

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Metra seeks input about potential fare options

Survey asks for opinions about new fare products, off-peak pricing and more

CHICAGO (March 1, 2017) – Metra today launched an online survey to ask what its customers, former customers and prospective customers think about a variety of potential fare and ticket options, including off-peak and reverse-commute pricing, one-day and seven-day passes, loyalty programs and other ideas.

The survey is part of a study that Metra commissioned in July 2016 to evaluate the agency's distance-based fare structure and fare products and recommend changes that best serve the region's needs. The scope of work for Metra's consultant, Four Nines Technologies, includes determining opportunities and costs of potential fare structure changes and developing a model that can help Metra evaluate those potential changes.

The survey is available now at metrarail.com and will be online through March 31, 2017.

“Different fare options can encourage different riding behavior, and that's why we are seeking input both from our existing customers and prospective customers as part of this process,” said Metra Executive Director/CEO Don Orseno. “The goal is to come up with a fare structure that works well for our customers and increases ridership and fare revenue that can impact our bottom line.”

The survey first asks respondents for information about commuting habits before asking for opinions about a variety of potential changes. Those include:

- Their likelihood of buying a one-day pass that would allow them to make round trips, transfer between lines and make unlimited trips inbound and outbound during one day on all lines in their zone pair, similar to a Monthly Pass.
- Their likelihood of buying a seven-day or weekly pass priced at eight one-way tickets and valid Monday through Sunday, instead of a 10-Ride Ticket.
- Their likelihood of using a Weekend Pass with extended hours to include Friday evening trains.
- Their likelihood of switching travel times if Metra offered a lower fare on weekdays for trains that arrive downtown after 9:30 a.m. and leave downtown before 3 p.m. or after 7 p.m. (It also asks respondents to suggest the level of discount that would motivate their switch.)

- Whether lower fares for reverse-commutes, travel between non-downtown stations and travel during off-peak hours would encourage them to ride Metra. (It also asks respondents to suggest the level of discount that would motivate their change in travel patterns.)
- Their likelihood of using Metra more if it offered some kind of loyalty program.

The survey also asks about the ease of understanding Metra's Ventra App and zone-based fares, and allows respondents to provide additional comments about current fares and how they might be improved to meet their needs.

The survey results will be used to guide Metra's decision-making regarding changes to fares and fare policies. Any proposed changes would be subject to further public comment before being implemented. The study is expected to be completed this summer.

About Metra

Metra is one of the largest and most complex commuter rail systems in North America, serving Cook, DuPage, Will, Lake, Kane and McHenry counties in northeastern Illinois. The agency provides service to and from downtown Chicago with 241 stations over 11 routes totaling nearly 500 route miles and approximately 1,200 miles of track. Metra operates more than 700 weekday trains, providing about 300,000 passenger trips each weekday.

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