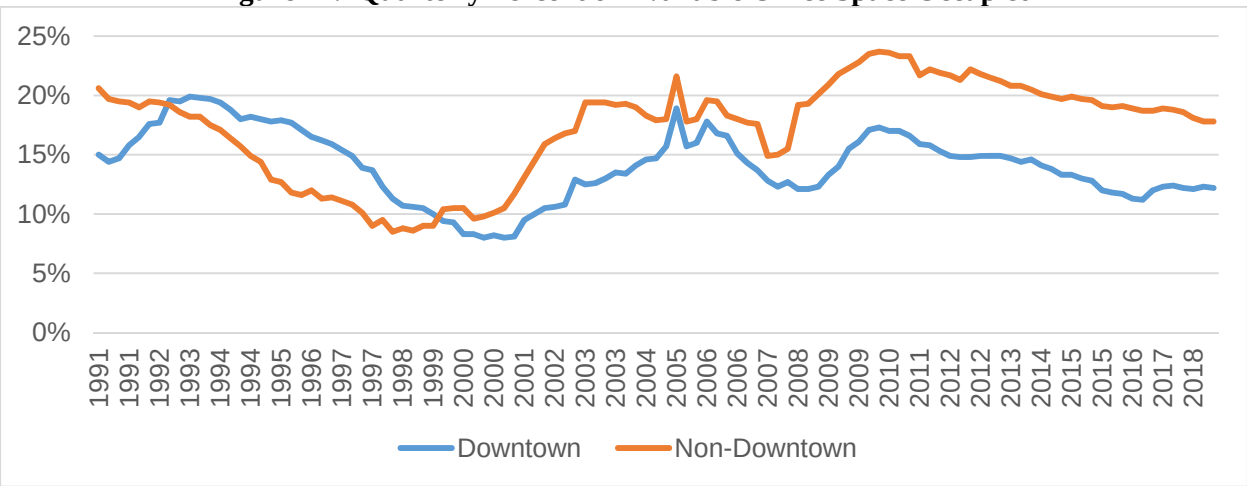
Approximately 90% of Metra's morning passenger trips are destined for the five stations located downtown (Union Station, Ogilvie Transportation Center, LaSalle Street, Van Buren, and Millennium). Metra's peak-period/peak-direction (AM Peak inbound trains and PM Peak outbound trains) average weekday ridership has historically followed trends in non-government employment downtown. As employment downtown rose in the 1990s and dropped between 2008 and 2010, passenger loads followed suit (see Figure 20). In the last few years, steady increases in the number of downtown jobs have occurred while ridership has decreased.

Figure 20: Average Peak Hour and Peak Direction Weekday Passenger Loads in March & Downtown Chicago Employment



The shift in the share of total employment towards downtown Chicago is evident in office occupancy rates (see Figure 21). Downtown Chicago office occupancy rates remained constant near 85.1 percent between the First Quarter of 2012 through the first half of 2013. Beginning in the Third Quarter of 2013, the occupancy rate began to climb. By the Fourth Quarter of 2016, the rate had gone up to 89 percent. Occupancy rates dropped slightly to 87.8 percent by the Fourth Quarter of 2017. Office occupancy rates outside of downtown were relatively unchanged in 2017 compared to 2016. The Fourth Quarter of 2016 was 81.3 percent and the Fourth Quarter of 2017 was 81.4 percent. In the Third Quarter of 2018, the downtown office occupancy rate was 87.8 percent, and the suburban rate was 82.2 percent. The difference between downtown and outside-of-downtown occupancy has been steady since the Second Quarter of 2008 (see Figure 21).

Figure 21: Quarterly Percent of Available Office Space Occupied



Source: CB Richard Ellis

Regional Population

Total demand for transportation services can be broadly measured by population. Northeastern Illinois' regional population increased by 2.8 percent between 2000 and 2010, with Cook County decreasing in population and the collar counties steadily growing, as shown in Table 9. In the last seven years, Kane County has seen the highest percentage growth.

Table 9: Northeastern Illinois Regional Population Growth

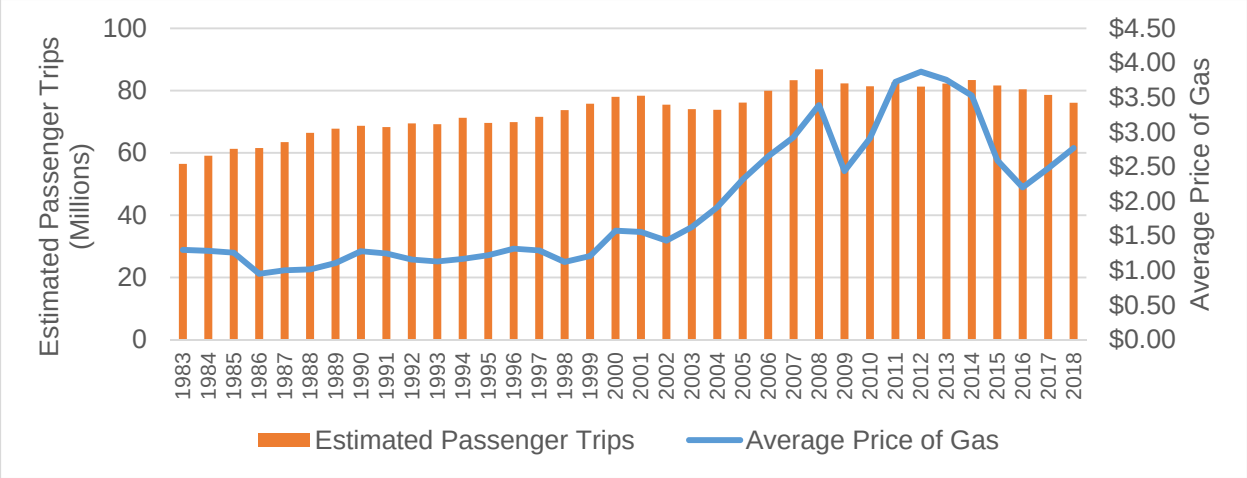
	2000	2010	2017 Est.	00 vs. 10	10 vs. 17	2040 Projections	% Change (2010-2040)
Cook County	5,376,741	5,194,675	5,211,263	-3.4%	0.3%	5,960,242	15%
City of Chicago	*2,896,016*	*2,695,598*	*2,716,450*	*-6.9%*	0.8%	*3,054,654*	*13%*
Other	*2,480,725*	*2,499,077*	*2,494,813*	*0.7%*	-0.2%	*2,905,588*	*16%*
DuPage County	904,161	916,924	930,128	1.4%	1.4%	1,104,089	20%
Kane County	404,119	515,269	534,667	27.5%	3.8%	789,295	53%
Lake County	644,356	703,462	703,520	9.2%	0.0%	896,341	27%
McHenry County	260,077	308,760	309,122	18.7%	0.1%	508,918	65%
Will County	502,266	677,560	692,661	34.9%	2.2%	1,175,218	73%
NE Illinois Region	8,091,720	8,316,650	8,381,361	2.8%	0.8%	10,434,103	25%
City Share	35.8%	32.4%	32.4%			29.3%	
Suburban Share	64.2%	67.6%	67.6%			70.7%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Projections from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning October 2014 Updates.

Automobile Operation Costs

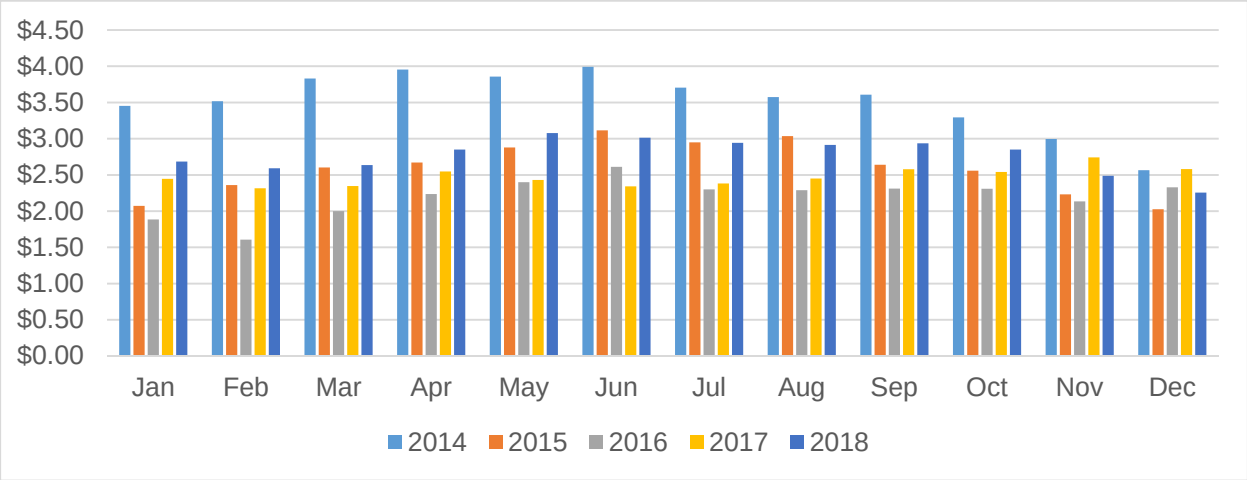
Congestion, highway tolls, parking rates, and the cost of automobile ownership and operation are factors that people consider as they choose to travel throughout the Chicago region. Metra ridership historically trended along with the average gasoline price as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for Regular Gasoline sold in the greater Chicago-Gary-Kenosha region (see Figure 22). The average annual gas price in 2018 ($2.77 per gallon) was $0.29 higher than in 2017 ($2.48 per gallon).

Figure 22: Annual Ridership and Average Annual Gas Price



At the beginning of the decade, gas prices fluctuated between $3.50 and $4.00 per gallon. In 2014, a dramatic drop in gas prices at the end of the year did not lead to a corresponding drop in Metra ridership. In 2015 and 2016, lower ridership appears to correlate with the sustained lower gas prices. This effect is most noticeable on discretionary ridership, infrequent trips that occur during less congested periods.

Figure 23: Average Monthly Gas Price



Major Construction Projects

Metra provides a reliable option for many of its riders, enabling them to avoid chronically congested roadways and to ride transit when other services are disrupted. When Metra's transportation partners undertake construction on any of the region's major transportation facilities, Metra service can play an important role in mitigating construction disruptions. Many who use Metra during construction revert back to their previous travel patterns after construction. As such, the timing of major construction projects can significantly influence Metra's annual ridership estimates one way or the other.

Table 10 lists all major construction projects that have occurred since 2000. The shaded projects were ongoing in 2018.

Table 10: Major Roadway Construction Projects

Major Roadway	Affected Lines	Years
Congress Pkwy	Milw-W,UP-W, BNSF	2010-2012
Dan Ryan	Elec, RI, So. Shore	1988-1989, 2003-2007
Edens	UP-N, Milw-N	1979, 2007-2008
Edens Spur	UP-N, Milw-N	2010
Eisenhower	Milw-W,UP-W, BNSF	1984-1985, 2010
Hillside Strangler	BNSF, Milw-W, UP-W	2000-2001
I-355	Milw-W,UP-W, BNSF	2010
I-57 Rehab	Elec, RI	2002-2003
I-90 Jane Addams Tollway	Milw-W, UP-NW	2013-2016
IL Route 59	BNSF	2013-2015
Jane Byrne Interchange	Elec., RI, BNSF, Heritage, SWS, Milw-N, Milw-W, NCS, UP-N, UP-NW, UP-W	2015-2022
Kennedy	UP-N, Milw-N, UP-NW	1992-1994
Lake Shore Drive	Elec	1996
Stevenson	BNSF, Heritage, SWS	1998-2000
South Lake Shore Drive	Elec	2001-2004
Wacker Drive	BNSF, Heritage, SWS, Milw-N, Milw-W, NCS, UP-N, UP-NW, UP-W	2010-2012

Jane Byrne Interchange Reconfiguration – In March 2015, work began on a major reconfiguration of the Jane Byrne Interchange. During the first phase of the construction, the number of lanes was reduced on several ramps and the inbound Dan Ryan Expressway, and access to Congress Parkway from the Dan Ryan was via a detour. In December 2016, a new flyover linking the inbound Dan Ryan Expressway to the outbound Eisenhower Expressway was completed. Work completed in 2017 enabled improvements to be made on the section that connects to Interstate 290 in 2018. The project will continue through 2021.

Marketing

Metra markets its services to a wide variety of audiences. Its customer base includes traditional commuters and reverse commuters as well as recreational customers, weekend riders and occasional users, all of which represent important market segments for future ridership growth. Metra uses a proactive, customer-driven marketing approach to build on successful programs to meet passenger travel needs. While some of the marketing is tailored to specific market segments, other efforts are geared toward the general population to reinforce brand identity throughout the region while sending a call to action that resonates with all potential customers.

Metra's 2018 overall budget for marketing initiatives were greatly reduced over previous years, but there was still a focus on maintaining top-of-mind awareness to consumers to consider Metra as a viable travel alternative:

- A new movers program continued to be offered, inviting targeted direct mail recipients to request two free one-way tickets.

- In late spring 2018, very targeted 4-week campaigns were initiated to alert those in affected areas of zone consolidation and reassignment in hopes of attracting new riders to the system. Messaging methods included gas pump toppers, posters (small billboards), digital radio, digital news and entertainment sites and direct mail.

- A summer marketing effort supported the seasonal recreational travel program, which included the extension of Weekend Family Fares to weekdays and offered a dedicated web page that featured promotions to downtown attractions.

- Special event tickets were promoted through social media channels and website to support large ridership events including the Lollapalooza music festival.

- During the winter holiday season, Family Fares program were extended to include weekdays and coincided with schools' holiday break.

For 2019, the Marketing Department will expand upon these initiatives and continue to develop creative ways to maintain the Metra brand and ultimately support Metra's efforts to stabilize and ultimately grow ridership.

Business Development

Working with a range of civic and business partners, Metra continuously strives to cultivate new riders across all market segments. One-to-one outreach efforts are directed to human resources managers, trade groups such as the Transportation Management Association (TMA) of Lake-Cook, chambers of commerce and others. Promoting Metra as a preferred option for both traditional and reverse commuters, Metra works with these civic groups, commercial property managers, and employers throughout the region to identify needs for connecting services. Metra then worked with Pace and/or an assortment of other providers, including Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), TMAs, local chambers and municipalities, to support both public transportation and innovative connecting services.

Metra continued to be directly involved in the support of a network of 11 Pace shuttles serving the Lake-Cook Corridor, and helped promote ridership on a number of other shuttle projects, including Conway Park businesses in Lake Forest, Esplanade office complex in Downers Grove, HSBC in Rolling Meadows, and more.

Throughout Metra's system, Metra has promoted (and continues to promote) transit benefits as a means for commuters to save on their transportation costs. In so doing, Metra champions all product offerings, while stressing the value of the RTA's program, which is offered at the lowest cost of any provider in the region. In support of this IRS-approved benefit, Metra maintains a transit benefit info page on metrarail.com and periodically e-blasts info to chambers and others. Beyond the commute markets, Metra works with meeting planners, convention staff, residential and hotel property managers, as well as concierges and other tourism related entities to promote Metra as a preferred mode for accessing cultural, recreational, sporting, entertainment and conference/convention venues.

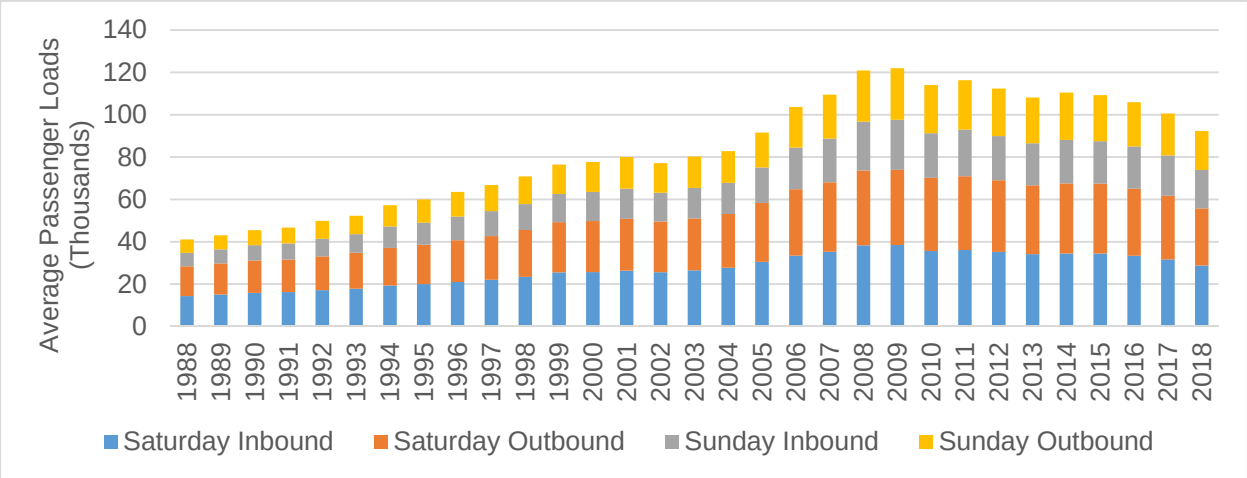
Cultural Attractions

Metra provides direct access to many of the region's top cultural attractions. The downtown area is home to internationally renowned museums, world-class theaters and music venues, award winning restaurants, and is one of the premier shopping destinations in North America. Chicago-area residents and many travelers from outside the region use Metra as it provides direct access to these attractions without the need to navigate the region's congested highways, and without the need to locate and pay for parking.

Beyond the immediate downtown area, several of Metra's outlying stations are close to a number of popular attractions such as the Ravinia Festival, Chicago Botanic Garden, Brookfield Zoo, Museum of Science and Industry, Arlington Park Race Track, Schaumburg Boomers Stadium, Joliet Slammers Silver Cross Field, and U.S. Cellular Field to name a few.

Metra's direct access to many of Chicago's cultural attractions causes Metra's weekend train loads to be heavy at times. Average weekend passenger loads climbed from approximately 80,000 per weekend to 120,000 per weekend between 2004 and 2008 (see Figure 24). This volume has dropped since 2009. In 2018, weekend loads averaged under 100,000 which is comparable to 2005.

Figure 24: Annual Average Weekend Passenger Loads by Day and Direction



Special Events

Special events often bring large crowds into Chicago during off-peak hours. Metra provided additional service or added capacity for the following events in 2018:

- Women's March Chicago (January 20)
- South Side Irish Parade (March 11)
- St. Patrick's Day Parade (March 17)
- Blues Fest and Spring Awakening (June 8-9)
- Chicago Pride Parade (June 24)
- Taste of Chicago (July 11-15)
- Lollapalooza (August 2-5)
- Arlington Million (August 11)
- Chicago Air and Water Show (August 18-19)
- Riot Fest (September 14-16)
- Bank of America Chicago Marathon (October 7)
- Magnificent Mile Lights Festival (November 17)
- Black Friday (November 23)

Fares

On February 1, 2018, Metra implemented a fare increase for the fourth consecutive year. Table 11 lists the effective changes to commuter rail fares since 1981.

In July 2018, Metra implemented two pilot programs resulting from the 2017-2018 Fare Structure Study. Fare Zones K-M (Woodstock, McHenry, Harvard, Antioch, and Kenosha stations) were consolidated into Fare Zone J. 83rd St. and 87th St. (ME-ML) and 123rd St. (RI-Beverly) stations were reassigned from Zone C to B; State St. through Ashland stations (ME-BI) were reassigned from Zone D to C.

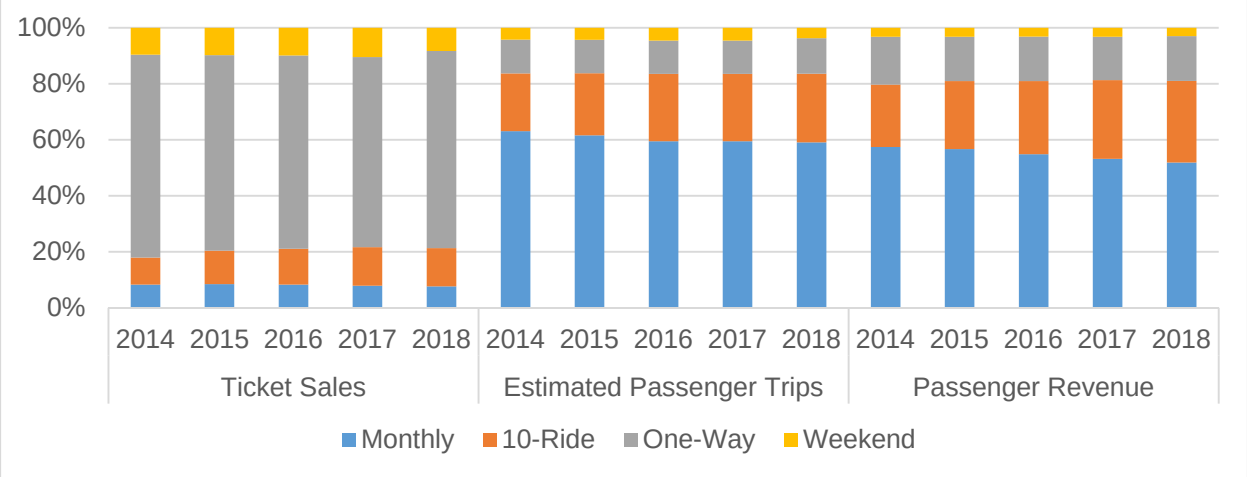
Table 11: Fare Changes over Time

Date	Action
Jan-81	across-the-board 33% increase
Jul-81	across-the-board 12.5% increase plus 40% surcharge
Oct-81	surcharge reduced to 33% (average -5%)
Feb-84	across-the-board 10% reduction (by Interim RTA Board)
Aug-85	discount ten-ride tickets by 15%; reduce Zone B fares by 18%; Family Fares
Feb-86	across-the-board 5% increase
Feb-89	across-the-board 5% increase (Capital Farebox Financing program)
Apr-90	raise on-train cash fare penalty from 50¢ to $1.00
May-91	introduce Weekend $5 Ticket
Feb-96	across-the-board increase, 20¢ per zone, +5½% overall
Jun-02	across-the-board 5% increase; raise on-train cash fare penalty from $1.00 to $2.00
Feb-06	across-the-board 5% increase
Feb-08	across-the-board 10% increase
Feb-10	increase one-way tickets by 6%, quarter-rounded; raise on-train cash fare penalty from $2.00 to $3.00; raise Weekend Ticket from $5.00 to $7.00
Feb-12	25.1% average fare increase (15.7% one-way; 30% ten-ride; 29.4% monthly); one-way tickets valid for 14 days from date of purchase and not eligible for refunds; monthly tickets valid only for the month issued and refunds subject to a $5 handling fee
Feb-13	increase price of full-fare ten-ride ticket from 9.0 to 10.0 equivalent one-way fares (11.1% increase)
Feb-15	10.8% average fare increase; discount for full- and reduced-fare ten-ride tickets (priced at 9.0 equivalent one-way fares); weekend ticket increase from $7 to $8; on-train cash fare penalty increase from $3 to $5 (implemented in 2016); various fare policy changes including extension of one-way valid period from 14 to 90 days, extension of monthly valid period to noon on 1st business day following valid month, and elimination of all refunds except by discretion of CEO
Feb-16	Increase One-Way Fares by $0.25; Increase Full-Fare Ten-Ride by $1.75, Full-Fare Monthly Fares by $2.50, Reduced Ten-Ride by $0.75, and Reduced Monthly by $1.25, on-train cash fare penalty increase from $3 to $5 (adopted in 2015) was implemented.
Feb-17	Increase One-Way Fares by $0.25, Full-Fare Ten-Ride by $2.75, Full-Fare Monthly Fares by $11.75, Reduced One-Way by $0.25, Reduced Ten-Ride by $1.50, and Reduced Monthly by $7.50
Feb-18	Increase Adult One-Way fares by $0.25; increase Reduced One-Way fares $0.00-$0.25; increase Adult 10-Ride to 9.5 Adult One-Ways; increase Reduced 10-Ride to 9.5 Reduced One-Ways; increase Adult Monthly multiplier to 29.0 Adult One-Ways; maintain Reduced Monthly multiplier at 35.0 Reduced One-Ways; increase Weekend Pass by $2
Jul-18	Zone Consolidation Pilot: consolidate Fare Zones K-M into Fare Zone J; Station Zone Reassignment Pilot: 83rd St. and 87th St. (ME-ML) and 123rd St. (RI-Beverly) stations reassigned from Zone C to B; State St. through Ashland stations (ME-BI) reassigned from Zone D to C

February 2013, 2015, and 2018 10-Ride Fare Policy Change - Impact on Other Ticket Types

The change in the 10-ride ticket policy had an effect on the share of ticket sales, passenger trips, and fare revenue by ticket type. Figure 25 shows the share of ticket sales, passenger trips, and fare revenue by ticket type for 2012 through 2016. Because Metra estimates ridership based on ticket sales, small shifts in the share of the type of ticket sold can result in larger shifts in the share of passenger trips attributable to each ticket type. When the price of the 10-ride ticket was increased to equal the price of 10 one-way tickets in February 2013, the share of trips attributable to monthly ticket holders increased while the share of 10-ride trips decreased. In 2015, when the price of a 10-ride ticket was reduced to the price of a nine one-way tickets, the share of passenger trips attributable to monthly tickets decreased while the share for 10-ride tickets increased. This trend continued into 2018, abating after the price of 10-ride tickets was raised to 9.5-times the one-way fare on February 1, 2018.

Figure 25: Ticket Sales, Passenger Trips, and Fare Revenue Share by Ticket Type



Average Fare

Each year, Metra calculates the average fare paid by fare-paying passengers (the average fare calculation does not include RTA Ride Free Permit rides). In 2018, the average fare increased 7.7% compared to 2017 (from $4.60 to $4.96) as a result of the February 2018 fare increase (see Figure 26).

Figure 26: Average Fare and Annual Paid Trips

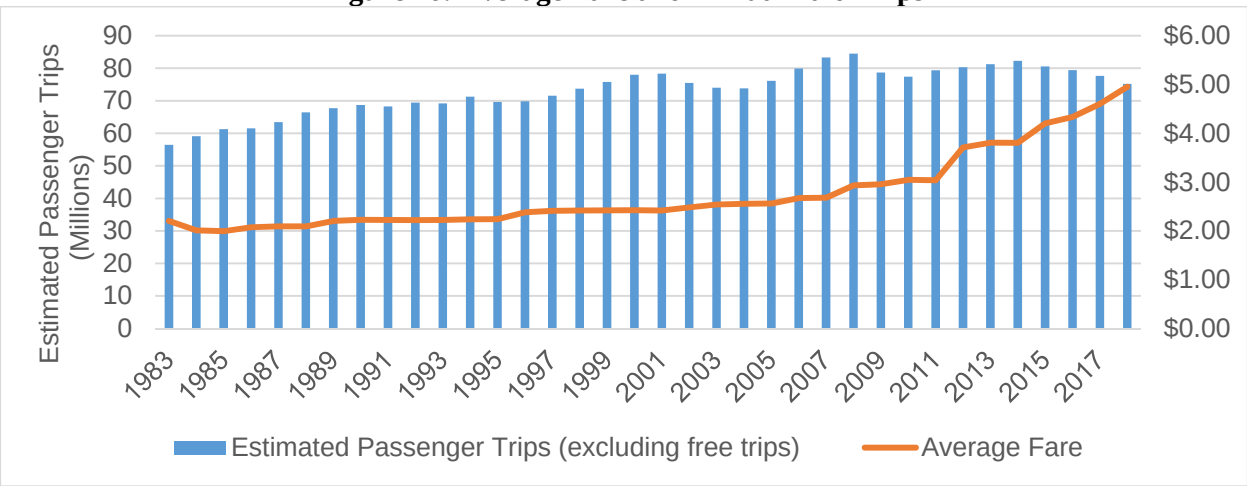


Table 12 illustrates the change in average fare paid and average miles traveled in 2017 and 2018 for each rail line.

Table 12: Average Fare Paid and Miles Traveled by Line

Line	2017		2018		% Change	
	Fare	Avg. Miles	Fare	Avg. Miles	Fare	Avg. Miles
BNSF	$4.69	23.4	$5.05	23.5	7.7%	0.3%
ME	$4.28	19.8	$4.60	19.8	7.3%	0.1%
HC	$4.93	27.7	$5.24	27.5	6.3%	-0.8%
MD-N	$4.74	23.1	$5.13	23.0	8.2%	-0.1%
MD-W	$4.76	24.7	$5.11	24.6	7.4%	-0.1%
NCS	$5.41	31.6	$5.73	31.4	5.9%	-0.8%
RI	$4.43	21.3	$4.76	21.4	7.2%	0.5%
SWS	$4.41	19.1	$4.71	19.0	6.8%	0.0%
UP-N	$4.21	16.8	$4.56	16.8	8.3%	-0.2%
UP-NW	$4.83	25.1	$5.19	25.0	7.5%	-0.3%
UP-W	$4.65	22.4	$5.02	22.4	8.0%	0.1%
Total	**$4.60**	**22.4**	**$4.96**	**22.4**	**7.7%**	**0.1%**

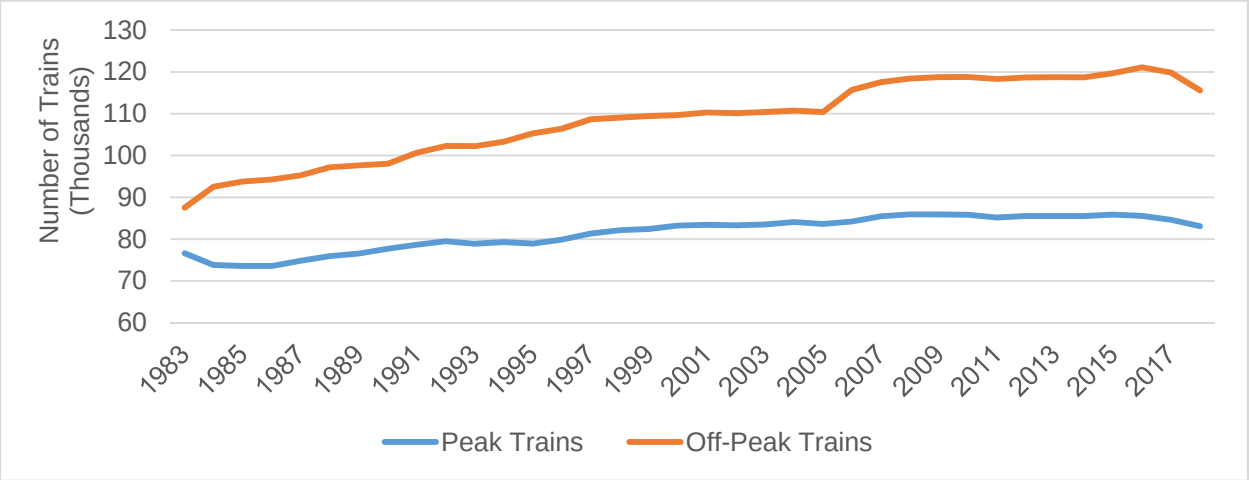
Level of Service

At the beginning of 2018, Metra operated 691 trains each weekday, 264 trains on Saturday, and 175 trains on Sunday. In February 2018, as part of budget-related service actions, the level of service on weekdays was reduced from 691 trains to 686, on Saturdays from 264 trains to 260, and on Sundays from 175 trains to 173. These changes were made on the Milwaukee District North, North Central Service, and Rock Island lines. On the Milwaukee District North Line, the total number of Saturday trains was reduced by 4, from 24 to 20, and the total number of Sunday trains was reduced by 2, from 20 to 18. On the North Central Service, the total number of weekday trains was reduced by 2, from 22 to 20. On the Rock Island Line, the total number of weekday trains was reduced by 3, from 70 to 67.

In April 2018, the level of service on weekdays was reduced from 686 trains to 685. This change was made on the Metra Electric Line, on which the total number of weekday trains was reduced by 1, from 156 to 155. In June 2018, the level of service on weekdays was increased from 695 trains to 686. This change was made on the BNSF Line, on which the total number of weekday trains increased from 94 to 95.

As a result of these changes, the total number of peak service period trains (weekday a.m. and p.m. peak trains) operated by Metra each day in 2018 was reduced -0.9 percent from 329 to 326 and the total number of off-peak trains (weekday off-peak, Saturday and Sunday trains) was reduced -1.0 percent from 801 to 793. Figure 27 shows the number of peak and off-peak trains on an annual basis since 1984. Since 1984, service has increased +13 percent in the peak period and +25 percent in the off-peak period.

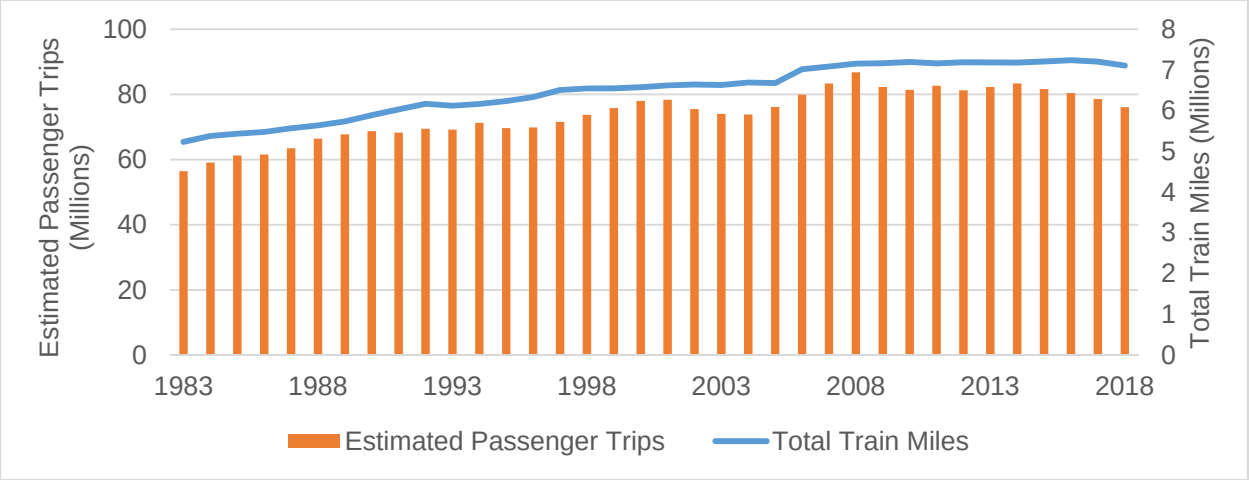
Figure 27: Trains per Year Peak vs. Off-Peak



Total Train Miles

Total train miles (revenue and non-revenue) are a useful measure of the quantity of service offered. Figure 28, combines annual train miles with ridership (including free trips) for the system, and illustrates the importance of service levels to the amount of passenger use. In 2018, the number of total train miles declined 1.3 percent compared to 2017. Since 1984, train miles have increased 35.8 percent, while passenger trips have increased 34.5 percent.

Figure 28: Annual Ridership vs. Annual Train Miles



Stations

Since Metra began in 1984, 32 stations have been opened and 15 stations have been closed (see Table 13 and Table 14). The opening of stations tends to have a positive impact on Metra ridership as Metra becomes more accessible to commuters. In February 2018, Metra opened a new station on the Heritage Corridor Line in Romeoville.

Table 13: Stations Opened Since 1984

Opened Station	Line	Year
Big Timber	MD-N	1986
Route 59	BNSF	1989
Orland Park/153rd	SWS	1990
Hickory Creek	RI	1993
Orland Park/179th	SWS	1995
Lake Cook Rd.	MD-N	1996
O'Hare Transfer	NCS	1996
Prospect Heights	NCS	1996
Wheeling	NCS	1996
Buffalo Grove	NCS	1996
Prairie View	NCS	1996
Vernon Hills	NCS	1996
Mundelein	NCS	1996
Prairie Crossing/Libertyville	NCS	1996
Round Lake Beach	NCS	1996
Lake Villa	NCS	1996

Opened Station	Line	Year
Antioch	NCS	1996
Glen/N. Glenview	MD-N	2001
Prairie Crossing/Libertyville	MD-N	2004
Palos Heights	SWS	2004
Pingree Road	UP-NW	2005
Manhattan	SWS	2006
La Fox	UP-W	2006
Elburn	UP-W	2006
Franklin Park/Belmont Ave.	NCS	2006
Schiller Park	NCS	2006
Rosemont	NCS	2006
Grayslake/Washington St.	NCS	2006
Laraway Rd.	SWS	2006
Grand/Cicero	MD-N	2006
35th Street/"Lou" Jones	RI	2011
Romeoville	HC	2018

Table 14: Stations Closed Since 1984

Closed Station	Line	Year
67th Street	ME	1984
Halsted	HC	1984
Brighton Park	HC	1984
Rondout	MD-N	1984
Wilson Road	MD-N	1984
Western Ave.	MD-N	1984
Hartland	UP-NW	1984
Givens	RI	1984

Closed Station	Line	Year
Longwood/99th	RI	1985
Abbott Platform	UP-N	1986
Lockport/5th	HC	1988
Glenn	HC	1989
Hermosa	MD-W	2006
Cragin	MD-W	2006
Clyde	BNSF	2007

Parking Utilization

Since a majority of Metra riders drive to stations, parking utilization rates are usually consistent with changes in ridership. Knowing this, Metra has made a conscious effort to increase parking availability at stations. In 2018, the number of used parking spaces increased by 1.7 percent compared to 2017 (see Table 15).

Over 38,000 net parking spaces have been added to the system since 1987. In 2018, some commuter parking was lost due to either lot reconfigurations with spaces reduced or municipal conversion of some spaces to local short-term parking. The lost spaces were replaced in greater number, but not necessarily in the same locales, by either new lots built by Metra or the designation of existing parking for commuters by municipalities. Such annual gains and losses of commuter spaces is a normal occurrence. System-wide, 120 net spaces were lost in total parking capacity.

Table 15: Metra Commuter Parking

Year	Capacity	Used	Empty	% Used
1987	52,602	46,138	6,464	87.7%
1991	61,952	54,175	7,777	87.4%
1994	67,480	58,233	9,247	86.3%
1997	72,104	60,887	11,217	84.4%
1999	72,265	63,826	8,439	88.3%
2001	75,724	67,038	8,686	88.5%
2003	78,086	67,405	10,681	86.3%
2005	81,996	68,212	13,784	83.2%
2006	85,956	70,499	15,457	82.0%
2007	88,675	71,368	17,307	80.5%
2008	88,628	71,860	16,768	81.1%
2009	89,090	67,852	21,238	76.2%
2010	90,238	67,183	23,055	74.5%
2011	89,982	68,341	21,641	75.9%
2012	90,020	66,513	23,507	73.9%
2013	90,257	67,200	23,057	74.5%
2014	90,634	68,450	22,184	75.5%
2015	90,776	67,588	23,191	74.5%
2016	91,175	67,980	23,195	74.6%
2017	90,746	66,590	24,156	73.4%
2018	90,626	67,754	22,872	74.8%
Difference	**(net)**			
'87-'18	**38,024**	**21,616**	**16,048**	

Telecommuting, Flextime, and Compressed or Alternate Work Schedules

Human resources practices such as telecommuting, flextime, and compressed or alternate work schedules have gained momentum at many Chicago area employers. According to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, Chicago ranked 11th in telecommuting among major metro areas with 3.99 percent of employees working primarily from home.

These changes in traditional five-day workdays have several potential implications for Metra ridership. First, riders commuting to work less than five days a week may opt to use ten-ride tickets instead of monthly passes. Second, Metra's service is heavily concentrated during peak periods. Riders commuting to work on flexible hours outside of the peak period may find Metra's off-peak service inconvenient, and therefore may opt to commute using an alternate mode.

According to the RTA's 2016 Customer Satisfaction Study, over half of Metra's respondents (56 percent) reported telecommuting at least one day per month. Of those, they telecommuted on average 9 days per month.

Calendar Differences

Since Metra's heaviest passenger loads are during the weekday commute hours, ridership is impacted by the number of weekdays in the year. As shown in Table 16, 2018 had one additional weekday, the same number of Saturdays, and one additional Sunday/holiday compared to 2017. Metra operates Sunday schedules on major holidays.

Table 16: Calendar Differences between 2016 and 2017

	Weekday			Saturday		
	2017	2018	Change	2017	2018	Change
Jan	21	22	1	4	4	0
Feb	20	20	0	4	4	0
Mar	23	22	-1	4	5	1
Apr	20	21	1	5	4	-1
May	22	22	0	4	4	0
Jun	22	21	-1	4	5	1
Jul	20	21	1	5	4	-1
Aug	23	23	0	4	4	0
Sep	20	19	-1	5	5	0
Oct	22	23	1	4	4	0
Nov	21	21	0	4	4	0
Dec	20	20	0	5	5	0
Total	**254**	**255**	**1**	**52**	**52**	**0**
	Sunday/Holiday			**All Days**		
	2017	**2018**	**Change**	**2017**	**2018**	**Change**
Jan	6	5	-1	31	31	0
Feb	4	4	0	28	28	0
Mar	4	4	0	31	31	0
Apr	5	5	0	30	30	0
May	5	5	0	31	31	0
Jun	4	4	0	30	30	0
Jul	6	6	0	31	31	0
Aug	4	4	0	31	31	0
Sep	5	6	1	30	30	0
Oct	5	4	-1	31	31	0
Nov	5	5	0	30	30	0
Dec	6	6	0	31	31	0
Total	**59**	**58**	**-1**	**365**	**365**	**0**

IV. 2018 TICKET SALES

Metra offers monthly passes, 10-ride tickets, one-way tickets, and weekend passes. The total number of tickets bought in 2018 declined by 0.5 percent compared to 2017 (see Table 17).

In 2018, 10-ride ticket sales decreased 1.2 percent, monthly pass sales decreased 3.8 percent, one-way ticket sales increased 3.3 percent, and weekend and special event passes decreased 21.1 percent. The February 2018 fare change was a major driver of change in ticket preference. The decrease in 10-ride ticket sales is attributable to the reduction of the 10-ride discount from the 9-times the price of a one-way ticket to 9.5-times the price of a one-way ticket. The decrease in weekend pass sales is likely due to the increase in the cost of the pass from $8.00 to $10.00. The increase in one-way ticket sales is likely attributable to customers shifting from the 10-ride ticket and weekend pass to the one-way ticket.

Table 17: Ticket Sales by Type

Ticket Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Change 2014-2018	Change 2017-2018
Monthly Pass	1,242,471	1,179,231	1,133,464	1,072,941	1,032,447	-16.9%	-3.8%
10-Ride Ticket	1,444,553	1,656,461	1,753,264	1,866,371	1,843,794	27.6%	-1.2%
One-Way Ticket	10,866,998	9,706,366	9,457,638	9,209,144	9,511,730	-12.5%	3.3%
Mobile & Station	*6,514,736*	*5,771,648*	*6,568,058*	*6,817,656*	*7,358,535*	*13.0%*	*7.9%*
Conductor	*4,352,262*	*3,934,718*	*2,889,580*	*2,391,488*	*2,153,195*	*-50.5%*	*-10.0%*
Weekend and Special Event Pass	1,470,595	1,484,020	1,495,940	1,470,765	1,160,103	-21.1%	-21.1%
Mobile & Station	*389,018*	*442,366*	*602,702*	*693,550*	*576,127*	*48.1%*	*-16.9%*
Conductor	*1,081,577*	*1,041,654*	*893,238*	*777,215*	*583,976*	*-46.0%*	*-24.9%*
Total	**15,024,617**	**14,026,078**	**13,840,306**	**13,619,221**	**13,548,074**	**-9.8%**	**-0.5%**

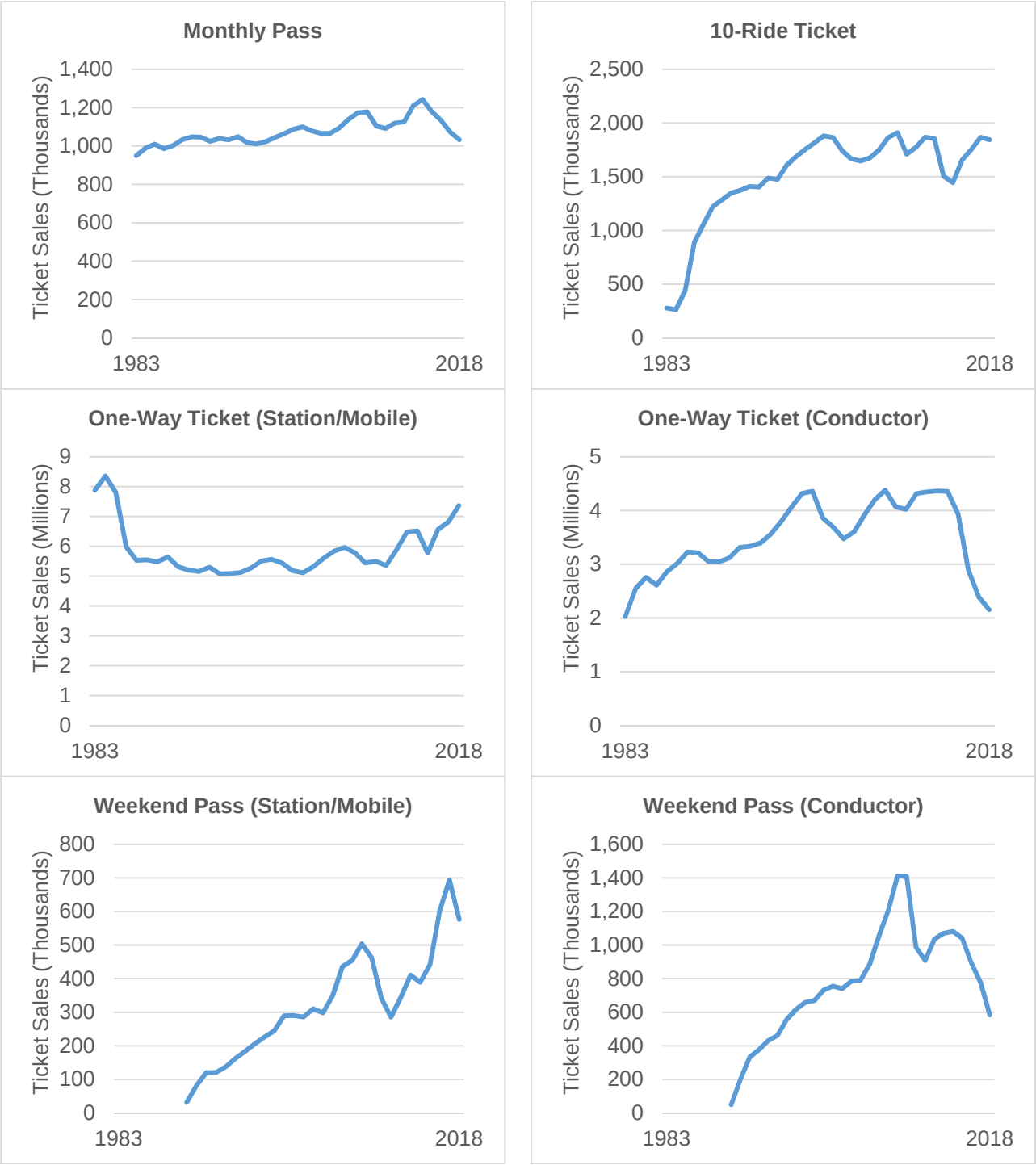
Table 18 shows the percent share of tickets, passenger trips, and revenue by ticket type for the last five years. As a result of the price of the 10-ride ticket being decreased to the cost of nine one-way tickets in 2015, the percentage of ten-ride tickets had increased from 9.6 percent in 2014 to 13.8 in 2017, remaining steady at 13.6 percent in 2018 due to the increase in the 10-ride multiplier to 9.5-times the cost of a one-way ticket. This percentage shift in ticket sales by type translates into 10-ride ticket trips now making up 24.5 percent of estimated passenger trips, compared to 17.5 percent in 2014.

Table 18: Percent Share by Ticket Type

Ticket Type	Ticket Sales					Estimated Passenger Trips				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Monthly Pass	8.3%	8.5%	8.3%	7.9%	7.6%	64.9%	63.1%	61.6%	59.5%	59.1%
10-Ride Ticket	9.6%	11.9%	12.8%	13.8%	13.6%	17.5%	20.6%	22.2%	24.1%	24.5%
One-Way Ticket	72.5%	69.8%	69.0%	67.9%	70.4%	13.2%	12.1%	12.0%	11.9%	12.7%
Weekend Pass	9.6%	9.8%	9.9%	10.4%	8.3%	4.4%	4.2%	4.3%	4.6%	3.7%
	Passenger Revenue									
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018					
Monthly Pass	57.4%	56.7%	54.9%	53.2%	51.9%					
10-Ride Ticket	22.3%	24.3%	26.1%	28.1%	29.1%					
One-Way Ticket	17.1%	15.9%	15.9%	15.5%	16.0%					
Weekend Pass	3.2%	3.2%	3.1%	3.2%	3.0%					

Figure 29 shows the total numbers of tickets by ticket type sold since 1984. A large decrease in the number of monthly tickets sold corresponds with a large increase in the number of 10-rides sold in 2015 compared to 2014. This continued in 2016 and 2017 before leveling off in 2018. The shift to the Ventra App is evident in the decrease in one-way ticket and weekend pass conductor sales, and corresponding increase in mobile & station sales.

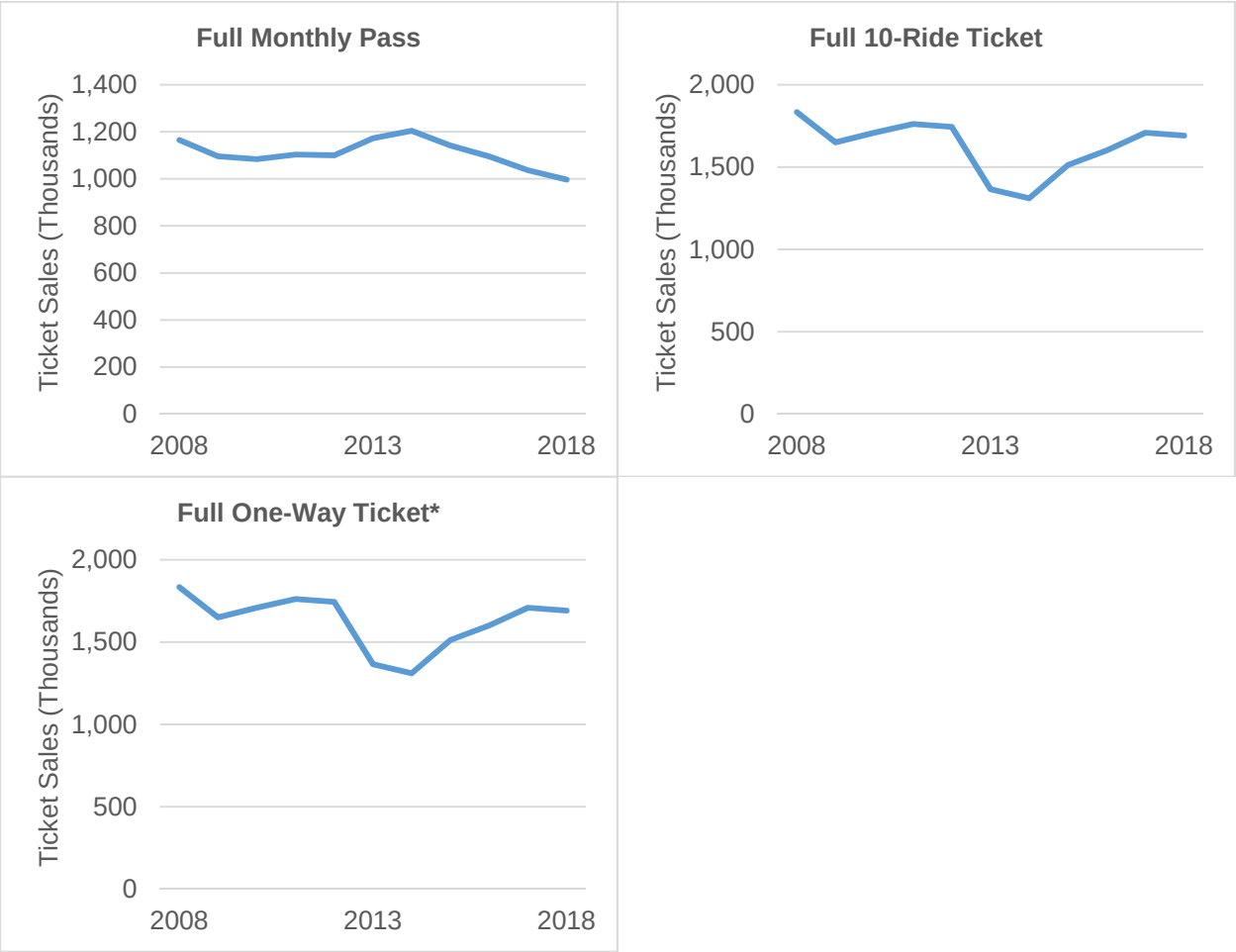
Figure 29: Total Ticket Sales by Type



Full Fare Sales

Figure 30 shows the total number of full fare tickets by ticket type since 2008.

Figure 30: Full Fare Ticket Sales by Type



*Does not include conductor or group sales

Reduced Fare Sales

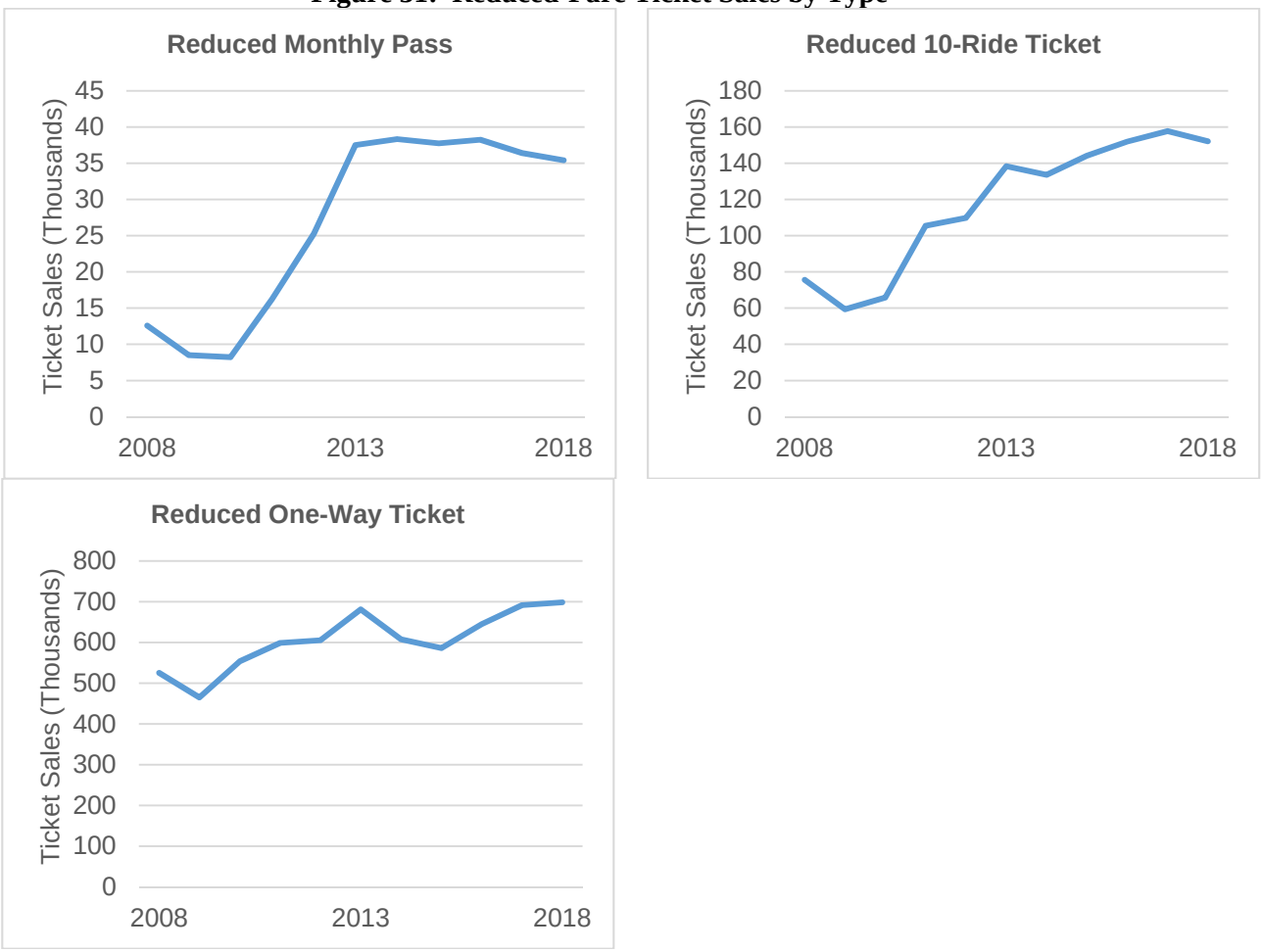
In 2018, all reduced fare ticket types saw a decrease in sales (when considering one-way and conductor sales together). Table 19 shows all reduced-fare ticket sales by month for 2017 and 2018. Reduced fare monthly pass sales decreased 2.8 percent, reduced fare 10-ride ticket sales decreased 3.6 percent, one-way and conductor sales collectively decreased 2.2 percent.

Table 19: Reduced-Fare Ticket Sales

	2017				2018			
	Monthly	10-Ride	One-Way	Conductor	Monthly	10-Ride	One-Way	Conductor
Jan	3,057	16,713	40,985	24,673	2,771	18,132	40,528	20,183
Feb	3,125	9,763	39,437	23,774	2,897	9,165	36,638	18,463
Mar	3,215	12,430	55,605	26,124	3,007	11,429	64,010	24,568
Apr	3,121	11,599	47,172	26,185	3,006	12,195	43,755	22,532
May	3,161	13,217	53,480	27,866	3,039	13,026	55,248	27,998
Jun	2,927	13,494	83,163	39,002	2,875	12,742	73,733	34,342
Jul	2,730	12,535	86,162	36,050	2,841	12,374	88,996	34,797
Aug	2,691	13,792	83,668	36,566	2,703	12,919	82,500	32,105
Sep	3,200	13,249	46,153	25,357	3,154	12,430	49,190	24,220
Oct	3,406	14,498	50,164	26,729	3,318	14,436	52,359	25,649
Nov	3,139	14,168	50,670	24,346	3,122	12,216	53,685	22,797
Dec	2,645	12,291	54,938	24,845	2,675	11,029	57,839	24,766
Total	**36,417**	**157,749**	**691,597**	**341,517**	**35,408**	**152,093**	**698,481**	**312,420**

Figure 31 shows the total number of reduced fare tickets by ticket type (monthly, 10-ride, and one-way excluding conductor) sold since 2008.

Figure 31: Reduced-Fare Ticket Sales by Type



*Includes all eligible and ineligible reduced-fare rides for reimbursement and does not include conductor or group sales

Mobile Ticketing Adoption

The Ventra App was launched in November 2015. Figure 32 shows the percentage of total tickets purchased using the app. Table 20 shows mobile ticketing adoption by ticket type.

Figure 32: Mobile Ticketing Adoption (% of total ticket sales)

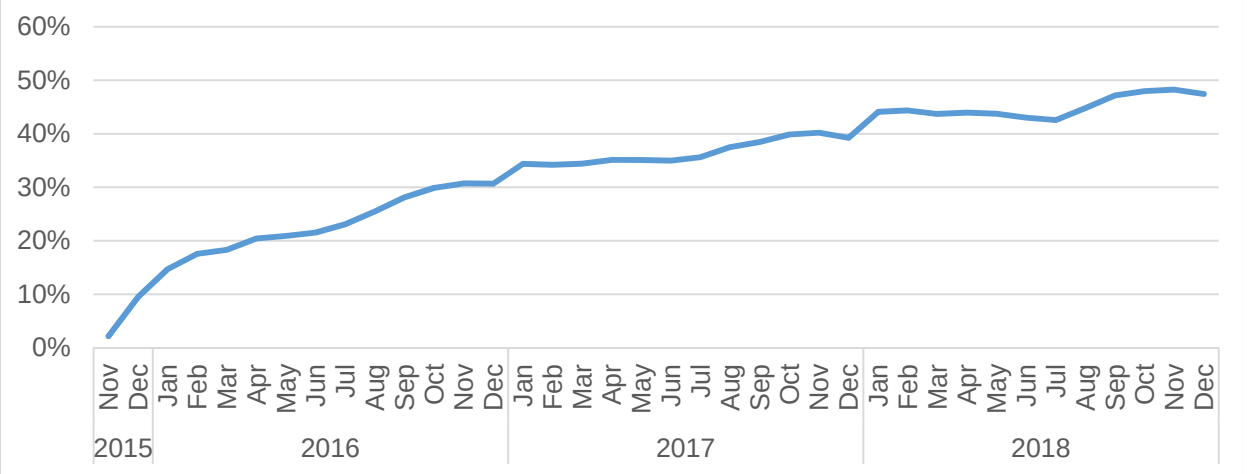


Table 20: Mobile Ticket Sales by Ticket Type (2018)

Month	Monthly Pass	10-Ride Ticket	One-Way Ticket	Weekend/Special Event Pass
Jan	25,179	118,441	274,092	23,057
Feb	25,713	64,943	256,943	20,532
Mar	26,960	76,461	318,564	33,710
Apr	27,829	82,774	290,081	21,178
May	27,501	88,495	355,824	27,329
Jun	28,303	87,867	403,602	38,204
Jul	26,550	93,644	439,706	40,167
Aug	27,930	95,757	462,860	47,227
Sep	29,464	90,540	370,903	38,121
Oct	32,981	99,260	400,425	24,812
Nov	30,235	86,449	373,297	30,522
Dec	23,582	82,386	368,515	42,664
Total	**332,227**	**1,067,017**	**4,314,812**	**387,523**

Table 21: Mobile Adoption: Percent of Ticket Sales by Ticket Type (2018)

Month	Monthly	10-Ride	One-Way	Weekend/ Special Event	All Tickets	All Rides
Jan	29.5%	55.9%	43.9%	29.6%	44.1%	39.4%
Feb	29.8%	55.5%	45.2%	34.8%	44.3%	36.9%
Mar	30.6%	56.3%	44.1%	35.2%	43.7%	38.1%
Apr	31.4%	57.0%	44.0%	31.6%	43.9%	38.9%
May	31.4%	57.0%	44.0%	30.4%	43.7%	39.2%
Jun	32.3%	56.7%	43.0%	33.1%	43.0%	39.7%
Jul	31.8%	58.6%	42.5%	30.4%	42.6%	39.9%
Aug	32.8%	59.0%	45.4%	32.0%	44.8%	41.1%
Sep	33.9%	60.4%	47.4%	37.2%	47.2%	42.0%
Oct	36.0%	59.8%	48.3%	33.1%	48.0%	43.4%
Nov	34.8%	58.4%	49.5%	34.0%	48.2%	42.2%
Dec	31.5%	59.9%	47.9%	39.1%	47.4%	41.1%
2018 Average	**32.2%**	**57.9%**	**45.4%**	**33.4%**	**45.0%**	**40.2%**

Table 21 shows total ticket sales of all types by sales channel and tender type. In 2018, 45.0 percent of all ticket sales were made through the Ventra App: the app is remains the largest sales channel by number of ticket sales.

Table 21: Total Ticket Sales by Sales Channel and Tender Type

Sales Channel	2016 (Thousands)	2017 (Thousands)	2018 (Thousands)	Change	2017 Share	2018 Share
Commuter Benefit	507	470	445	-5.2%	3.4%	3.3%
Conductor	3,783	3,169	2,737	-13.6%	23.3%	20.2%
Internet	56	46	23	-49.2%	0.3%	0.2%
Mail	44	17	-		0.1%	0.0%
Ticket Agent	5,127	4,259	3,744	-12.1%	31.3%	27.6%
Cash & Other	*2,569*	*2,075*	*1,732*	*-16.5%*		
Credit Card	*2,558*	*2,184*	*2,012*	*-7.9%*		
Vending Machine	1,037	629	497	-21.0%	4.6%	3.7%
Cash	*267*	*56*	*-*			
Credit Card	*770*	*967*	*881*	*-8.9%*		
Ventra Mobile App	3,286	5,030	6,102	21.3%	36.9%	45.0%
Credit Card	*2,918*	*4,503*	*5,556*	*23.4%*		
Mixed & Other	*56*	*72*	*65*	*-10.2%*		
Ventra	*312*	*454*	*481*	*5.8%*		
Total	**13,840**	**13,620**	**13,549**	**-0.5%**		

Changes in ticket sales channels can affect passenger revenue and ticket sales trends:

- The Ventra App was introduced in November 2015, causing a long-term shift from ticket agent and conductor sales to sales through the app.
- Cash vending machines (previously present only on the Metra Electric Line) were eliminated in May 2017, causing a shift toward conductor sales on the Metra Electric Line.
- The Ticket by Mail program was eliminated in July 2017.
- Metra stopped selling Monthly Passes and 10-Ride Tickets from vending machines at 15 non-downtown stations on the Metra Electric Line in June 2018.
- The Ticket-by-Internet program was eliminated in June 2018.
- In December 2018, an update to the Ventra app ended the option for purchasing mobile tickets without creating a Ventra account.