

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Metra to reduce schedules on three lines on May 4 *Changes will affect Heritage, SWS and NCS*

CHICAGO (April 29, 2020) – In response to dramatically low ridership due to the COVID-19 crisis, Metra will temporarily further reduce the schedules on its three least busy lines – the Heritage Corridor, SouthWest Service and North Central Service – starting Monday, May 4.

On the Heritage Corridor and North Central Service, the schedule will be temporarily reduced to one inbound trip in the morning and one outbound trip in the evening. On the SouthWest Service, there temporarily will be two inbound trips in the morning and two outbound trips in the evening. The new schedules can be viewed at metrarail.com.

“We hope our customers understand why we are making these schedule reductions,” said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. “We are trying to find the balance between providing service for essential workers while stemming the huge losses we are seeing in fare revenue and sales taxes, our two major sources of operating funding. We are being forced to make some tough decisions.”

During its April Board meeting, Metra outlined a preliminary estimate that it will lose about \$535.5 million in fares and sales tax in 2020 and 2021 due to this crisis. There are many assumptions built in to that estimate that are almost certain to change. Metra is expecting about \$480 million in federal relief aid. The schedule reductions announced today are expected to save about \$470,000 a month in labor and fuel costs.

The temporary schedule changes are being made due to very low ridership under the current schedules, which are already reduced from the regular weekday schedules:

- On the Heritage Corridor, the three morning inbound and four afternoon/evening outbound trains have been serving a total of about 35 riders per day.
- On the North Central Service, the five morning inbound and five afternoon/evening outbound trains have been serving a total of about 65 riders a day. Off-peak trains have been serving only a handful of riders each.
- On the SouthWest Service, the five morning inbound and five afternoon/evening outbound trains have been serving a total of about 120 riders a day. Off-peak trains have been serving only a handful of riders each.

All trains will have enough cars for customers to be able to practice social distancing, and Metra will be prepared to add trains when ridership begins to return to normal. In addition, some

riders on the Heritage Corridor and SouthWest Service lines may be able to use the Rock Island or BNSF lines as alternatives, and some riders on the North Central Service may be able to use the Milwaukee District North or UP Northwest lines as alternatives. Pace may also be an alternative for some riders.

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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 242 stations over 11 routes totaling nearly 500 route miles and approximately 1,200 miles of track. Metra operates nearly 700 trains and provides nearly 281,000 passenger trips each weekday.

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