

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Proposed 2020 budget includes no fare increase and \$480.5 million in capital spending**

CHICAGO (Oct. 8, 2019) – Metra today unveiled a proposed \$827.4 million operating budget that keeps expenses in check and does not require a fare increase and outlined \$480.5 million in proposed capital spending, including major investments in locomotives and railcars, stations, bridges and yards.

### **Capital budget**

The capital budget was significantly bolstered by the new state capital program, which over the next five years is expected to deliver nearly \$1.45 billion to Metra. When combined with \$961.8 million in expected federal formula funding, \$146 million from the RTA, \$26 million in fare revenue and \$4 million from other sources, Metra will have nearly \$2.6 billion to invest in its system over the next five years – an unprecedented amount.

In 2020, Metra expects \$205.2 million in state bond funds and \$73.7 million in what has been labeled state “pay-as-you-go” or “Paygo” funding – an annual allotment of funding tied to the state gas tax that will grow with inflation. Funding from federal (\$186.7 million) and local (\$14.9 million) sources provide additional capital funding in 2020, bringing the total to \$480.5 million.

The budget proposes to allocate \$331.1 million, or about two-thirds, of the 2020 capital funds to five major areas:

- **New railcars and new locomotives, \$138.8 million.** Metra currently has a request for proposals pending for as many as 400 new cars, and it has asked manufacturers to propose new designs that maximize capacity and add customer amenities. It also is buying some new remanufactured locomotives and has set aside some money to buy a prototype alternative fuel locomotive.
- **Locomotive and car rehabilitation, \$95.3 million.** Metra will continue its innovative and cost-efficient locomotive and car rehab programs. It also will fund new programs to overhaul 21 recently purchased Amtrak locomotives and upgrade 54 locomotives with more reliable AC traction motors.
- **Stations and parking, \$51.2 million.** Metra is undertaking major efforts to upgrade its stations, with an emphasis on improving ADA accessibility and ensuring that every station has a warming shelter. Major station projects included in the 2020 program include a new Auburn Park Station on the Rock Island Line and major upgrades to the 147<sup>th</sup> Street Station on the Metra Electric Line and Hubbard Woods on the UP North Line.

- **Yard rehabilitation, \$23.2 million.** Major projects are funded to expand the Western Avenue Yard that services trains on the Milwaukee District lines, the North Central Service and Heritage Corridor, and the California Avenue Yard that services trains on the UP lines. A lack of yard space is a factor limiting Metra's ability to add service.
- **Bridges, \$22.6 million.** Metra has nearly 500 bridges that are more than a century old. Funding will be used to design and construct the replacement of several bridges, including the next phase of the UP North bridge project involving the design for the replacement of bridges over 11 streets between Fullerton and Addison in Chicago.

## Operating budget

As it does every year, Metra searched for ways to control or reduce its operating costs to head off the need for a fare increase. This year it identified nearly \$6 million in efficiencies. In addition, it expects to save about \$7 million by not filling vacancies and about \$5 million by reducing overtime and other miscellaneous expenses.

Those \$18 million in reductions will help offset an expected \$23 million increase in operating expenses next year, including about \$7 million in new operating expenses associated with Positive Train Control (PTC), a federally mandated safety system, and about \$16 million in labor and various other operating expenses.

Therefore, Metra expects its overall operating budget to increase by \$5 million next year, from \$822 million in 2019 to \$827 million in 2020, a gain of 0.6 percent. Higher revenues from the regional transportation sales tax, which funds about half of Metra's operating budget, will cover that \$5 million and no fare increase will be needed.

The proposed 2020 budget will be the subject of a series of eight public hearings throughout the Chicago area. The schedule accompanies this release. Metra customers and members of the public are encouraged to attend and provide comments on the proposed budget.

Comments on the proposed budget can also be emailed to [2020budgetcomments@metrarr.com](mailto:2020budgetcomments@metrarr.com), faxed to 312-322-7094 or mailed to the Assistant Secretary to the Metra Board, Room 1300, 547 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL, 60661. Comments must be received no later than 24 hours after the last public hearing on Nov. 5. All comments received will be presented to Metra's Board of Directors prior to voting on the final budget in November 2019.

For more information about Metra's proposed 2020 budget, please visit [metrarail.com](http://metrarail.com).

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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 290,000 passenger trips each weekday.*

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## 2020 Metra budget public hearing schedule

All meetings will be from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

### **Monday, Nov.4**

#### **McHenry County**

Crystal Lake City Hall  
City Council Chambers  
100 W. Woodstock Street  
Crystal Lake

#### **Will County**

Will County Office Building  
County Board Room – 2nd Floor  
302 N. Chicago Street  
Joliet

#### **Kane County**

Kane County Government Center  
Building A – 1st Floor Auditorium  
719 S. Batavia Avenue  
Geneva

#### **City of Chicago**

Metra  
Board Room 13th floor  
547 W. Jackson Boulevard  
Chicago

### **Tuesday, Nov. 5**

#### **Lake County**

Mundelein Village Hall  
Village Board Room  
300 Plaza Circle  
Mundelein

#### **South Suburban Cook County**

East Hazel Crest Village Hall  
Village Board Room  
1904 W. 174th Street  
East Hazel Crest,

#### **DuPage County**

Clarendon Hills Village Hall  
Village Board Room  
1 N. Prospect Avenue  
Clarendon Hills

#### **North Suburban Cook County**

Hanover Park Police Department  
Community Room  
2011 Lake Street  
Hanover Park