

Regional Transportation Authority Customer Satisfaction Study

Metra Report

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Submitted by
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in cooperation with
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Tabulations



1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the findings of the 2011 Metra Customer Satisfaction study. This study was conducted by Resource Systems Group, Inc. (RSG) in November 2011 on behalf of Metra and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). Metra's objective was to collect not only customer satisfaction data to satisfy the State Legislature's reporting requirements for the RTA, but also to understand customer perceptions of quality across a range of Metra service attributes. This information will help Metra evaluate its own performance, identify areas of concern and prioritize future service adjustments.

Comparable surveys were conducted for CTA and Pace with an eye toward measuring similar aspects of service with the same scale in order to gain an understanding of satisfaction with overall transit service in the six-county RTA service region. While the survey was conducted across the full service region, care was taken to acknowledge that both the socio-demographics and satisfaction ratings vary with each Service Board.

In keeping with previous survey efforts, RSG developed a survey that was administered to Metra customers via paper-based and web-based questionnaires. The paper surveys were distributed and collected by trained survey teams on board Metra trains and either completed by respondents as they traveled or later returned via postage-paid mail. Paper surveys were distributed according to a sampling plan aimed at collecting a representative sample of Metra customers by time period and train line. The paper survey also included a URL and a toll-free number with a unique password for respondents who preferred to take the survey online or over the phone. Surveys completed by customers recruited on-board Metra trains accounted for 11,698 surveys.

A supplemental effort recruited additional online responses directly from Metra's customer list, Metra's website, the passenger newsletter and various social media sites, which generated an additional 5,075 responses. These additional respondents included people who ride at all times of the day and week - some of whom ride only occasionally.

A total of 16,773 surveys were completed, but the data analysis in this report is based exclusively on the 11,698 completed surveys responses received from passengers recruited on board trains and does not include the supplemental 5,075 responses received from those recruited through all other means. Table 1.1 shows the number of completed surveys received and average daily ridership by line.



Table 1.1: Completed Surveys and Average Daily Ridership by Line

Metra Line	Completed Surveys	% Surveys	Average Daily Ridership	% Average Daily Ridership
BNSF	2,671	24%	68,152	21%
Heritage Corridor	308	3%	2,557	1%
Metra Electric	1,337	12%	40,122	12%
Milwaukee District North	1,053	9%	27,103	8%
Milwaukee District West	828	7%	24,184	7%
North Central Service	182	2%	5,647	2%
Rock Island District	1,157	10%	29,014	9%
SouthWest Service	384	3%	8,732	3%
Union Pacific North	1,065	9%	42,893	13%
Union Pacific Northwest	1,297	12%	46,339	14%
Union Pacific West	985	9%	30,523	9%
Total	11,698	100%	325,266	100%

Following the completion of the data collection effort, the data quality was confirmed through extensive merging and cleaning processes. The on-board recruitment responses were expanded (weighted) to reflect the total number of weekday Metra passengers by line, direction, and time of day. Note that Table 1.1 above reflects the unweighted survey counts. Translated surveys were available to anyone who preferred a Spanish version, but only one Spanish survey was completed and returned.

An analysis of riders' satisfaction with thirty-nine aspects of service and their respective importance was conducted to identify areas where Metra customers are most and least satisfied with services. These tabulations were also conducted across important subsets of Metra customers, including travel direction, time period, and train line. Multiple regression models were used to estimate how the thirty-nine service attributes influenced a customer evaluation of overall satisfaction.

From this analysis of Metra customers, one principal finding stands out from all others: ***The most important determinant of customer satisfaction for Metra passengers is predictable, on-time service that gets passengers to where they need to go safely and as quickly as possible.*** In general, attributes that belonged to the Travel Time and Reliability service dimension were the most important attributes to Metra customers across all train lines, time periods, and direction. These findings are somewhat expected, as Metra primarily serves choice transit riders who likely use Metra because of perceived superior speed and reliability compared to driving.

Customers were overwhelmingly satisfied with most aspects of service; however customers tended to be less satisfied with service attributes that relate to Information and Communication. Attributes where more than 25% of respondents indicated dissatisfaction included:

- Notification of service changes;
- On-board communications during service delays;
- Announcements regarding delays at station; and
- Web-site postings regarding delays prior to using train.

Metra already has service alerts via its website, Twitter, and text messaging; thus, making



customers more aware of these alerts and/or improving the timeliness and quality of the alerts may help with this issue. Research has found that when customers have information about wait time and delays, the time they believe they spend waiting is lower, which could in turn make them more satisfied with travel and wait time without needing to increase service frequency; this is an additional benefit to improving attributes in this category¹.

This report presents the findings from the on-board recruitment efforts only.

2.0 RESULTS

This section includes the findings of the completed on-board recruit survey responses and is divided into four sections: Demographics and Trip Details, Customer Satisfaction and Attribute Importance Ratings, Key Drivers of Overall Satisfaction, and Customer Loyalty and Expectations. This section highlights the important and substantive details of the survey results. All tabulations in this section were conducted on the weighted dataset (see the Methodology Report for details on weighting, survey administration, and a latent class cluster analysis). A complete set of tabulations showing the results of the survey are available in Appendix A.

2.1 Demographics and Trip Details

2.1.1 Demographics

On average, Metra customers are most likely to be between ages of 40 and 60, work in professional, managerial, or administrative jobs and have a household income of more than \$75,000 per year.

More than two-thirds of Metra survey respondents are above 40 years of age (67%) and only 16% of respondents are under the age of 30. The largest age group consists of customers aged 50 to 54, which represents 15% of the total Metra respondents. Table 2.1 shows the North Central Service riders are slightly older than other Metra riders, and SouthWest Service riders are younger. Table 2.2 shows that the outbound travelers are usually younger than the inbound travelers as a whole.

¹ Taylor, B; Iseki, H; Miller, M; and Smart, M (2009) Thinking Outside the Bus: Understanding User Perceptions of Waiting and Transferring in Order to Increase Transit Use, Final Report, Berkeley, CA: California Partners for Advanced Transit and Highways.



Table 2.1: Age by Metra Line

Age	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Under 18	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
18-24	8%	9%	10%	5%	8%	9%	10%	9%	8%	2%	7%	8%
25-29	7%	6%	12%	5%	8%	8%	9%	8%	10%	2%	9%	8%
30-34	8%	7%	11%	15%	12%↑	8%	12%	7%	8%	3%	10%	9%
35-39	10%	8%	8%	17%↑	11%↑	8%	10%	6%	8%	8%	9%	9%
40-44	13%	13%	12%	13%	13%	10%	13%	9%	11%	8%	11%	12%
45-49	12%	17%↑	14%	14%	14%	11%	11%	12%	13%	12%	10%	13%
50-54	15%	17%	14%	15%	14%	17%	12%	17%	14%	23%	11%↓	15%
55-59	14%	12%	10%	12%	9%↓	15%	10%	12%	13%	19%	11%	12%
60-64	8%	7%	7%	4%	7%	9%	8%	10%	9%	17%↑	9%	9%
65 or over	6%	4%↓	3%	2%	4%↓	5%	4%	8%↑	6%	5%	12%↑	6%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.2: Age by Time/Direction

Age	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
Under 18	0%	0%	1%↑	0%	0%
18-24	5%↓	13%↑	9%	20%↑	8%
25-29	6%↓	9%	19%↑	13%↑	8%
30-34	9%	8%	16%↑	10%	9%
35-39	10%	7%	10%	7%	9%
40-44	12%	12%	10%	8%	12%
45-49	14%↑	11%	7%↓	10%	13%
50-54	16%↑	13%	11%↓	9%↓	15%
55-59	13%↑	11%	7%↓	5%↓	12%
60-64	9%	8%	4%↓	8%	9%
65 or over	5%↓	8%	6%	10%↑	6%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.3 shows gender by most recent Metra line used. SouthWest Service, Metra Electric, Heritage Corridor, and Rock Island each have at least a two-thirds female ridership. Please note though that SouthWest Service and Heritage Corridor are among the lines with the lowest ridership, together representing less than 3% of the total survey sample. The overall ridership across all trains is approximately half men and half women.

Table 2.3: Gender by Metra Line

Gender	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Male	32%	35%	26%	33%	51%	51%	48%	55%	51%	55%	55%	48%
Female	68%	65%	74%	67%	49%	49%	52%	45%	49%	45%	45%	52%

Race is fairly consistent across time and direction of travel in the Metra system. However, Table 2.4 shows there are differences in the race of customers riding on some lines. This is especially true for the Metra Electric train, which has a White/Caucasian ridership of only 32%, considerably lower



than the overall White/Caucasian ridership composition of 72%.

Table 2.4: Race by Metra Line

Race	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
White/Caucasian	32%	72%	73%	78%	74%	84%	67%	86%	79%	80%	81%	72%
Black/African-American	52%	19%	12%	8%	8%	7%	7%	2%	6%	3%	7%	13%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	2%	4%	4%	10%	5%	15%	6%	8%	12%	5%	7%
Hispanic/Latino	11%	6%	8%	8%	6%	3%	9%	4%	6%	5%	5%	6%
Other	3%	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	0%	2%	2%

Table 2.5 shows the educational attainment of Metra customers by train line. Overall, 72% of Metra customers have graduated from college. Milwaukee District North line has the most educated customers, with nearly half possessing a post graduate degree. This makes Metra customers a highly educated group compared to the Chicago Metro area as a whole, of which 13% of residents have a post graduate degree and about 21% have a college degree according to 2010 Census data.

Table 2.6 shows that educational status is consistent when compared across time and direction of travel.

Table 2.5: Educational Attainment by Metra Line

Education	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Post graduate degree	18%	19%	16%	19%	33%	31%	24%	31%	35%	31%	48%	30%
College graduate	39%	38%	48%	50%	45%	46%	41%	42%	42%	44%	38%	42%
Some college or technical school	32%	33%	29%	25%	17%	17%	25%	20%	16%	17%	11%	21%
High school graduate	9%	9%	7%	6%	4%	5%	10%	6%	6%	7%	2%	6%
Some high school or less	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Table 2.6: Educational Attainment by Time/Direction

Education	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
Post graduate degree	30%	34%	32%	31%	30%
College graduate	43%	37%	46%	36%	42%
Some college or technical school	21%	22%	16%	23%	21%
High school graduate	6%	7%	4%	8%	6%
Some high school or less	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%

Overall, 91% of Metra riders are employed, with 84% employed full-time.

Table 2.7: Employment Status by Ticket Type

Employment Status	Monthly	Ten-Ride	One-Way	Weekend Pass	Circuit Ride Free Permit	Other	Overall
Employed full-time	93%	75%	49%	100%	3%	48%	84%



Employed part-time	3%	14%	15%	0%	10%	14%	7%
Student	3%	5%	7%	0%	9%	0%	4%
Currently not employed	0%	1%	8%	0%	39%	0%	1%
Homemaker	0%	1%	5%	0%	8%	3%	1%
Retired	0%	3%	13%	0%	24%	28%	2%
Other	0%	1%	3%	0%	7%	7%	1%

Table 2.8 shows employment status by time and direction of travel. The midday riders are significantly less likely to be employed than the morning peak riders. Also, the midday riders are more likely to be retired. For both midday and morning peak riders, inbound travelers are more likely to be employed than the ones traveling outbound.



Table 2.8: Employment Status by Time/Direction

Employment	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
Employed full-time	90%	69%	83%	56%	84%
Employed part-time	5%	14%	8%	16%	7%
Student	2%	8%	4%	11%	4%
Currently not employed	1%	2%	1%	6%	1%
Homemaker	0%	1%	1%	3%	1%
Retired	1%	6%	2%	6%	2%
Other	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%

Table 2.9: Employment Status by Gender

Employment	Male	Female	Overall
Employed full-time	86%	82%	84%
Employed part-time	6%	9%	7%
Student	4%	4%	4%
Currently not employed	1%	1%	1%
Homemaker	0%	1%	1%
Retired	2%	2%	2%
Other	1%	1%	1%

Table 2.10 and Table 2.11 show there are differences in reported household income by train line and by time and direction traveled. Metra Electric tends to have lower incomes than other Metra trains, while Milwaukee District – North and Union Pacific North tend to have higher household incomes. Furthermore, midday trains traveling outbound have lower incomes, and morning trains traveling inbound have higher incomes.

Table 2.10: Household Income by Metra Line

Household Income	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Less than \$25,000	8%	7%	2%	2%	7%	5%	7%	5%	4%	5%	6%	6%
\$25,000-60,000	32%	17%	20%	9%	13%	14%	21%	13%	14%	14%	15%	17%
\$60,000-100,000	32%	34%	28%	32%	26%	28%	31%	27%	24%	29%	22%	28%
\$100,000-150,000	19%	25%	33%	35%	27%	27%	25%	30%	25%	29%	18%	25%
\$150,000 and over	8%	17%	17%	22%	28%	26%	16%	26%	32%	24%	38%	25%



Table 2.11: Household Income by Time and Direction of Travel

Household Income	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
Less than \$25,000	3%	9%	7%	20%	6%
\$25,000-60,000	15%	22%	24%	21%	17%
\$60,000-100,000	28%	24%	29%	26%	28%
\$100,000-150,000	27%	21%	23%	19%	25%
\$150,000 and over	27%	24%	17%	15%	25%

Table 2.12: Household Income by Ticket Type

Household Income	Monthly	Ten-Ride	One-Way	Weekend Pass	Circuit Ride Free Permit	Other	Overall
Less than \$25,000	3%	6%	23%	0%	54%	5%	6%
\$25,000-60,000	16%	17%	24%	43%	39%	23%	17%
\$60,000-100,000	29%	24%	25%	57%	6%	29%	28%
\$100,000-150,000	27%	24%	18%	0%	0%	21%	25%
\$150,000 and over	25%	29%	9%	0%	0%	22%	25%

The number of minors in a household is relatively consistent across train lines.

The number of children in a household is less consistent when compared across time and direction traveled. Table 2.13 shows that riders traveling outbound are much more likely to have an adult-only household. Furthermore, inbound riders were almost twice as likely as outbound riders to have 3 or more minors in their household.

Table 2.13: Number of Minors in Household by Time/Direction

Number of Minors	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
0	48%	51%	66%	65%	52%
1	22%	23%	18%	18%	21%
2	21%	16%	11%	11%	19%
3	7%	7%	4%	5%	7%
4 or more	2%	2%	1%	0%	2%

Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2 show how car availability among respondents differs by train line and by time and direction of travel. Figure 2.1 shows that Heritage Corridor riders are much more likely to have a car available than average. Alternatively, Union Pacific North riders are much less likely to have a car. Figure 2.2 shows that car availability by time and direction fluctuates, with fewer outbound customers reporting that they had access to a car for the trip they were making.



Figure 2.1: Car Availability by Metra Line

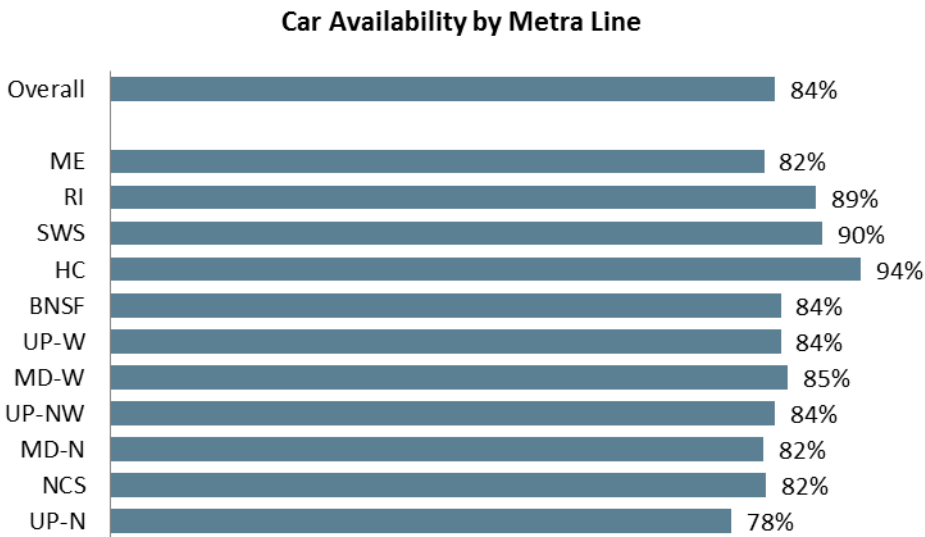


Figure 2.2: Car Availability by Time/Direction

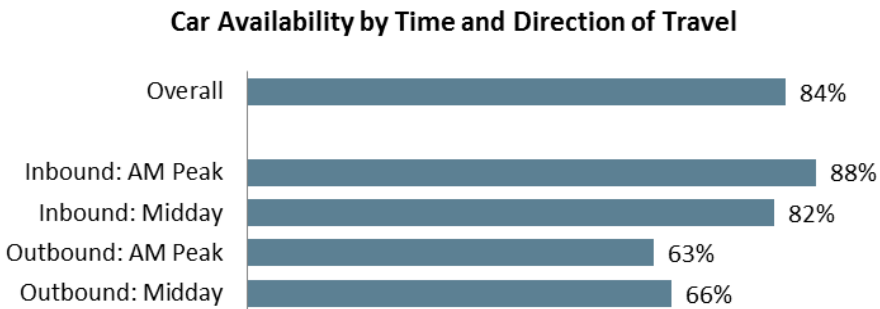


Table 2.14 shows car availability by fare zone. Respondents in Zone A, Zone B, and Zone M are much less likely to have a car available to them than respondents from other zones.



Table 2.14: Car Availability by Fare Zone

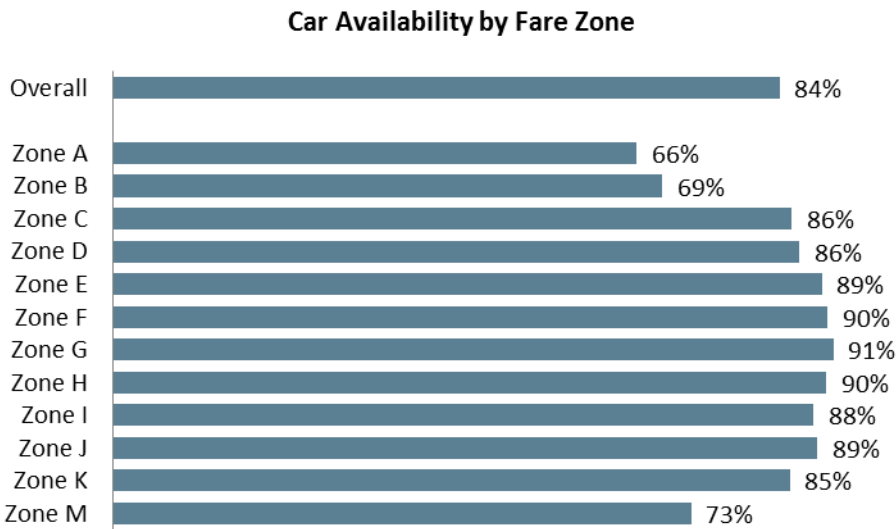
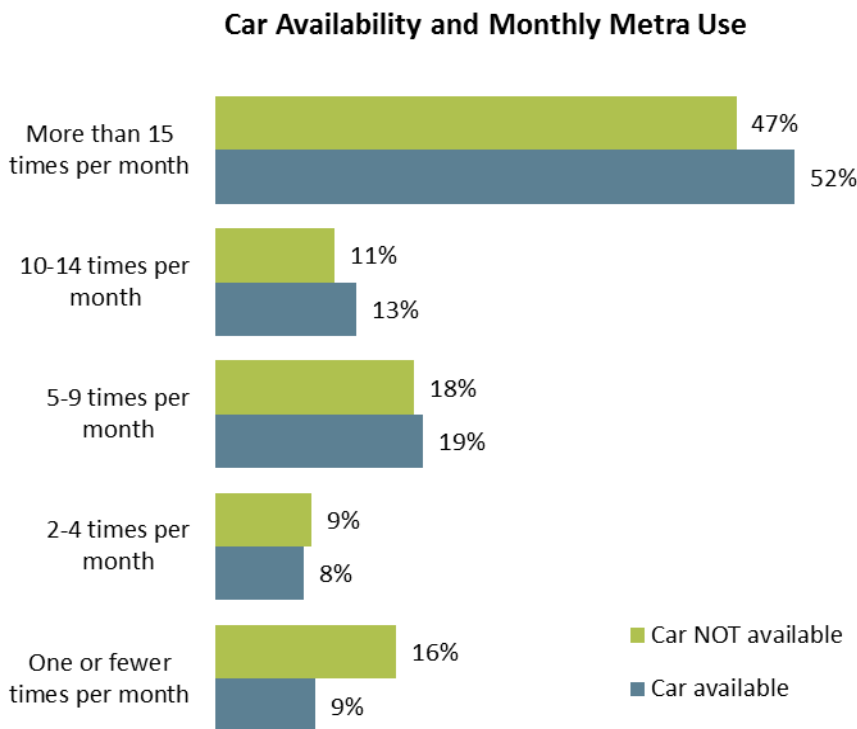


Figure 2.3 show the approximate number of times respondents both with and without access to a car ride Metra per month. Surprisingly, respondents who indicated they had a car available for the trip they were making use Metra more often than those without a car available. This finding makes it clear that Metra customers are choice riders, who are not dependent on Metra service, and who use trains for the perceived benefits in time, comfort or convenience.

Figure 2.3: Car Availability and Metra Use



2.1.2 Electronic Devices

Table 2.15 shows the portable electronic devices that Metra riders use. Half of all Metra riders use a smart phone, 27% carry a laptop, and 6% have a wireless card they could use while traveling. However, only 11% report being willing to pay a fee for Wi-Fi on board. Metra customers are well connected and are capable of receiving or accessing information about Metra service, including announcements about disruptions or delays.

Table 2.15: Electronic Device Ownership by Age

Electronic Device	Under 18	18-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65 or Over	Overall
Standard Cell Phone	48%	34%	26%	27%	26%	34%	42%	44%	45%	43%	45%	36%
Smart Phone	29%	60%	72%	71%	71%	60%	52%	44%	40%	33%	20%	50%
Phone Subtotal	76%	94%	98%	98%	97%	95%	94%	88%	85%	76%	65%	86%
PDA	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	2%	3%
Laptop/tablet PC	9%	37%	32%	41%	35%	34%	33%	27%	23%	15%	8%	27%
eReader	12%	6%	11%	14%	13%	14%	12%	12%	15%	16%	8%	12%
Wireless card	6%	4%	5%	10%	9%	8%	5%	7%	5%	3%	2%	6%
Other device	10%	16%	8%	5%	4%	6%	5%	6%	4%	4%	4%	6%

Table 2.16: Electronic Device Ownership by Metra Line

Electronic Device	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Standard Cell Phone	39%	41%↑	38%	42%	32%↓	37%	37%	37%	35%	43%	31%↓	36%
Smart Phone	40%↓	44%↓	48%	52%	52%↑	51%	50%	50%	52%	45%	55%↑	50%
Phone Subtotal	79%	85%	86%	94%	84%	88%	87%	87%	87%	88%	86%	86%
PDA	2%	1%	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%
Laptop/tablet PC	18%↓	17%↓	20%↓	36%↑	30%↑	30%	33%↑	32%↑	32%↑	27%	27%	27%
eReader	10%	11%	13%	16%	13%	12%	11%	12%	11%	10%	11%	12%
Wireless card	3%↓	2%↓	6%	7%	6%	6%	7%	9%↑	7%	7%	5%	6%
Other device	5%	6%	5%	6%	6%	7%	7%	6%	5%	4%	5%	6%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.17 shows the respondents who indicated they possess a smartphone consider the capability while using Metra services. Overall 77% of smartphone users indicated they find smartphone service adequate. Customer ratings fluctuate somewhat between train lines with riders on Union Pacific – West, Milwaukee District – North, and North Central Service reporting below average satisfaction and customers on Metra Electric reporting above satisfaction with smartphone service.



Table 2.17: Smartphone Capability Adequacy by Age and Train Line, for Smartphone Users Only

Smartphone Capability Adequacy	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
18-24	87%	67%	82%	90%	78%	66%	79%	79%	78%	100%	85%	78%
25-29	92%	83%	65%	70%	83%	65%	85%	88%	70%	67%	74%	80%
30-34	69%	80%	86%	66%	68%	69%	68%	77%	68%	40%	80%	72%
35-39	81%	81%	77%	74%	76%	70%	66%	75%	71%	65%	87%	77%
40-44	89%	80%	51%	71%	73%	69%	66%	77%	82%	88%	67%	74%
45-49	85%	82%	76%	80%	82%	79%	72%	82%	78%	52%	76%	79%
50-54	83%	78%	86%	85%	77%	76%	65%	77%	84%	76%	76%	77%
55-59	85%	78%	100%	67%	80%	73%	61%	87%	84%	81%	68%	78%
60-64	79%	90%	84%	100%	81%	89%	73%	74%	70%	65%	71%	77%
Overall	83%	79%	75%	74%	77%	73%	71%	80%	78%	72%	76%	77%

Includes only respondents who reported themselves as Smartphone Users

Table 2.18 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated they would support paying for Wi-Fi across each train line and age group. Overall, only 15% of respondents indicated they would be willing to pay for Wi-Fi service onboard Metra vehicles.

Table 2.18: Willingness to Pay for Wi-Fi by Age and Metra Line

Willingness to Pay for Wi-Fi	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
18-24	18%	35%	19%	0%	24%	36%	18%	29%	28%	67%	18%	25%
25-29	12%	14%	23%	8%	19%	23%	17%	30%	28%	13%	23%	21%
30-34	16%	26%	17%	20%	31%	35%	39%	29%	18%	43%	12%	26%
35-39	8%	13%	13%	22%	17%	22%	24%	21%	24%	29%	16%	17%
40-44	12%	7%	25%	21%	18%	23%	25%	20%	19%	26%	27%	19%
45-49	6%	7%	12%	13%	9%	18%	9%	17%	12%	5%	21%	12%
50-54	8%	3%	6%	8%	10%	12%	16%	12%	14%	24%	21%	12%
55-59	5%	4%	10%	14%	7%	10%	12%	12%	9%	3%	16%	9%
60-64	4%	4%	0%	0%	5%	5%	7%	7%	6%	5%	11%	6%
Overall	9%	10%	14%	14%	15%	18%	19%	17%	16%	14%	18%	15%



2.1.3 Ticket Usage

Most Metra riders take advantage of the discount of a monthly ticket. While ticket type does not vary significantly by line, Table 2.19 shows it does differ by time and direction of travel. Metra riders traveling outbound during the midday hours are much more likely to use a one-way ticket, and those riding inbound during the morning peak are much more likely to use monthly passes. This is likely because those traveling inbound in the AM Peak are more likely to be employed and using Metra for their commute trip. The passes used by those traveling outbound in the morning and those traveling inbound during midday are very similar.

Table 2.19: Metra Ticket Type by Time/Direction

Metra Ticket Type	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
Monthly	72%	46%	47%	35%	64%
Ten-Ride	24%	41%	40%	35%	28%
One-Way	3%	11%	10%	26%	7%
Circuit Ride Free Permit	0%	1%	1%	3%	1%
Other	0%	2%	2%	1%	1%

Table 2.20 shows the breakdown of ticket type by number of trips per month. Almost 90% of the people who ride 40 or more times per month take advantage of the monthly pass, which offers considerable savings for frequent riders compared to the cost of single or 10-ride tickets. Somewhat surprisingly, more respondents who ride 30-39 times per month are using the ten-ride ticket than respondents who ride 20-29 times per month; and even fewer are using the monthly pass.

Table 2.20: Metra Ticket Type by Number of Trips per Month

Metra Ticket Type by Trips per Month	40+	30-39	20-29	10-19	Less than 10	Overall
Monthly	89%	50%	60%	19%	22%	64%
Ten-Ride	9%	47%	36%	69%	43%	28%
One-Way	1%	3%	3%	10%	28%	7%
Circuit Ride Free Permit	0%	0%	0%	1%	4%	1%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%

Commuter benefits are incentives aimed to encourage individuals to use transit more often. These incentives include pre-tax, employee-paid, as well as employer subsidized incentives. For pre-tax benefits, individual customers apply non-refundable deductions of their pretax income towards their fares, and employers can reduce the amount of payroll taxes for every employee who uses transit to get to and from work.

Half of respondents indicated that their employer is involved with a commuter benefits program. Unsurprisingly, 59% of inbound peak period travelers indicated they have access to commuter transit benefits, while midday riders, who are less likely to be employed or traveling for work use Metra for commute trips, were less likely to be aware of or have access to commuter benefits programs. This is somewhat surprising given that the transit benefit cap was at its all-time highest amount of \$230.00 per month at the time of the survey. Table 2.21 and Table 2.22 show the portion of respondents whose employers offer any commuter benefit programs (either through RTA



FareCheck or another commuter benefit program).

Table 2.21: Access to Commuter Benefits by Time/Direction

Access to Commuter Benefits	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
Yes	59%	34%	31%	21%	50%
No	32%	46%	51%	48%	36%
Don't know	6%	6%	10%	9%	7%
Not employed	3%	13%	8%	21%	6%

Table 2.22: Access to Commuter Benefits by Train Line

Access to Commuter Benefits	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Yes	49%	58%	64%	74%	52%	52%	50%	58%	47%	52%	43%	50%
No	36%	32%	28%	22%	34%	37%	36%	38%	42%	42%	41%	36%
Don't know	7%	6%	4%	1%	7%	5%	7%	6%	8%	4%	9%	7%
Not employed	8%	4%	4%	3%	7%	6%	8%	8%	3%	2%	7%	6%

The most used payment methods across all Metra trains are credit/debit cards and commuter transit benefit programs. Table 2.23 shows that payment method does vary across Metra lines.

Table 2.24 shows payment methods by time and direction of travel. It shows morning riders traveling inbound are much more likely to use a commuter transit benefit program, and much less likely to use cash or a credit/debit card. Ten percent of all Metra riders use personal checks to pay for their Metra tickets.

Table 2.23: Payment Method by Metra Line

Payment Method	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Cash	25% [↑]	15%	13%	7% [↓]	14% [↓]	15%	16%	16%	14%	11%	19%	16%
Personal Check	10%	14% [↑]	15%	13%	10%	8%	10%	11%	9%	14%	8%	10%
Credit/Debit Card	32% [↓]	28% [↓]	30%	27% [↓]	38%	39%	37%	35%	45% [↑]	36%	42% [↑]	37%
RTA FareCheck	5%	10% [↑]	9%	10%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	4%	8%	7%
Other Commuter Transit Benefit Program	25%	33% [↑]	32%	43% [↑]	29%	30%	29%	29%	24%	34%	22% [↓]	28%
Other	3%	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%

[↑][↓] indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.24: Payment Method by Household Income

Payment Method	Less than \$25,000	\$25,000-60,000	\$60,000-100,000	\$100,000-150,000	\$150,000 and over	Overall
Cash	48%	24%	16%	10%	9%	16%
Personal Check	2%	9%	11%	9%	11%	10%
Credit/Debit Card	39%	43%	39%	33%	36%	37%
RTA FareCheck	2%	5%	7%	10%	8%	7%
Other Commuter Transit Benefit Program	5%	16%	26%	37%	35%	28%
Other	4%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%

Table 2.25 shows payment method by Metra ticket type. Riders who purchase a monthly pass are



more likely to use a commuter benefits program than Metra riders overall. Moreover, riders who purchase ten-ride tickets are most likely to use a credit/debit card, and riders who buy one-way tickets are most likely to use cash.

Table 2.25: Payment Method by Metra Ticket Type

Payment Method	Monthly	Ten-Ride	One-Way	Circuit Ride Free Permit	Other	Overall
Cash	6%↓	21%	84%↑	7%	63%↑	16%
Personal Check	13%	6%	0%↓	0%	1%	10%
Credit/Debit Card	32%	55%↑	15%↓	0%	24%	37%
RTA FareCheck	9%	5%	0%	2%	4%	7%
Other Commuter Transit Benefit Program	38%↑	13%	0%	8%	1%	28%
Other	1%	1%	0%	83%↑	6%	2%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.26 shows where respondents purchased their tickets by Metra line. Most respondents purchased their tickets from an agent at a station. Very few people used station vending machines or purchased their tickets on-board a train from a conductor. A sizable portion of respondents purchase their tickets through their employers using commuter benefits other than RTA FareCheck, particularly individuals traveling inbound to Chicago during peak periods.

Table 2.26: Ticket Purchase Location by Metra Line

Purchase Location	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Agent at a downtown Chicago station	45%↑	30%	44%↑	35%	26%↓	31%	25%↓	28%	28%	36%	34%	31%
Agent at station outside of downtown Chicago	2%↓	30%	10%↓	9%↓	35%↑	31%	38%↑	31%	35%↑	6%↓	33%↑	28%
Conductor on the train	2%	1%	2%	1%	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%	3%
Ticket-By-Mail program	13%	17%↑	18%	17%	12%	13%	11%	13%	10%	16%	9%↓	13%
Ticket-By-Internet program	2%	1%	4%	7%↑	3%	3%	3%	3%	6%↑	11%↑	4%	3%
Commuter Transit Benefit program	14%↓	20%	21%	29%↑	20%	20%	19%	20%	16%	26%	14%↓	18%
Station vending machine – Cash	9%↑	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Station vending machine – Credit/Debit	11%↑	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%
Other	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level

Note: Station vending machines were only available at Metra Electric Line stations during the time of the survey (ticket vending machines were added to Chicago Union Station, LaSalle Street Station, and Ogilvie Transportation Center on March 8, 2012).

2.1.4 Metra Usage Patterns

Respondents were asked on the survey to indicate the number of one way (inbound or outbound) trips they make in a given month. The vast majority of respondents are frequent users of the system, with 82% using Metra at least 20 times per month and 51% use Metra at least 40 times per month.



Table 2.27 shows the duration of time respondents indicated they have used Metra by time and direction of travel. Sixty-nine percent of riders indicated they have used Metra for more than three years. Very few Metra customers indicated they were not regular riders, although the percentage of non-regular riders traveling outbound during midday (12%) was much higher than the overall (3%).

Table 2.27: Duration of Ridership by Time/Direction Traveled

Duration	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
Over 3 years	75%↑	60%↓	43%↓	48%↓	69%
Between 2 to 3 years	6%↓	11%↑	14%↑	8%	7%
Between 1 to 2 years	8%↓	12%	16%↑	13%	9%
6 months to one year	5%	5%	10%↑	7%	6%
Less than 6 months	5%↓	9%	12%↑	12%↑	7%
Not a regular rider	1%↓	4%	6%↑	12%↑	3%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.28 shows how Metra customers of various ridership durations purchase their tickets. Riders who have been using Metra for over three years are predominantly full-time employed commuters with many purchasing their tickets through a commuter benefit program.

Table 2.28: Duration of Ridership by Payment Methods

Duration	Cash	Personal Check	Credit/debit card	RTA FareCheck	Other Commuter Benefit	Other	Overall
Over 3 years	55%↓	91%↑	55%↓	83%↑	82%↑	64%	69%
Between 2 to 3 years	9%↑	4%↓	9%↑	6%	5%↓	6%	7%
Between 1 to 2 years	10%	3%↓	14%↑	5%↓	6%↓	7%	9%
6 months to one year	6%	1%↓	8%↑	3%	4%↓	4%	6%
Less than 6 months	8%	1%↓	12%↑	2%↓	3%↓	3%	7%
Not a regular rider	11%↑	0%	2%	0%	0%	16%	3%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level

2.1.5 Trip Characteristics

Station origins are widely spread by geography and urban environment but generally extend far into suburban Chicago and the surrounding exurban towns. Destinations, however, are very homogenous reflecting that Metra is primarily a commuter system serving customers who live in Chicago's surrounding suburbs but work in and around the central business district. The vast majority of passengers exit from a small portion of Metra stations: Union Station, Millennium Station, Ogilvie Transportation Center and LaSalle Street Station, with a smaller portion exiting Metra at Van Buren Station.

Table 2.29 shows where people indicated their trip began. The overwhelming majority (95%) started their trips from home. Outbound trips during the midday, accounting for 3% of all trips, had a higher portion of trips starting from work and locations other than home/work.

Table 2.29: Trip Origin Location by Time/Direction



Origin Location	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
Home	98%↑	96%	91%↓	71%↓	95%
Work	1%	2%	6%↑	14%↑	3%
Other	1%	2%	4%	15%↑	3%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level

Riders predominantly use Metra to get to and from work, which makes up the largest trip purpose at all travel periods and directions. Trip purposes overall reflect that Metra is a commuter train service serving workers who need to access downtown Chicago on a daily basis.

Table 2.30: Trip Purpose by Time/Direction

Trip Purpose	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
Commute to/from work	93%↑	71%↓	84%	52%↓	86%
Commute to/from school	4%↓	14%↑	6%	17%↑	6%
Business related to work	1%	5%↑	3%	8%↑	2%
Medical/dental appointment	0%	2%	1%	4%↑	1%
Personal business	1%	4%	2%	7%↑	2%
Shopping	0%	1%	1%	2%	0%
Entertainment, visiting, recreation	0%	2%	2%	8%↑	2%
Other	0%	2%	2%	2%	1%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.31 and Table 2.32 show the percent of respondents who transfer to another service board by train line and by the time and direction they traveled. Twenty-one percent of BNSF riders make at least one transfer, transferring slightly more than other lines. Twenty percent of Milwaukee District North Line (MD-N) riders make at least one transfer. Outbound travelers are also considerably more likely to make transfers.

Table 2.31: Number of Transfers by Metra Line

Number of Transfers	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
No Transfer	82%	85%	90%↑	92%↑	79%↓	86%	84%	83%	81%	87%	82%	83%
1	16%	14%	10%↓	8%↓	18%	14%	15%	16%	18%	12%	16%	16%
2+	2%	1%	0%	0%	3%	1%	0%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level



Table 2.32: Number of Transfers by Time/Direction

Number of Transfers	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
No Transfer	86%	82%	65%↓	71%↓	83%
1	13%	17%	30%↑	25%↑	16%
2+	1%	2%	5%↑	5%↑	1%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level

2.1.6 Access and Egress Modes

Most respondents accessed Metra services in a private automobile, with 50% of riders driving alone and parking. Twenty-three percent of riders walked to access a Metra station and 13% were dropped off. Eight percent of riders accessed Metra services using another mass transit mode (CTA, Pace, or other Metra train).

Table 2.33 shows the access modes respondents used to reach their Metra station by line. Driving is the primary mode used to access Metra stations for all lines except Union Pacific North, where customers are more likely to walk to the station (Table 2.33). Meanwhile, those riding the Heritage Corridor, Milwaukee District North, Rock Island, and SouthWest Service are less likely to walk to a station than Metra riders overall.

Table 2.34 shows access mode by time and direction of travel. Riders are more likely to carpool to access their station when traveling inbound, and more likely to use public transportation when traveling outbound.

Table 2.33: Access Mode by Metra Line

Access Mode	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Walked	27%	16%↓	13%↓	5%↓	21%	23%	14%↓	21%	20%	14%	44%↑	23%
Drove alone and parked	51%	63%↑	70%↑	77%↑	47%↓	51%	63%↑	54%	53%	62%	25%↓	50%
Got dropped off	12%	12%	15%	15%	14%	16%	15%	13%	13%	17%	12%	13%
Carpooled	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%
Took another Metra train	1%	0%	0%↓	0%↓	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	3%↑	1%
Took Pace bus	1%	0%↓	0%	0%↓	5%↑	1%	1%	1%	0%↓	0%↓	1%	2%
Took CTA bus	3%	1%	0%↓	0%↓	1%↓	1%	2%	3%	5%↑	1%	6%↑	3%
Took CTA rail	1%	3%	0%↓	0%↓	3%↑	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	3%	2%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	3%	1%	3%	3%	1%	4%	2%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level



Table 2.34: Access Mode by Time/Direction

Access Mode	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
Walked	19%↓	27%	37%↑	45%↑	23%
Drove alone and parked	59%↑	44%↓	17%↓	13%↓	50%
Got dropped off	14%	18%↑	11%	8%↓	13%
Carpooled	3%	4%	1%	1%	3%
Took another Metra train	0%↓	1%	7%↑	2%↑	1%
Took Pace bus	2%	1%	1%	3%	2%
Took CTA bus	1%↓	2%	14%↑	10%↑	3%
Took CTA rail	0%↓	1%	8%↑	12%↑	2%
Other	2%	3%	4%	5%	2%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.35 shows access mode by fare zone. Public transportation is much more likely to be the access mode in Zone A and Zone B. Walking is the primary access mode for Zones A, B, and C, while driving and parking is the primary access mode for all other zones.

Table 2.35: Access Mode by Board Station Fare Zone

Access Mode	Zone A	Zone B	Zone C	Zone D	Zone E	Zone F	Zone G	Zone H	Zone I	Zone J	Zone K	Zone M	Overall
Walked	44%	43%	40%	28%	15%	12%	7%	4%	7%	6%	11%	22%	23%
Drove alone and parked	9%	27%	36%	49%	62%	64%	76%	72%	76%	74%	66%	53%	50%
Got dropped off	7%	10%	13%	15%	16%	16%	10%	17%	12%	17%	20%	24%	13%
Carpooled	0%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%	4%	2%	2%	0%	3%
Took another Metra train	7%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Took Pace bus	0%	3%	1%	3%	1%	3%	3%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Took CTA bus	15%	7%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Took CTA Rail	13%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Other	4%	3%	4%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%

The majority of respondents (74%) walk the remainder of the distance to their final destination once they have left a Metra station, while 19% board another transit service. The high proportion of egress trips on foot reflects that the majority of final destinations (61%) are less than eight blocks from a Metra station (shown in Table 2.39). Table 2.37 shows that riders traveling inbound are much more likely to walk or take a CTA bus from their station to their destination, while outbound riders are more likely to drive alone, get picked up, or take a Pace bus.



Table 2.36: Egress Mode by Metra Line

Egress Mode	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Walked	75%	77%	87%↑	85%↑	72%	74%	74%	68%↓	69%↓	66%	82%↑	74%
Drove alone	4%	4%	0%	1%	3%	3%	3%	5%↑	3%	3%	2%	3%
Got picked up	2%	2%	0%	1%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	1%	3%
Carpooled	0%	0%↓	0%↓	0%	0%	0%↓	0%	1%	1%	2%	0%↓	0%
Took another Metra train	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Took Pace bus	1%	1%	0%↓	0%↓	3%↑	1%	1%	2%	6%↑	2%	1%	2%
Took CTA bus	8%	2%↓	9%	7%	9%	7%	10%	10%	8%	6%	5%	8%
Took CTA rail	6%↑	9%↑	1%	1%	1%↓	3%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%
Took private shuttle or taxi	3%↓	4%	1%	5%	6%	7%	5%	6%	8%↑	12%↑	6%	6%
Other	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.37: Egress Mode by Time/Direction

Egress Mode	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
Walked	79%↑	73%	55%↓	47%↓	74%
Drove alone	1%↓	2%	9%↑	18%↑	3%
Got picked up	1%↓	2%	7%↑	13%↑	3%
Carpooled	0%↓	1%	2%↑	1%	0%
Took another Metra train	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Took Pace bus	1%↓	1%	8%↑	7%↑	2%
Took CTA bus	8%	12%↑	4%↓	2%↓	8%
Took CTA rail	3%↑	3%	1%↓	1%	3%
Took private shuttle or taxi	5%	5%	9%	8%	6%
Other	1%	1%	4%	2%	1%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for a row at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.38 shows that riders alighting from a Metra station in Zone A are much more likely to walk to their final destination than any other zone. Table 2.39 shows that, unsurprisingly, the vast majority of riders whose final destination is within 8 blocks of the alight station choose to walk. Many people whose destinations are more than a mile away choose to walk as well. In fact, a quarter of the people who travel more than 2 miles to their final destination get there on foot.



Table 2.38: Egress Mode by Alight Station Fare Zone

Egress Mode	Zone A	Zone B	Zone C	Zone D	Zone E	Zone F	Zone G	Zone H	Zone I	Zone J	Zone K	Overall
Walked	80%	66%	76%	48%	44%	37%	14%	15%	25%	32%	18%	74%
Drove alone	0%	2%	6%	10%	15%	18%	57%	18%	36%	45%	7%	3%
Got picked up	1%	3%	4%	11%	11%	24%	9%	16%	23%	0%	33%	3%
Carpooled	0%	0%	0%	3%	3%	4%	0%	1%	0%	23%	12%	0%
Took another Metra train	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Took Pace bus	0%	2%	3%	15%	15%	7%	1%	22%	2%	0%	0%	2%
Took CTA bus	8%	13%	4%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	8%
Took CTA rail	3%	5%	2%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Took private shuttle or taxi	5%	6%	3%	8%	9%	7%	8%	26%	10%	0%	12%	6%
Other	1%	2%	3%	4%	2%	3%	7%	2%	4%	0%	0%	1%

Table 2.39: Egress Mode by Egress Trip Distance

Egress Mode	2 blocks or less	3 to 4 blocks	5 to 6 blocks	7 to 8 blocks	1 to 1 ½ miles	1 ½ to 2 miles	More than 2 miles	Overall
Walked	96%	96%	92%	86%	66%	38%	25%	74%
Drove alone	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	5%	14%	3%
Got picked up	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	6%	7%	3%
Carpooled	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%	0%
Took another Metra train	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%
Took Pace bus	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	5%	7%	2%
Took CTA bus	0%	1%	3%	6%	13%	18%	17%	8%
Took CTA rail	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	5%	10%	3%
Took private shuttle or taxi	1%	1%	1%	3%	10%	17%	14%	6%
Other	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	3%	3%	1%
Overall	17%	16%	14%	14%	15%	7%	16%	100%

2.1.7 Parking

Table 2.40 shows the percent of drivers paying by each permit type and the average cost of parking by each of the different permit types. Most customers simply pay a daily fee for parking instead of using a longer term permit. More frequent riders are slightly more likely to use a monthly or quarterly permit than those traveling less frequently.



Table 2.40: Average Parking Costs by Permit Type

	Daily fee	Weekly permit fee	Monthly permit fee	Quarterly permit fee	Six-month permit fee	Annual permit fee	Free parking
% of drivers paying by permit type	54%	0%	13%	15%	2%	4%	11%
Average parking fee	\$1.93	\$2.55	\$33.17	\$82.50	\$119.29	\$264.72	n/a

Table 2.41 and Table 2.42 show the percent of drivers paying by each permit type by Metra line and by boarding fare zone. The majority of drivers in Zone K are able to park for free (67%), while in Zone G only 2% can do so.

Table 2.41: Parking Permit Type by Metra Line

Parking Permit Type	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Daily Fee	59%	77%	77%	61%	40%	46%	49%	65%	54%	54%	26%	54%
Weekly permit fee	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Monthly permit fee	17%	8%	6%	8%	19%	5%	15%	10%	11%	39%	7%	13%
Quarterly permit fee	6%	5%	10%	9%	28%	34%	22%	9%	4%	4%	9%	15%
Six-month permit fee	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	14%	1%	7%	2%
Annual permit fee	0%	1%	0%	16%	2%	3%	9%	1%	6%	0%	21%	4%
Free parking	16%	8%	3%	4%	7%	10%	5%	13%	10%	3%	29%	11%
Other	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%

Table 2.42: Parking Permit Type by Boarding Fare Zone

Parking Permit Type	Zone A	Zone B	Zone C	Zone D	Zone E	Zone F	Zone G	Zone H	Zone I	Zone J	Zone K	Zone M	Overall
Daily Fee	54%	39%	48%	47%	54%	56%	60%	59%	71%	69%	21%	100%	54%
Weekly permit fee	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Monthly permit fee	4%	5%	12%	7%	10%	18%	17%	16%	19%	10%	11%	0%	13%
Quarterly permit fee	7%	5%	4%	22%	21%	16%	17%	14%	4%	15%	0%	0%	15%
Six-month permit fee	0%	0%	1%	10%	2%	0%	0%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Annual permit fee	1%	2%	3%	7%	7%	4%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Free parking	32%	47%	29%	6%	5%	4%	2%	5%	5%	6%	67%	0%	11%
Other	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%

2.2 Customer Satisfaction and Importance

In the survey, respondents were asked to categorize their level of satisfaction with thirty-nine relevant service attributes. Each service attribute belongs to one of nine larger service dimensions:

- Travel Time and Reliability
- Safety and Security
- Information
- Communications
- Cleanliness
- Employees' Performance
- Comfort
- Overall Service
- Regional Satisfaction

Thirty-two of these service attribute questions measured customer satisfaction with attributes



internal to the operating decisions made by Metra, and seven asked for respondents' levels of satisfaction with attributes that relate to regional mobility and inter-service transit coordination. Additionally, respondents were asked to rate how Metra performed in relation to their expectations and whether they would recommend Metra to others.

2.2.1 Satisfaction with Service Attributes

The following sets of charts illustrate the levels of satisfaction all respondents have with each of the thirty-two service attributes and satisfaction with each of the Metra lines on these service attributes. Customers are considered "satisfied" if they reported a score in the 6–10 categories on the 1–10 scale (also known as "top box" scores).

2.2.1.1 Travel Time and Reliability

Overall, respondents tend to be satisfied with the Travel Time and Reliability. Over 80% of customers are satisfied with getting to their destination on time, their total travel time, and the number of trains during rush hour. This is not surprising because the great majority of these travelers (86%) have access to automobiles for their trip; thus taking Metra is a choice and the perceived travel time savings afforded by taking Metra are likely a key reason why many choose to use it. Maintaining or improving these attributes should be a top priority, as these are key drivers of satisfaction (as will be discussed in Section 2.3). Within this category, customers did not express as much satisfaction with the number of trains during non-rush hour periods, with 67% of customers reporting that they are satisfied.

Figure 2.4: Satisfaction with Travel Time and Reliability Attributes

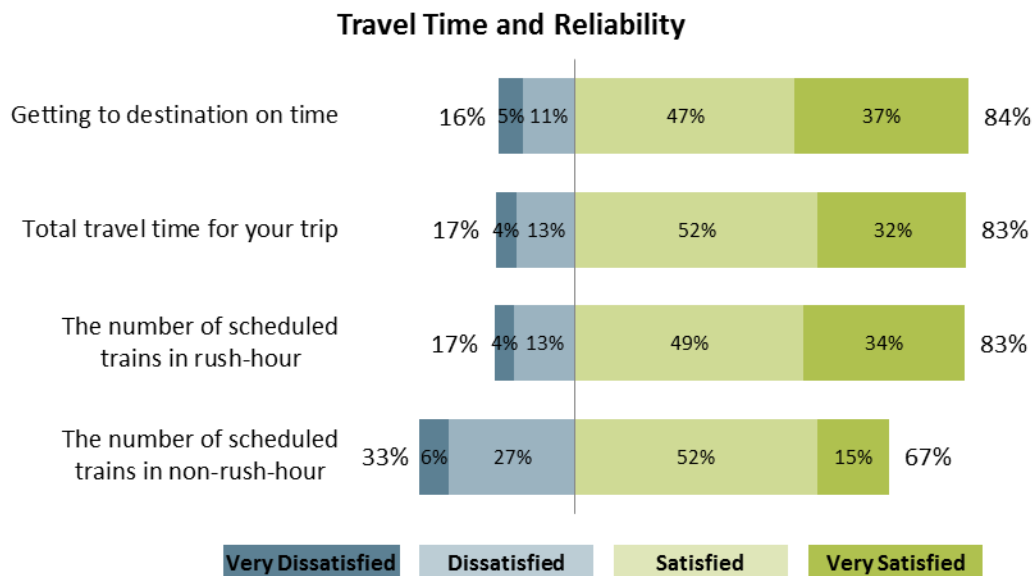


Table 2.43 shows the percentage of customers who are satisfied with the Travel Time and Reliability attributes for each Metra line. Customers riding the Heritage Corridor and SouthWest Service lines are less satisfied with all aspects of Travel Time and Reliability, with customers particularly dissatisfied with the number of trains scheduled during non-rush hour. It should be noted customers on the SouthWest Service line report better satisfaction than those on the Heritage Corridor, likely due to recent service upgrades. North Central Service also ranks significantly lower on many of these attributes. Metra Electric has significantly higher rates of satisfaction on all Travel Time and Reliability attributes.



Table 2.43: Satisfaction with Travel Time and Reliability Attributes by Line

% Satisfied	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Getting to destination on time	94%↑	92%↑	35%↓	23%↓	76%↓	81%	84%	92%↑	87%	80%	87%↑	84%
The number of scheduled trains in rush-hour	88%↑	89%↑	59%↓	26%↓	86%↑	83%	77%↓	84%	84%	59%↓	83%	83%
The number of scheduled trains in non-rush-hour	70%	68%	37%↓	14%↓	64%↓	69%	73%↑	72%↑	73%↑	45%↓	67%	67%
Total travel time for your trip	92%↑	83%	56%↓	40%↓	87%↑	82%	73%↓	84%	84%	59%↓	88%↑	83%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.44 shows customer satisfaction with Travel Time and Reliability by direction and travel period. Those traveling outbound in the AM Peak are more satisfied with on-time performance but less satisfied with the number of trains in the peak period.

Table 2.44: Satisfaction with Travel Time and Reliability by Time/Direction

% Satisfied	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
Getting to destination on time	83%	83%	88%↑	86%	84%
The number of scheduled trains in rush-hour	84%	83%	76%↓	83%	83%
The number of scheduled trains in non-rush-hour	67%	68%	65%	69%	67%
Total travel time for your trip	82%↓	88%↑	84%	88%↑	83%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

2.2.1.2 Safety and Security

Levels of satisfaction for the Safety and Security service attributes on the whole are very high, with nearly all customers satisfied with all attributes. Safety tends to be one of the top attributes contributing to overall customer satisfaction and attention should be paid to maintaining these attributes.

Only a small portion of respondents reported they were dissatisfied with their personal security either on board a Metra vehicle or at Metra stations. Dissatisfaction with personal safety is slightly higher at boarding stations than destination stations, likely because passengers spend more time at these stations for their reported trip and may feel more exposed to perceived security threats.



Figure 2.5: Satisfaction with Safety and Security Attributes

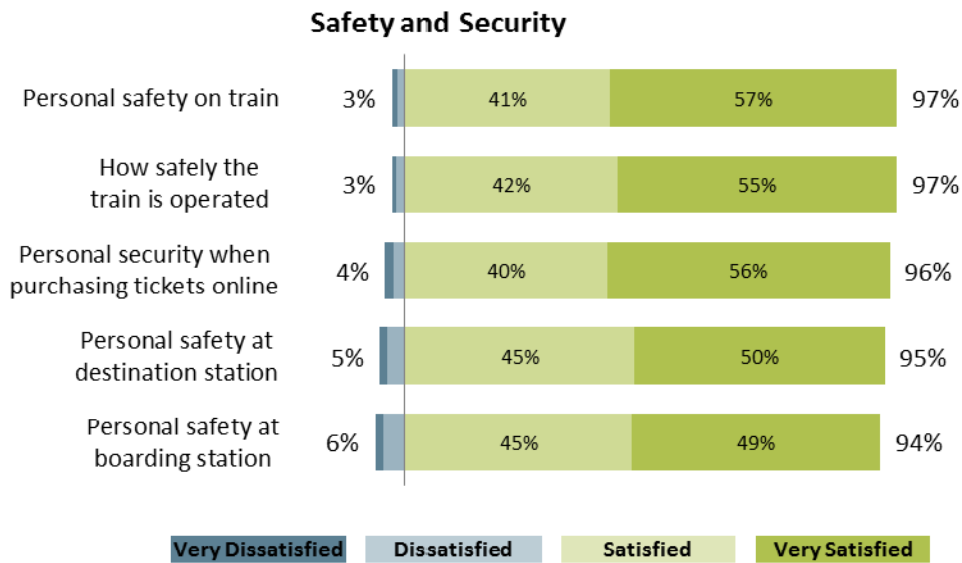


Table 2.45 shows customer satisfaction across all Metra lines for safety-related attributes. Respondents are very satisfied across all Metra lines, with nearly all lines consistently ranking all safety attributes above 90% satisfied. Heritage Corridor and Metra Electric are ranked slightly lower than other lines, particularly within the personal safety at boarding station attribute.

Table 2.45: Satisfaction with Safety and Security Attributes by Line

% Satisfied	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
How safely the train is operated	97%	98%	96%	91%↓	97%	98%	97%	98%	98%	99%	99%	97%
Personal safety on train	95%↓	98%	96%	95%	98%	98%	96%	98%	99%	100%↑	98%	97%
Personal safety at boarding station	85%↓	93%	93%	85%↓	96%↑	96%↑	94%	95%	96%↑	96%	96%↑	94%
Personal safety at destination station	90%↓	94%	94%	89%↓	96%	97%↑	95%	96%	96%	95%	97%↑	95%
Personal security when purchasing tickets online	91%↓	96%	96%	96%	97%	97%	96%	96%	96%	95%	99%	96%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

2.2.1.3 Information

Attributes belonging to the Information service category were positively rated by respondents. Availability of schedules and route information was particularly well-rated. However, respondents are less satisfied with notifications of service changes.

As previously discussed, approximately 50% of respondents possess a smartphone, enabling them to access information about disruptions or changes in service delivery while away from home. Metra already posts web alerts and sends email messages about service changes; further publicizing these capabilities so that more customers use them could help improve satisfaction in this category. However, it should be noted that customers with smartphones are actually less satisfied with the notification of service changes.



Figure 2.6: Satisfaction with Information Attributes

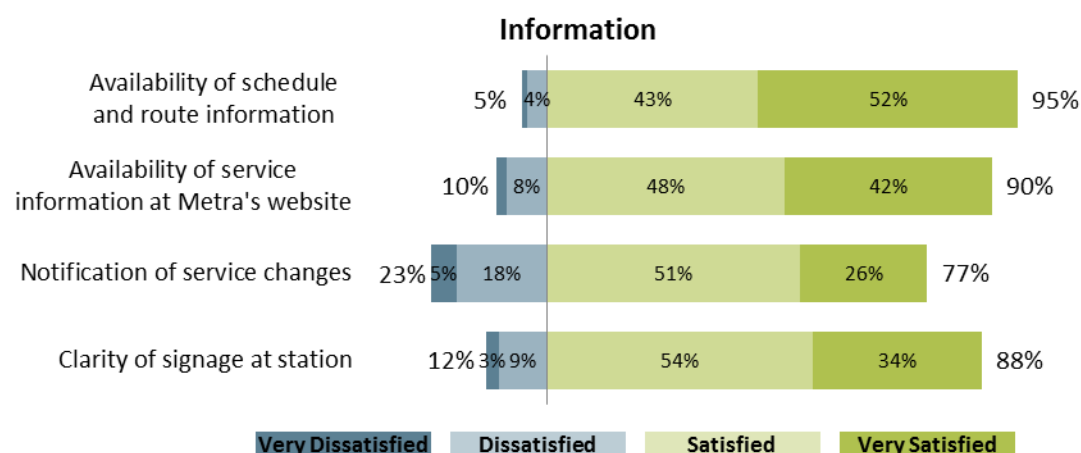


Table 2.46 shows customer satisfaction with the Information attributes across each Metra line. Clarity of signage is lower on the Heritage Corridor Line, although 81% of customers are still satisfied. Customers riding BNSF, Heritage Corridor, and Union Pacific North are least satisfied with the notification of service changes.

Table 2.46: Satisfaction with Information Attributes by Line

% Satisfied	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Availability of schedule and route information	93%↓	96%	92%↓	89%↓	95%	95%	96%	96%	96%	94%	94%	95%
Availability of service information at Metra's website	92%	91%	87%	82%↓	89%	92%	92%	88%	91%	90%	89%	90%
Notification of service changes	81%↑	81%↑	75%	68%↓	72%↓	76%	82%↑	75%	81%↑	76%	73%↓	77%
Clarity of signage at station	87%	90%	86%	81%↓	88%	89%	90%	87%	86%	89%	87%	88%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

2.2.1.4 Communication

Customers are most satisfied with on-board announcements of stations, and satisfied (though somewhat less so) with the other aspects of Communication as well. Communication of delays while on board is a key driver of overall satisfaction and one which performs below average compared to other attributes. Metra should give additional consideration to these attributes to improve overall satisfaction.

Improving satisfaction with these attributes can be dovetailed with improving the lowest rated attribute in the Information service category: notification of service changes. Providing reliable and consistent updates about service delays, disruptions, and changes can help avoid customer frustration and ultimately allow Metra riders to get to where they need to go with minimum time and inconvenience. As suggested in Section 2.2.1.1, this is likely the primary reason why people tend to use Metra in the first place. Increasing awareness of and/or improving methods to communicate information to passengers are the most obvious and straightforward service improvements that could be made to improve customer experience and satisfaction with



Communications. Previous research has shown that providing customers with real-time information about transit arrival and delays can reduce the perceived time spent waiting for transit, which would likely in turn improve satisfaction with Travel Time and Reliability attributes². Real time info tracking of trains just began at Metra stations (after the survey had been completed), which will improve the quality of information provided to customers.

Figure 2.7: Satisfaction with Communication Attributes

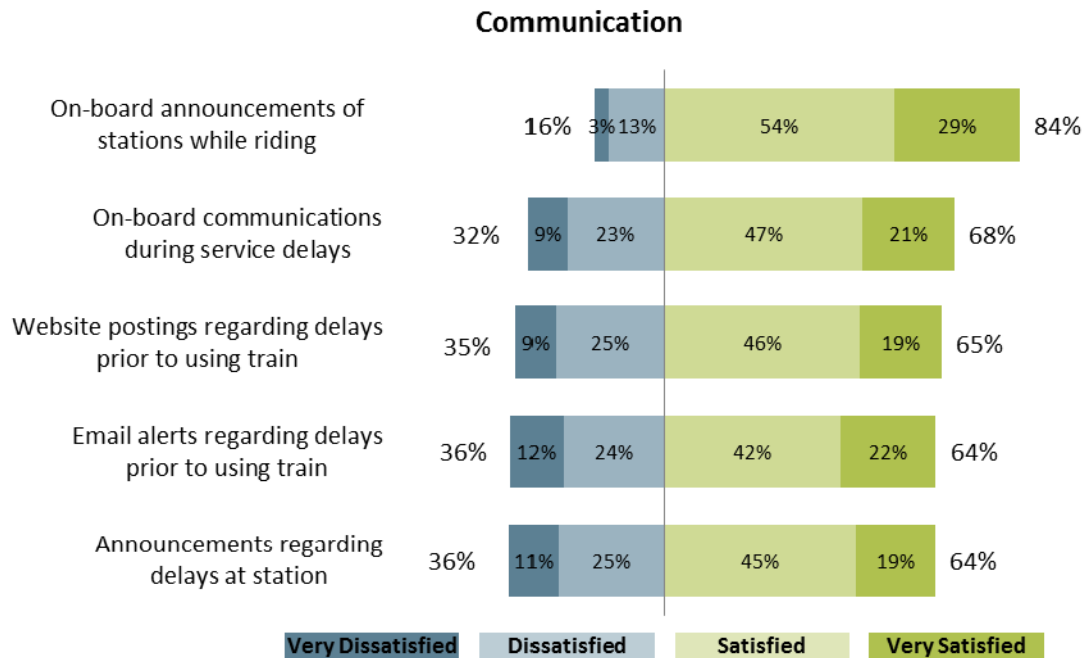


Table 2.47 shows the proportion of respondents satisfied with Communication attributes by line.

Table 2.47: Satisfaction with Communication Attributes by Line

% Satisfied	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
On-board announcements of stations while riding	75%↓	84%	78%↓	66%↓	83%	86%	83%	87%↑	85%	87%	88%↑	84%
On-board communications during service delays	69%	72%↑	55%↓	48%↓	61%↓	69%	71%	70%	72%	69%	74%↑	68%
Announcements regarding delays at station	70%↑	68%	50%↓	45%↓	56%↓	64%	68%	63%	67%	70%	66%	64%
Website postings regarding delays prior to using train	74%↑	73%↑	54%↓	47%↓	58%↓	69%	71%	63%	70%	67%	63%	65%
Email alerts regarding delays prior to using train	70%	67%	50%↓	45%↓	60%↓	62%	68%	62%	66%	67%	67%	64%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

² Taylor, B; Iseki, H; Miller, M; and Smart, M (2009) Thinking Outside the Bus: Understanding User Perceptions of Waiting and Transferring in Order to Increase Transit Use, Final Report, Berkeley, CA: California Partners for Advanced Transit and Highways.



2.2.1.5 Cleanliness

As a whole, customers are pleased with the condition and cleanliness of stations and trains, although they are less satisfied with the cleanliness of train interiors than the cleanliness of the stations. Cleanliness on board the trains is a key contributor to overall satisfaction.

Figure 2.8: Satisfaction with Cleanliness Attributes

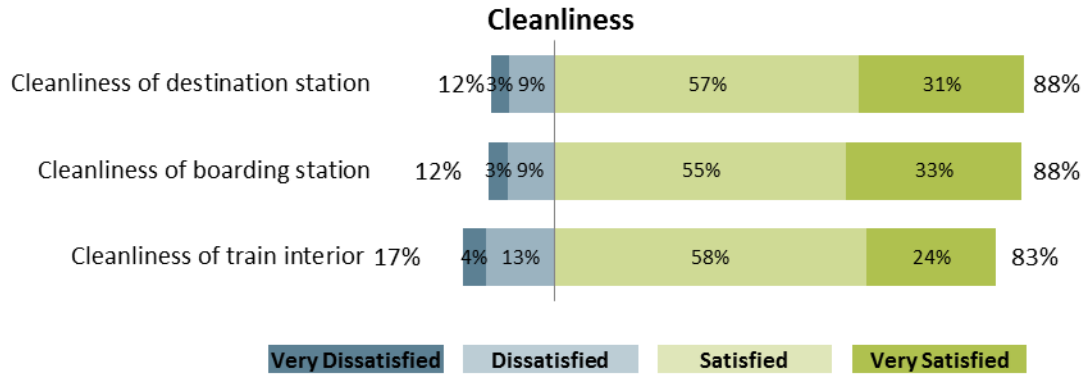


Table 2.48 shows customer satisfaction across each Metra line for the Cleanliness attributes. Heritage Corridor has fewer satisfied customers with all aspects of Cleanliness; however this line makes up only a very small portion of Metra’s total riders. Customers on BNSF and the Union Pacific lines are more satisfied than customers on other lines.

Table 2.48: Satisfaction with Cleanliness Attributes by Line

% Satisfied	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Cleanliness of train interior	81%	78%↓	82%	70%↓	86%↑	84%	79%↓	82%	85%	76%	86%↑	83%
Cleanliness of boarding station	72%↓	82%↓	89%	79%↓	92%↑	93%↑	88%	91%↑	88%	94%	89%	88%
Cleanliness of destination station	82%↓	86%	82%↓	80%↓	88%	95%↑	84%↓	92%↑	85%	85%	92%↑	88%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

2.2.1.6 Employee Performance

Customers are overwhelmingly satisfied with the performance of Metra employees with all Employee Performance attributes exceeding 90% satisfaction.



Figure 2.9: Satisfaction with Employee Performance Attributes

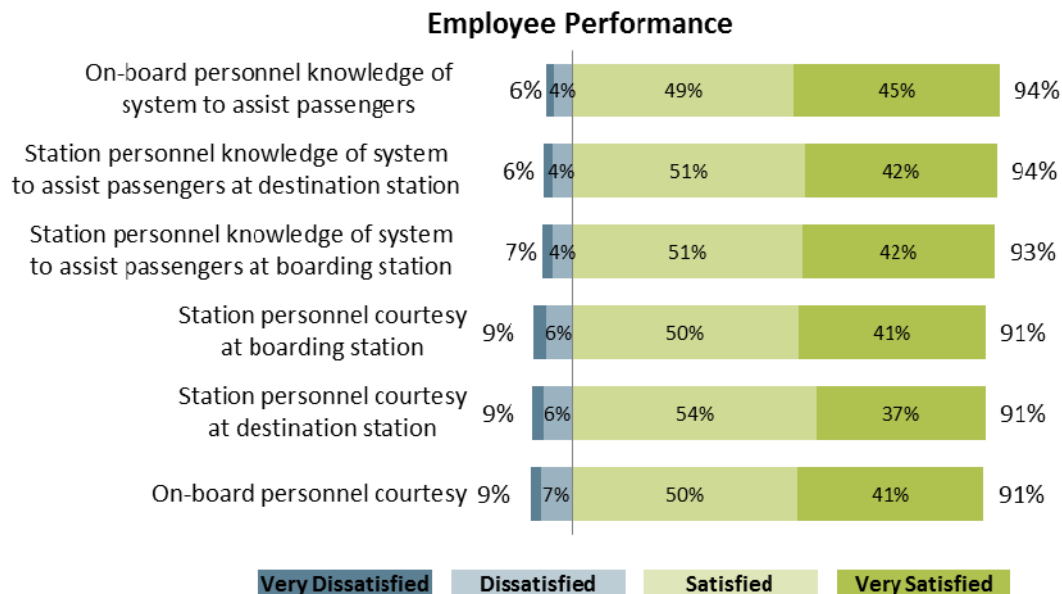


Table 2.49 shows customer satisfaction with Employee Performance for each Metra line. This attribute is a key driver of overall satisfaction and one which should be maintained throughout the system and improved on lines with lower satisfaction levels.

Table 2.49: Satisfaction with Employee Performance Attributes by Line

% Satisfied	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
On-board personnel courtesy	91%	93%	90%	84%↓	89%	92%	94%	88%↓	94%↑	98%↑	90%	91%
Station personnel courtesy at boarding station	90%	91%	91%	89%	90%	92%	94%	92%	92%	97%	93%	91%
Station personnel courtesy at destination station	91%	91%	88%	85%↓	91%	91%	93%	91%	94%	95%	90%	91%
On-board personnel knowledge of system to assist passengers	94%	94%	93%	84%↓	93%	96%	97%	94%	96%	99%	94%	94%
Station personnel knowledge of system to assist passengers at boarding station	93%	92%	91%	85%↓	93%	94%	95%	94%	94%	99%	93%	93%
Station personnel knowledge of system to assist passengers at destination station	94%	93%	88%↓	85%↓	93%	93%	96%↑	94%	95%	98%	94%	94%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

2.2.1.7 Comfort

Customers are generally satisfied with on-board temperatures and seating availability. Customers are somewhat less satisfied with their comfort while waiting for trains.



Figure 2.10: Satisfaction with Comfort Attributes

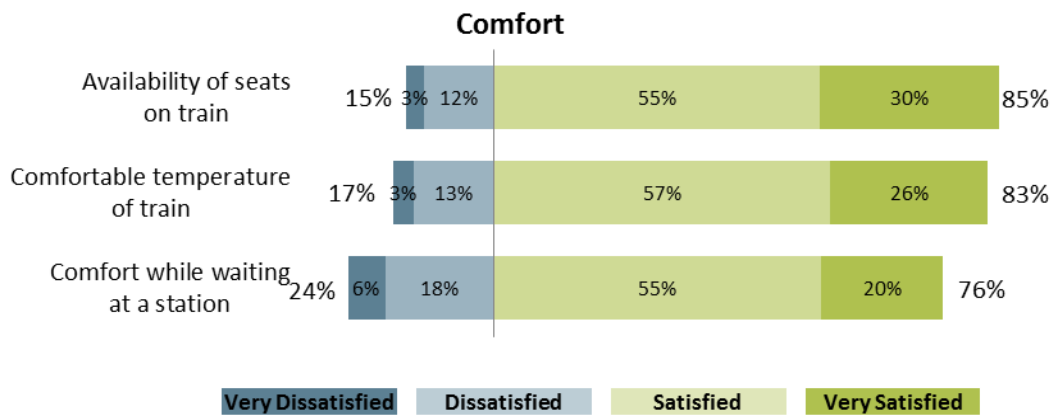


Table 2.50: Satisfaction with Comfort Attributes by Line

% Satisfied	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Availability of seats on train	85%	88% [↑]	82%	83%	82% [↓]	87%	82% [↓]	84%	88%	85%	91% [↑]	85%
Comfortable temperature of train	80%	78% [↓]	78%	67% [↓]	82%	89% [↑]	77% [↓]	83%	84%	83%	92% [↑]	83%
Comfort while waiting at a station	76%	73%	80%	62% [↓]	73% [↓]	82% [↑]	77%	78%	75%	83%	72%	76%

[↑]_↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

2.2.1.8 Regional Service

It is important to again note that the majority of Metra passengers (84%) travel Metra exclusively when using public transit. Respondents are satisfied with the overall public transportation in the six-county region, with 82% reporting satisfaction. Metra customers are also satisfied with the ease of making transfers (and ease of paying for them), availability of public transportation and the availability of parking. Half of Metra customers access their station by driving and parking. Of those who drive and park, 76% percent indicated satisfaction with the availability of parking, a nearly identical level of satisfaction compared to the sample as a whole.

Among the Regional attributes, signage to support transfers and schedule coordination between Service Boards had slightly higher rates of dissatisfaction. Given that very few respondents either transfer to or from other transit services, Metra likely need not be concerned about this for its own specific service. However, from a regional perspective, it merits consideration for improvements.



Figure 2.11: Satisfaction with Regional Service Attributes

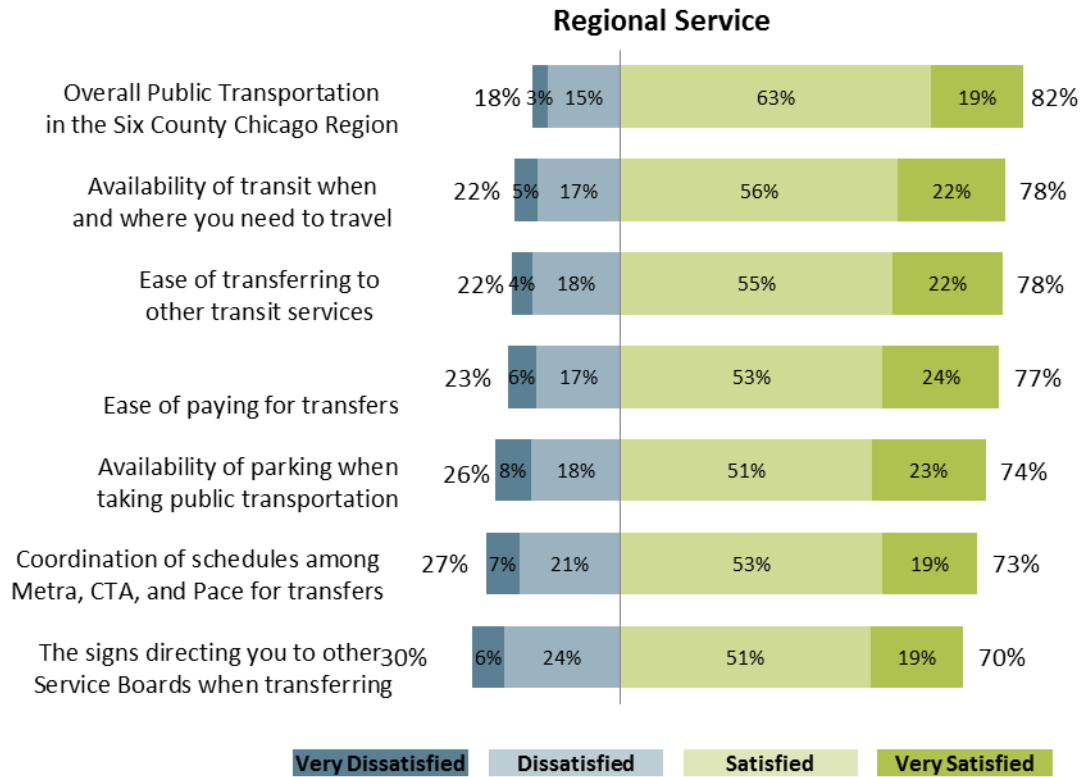


Table 2.51 shows customer satisfaction across all Metra lines for attributes relating to Metra’s regional coordination with other transit services in the six-county region. The values represent the percentage of those who answered the question and do not include the “N/A” responses.



Table 2.51: Satisfaction with Regional Service by Line

% Satisfied	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Availability of transit throughout the region when and where you need to travel	83%↑	82%	76%	64%↓	77%	79%	76%	77%	77%	74%	80%	78%
Ease of transferring to other transit services	82%↑	82%	81%	71%	77%	78%	76%	76%	78%	77%	75%	78%
Coordination of schedules among Metra, CTA, and Pace for transfers	75%	76%	75%	63%	74%	73%	71%	72%	73%	69%	68%	73%
Ease of paying for transfers	81%	82%	74%	67%	80%	75%	80%	74%	81%	81%	68%↓	77%
The signs directing you to Pace or CTA service when transferring	75%↑	76%↑	67%	62%	70%	67%	69%	71%	67%	66%	67%	70%
Availability of parking when taking transit	82%↑	78%	85%↑	63%↓	59%↓	72%	83%↑	81%↑	79%↑	92%↑	71%	74%
Overall transit in the six-county Chicago region	83%	85%	77%	69%↓	80%	81%	81%	83%	85%	83%	83%	82%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.52: Percentage of "N/A" Responses

% Satisfied	% "N/A"
Availability of transit throughout the region when and where you need to travel	22%
Ease of transferring to other transit services	39%
Coordination of schedules among Metra, CTA, and Pace for transfers	48%
Ease of paying for transfers	59%
The signs directing you to Pace or CTA service when transferring	51%
Availability of parking when taking transit	33%
Overall transit in the six-county Chicago region	19%

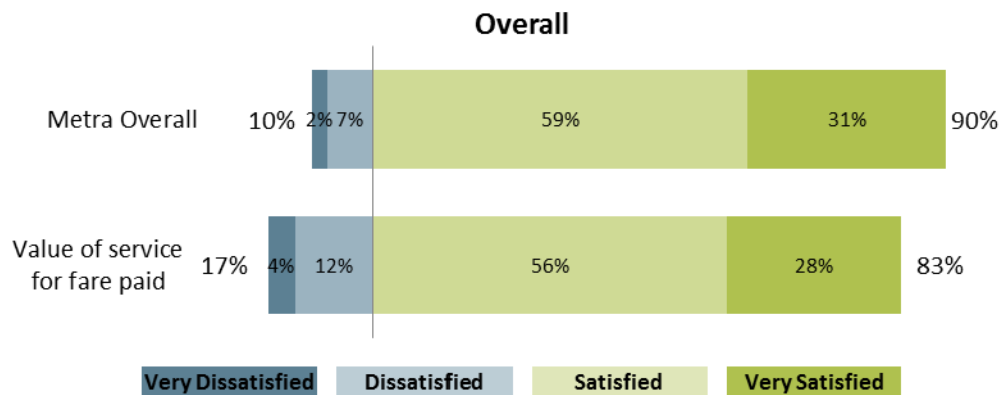


2.2.2 Overall Value and Satisfaction

Finally, respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with Metra service overall and with the value of the service for the fare paid. Overall, 90% of customers are satisfied with Metra’s service and 83% are satisfied with the value given the fare they pay.

As a note of interest: the survey was conducted prior to the implementation of a significant fare increase of more than 25%. Most likely, overall value ratings were not influenced by this development; rather responses were based on fares in place at the time of the survey. Also perceptions of overall value are also influenced by external conditions such as the cost of fuel and time spent traveling and as such may shift from time to time. At the time of the survey, gasoline in the Chicago area was declining from \$3.96 per gallon at the end of September to \$3.51 per gallon in December.

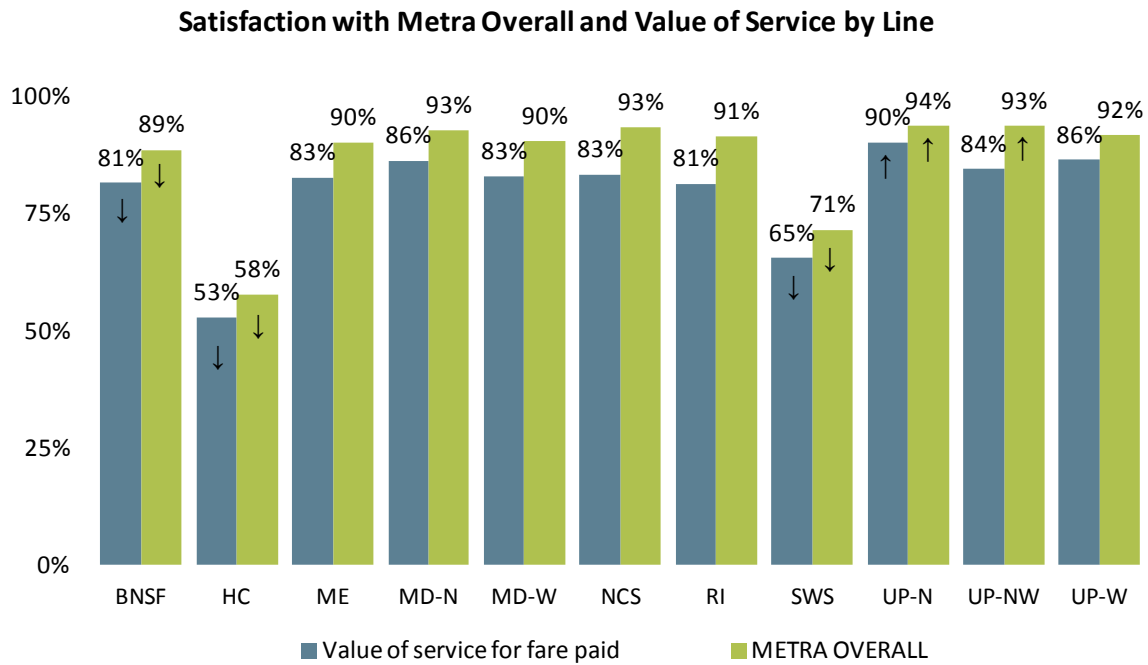
Figure 2.12: Satisfaction with Overall Value and Satisfaction Attributes



Satisfaction with Metra’s service overall is consistently high across nearly all lines, with the exception of the Heritage Corridor and SouthWest Service. Customers rated value for the service paid in a similar pattern to overall satisfaction.



Figure 2.13: Satisfaction with Value Overall Service by Line



↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

Additionally, the longer a rider has been a Metra customer, the lower the satisfaction levels with service overall. For example, among those who have been regular customers for over three years, 89% are satisfied, while 96% of those riding for less than 6 months are satisfied.

Customers traveling inbound during the AM Peak are significantly less likely to be satisfied with Metra overall and the value for service than customers traveling at other times/directions; however, satisfaction is still relatively high. Customers traveling outbound in the midday are the most satisfied.

Table 2.53 and Table 2.54 show the satisfaction with value for the fare paid and overall satisfaction by line, time period, and direction. Riders were generally more satisfied with value in the midday.

Table 2.53: Value for Service by Line and Time/Direction

% Satisfied	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Inbound: AM Peak	82%	81%↓	65%↓	53%↓	80%↓	86%↑	81%	84%	85%	82%	91%↑	82%
Inbound: Midday	80%	-	72%	-	80%	88%	86%	83%	85%	95%	91%↑	84%
Outbound: AM Peak	93%	87%	-	-	79%	91%	85%	85%	88%	80%	89%	87%
Outbound: Midday	84%	86%	-	-	91%	82%	100%↑	87%	95%	-	87%	88%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

Note: Sample size outside of the AM Peak inbound can be somewhat small and caution must be given when interpreting the results.



Table 2.54: Overall Satisfaction by Line and Time/Direction

% Satisfied	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Inbound: AM Peak	88%↓	90%	70%↓	58%↓	87%↓	91%	89%	93%↑	92%	93%	93%↑	89%
Inbound: Midday	92%	-	81%	-	88%	93%	90%	93%	89%	95%	94%	92%
Outbound: AM Peak	93%	87%	-	-	91%	100%↑	87%	93%	95%↑	96%	95%	94%
Outbound: Midday	100%	100%	-	-	100%	89%	100%↑	97%	100%	-	94%	97%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

Note: Sample size outside of the AM Peak inbound can be somewhat small and caution must be given when interpreting the results.

2.3 Key Drivers of Overall Customer Satisfaction

The importance customers place on particular aspects of service can be analyzed in two ways; through reporting stated importance or by derived importance, which are mathematically estimated coefficients. Stated importance can be analyzed by presenting the proportion of respondents who indicated they consider a particular attribute or dimension as very important. Derived importance is arrived at through mathematical models that yield coefficients. The following sections will detail the results from each of these two methods.

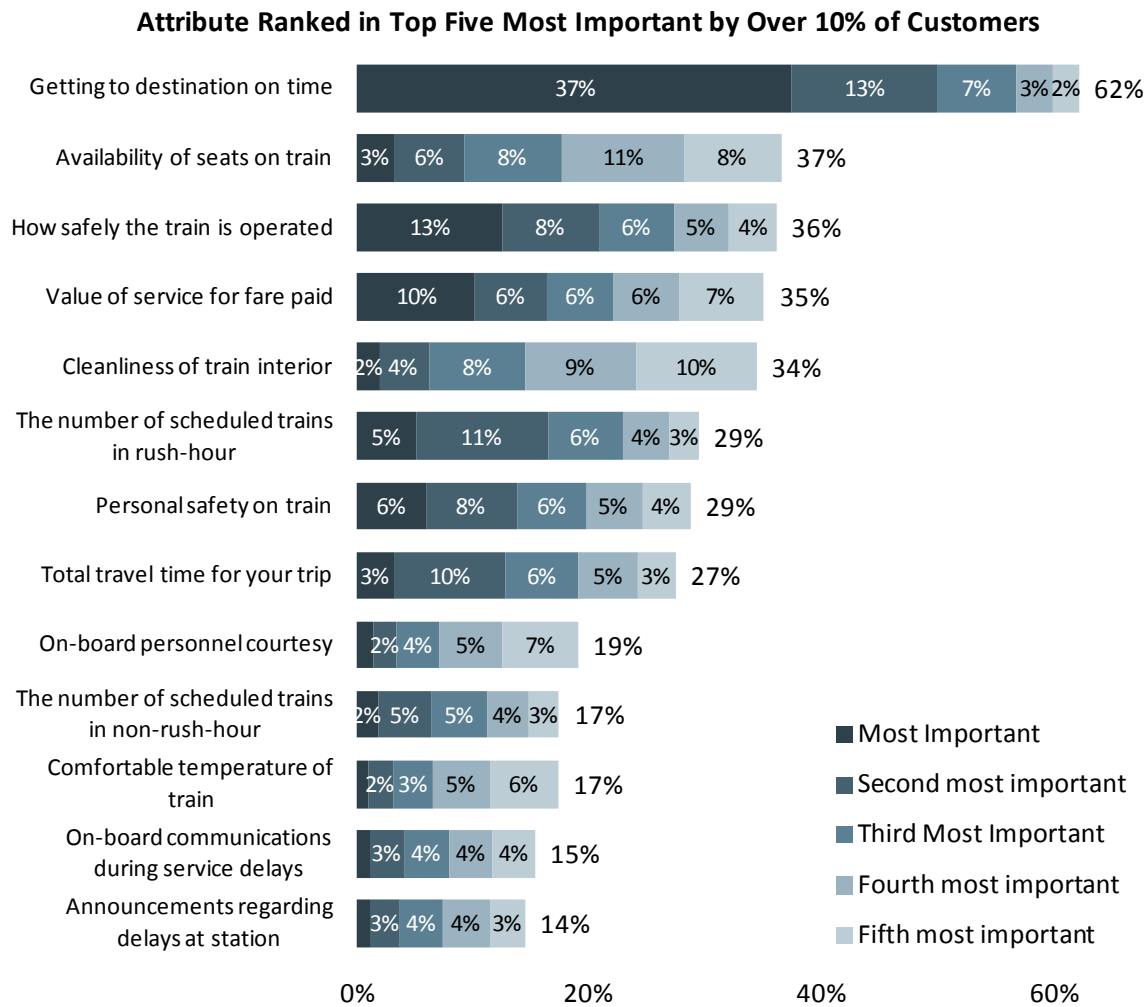
2.3.1 Stated Importance

The first method for measuring importance—stated importance—involves simply asking customers to rank the most important attributes to them that they feel contribute to their overall satisfaction. In this survey, customers were asked to rank the five most important attributes out of the 39 total attributes in the survey.

Figure 2.14 includes the attributes ranked in the top five by at least 10% of customers. The most critical service attribute that cannot be overlooked is the on-time delivery of services (Getting to a destination on time). It is ranked as the most important aspect of service nearly three times as often as any other attribute and in the top five over 1.5 times as often as the next most important attribute. Availability of seats on the train is ranked in the top five the second most often, though it is not often the most important attribute. The safety of train operation, value of service, and cleanliness all rank similarly to availability of seating with over one-third of customers ranking them in the top five most important attributes of Metra service.



Figure 2.14: Importance Ratings for Attributes with At Least 10% of Customers Ranking in Top Five



It should be noted that the importance question may be slightly skewed due to the layout of the paper survey. As noted in the methodology report, there was not sufficient space to include all attributes on the same page with the importance ranking question. Consequently, the Travel Time and Reliability attributes were listed on a separate page. It appears that up to 25% of customers did not look at this separate page when ranking the attributes and thus did not consider those attributes when reporting their rankings. At least one of these attributes is typically among the top five most important for nearly all respondents. Analysis was done to show that the ranking ordering of the important attributes was still similar among the paper and web-based questionnaires and it was decided to include all data in the analysis. However, it should be recognized that the Time and Reliability attributes would likely be rated important by even more respondents had all attributes been listed on the same page.

Figure 2.15 shows further detail on this issue and that there are small differences in the order that paper and web respondents ranked the most important attributes that contribute to quality service. As noted, although this is not ideal, it has not dramatically influenced the overall positioning of the most important attributes. Analysis shows that the overall order of the most important attributes changed only slightly between the two groups, with paper-based respondents ranking the total travel time outside of the top five most important attributes, but it is still in the top ten



attributes. The statistical modeling presented in Section 2.3.2 Derived Importance verifies that the overall importance of the Travel Time and Reliability attributes.

Figure 2.15: Most Important Attributes by Survey Method

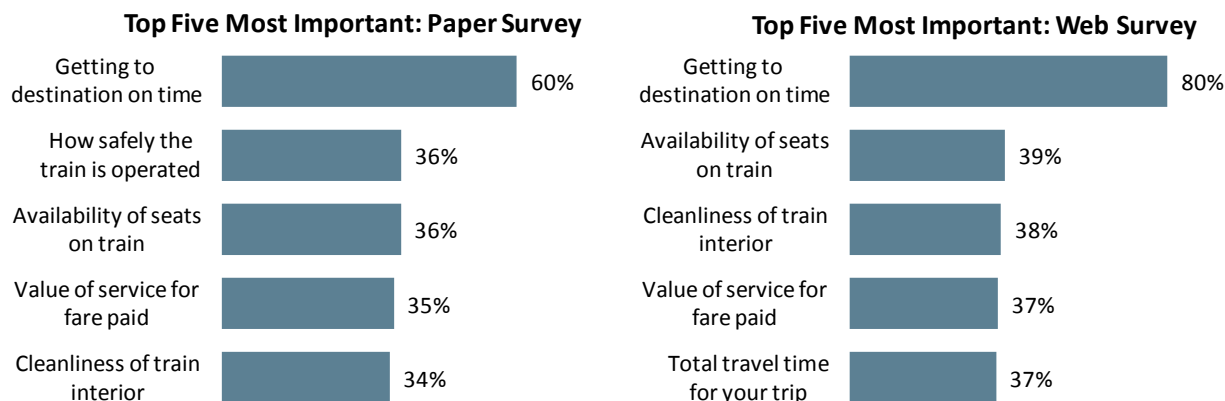


Figure 2.16 shows the attributes most frequently ranked as the top five most important by time period and direction of travel; Figure 2.17 shows these attributes by ticket type. Getting to the destination on time was rated as important the most often by respondents.

Figure 2.16: Most Important Attributes by Time and Direction

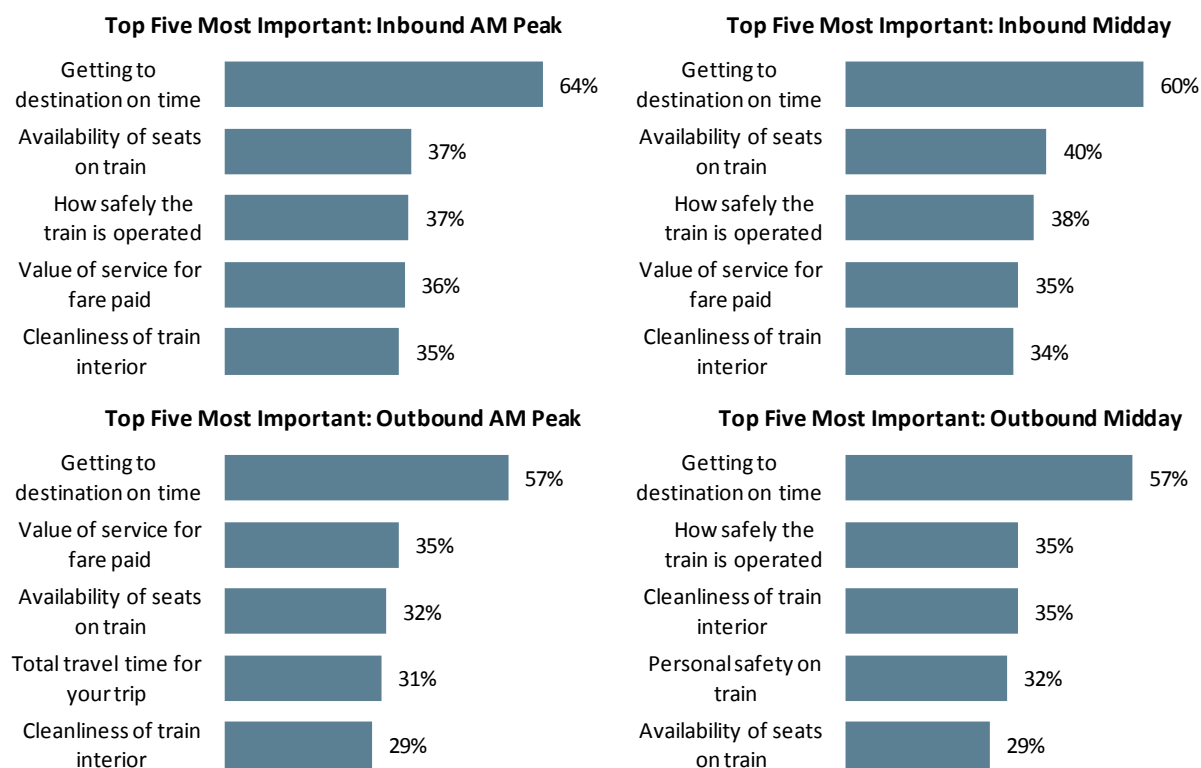


Figure 2.17: Most Important Attributes by Ticket Type

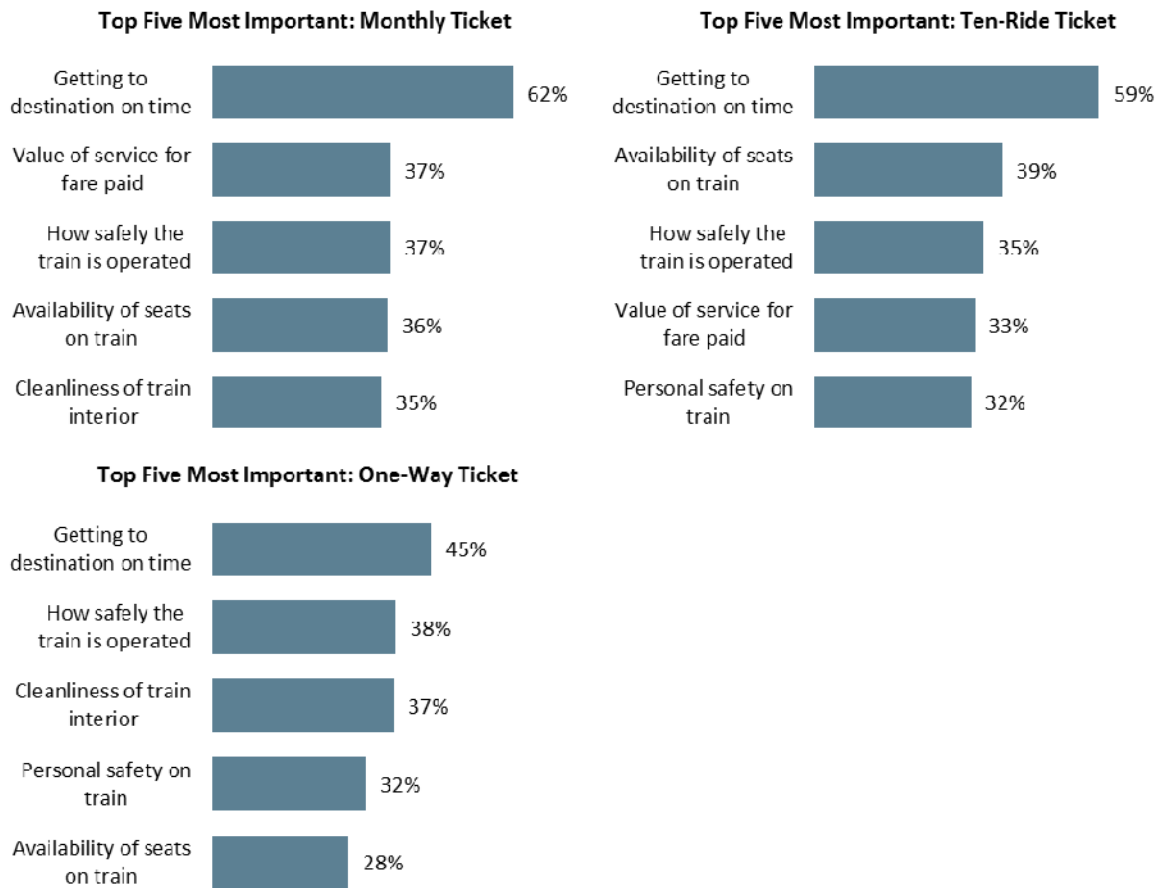


Table 2.55 and Table 2.56 underscore the impact of on-time performance on overall satisfaction. Both tables show a cross tabulation of getting to destination on-time with how satisfied customers are with Metra service and value overall. Cells with higher values are in darker colors. Table 2.55 shows that 28% people who are very dissatisfied with getting to their destination on time are also very dissatisfied with Metra overall, and **no** respondents who indicated they are very satisfied with on time performance are unsatisfied with Metra overall.

Table 2.55: Correlation between On-Time Service and Overall Satisfaction

		Metra Overall			
		Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Getting to destination on time	Very Dissatisfied	28%	32%	34%	6%
	Dissatisfied	4%	25%	64%	6%
	Satisfied	1%	5%	76%	18%
	Very Satisfied	0%	1%	39%	59%

The relationship between on-time performance and perceived value for fare paid is similar to the previous table. Table 2.56 shows that 35% of respondents who indicated they are very unsatisfied with on-time services are also very unsatisfied with the value of Metra service for the cost of the fare. Those who are very satisfied with on-time performance are very satisfied with the value for a ticket (51%).



Table 2.56: Correlation between On-Time Service and Overall Value

		Value of Service for Fare Paid			
		Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Getting to destination on time	Very Dissatisfied	35%	27%	32%	5%
	Dissatisfied	10%	29%	52%	9%
	Satisfied	2%	13%	68%	16%
	Very Satisfied	1%	4%	44%	51%

2.3.2 Derived Importance

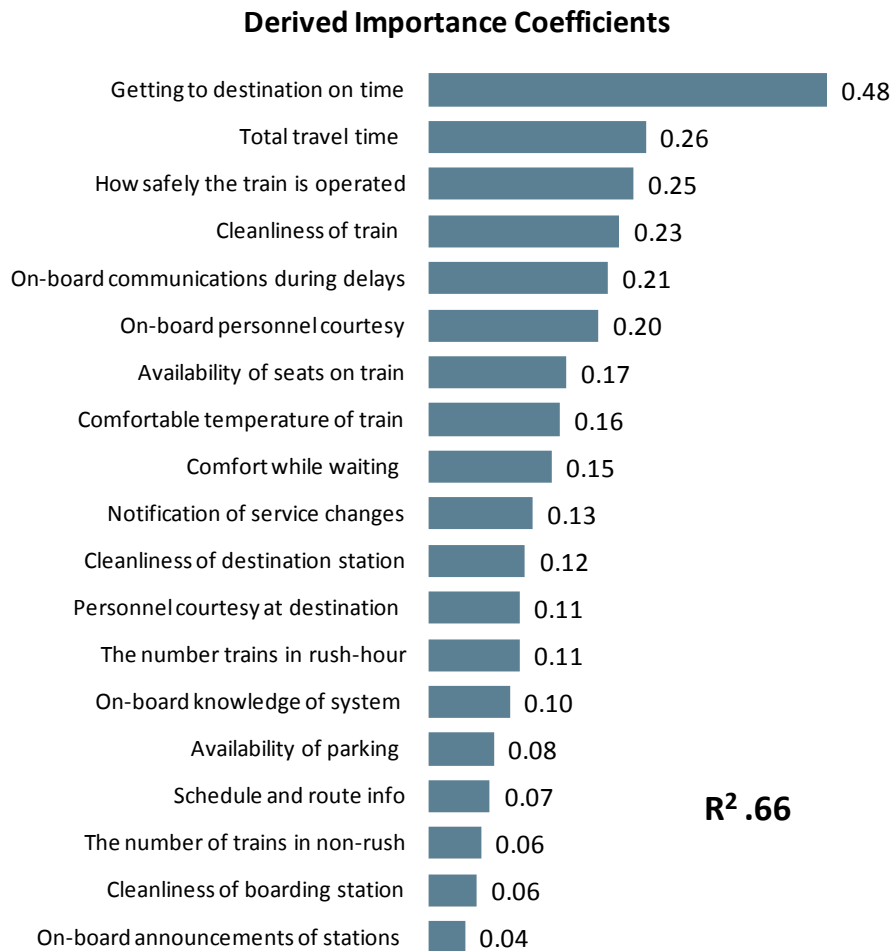
Derived importance measures are arrived at through statistically testing the strength a collection of attributes have on influencing overall satisfaction. Derived importance can help further isolate the underlying factors driving overall customer satisfaction that a respondent may not explicitly state.

For this analysis, individual service attributes were modeled as predictors that influence overall satisfaction with Metra services. A multiple regression model was produced using a forward step iterative process. In this approach, the service attribute with the highest correlation with the dependent variable is the first to be entered into the equation. Additional variables are then added if they are shown to significantly influence overall satisfaction. If any variable does not increase the overall predictive power of the model is eliminated from the equation. For example, through repeated iterations it was found that ‘Personal security while purchasing tickets’ and ‘Signs directing to CTA and Pace transfers’ did not significantly influence a customer’s overall satisfaction with service and thus were not included in the final model. The final model is parsimonious in that it only contains attributes that significantly influence overall satisfaction.

Other service attributes were removed during the analysis when shown to be highly correlated with one another, and their effects on satisfaction could not be reliably tested in the final model. For example, many of the Safety and Security attributes tended to be highly correlated with one another and thus only one of the correlated attributes from that category was included in the final model. The final regression model yielded 19 of the 39 attributes that significantly influence overall satisfaction, shown in Figure 2.18.



Figure 2.18: Derived Attribute Importance Coefficients



The horizontal axis in Figure 2.18 displays the coefficient values for each attribute’s impact on overall satisfaction. The model showed excellent explanatory power with an adjusted R² of .66, reasonably high for this type of transit service research. This value means 66% of the responses can be explained by this model. The most important derived attributes that influence overall satisfaction are unsurprising and generally consistent with stated importance. Getting to your destination on time has almost twice the influence on overall satisfaction than the next most important variable, total travel time, reflecting that on-time quick performance is the main reason why respondents use Metra. Train safety and cleanliness also ranked very high. On-board courtesy and communications also ranked as highly important.

As a note; the number of trains that operate at peak and off-peak periods have relatively low levels of derived importance in this model. Although it would make intuitive sense that the number trains on peak and off-peak periods would also be ranked as extremely important, analysis shows that respondents tend to think of these two attributes in a similar way as they do to on-time service and total travel time; i.e. statistical correlation between these attributes means the effects they have on overall satisfaction cannot be entirely separated from one another. However, on-time performance and total travel time were more highly correlated with overall satisfaction than the number of trains in peak or off-peak. Although correlation was found between these attributes, it was still below the threshold to eliminate the attributes from the model. Should the attributes getting to the



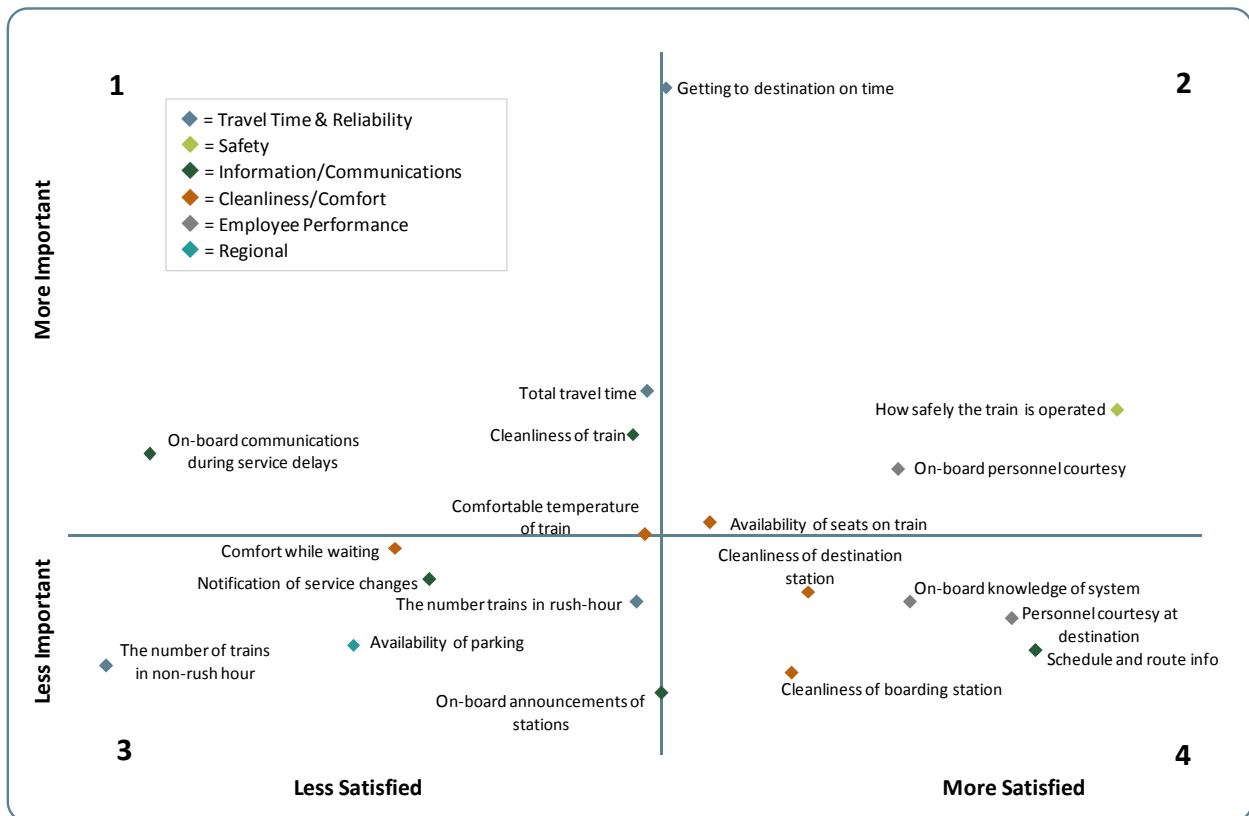
destination on-time and total travel time be removed from the model, it is likely these attributes would have much larger coefficients.

Figure 2.19 is a quadrant chart showing customer satisfaction and derived customer importance. Quadrant charts are useful way to visualize service priorities by placing customer satisfaction into context with overall importance. The vertical (Y) axis represents the derived importance of the service attributes. Derived importance increases from the bottom of the chart to the top. The horizontal (X) axis represents the portion of respondents who indicated they were at least 'satisfied' with each service attribute. The vertical line that travels through the center of the chart is the average satisfaction (83%) that respondents reported across all attributes. The horizontal line that travels through the chart represents the average value for the importance coefficients derived across all attributes. The chart can be interpreted by noting the values in the four corners, each demarking a single quadrant bounded by the average importance and satisfaction lines.

Table 2.57: Understanding a Quadrant Chart

Quadrant	Location	Satisfaction Level	Importance	Action
1	Top left	Relatively low	Relatively high	Attributes for improvement
2	Top right	Relatively high	Relatively high	Attributes to maintain
3	Bottom left	Relatively low	Relatively low	Attributes to monitor
4	Bottom right	Relatively high	Relatively low	Attributes with no immediate action

Figure 2.19: Key Drivers of Satisfaction Quadrant Chart



Attributes found in the top left quadrant (#1) in Figure 2.19 are below average in satisfaction ratings and above average in importance. Most of these attributes are just barely below the average satisfaction, with the exception of on-board communication during service delays. On-board



communication of delays is a top five driver of overall satisfaction with Metra but among the lowest in terms of satisfaction with an attribute. Total travel time, cleanliness of train, and comfortable temperatures are also in this quadrant and it is worth prioritizing improvements these attributes.

In the top right quadrant (#2), attributes that are above average in importance and above average in satisfaction should be viewed as a top priority to maintain and strengths to communicate to customers. Metra customers feel on-board personnel courtesy and availability of seating have above average importance and satisfaction levels. It should be noted though that the most important attribute—getting to the destination on time—rates only marginally above average on satisfaction. Although all attributes located above average importance deserve careful consideration, attributes within quadrant #1 are where attention should be first directed.

Metra should also monitor the attributes in quadrant #3, which have lower levels of satisfaction and could become important in the future.

The results of this weighted satisfaction quadrant should, on the whole, be encouraging for Metra. Customers are largely satisfied with the most important services a commuter rail should offer. Where dissatisfaction exists, the adjustments required are small and represent only ‘fine tuning’ rather than any kind of major overhaul of the system or service.

2.4 Customer Attitudes and Loyalty

Respondents were also asked to give opinions about specific policies, service preferences and schedule details that may influence their travel choices. Respondents also reported their expectations of Metra’s services as well as their loyalty as a customer.

2.4.1 Customer Attitudes

In most cases where respondents must travel earlier than normal, Metra remains a viable travel option; however, customers who must stay later than normal were substantially less likely to agree that they would take Metra. Most interesting is the proportion of respondents who leave earlier than they otherwise might to claim a parking spot (72%). This proportion is similar across access modes. Because customers driving to Metra make up over 50% of all respondents, this means a large portion of Metra’s ridership alter their travel behavior to continue using their cars to access the service.

Customers on the Milwaukee District – North line are the least likely to agree that they need to leave early to find a parking space, while Rock Island customers are the most likely to report this behavior (Table 2.58). More North Central Service customers than customers of other lines felt they could not take Metra if they needed to leave earlier or later. Heritage Corridor customers were the least likely to feel they could take Metra if they needed to return home at a later time. Those traveling outbound in the AM Peak are less likely to feel they can take Metra if they have to be at work early (Table 2.59).



Table 2.58: Customer Attitudes towards Personal Scheduling and Metra Use by Line

% agree	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
I take an earlier train than necessary in order to find a parking space	71%	78%↑	70%	67%	73%	75%	72%	73%	56%↓	69%	76%	72%
I don't take Metra when I need to be at work early	19%	18%	22%	29%↑	14%↓	14%	15%	16%	34%↑	36%↑	14%↓	18%
My work schedule does not require me to be at the same workplace every day	20%	17%↓	13%↓	11%↓	21%	21%	19%	24%	34%↑	16%	23%	22%
I don't take Metra if I have to work late, or to attend an evening class, appt or entertainment	33%	37%	41%	65%↑	35%	27%↓	29%	31%	41%↑	46%	36%	34%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.59: Customer Attitudes towards Personal Scheduling and Metra Use by Time/Direction

% agree	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
I take an earlier train than necessary in order to find a parking space	72%	74%	70%	72%	72%
I don't take Metra when I need to be at work early	18%	12%↓	30%↑	13%	18%
My work schedule does not require me to be at the same workplace every day	19%↓	30%↑	25%	37%↑	22%
I don't take Metra if I have to work late, or to attend an evening class, appt. or entertainment	35%	31%	41%↑	28%↓	34%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.60: Customer Attitudes towards Personal Scheduling and Metra Use by Ticket Type

% agree	Monthly	Ten-Ride	One-Way	Circuit Ride Free Permit	Other	Overall
I take an earlier train than necessary in order to find a parking space	73%	71%	70%	58%	78%	72%
I don't take Metra when I need to be at work early	16%	19%	26%	31%	25%	18%
My work schedule does not require me to be at the same workplace every day	11%	41%	48%	36%	12%	22%
I don't take Metra if I have to work late, or to attend an evening class, appt. or entertainment	31%	42%	34%	28%	45%	34%

The next three tables show customer attitudes towards Service and Savings by line, by time/direction, and by ticket type. Only 32% of customers believe they are saving money when using Metra instead of other means of travel. Forty percent of respondents indicated the price of gas influences their decision to use Metra, and quiet cars seem to be widely liked.



Table 2.61: Customer Attitudes towards Service and Savings by Train Line

% agree	ME	RI	SWS	HC	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Overall
Conductors on my train are thorough when collecting fares/checking tickets	83%	87%↑	87%	80%	85%	88%↑	87%	85%	67%↓	87%	81%	83%
Quiet cars are good to have on my train	75%	68%	69%	65%	72%	74%	72%	72%	58%↓	68%	75%	71%
The cost of gasoline has influenced my decision to use Metra	50%↑	44%	43%	36%	38%	38%	40%	38%	38%	45%	36%	40%
I save money using Metra relative to other methods of traveling	29%	28%	10%↓	21%↓	44%↑	32%	22%	34%	36%	17%↓	31%	32%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.62: Customer Attitudes towards Service and Savings by Time/Direction

% agree	Inbound: AM Peak	Inbound: Midday	Outbound: AM Peak	Outbound: Midday	Overall
Conductors on my train are thorough when collecting fares/checking tickets	83%	84%	77%↓	88%↑	83%
Quiet cars are good to have on my train	69%↓	77%↑	70%	80%↑	71%
The cost of gasoline has influenced my decision to use Metra	38%	43%	47%↑	48%↑	40%
I save money using Metra relative to other methods of traveling	33%	28%	36%	29%	32%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the Metra system average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level

Table 2.63: Customer Attitudes towards Service and Savings by Ticket Type

% agree	Monthly	Ten-Ride	One-Way	Circuit Ride Free Permit	Other	Overall
Conductors on my train are thorough when collecting fares/checking tickets	83%	85%	84%	88%	82%	83%
Quiet cars are good to have on my train	70%	72%	79%	63%	65%	71%
The cost of gasoline has influenced my decision to use Metra	38%	42%	53%	57%	59%	40%
I save money using Metra relative to other methods of traveling	34%	30%	24%	46%	68%	32%

2.4.2 Customer Loyalty and Expectations

Perhaps the ultimate vote of customer confidence in Metra can be summarized by Figure 2.20, which shows the proportion of customers who would recommend Metra to others.



Figure 2.20: Likelihood to Recommend Metra

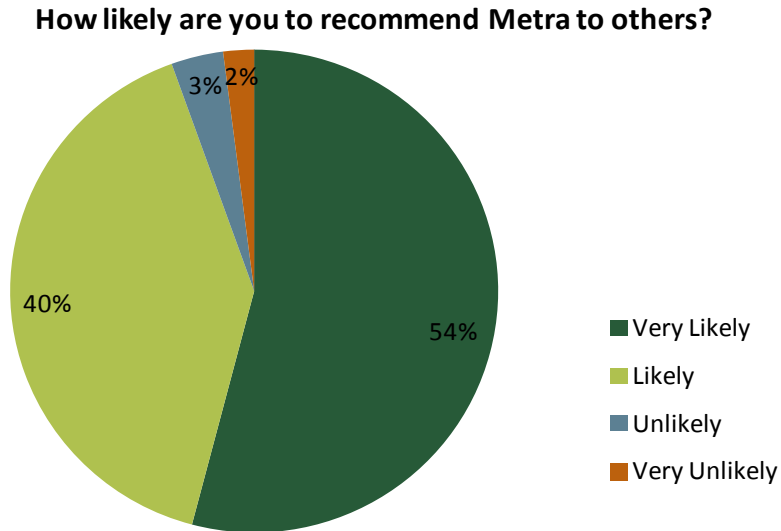


Figure 2.21 shows what customers expect from service performance across all respondents. Overall, 87% of customers feel that Metra is meeting their expectations in terms of general service performance.

Figure 2.21: Customer Expectations

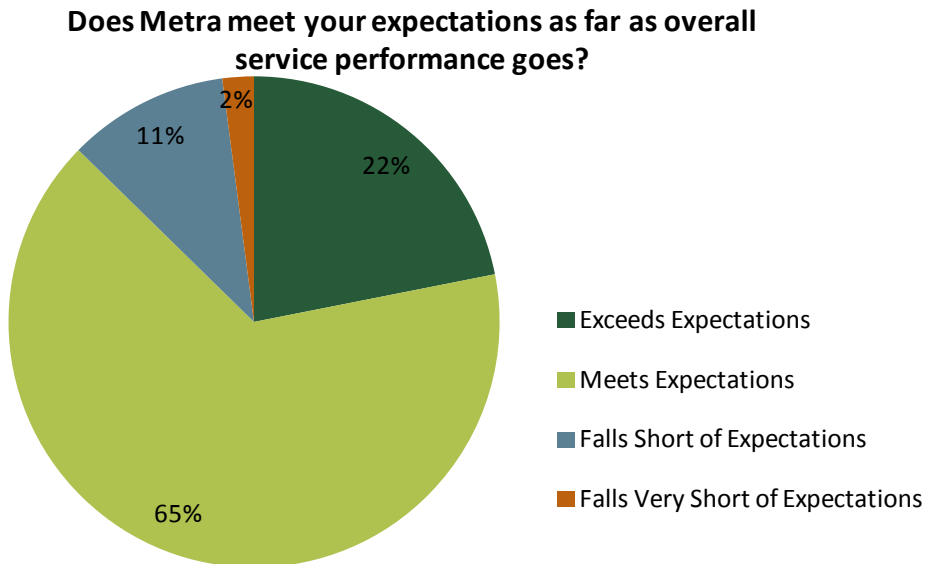


Table 2.64: Likelihood to Recommend Metra and Expectations by Line

	ME	HC	RI	SWS	BNSF	UP-W	MD-W	UP-NW	MD-N	NCS	UP-N	Total
Recommend Metra to others	95%	74%↓	95%	84%↓	94%↓	94%	94%	96%↑	96%	96%	96%↑	95%
Meets expectations	91%↑	45%↓	90%↑	61%↓	83%↓	87%	88%	91%↑	90%↑	84%	90%↑	87%

↑↓ indicates statistically significant difference from the average for an attribute at the 95% confidence level



3.0 NEXT STEPS

As Metra moves forward on the completion of the survey results from the 2011 Customer Satisfaction Survey, Metra has important information about the key areas to focus on to make small adjustments. As previously discussed, customers are largely satisfied with the most important services a commuter rail should offer. Where dissatisfaction exists, the adjustments required are small and represent only 'fine tuning' rather than any kind of major overhaul of the system or service. Below are the next steps given the completion of this report:

- Build upon existing market segment programs;
- Review strategies for infrequent users;
- Identify programs to attract a younger customer base;
- Increase presence in region to counter rider turnover;
- Report on communication enhancements to counter concerns;
- Communicate survey results to the various stakeholder segments;
- Develop customer research panels from email addresses provided via survey; and
- Work with the RTA, CTA, and Pace to conduct customer satisfaction survey every two years.

