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Regional Transportation Authority

METRA 2025 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION STUDY

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 Metra Customer Satisfaction Study offers updated insights into rider experiences and priorities across the commuter rail network. Conducted in partnership with the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), the study continues a coordinated regional effort to monitor satisfaction and guide service planning. The 2025 survey is the first to fully reflect post-pandemic travel patterns, capturing the evolving role of Metra for both weekday commuters and weekend travelers.

A total of 10,384 surveys were collected between February and April 2025 through systemwide postcard seat drops, postcard distribution and tablet intercept recruitment at downtown terminals, and online invitations. The sample was weighted and expanded to match March 2025 ridership by line, ensuring results are representative of the system's traveling population.

Riders continue to give Metra strong ratings on several key drivers of satisfaction. These include getting to their destination on time (90% in 2025 vs. 90% in 2022), having service available when and where it's needed (89% in 2025; new in 2025), courteous onboard staff (96% in 2025; new in 2025), accuracy of schedule and route information (92% in 2025; new in 2025), accuracy of real-time arrival information (86% in 2025; new in 2025), and cleanliness of the train interior (88% in 2025 vs. 87% in 2022).

The 2025 survey highlights notable demographic and behavioral shifts. Compared to 2022, an increased share of riders are reported to be age 65 or older, live in smaller households, report having no vehicle access, ride less frequently, and have a long history with Metra—more riders in 2025 reported riding for over 20 years. These patterns suggest that some older, less frequent, and more leisure-oriented riders who may have stepped away during the pandemic may be returning, after being less represented in the 2022 survey.

Taken together, the results indicate that Metra is delivering consistently strong service in the areas riders value most while adapting to shifting travel behaviors. Continued investment in reliability, customer service, and accurate travel information, alongside responsiveness to changing trip patterns and access needs, will be key to sustaining high satisfaction and reinforcing Metra's role as a trusted part of the regional transportation network.

2.0 OBJECTIVES & BACKGROUND

This report presents findings from the 2025 Metra Customer Satisfaction Study, conducted in March 2025 on behalf of Metra and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). The survey builds on the most recent wave conducted in 2022 and is the first to fully reflect post-pandemic travel conditions across the commuter rail system.

The primary goal of the study is to assess how riders perceive Metra's service quality and customer experience, providing insights to support performance monitoring, planning decisions, and system improvements. As part of a coordinated regional effort, Metra's results are designed to align with comparable surveys fielded by CTA and Pace, contributing to a six-county view of transit satisfaction and equity.

The 2025 survey was conducted during a period of ongoing change for Metra and the broader regional transit network. Ridership patterns have continued to shift since 2020, with total boardings in 2024 still trailing pre-pandemic figures. However, weekend ridership on the UP-North and UP-Northwest lines has now surpassed 2019 levels, highlighting evolving travel habits.[1] Throughout 2024, Metra introduced a streamlined fare structure and advanced efforts toward a regional rail model aimed at offering more frequent, all-day service—not just during traditional commute hours. These developments occurred as the agency also faced increasing fiscal uncertainty, with federal pandemic relief funding set to run out by 2026.

To ensure a broad and representative sample of Metra riders, the survey used a combination of digital and in-person outreach. A systemwide postcard seat drop placed 20,000 postcards on trains during the final week of March and trained surveyors distributed postcards and conducted surveys using tablets at downtown terminals. In addition, Email invitations were sent to nearly 197,000 Ventra users who had recently used Metra and opted into communications, along with 13,000 subscribers to Metra's rider newsletters. All materials included English and Spanish text. These efforts resulted in 10,384 complete surveys.

[1] Melissa Myer, "Regional transit ridership hits post-pandemic high in 2024; 11 percent jump from 2023," January 28, 2025, https://www.rtachicago.org/about-rta/press-releases/regional-transit-ridership-hits-post-pandemic-high-in-2024-11-percent-jump-from-2023.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

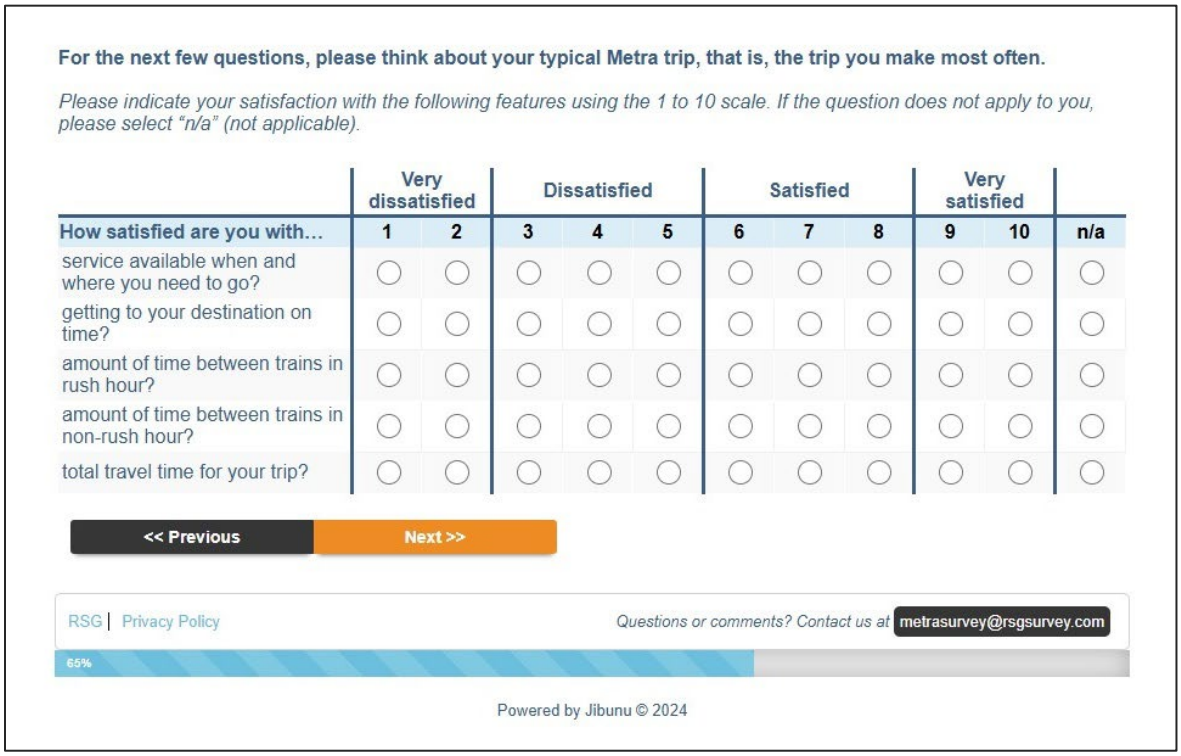
3.1 SURVEY DESIGN

The Metra Customer Satisfaction Survey closely mirrors the 2022 design. Maintaining this structure allows for reliable comparisons across years, with updates added to better capture current rider needs and experiences.

Following a similar format as the CTA and Pace surveys, the 2025 Metra survey began by asking respondents about their general Metra usage. This section included questions about which line they ride and which station they typically board at. These questions provided insight into customer satisfaction across different segments of riders.

At the core of the questionnaire were 15 Metra-specific satisfaction questions and 4 regional questions related to the six-county Chicagoland area. Although the 2025 survey did not formally group these items into service dimensions, they continued to reflect key themes such as service delivery, communication, safety, comfort, cleanliness, and staff performance. Respondents rated each item on a 10-point scale from “Very dissatisfied” to “Very satisfied,” with an option to select “not applicable” (“n/a”) where relevant. Figure 1 shows an example of how the satisfaction section appeared to online respondents.

FIGURE 1: SCREENSHOT OF ATTRIBUTE SATISFACTION RATING QUESTION IN METRA SURVEY



For the next few questions, please think about your typical Metra trip, that is, the trip you make most often.

Please indicate your satisfaction with the following features using the 1 to 10 scale. If the question does not apply to you, please select "n/a" (not applicable).

	Very dissatisfied		Dissatisfied			Satisfied			Very satisfied		
How satisfied are you with…	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**n/a**
service available when and where you need to go?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
getting to your destination on time?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
amount of time between trains in rush hour?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
amount of time between trains in non-rush hour?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
total travel time for your trip?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

The survey also asked riders about their likelihood of continuing to use Metra a year from now and whether they would recommend Metra service to others. These questions provide additional context for interpreting the satisfaction scores, as riders may express dissatisfaction with certain aspects of service while still feeling that Metra meets their overall expectations.

Finally, respondents were asked a series of demographic questions, such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, and income.

3.2 SAMPLING PLAN

The sampling plan was developed using Metra's average daily trip ridership data from October 2024 to determine postcard distribution targets for both on-train seat drops and in-person handouts. Seat drop allocations were calculated at the train line level, with a minimum of 200 postcards per line to ensure baseline coverage, and all counts rounded to practical bundle sizes for ease of distribution. Handout allocations were based on aggregated ridership for each downtown station, Union Station, Ogilvie, LaSalle, Millennium, and Van Buren, with no minimum set; the smallest allocation was 400 postcards at Van Buren. Postcards for both methods were distributed proportionally to ridership, ensuring coverage across the system in line with demand. The plan was organized around the train lines Metra uses to summarize its system network,

with separate targets set for on-train and station distributions. The number of postcards allocated to each downtown station and train line can be found in Appendix B.

3.3 SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Online Recruitment

The study team fielded the online survey from February 19 to April 17, 2025. Metra coordinated with their contractor Cubic Transportation Systems (CTS) to send the initial email invitation on February 19 to 196,850 Ventra users who had ridden Metra in the past 3 to 6 months and agreed to participate in outreach efforts. These emails were sent in several batches to avoid overwhelming the survey platform.

On February 27, the study team sent an additional round of emails to 13,076 riders subscribed to Metra's passenger magazine and other updates. The team also sent a reminder email on March 4 to non-respondents. Each email included a unique link to prevent multiple submissions.

The survey was programmed in Jibunu, allowing for a customized experience that improved data quality and reduced respondent fatigue. The online survey was available in English and Spanish.

Postcard Distribution

Before in-person recruitment began, surveyors and supervisors attended a training session on March 7, 2025, led by RSG staff to review processes and expectations. RTA's project manager also attended. Surveying at downtown stations was conducted on eight select dates in March 2025, consisting of 6 weekday days and 2 weekend days.

During the week of March 31, the team conducted a systemwide postcard seat drop, placing 20,000 postcards on trains. For both distribution methods, postcards were allocated by station and line based on prior ridership data to align sampling with passenger volumes. Survey staff also distributed postcards at Metra's five major downtown Chicago stations (Union, Ogilvie, LaSalle, Millennium, and Van Buren) targeting both arriving and departing passengers. Select surveyors also used tablets to administer the survey on-site, offering assistance when needed.

All postcards were double-sided, with English on one side and Spanish on the other. Figure 2 shows an example of the postcard used.

FIGURE 2: FRONT SIDE OF METRA POSTCARD

3.4 DATA CLEANING

Before weighting and analysis, the study team carefully cleaned the web survey data. Once processing and expansion were complete, the team merged variables that remained consistent with 2022 data. For questions with changed answer options, they collapsed categories into broader ranges to enable comparisons over time.

3.5 DATA WEIGHTING AND EXPANSION

The study team weighted and expanded the data to ridership counts to ensure that the survey sample accurately reflects Metra's traveling population. Initial weights were calculated by train line using March 2025 average daily ridership data provided by Metra, excluding Saturday, March 15, due to elevated ridership from St. Patrick's Day celebrations in downtown Chicago.

To increase representation, postcards were distributed both at all five downtown Metra stations and onboard all trains through postcard seat drops, with quantities allocated by line ridership. These intercept methods—station handouts, onboard seat drops, and tablet interviews—produced respondents who more closely reflect Metra's overall rider population, making them a stronger recruitment tool than email alone.

As in 2022, demographic differences were observed between intercept respondents and those recruited through email outreach. To address this, online respondents were reweighted to match the demographics of the intercept sample using an iterative proportional fit (IPF) algorithm based on household income, English proficiency, and race/ethnicity. The resulting IPF weights

were applied to online respondents, while intercept respondents retained their initial calculated weights.

To produce final expanded weights, each respondent's proportional weight was preserved and then adjusted so that the sum of all weights equaled Metra's average weekly ridership for March 2025. This approach ensures that results fairly represent the overall Metra rider population and incorporates weekend activity: the study team calculated an average daily ridership figure (weekday weighted by its share of the week, plus Saturday and Sunday) and multiplied it by seven to produce an "average week." A similar weekly weighting approach was used for all Service Boards to preserve consistency and methodological comparability.

All tabulations in this report use the expanded weights to accurately reflect Metra ridership.

TABLE 1: DATA EXPANSION TABLE

LINE	AVERAGE WEEKLY RIDERSHIP (MARCH 2025)	PERCENT OF RIDERSHIP	SAMPLE COLLECTED	SAMPLE PERCENT	AVERAGE WEIGHT
Heritage Corridor	6,573	1%	100	1%	0.76
Milwaukee District - North	64,246	7%	953	9%	0.78
Milwaukee District - West	54,446	6%	703	7%	0.89
Metra Electric	74,018	8%	754	7%	1.13
North Central Service	12,096	1%	270	3%	0.52
Rock Island	68,684	8%	700	7%	1.13
SouthWest Service	22,841	3%	233	2%	1.13
Union Pacific - North	146,804	16%	1814	17%	0.93
Union Pacific - Northwest	144,116	16%	2041	20%	0.81
Union Pacific - West	97,769	11%	1327	13%	0.85
BNSF	208,957	23%	1489	14%	1.62
Total	**900,557**	***100%***	***10,384***	***100%***	***1.00***

**Note: Final weighted proportion matched the ridership proportion At the 95% confidence level, the margin of error for the overall 2025 satisfaction results is ±0.53%.*

3.6 RESPONSE RATES

A total of 10,384 surveys were completed across all recruitment methods. Email invitations were sent to 13,076 Metra riders who had opted to receive Metra's passenger magazine and other news, resulting in 766 completed surveys, for a 5% response rate. In addition, the open web link was sent to 196,850 Ventra users who had ridden Metra in the past three to six months and agreed to participate in surveys, generating 6,898 completed surveys (4% response rate).

Distribution of 37,500 postcards on-board Metra trains and at downtown stations resulted in 2,561 completed surveys, corresponding to a 7% response rate. An additional 159 surveys were completed using tablets administered by field staff. In total, 43 surveys were completed in Spanish.

Table 2 presents the final counts of completed surveys by recruitment method.

TABLE 2: SURVEY COMPLETES BY RECRUITMENT AND COMPLETION METHOD

RECRUITMENT METHOD	TOTAL COMPLETES
Email	766
Postcard	2,561
Open Links	6,898
Tablet	159
Total	**10,384**

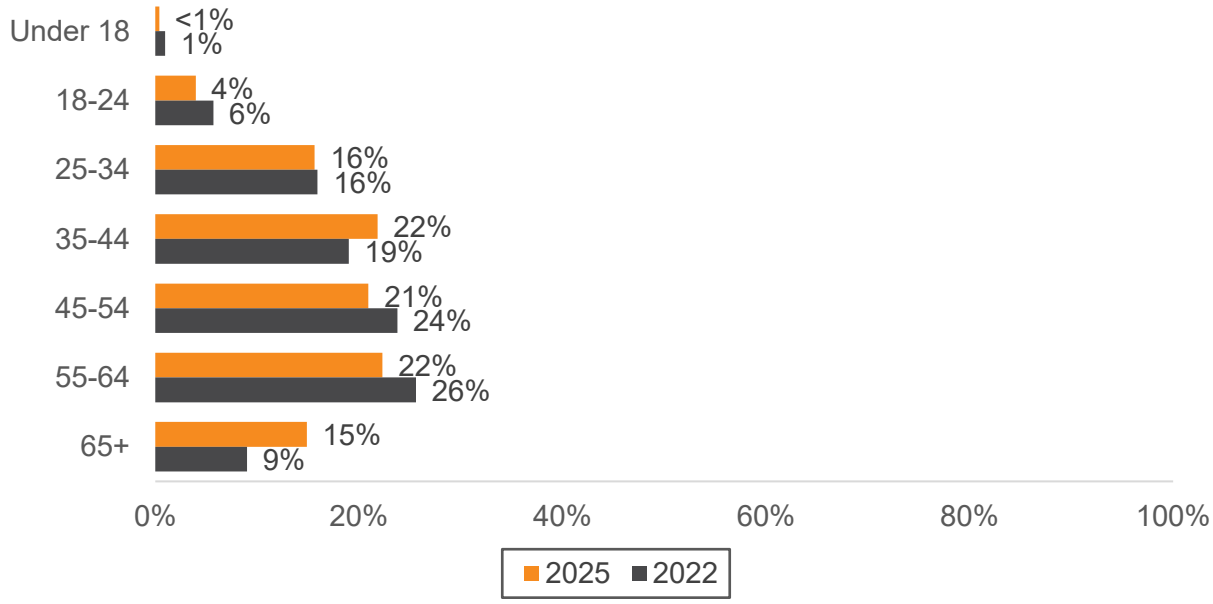
4.0 RESULTS

This section presents select results of the 2025 Metra Customer Satisfaction Survey such as travel behavior, satisfaction with service attributes, and demographic information. Where possible, 2025 results are compared to results from Spring 2022.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

The age profile of Metra riders in 2025 shows a modest shift toward older riders. The share of riders age 65 and older increased by 6 percentage points (15% in 2025, up from 9% in 2022). Meanwhile, the 55 to 64 group declined by 4 points (22%, down from 26%), and the 45 to 54 group dropped by 3 points (21%, down from 24%; Figure 3).

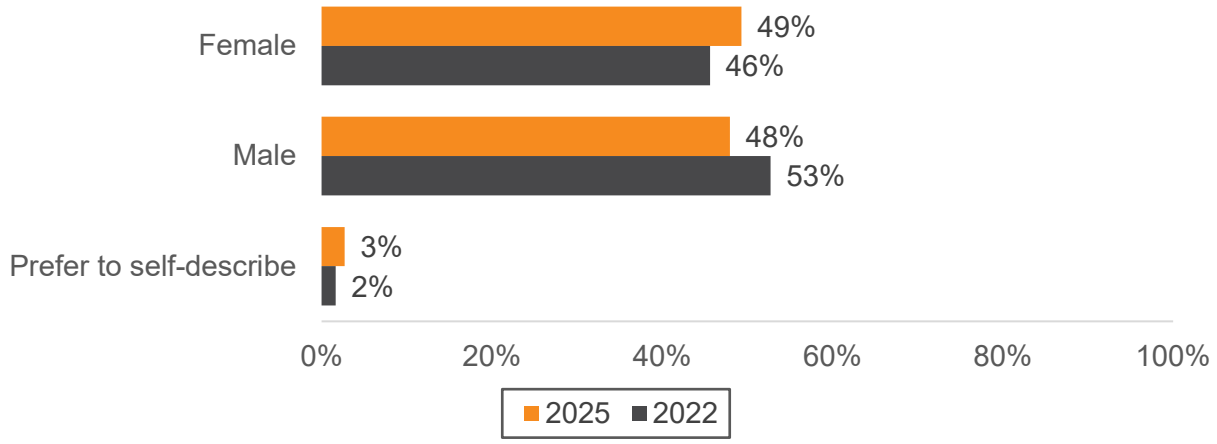
FIGURE 3: AGE BY YEAR



Total, n = 15,428; 2025, n = 10,384; 2022, n = 5,044

The gender distribution of Metra riders became more balanced in 2025. Female riders made up 49% of the sample, up 3 percentage points from 46% in 2022. The share of male riders declined by 5 points, from 53% to 48%. Riders who preferred to self-describe increased slightly, from 2% to 3% (Figure 4).

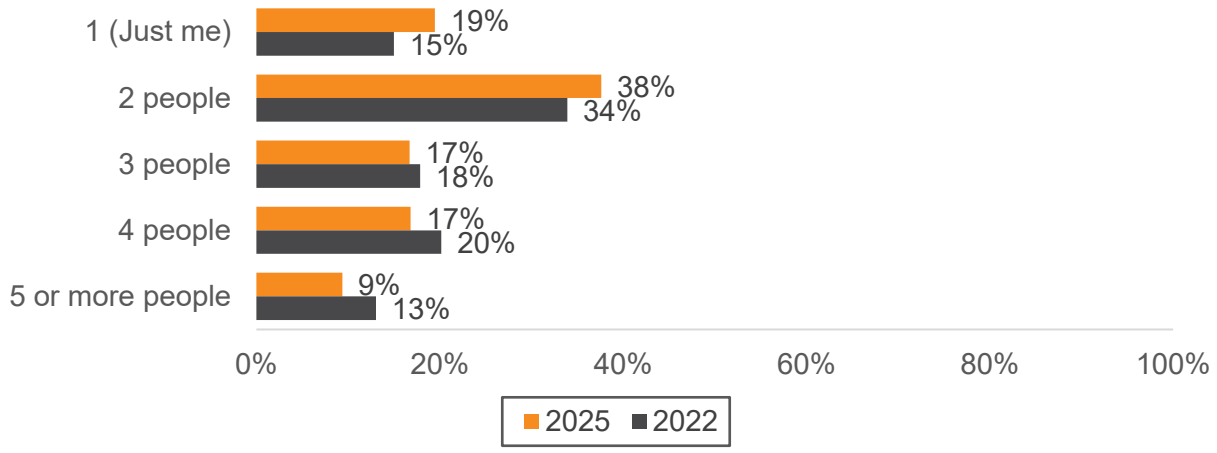
FIGURE 4: GENDER BY YEAR



Total, n = 15,428; 2025, n = 10,384; 2022, n = 5,044

Metra riders in 2025 were more likely to live in smaller households. The share living alone rose to 19% (up 4 percentage points) and those in two-person households increased to 38% (up 4 percentage points). Larger households declined, with five or more members falling to 9% (down 4 percentage points) and four-person households to 17% (down 3 percentage points; Figure 5).

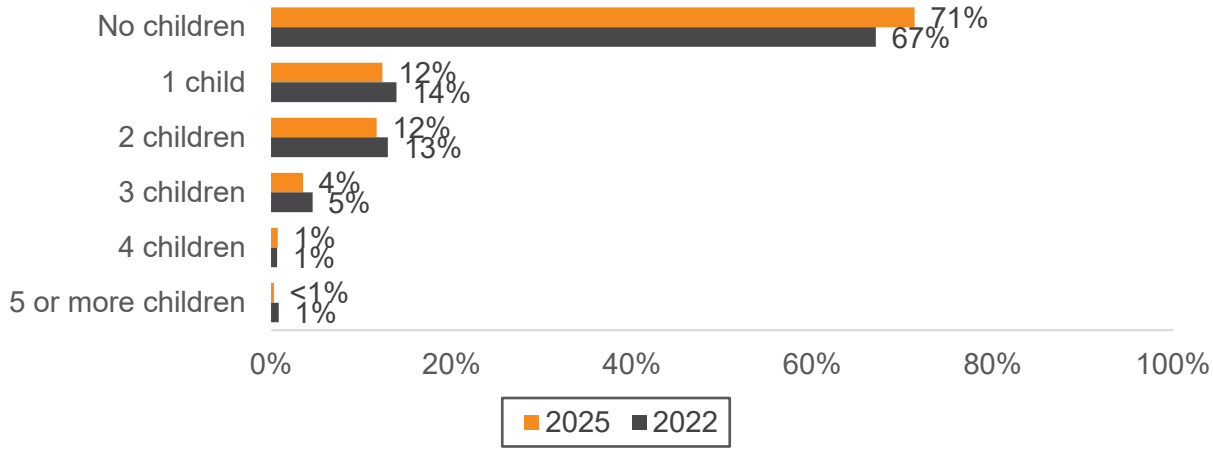
FIGURE 5: HOUSEHOLD SIZE BY YEAR



Total, n = 15,428; 2025, n = 10,384; 2022, n = 5,044

In 2025, a larger share of Metra riders reported having no children in the household, 71%, up 4 percentage points from 67% in 2022 (Figure 6).

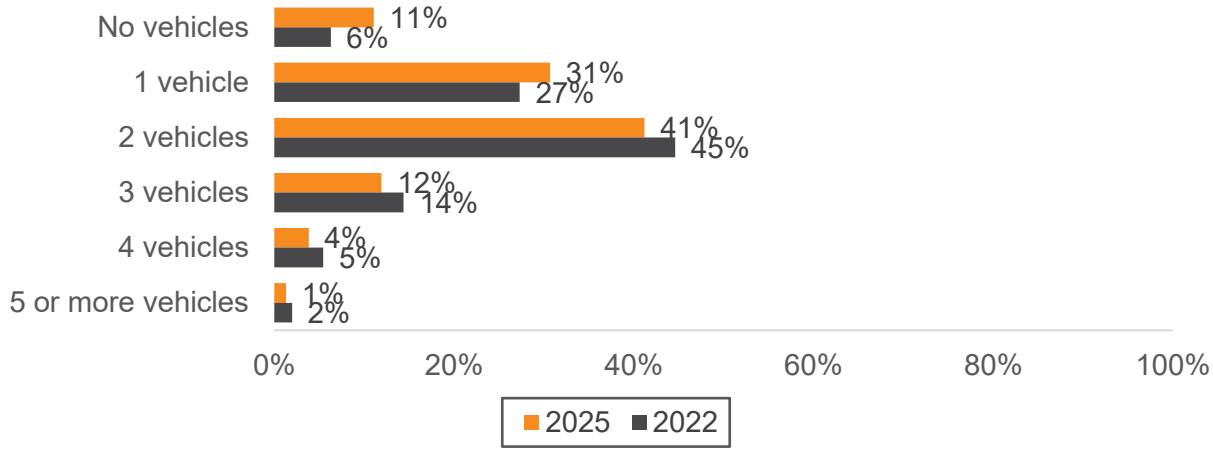
FIGURE 6: NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD BY YEAR



Total, n = 15,428; 2025, n = 10,384; 2022, n = 5,044

In 2025, Metra riders were slightly more likely to live in households with fewer vehicles. The share of riders with no vehicle access rose by 5 percentage points (11%, up from 6%), and one-vehicle households increased by 4 percentage points (31% vs. 27%:Figure 7).

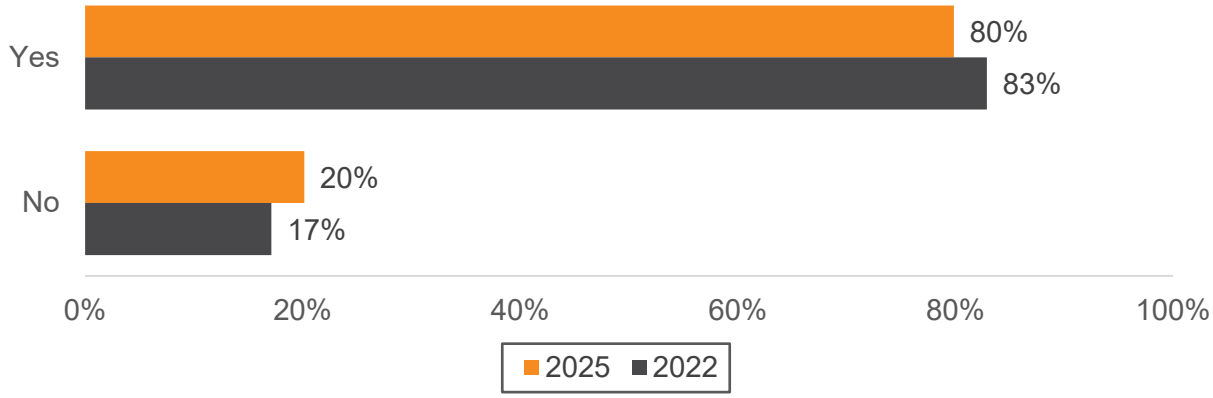
FIGURE 7: NUMBER OF VEHICLES IN HOUSEHOLD BY YEAR



Total, n = 15,428; 2025, n = 10,384; 2022, n = 5,044

The share of Metra riders with cars available for their typical trip declined slightly, dropping from 83% in 2022 to 80% in 2025, a 3 percentage point decrease. Meanwhile, the portion of riders without car access rose to 20%, up from 17% (Figure 8).

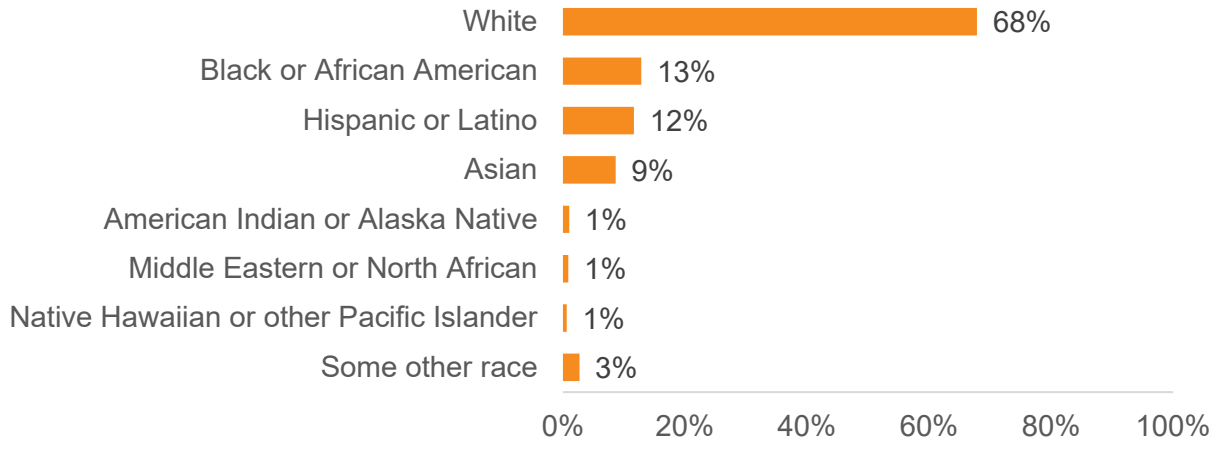
FIGURE 8: CAR AVAILABILITY BY YEAR



Total, n = 15,428; 2025, n = 10,384; 2022, n = 5,044

Figure 9 shows the racial and ethnic makeup of Metra riders in 2025. A majority, 68%, identified as White. Black or African American riders made up 13%, Hispanic or Latino riders accounted for 12%, and Asian riders represented 9%. All other groups, including American Indian or Alaska Native, Middle Eastern or North African (a new category in the 2025 survey), Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and those identifying as some other race, each comprised 3% or less of the sample.

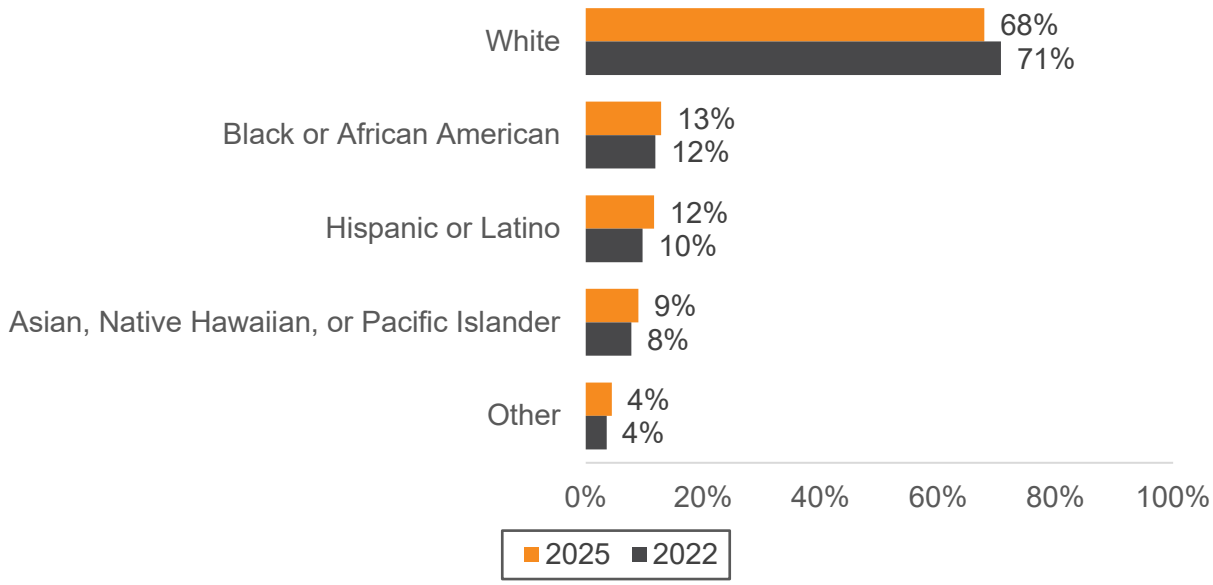
FIGURE 9: RACE AND ETHNICITY (2025 ONLY)



n = 10,185
**Note: Respondents could select all options that applied.*

Figure 10 shows how the racial and ethnic composition of riders shifted from 2022 to 2025, using the most detailed categories available given differences in survey response options across years. The proportion of riders identifying as White declined slightly, from 71% in 2022 to 68% in 2025. Small increases were observed among riders identifying as Black or African American (13%, up 1 percentage point), Hispanic or Latino (12%, up 2 points), and Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander (9%, up 1 percentage point). The share of riders selecting "Other" remained unchanged at 4%.

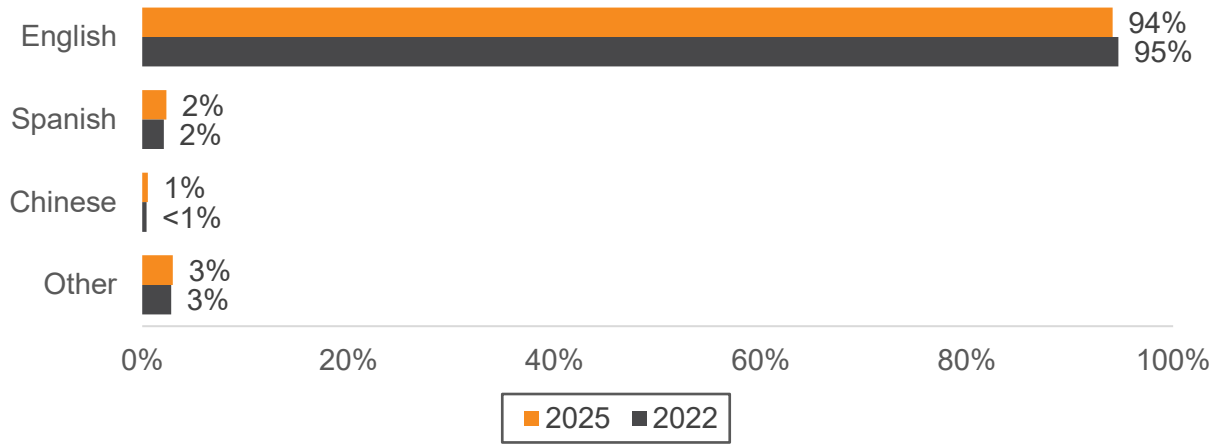
FIGURE 10: RACE AND ETHNICITY BY YEAR



Total, n = 15,229; 2025, n = 10,185; 2022, n = 5,044
**Note: Respondents could select all options that applied.*

In both 2022 and 2025, most Metra riders reported speaking English at home, 94% in 2025 (95% in 2022). The share of riders who speak Spanish remained unchanged at 2% and the share of riders who speak Chinese increased from less than 1% in 2022 to 1% in 2025 (Figure 11).

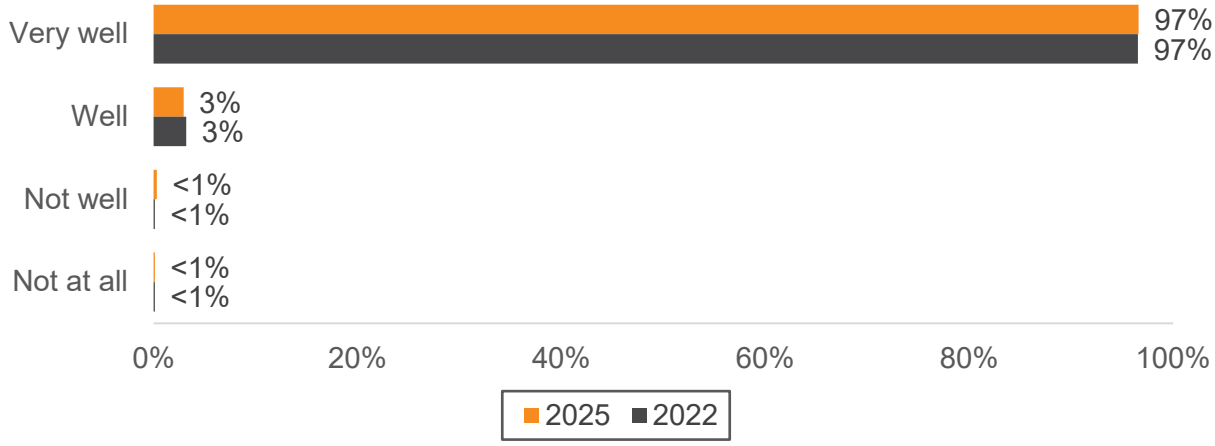
FIGURE 11: PRIMARY LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN HOUSEHOLD BY YEAR



Total, n = 15,428; 2025, n = 10,384; 2022, n = 5,044

English proficiency among Metra riders remained consistent between 2022 and 2025. In both years, 97% of riders said they speak English "very well," while an additional 3% reported speaking it "well." Less than 1% of riders indicated speaking English "not well" or "not at all" (Figure 12)

FIGURE 12: ENGLISH ABILITY BY YEAR

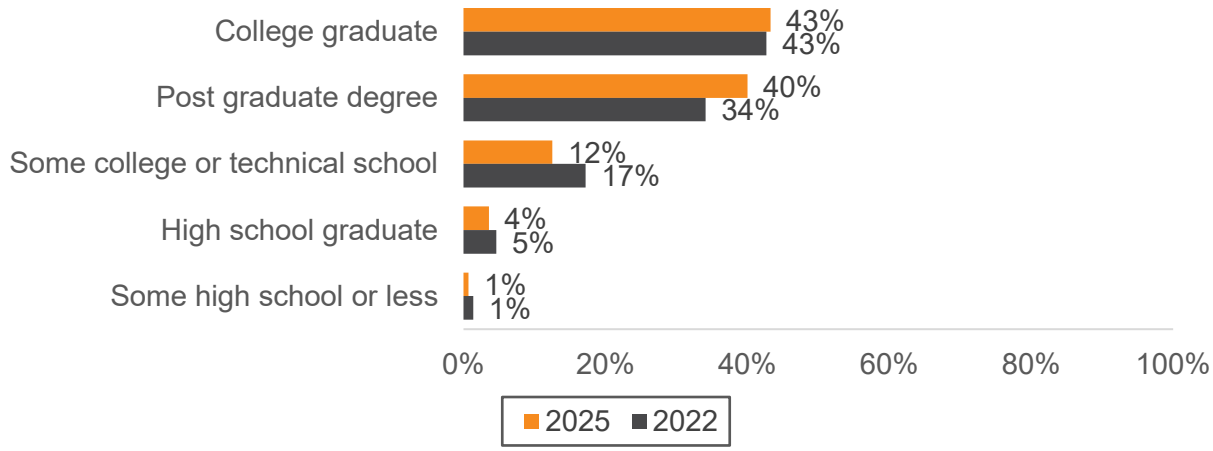


Total, n = 15,428; 2025, n = 10,384; 2022, n = 5,044

Figure 13 shows the education status of Metra riders across years. The share of riders with a postgraduate degree rose from 34% in 2022 to 40% in 2025, a 6 percentage point increase. Another 43% of riders held a college degree, unchanged from 2022.

Fewer riders reported some college or technical school (12%, down from 17%), and only 5% of the sample had a high school diploma or less, a share that remained largely consistent across both years.

FIGURE 13: EDUCATION STATUS BY YEAR

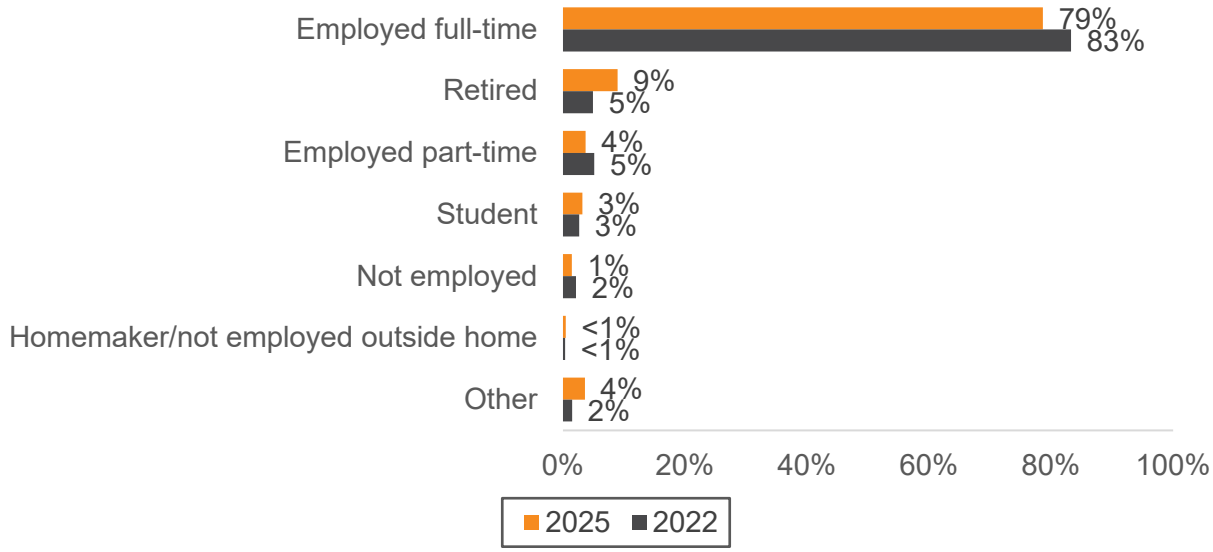


Total, n = 15,428; 2025, n = 10,384; 2022, n = 5,044

Full-time workers still make up the majority of Metra riders, though their share declined slightly in 2025. The portion of riders employed full-time dropped by 4 percentage points, from 83% in 2022 to 79% in 2025. At the same time, the share of retired riders grew from 5% to 9%.

Other employment categories saw minor shifts. The share of riders working part-time declined by 1 percentage point (to 4%), while students held steady at 3%. Riders identifying as not employed, homemakers, or selecting other remained a small part of the sample overall (Figure 14).

FIGURE 14: EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY YEAR

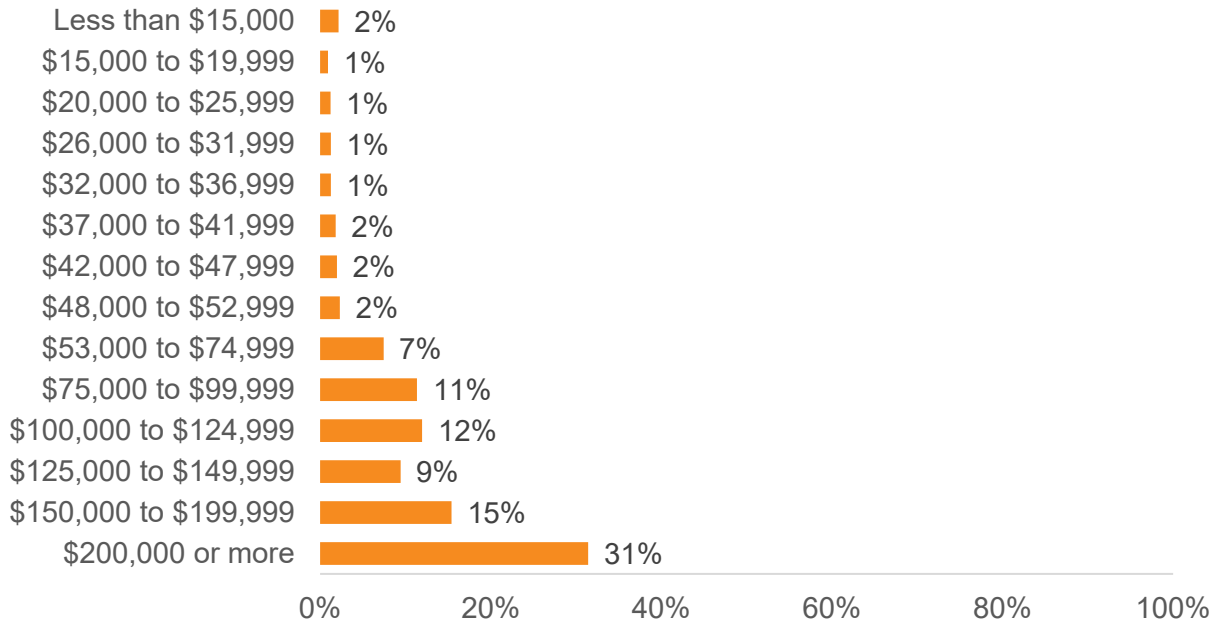


Total, n = 15,428; 2025, n = 10,384; 2022, n = 5,044

Nearly one in three Metra riders in 2025 reported annual household incomes of $200,000 or more, the largest single income group at 31%. Another 15% reported an annual household income between $150,000 and $199,999, and 12% fell in the $100,000 to $124,999 range.

By contrast, lower-income groups were much smaller with 2% of riders reporting household incomes under $15,000, and each income bracket below $50,000 accounting for 1 to 2% of riders (Figure 15).

FIGURE 15: HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2025 ONLY)

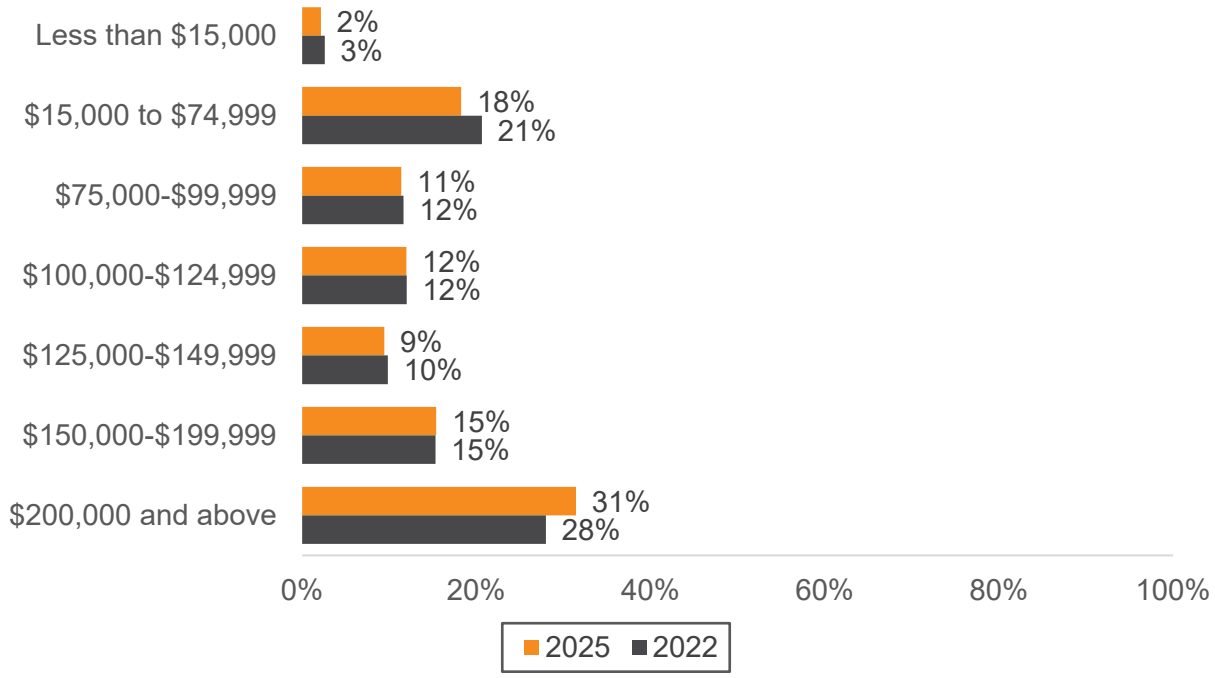


n = 9,475

Figure 16 shows household income at the most disaggregated level possible, based on changes in response options between 2022 and 2025. Riders in higher income brackets made up a larger share of the 2025 sample. The proportion earning $200,000 or more rose from 28% in 2022 to 31% in 2025.

The share of riders earning under $15,000 decreased slightly (2% in 2025 vs. 3% in 2022), and those earning $15,000 to $74,999 fell by 3 percentage points (18% vs. 21%). Middle-income brackets, between $75,000 and $199,999, remained relatively stable year over year, with small shifts in each category.

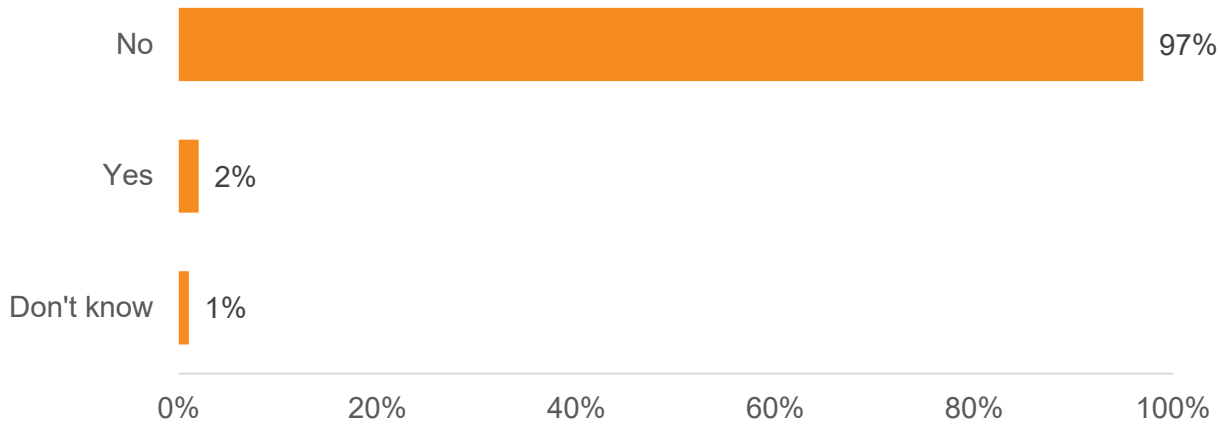
FIGURE 16: HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY YEAR



Total, n = 14,004; 2025, n = 9,475; 2022, n = 4,529

In 2025, 2% of Metra riders said their household receives benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). An overwhelming 97% reported not receiving SNAP, and 1% were unsure (Figure 17).

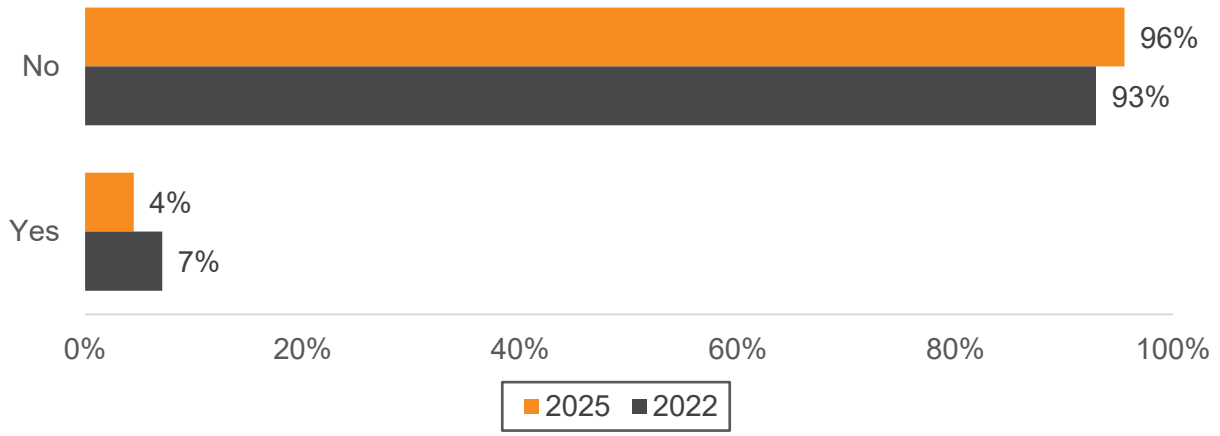
FIGURE 17: SNAP BENEFITS (2025 ONLY)



n = 9,475

Across both years, the majority of Metra riders reported not having a disability. In 2025, 4% of riders identified as having a disability, down slightly from 7% in 2022. Meanwhile, 96% of riders in 2025 said they did not have a disability, compared to 93% in 2022 (Figure 18).

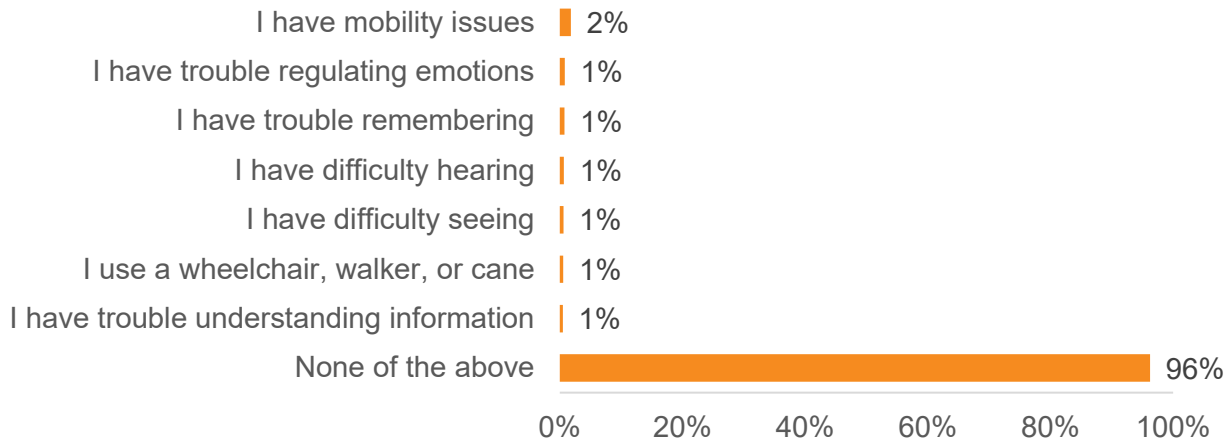
FIGURE 18: DISABILITY STATUS BY YEAR



Total, n = 15,418; 2025, n = 10,374; 2022, n = 5,044

A small share of riders reported having specific disabilities or conditions. Two percent indicated mobility issues, while 1% each reported trouble regulating emotions, trouble remembering, difficulty hearing, difficulty seeing, using a wheelchair, walker, or cane, or trouble understanding information (13%; Figure 19).

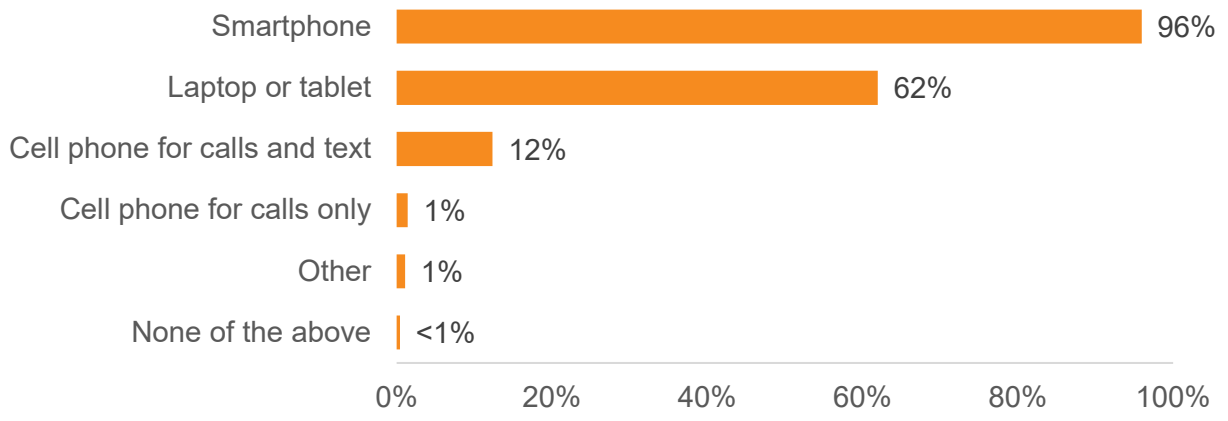
FIGURE 19: DISABILITY TYPE (2025 ONLY)



n = 10,384
**Note: Respondents could select all options that applied.*

Smartphone ownership is nearly universal among Metra riders, with 96% reporting access to one. A majority also reported using a laptop or tablet (62%). Far fewer riders reported using a basic cell phone—12% for calls and texts, and 1% for calls only. An additional 1% selected "Other," and virtually no riders indicated they lacked access to any of these devices (Figure 20).

FIGURE 20: USE OF MOBILE DEVICES (2025 ONLY)



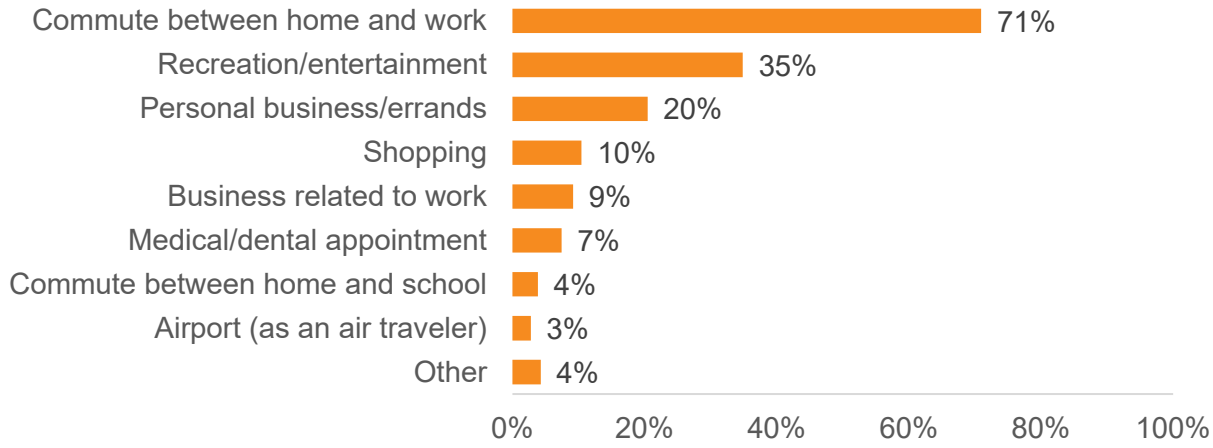
n = 10,384
**Note: Respondents could select all options that applied.*

4.2 GENERAL RIDERSHIP

The majority of Metra riders in 2025 reported using the service to commute between home and work, selected by 71% of riders. Recreation and entertainment was the next most common trip purpose at 35%, followed by personal business or errands at 20%.

Fewer riders reported using Metra for shopping (10%), business-related travel (9%), or medical and dental appointments (7%). A smaller share used Metra to commute to school (4%), travel to the airport (3%), or for other purposes (4%; Figure 21).

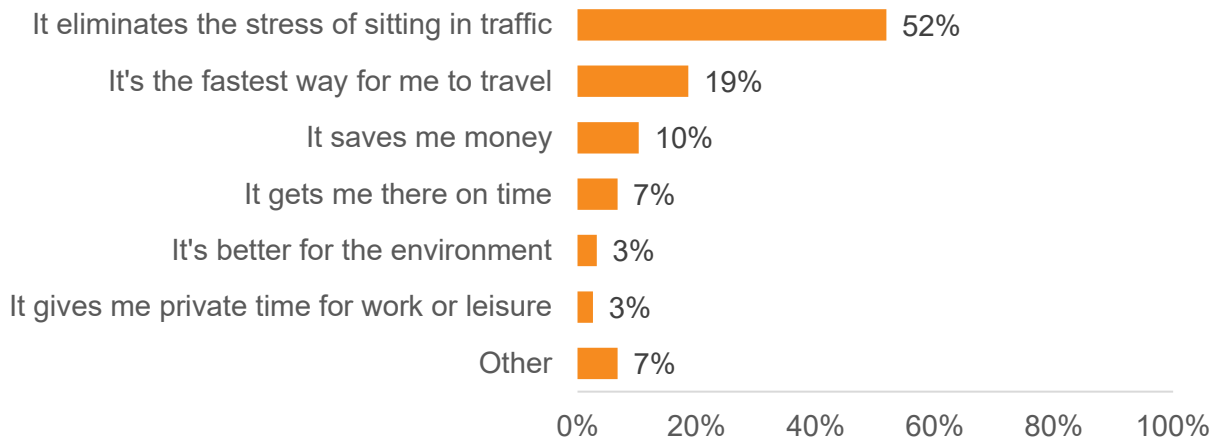
FIGURE 21: PURPOSES OF RIDING METRA (2025 ONLY)



n = 10,384
**Note: Respondents could select all options that applied.*

When asked why they ride Metra, a majority of riders (52%) said it eliminates the stress of sitting in traffic. Other top reasons include it being the fastest travel option (19%) and saving money (10%). Smaller shares of riders cited getting to their destination on time (7%), environmental benefits (3%), or having private time for work or leisure (3%). Another 7% selected “Other” as their primary reason for riding (Figure 22).

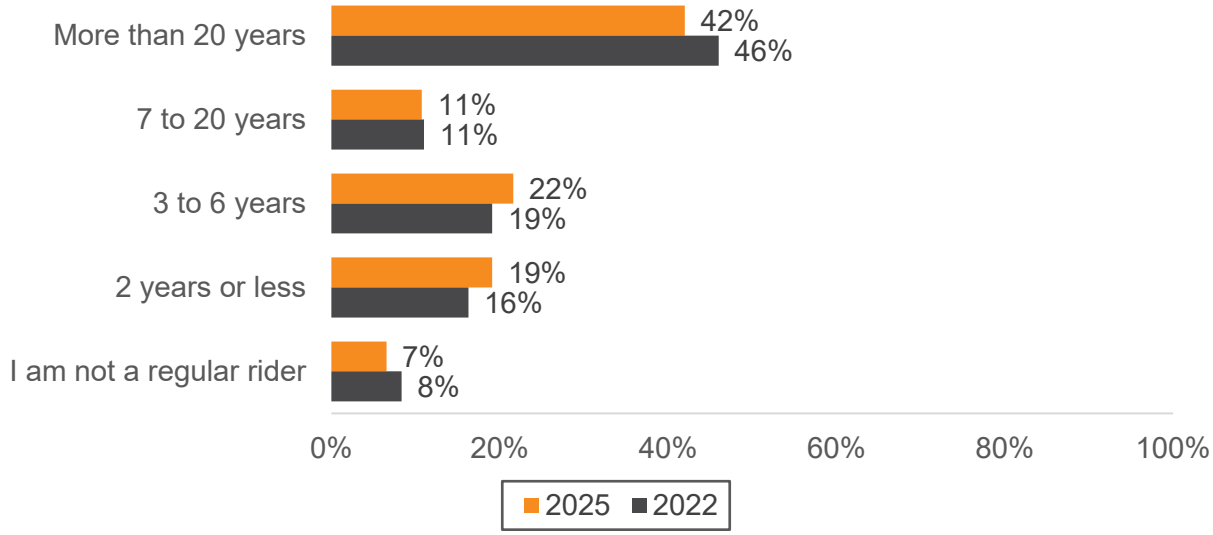
FIGURE 22: PRIMARY REASON FOR RIDING (2025 ONLY)



n = 10,384

Figure 23 shows that more Metra riders in 2025 have long-term experience with the system. The share of riders who have used Metra for more than 20 years declined by 4 percentage points, from 46% in 2022 to 42% in 2025. The share riding for 7 to 20 years stayed the same at 11%. Riders with 3 to 6 years of experience increased slightly from 19% to 22%, and those with 2 years or less rose from 16% to 19%. The share of riders who said they are not regular riders remained stable at 7% in 2025 and 8% in 2022.

FIGURE 23: REGULAR RIDER DURATION BY YEAR

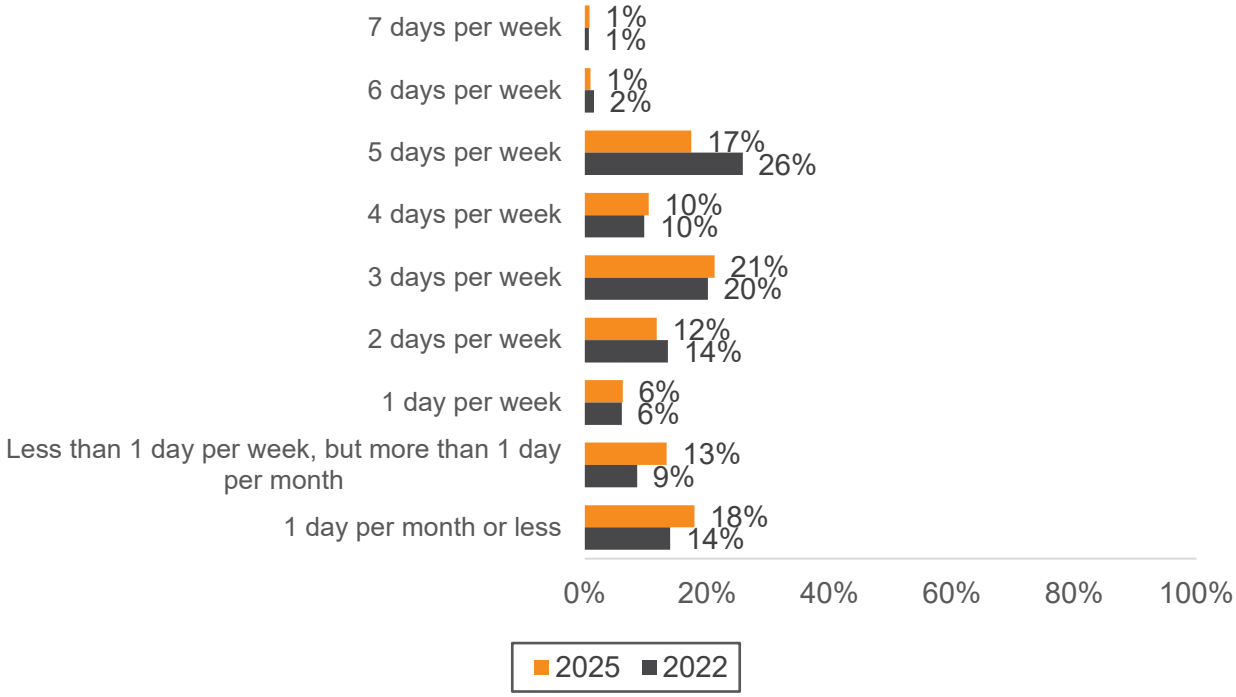


Total, n = 15,428; 2025, n = 10,384; 2022, n = 5,044

Figure 24 shows a shift toward less frequent Metra use in 2025. The share of riders commuting five days per week declined by 9 percentage points, from 26% in 2022 to 17% in 2025. Riders using Metra less than one day per week but more than once per month increased by 4 points (from 9% to 13%), and those riding one day per month or less rose by 4 points as well (from 14% to 18%).

The share of riders who take Metra three or four days per week remained relatively stable across years, and very few riders reported using Metra six or seven days per week in either year.

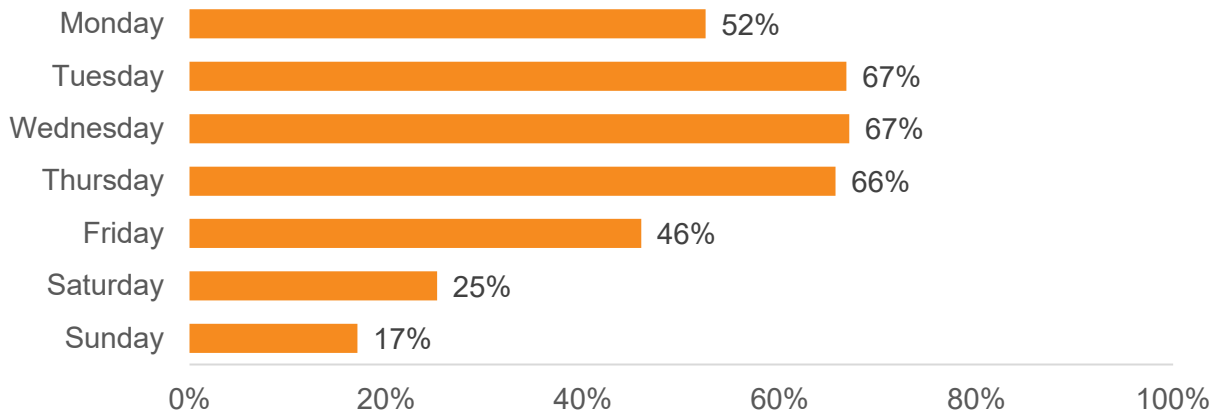
FIGURE 24: FREQUENCY OF METRA USE BY YEAR



Total, n = 15,428; 2025, n = 10,384; 2022, n = 5,044

Riders most often report traveling Tuesday through Thursday (67% Tuesday and Wednesday, 66% Thursday). Reported travel is somewhat lower on Monday (52%) and Friday (46%), and drops further on weekends (25% on Saturday and 17% on Sunday; Figure 25).

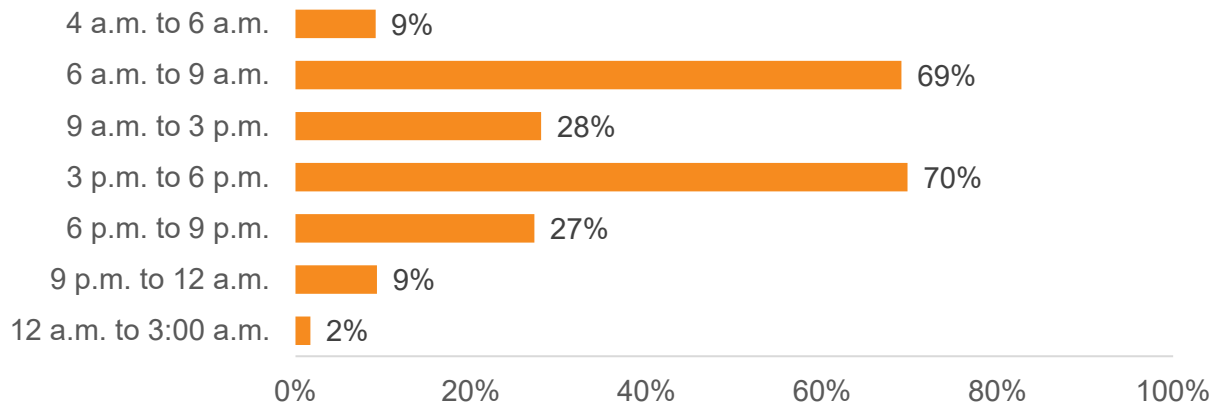
FIGURE 25: DAYS USED (2025 ONLY)



n = 10,384
**Note: Respondents could select all options that applied.*

Metra riders most often report traveling during traditional commute hours, with 69% riding between 6 to 9 a.m. and 70% between 3 to 6 p.m. Fewer ride midday (28% between 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.) or in the evening (27% between 6 to 9 p.m.). Small shares travel early morning (9% between 4 to 6 a.m.), late at night (9% between 9 p.m. to 12 a.m.), or overnight (2% between 12–3 a.m.; Figure 26).

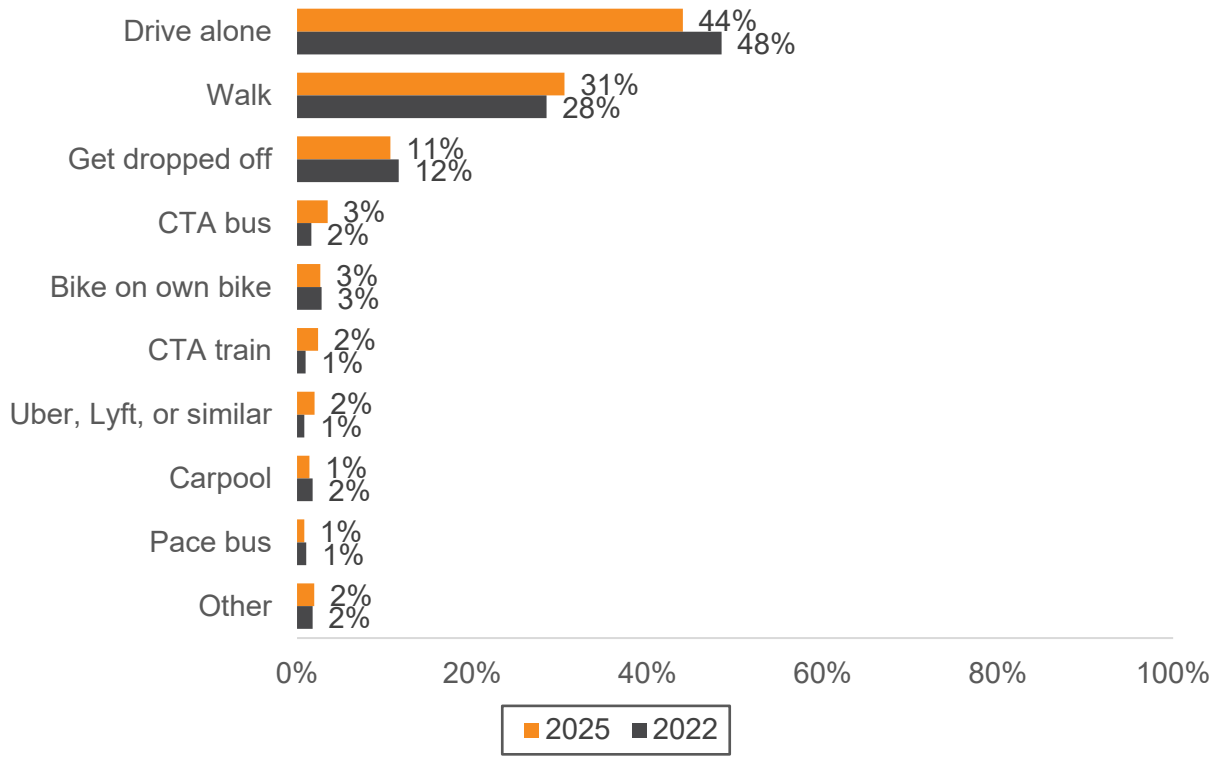
FIGURE 26: TIMES USED (2025 ONLY)



n = 10,384
**Note: Respondents could select all options that applied.*

Driving alone remains the most common way riders access Metra, though its share dropped slightly from 48% in 2022 to 44% in 2025. Walking increased by 3 percentage points, rising to 31%, while being dropped off declined slightly to 11%. Other access modes remained low and largely unchanged, with 3% biking on their own bike, 3% using CTA bus, 2% using CTA train, and 2% using Uber, Lyft, or similar services. Just 1% of riders reported using carpool, Pace bus, or other means to reach the train (Figure 27).

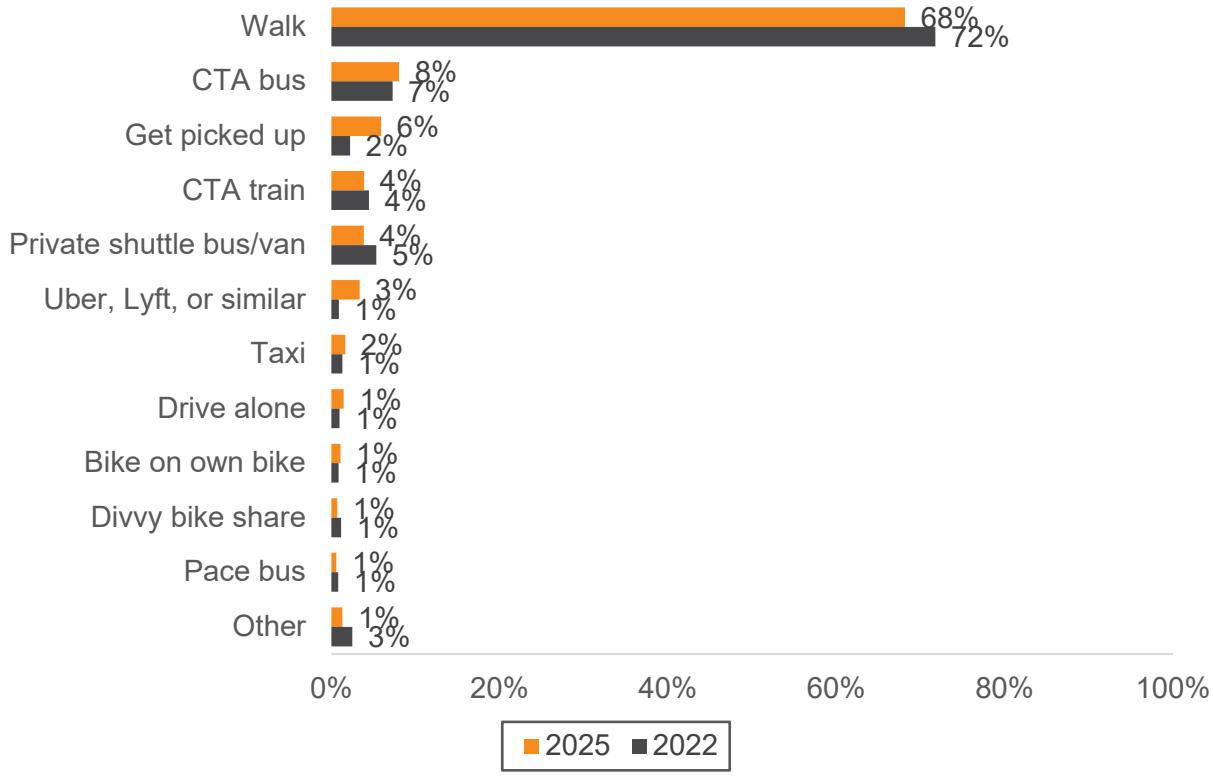
FIGURE 27: ACCESS MODE BY YEAR



Total, n = 15,428; 2025, n = 10,384; 2022, n = 5,044

Walking remains the dominant way riders leave their Metra station, though its share declined slightly from 72% in 2022 to 68% in 2025. CTA bus was the next most common mode at 8%, followed by private shuttle or van service at 4% and getting picked up at 6%, up from 2% in 2022. Other modes, including CTA train, Uber or Lyft, taxi, driving alone, biking (own or shared), Pace bus, and "Other", each accounted for 4% or less of responses (Figure 28).

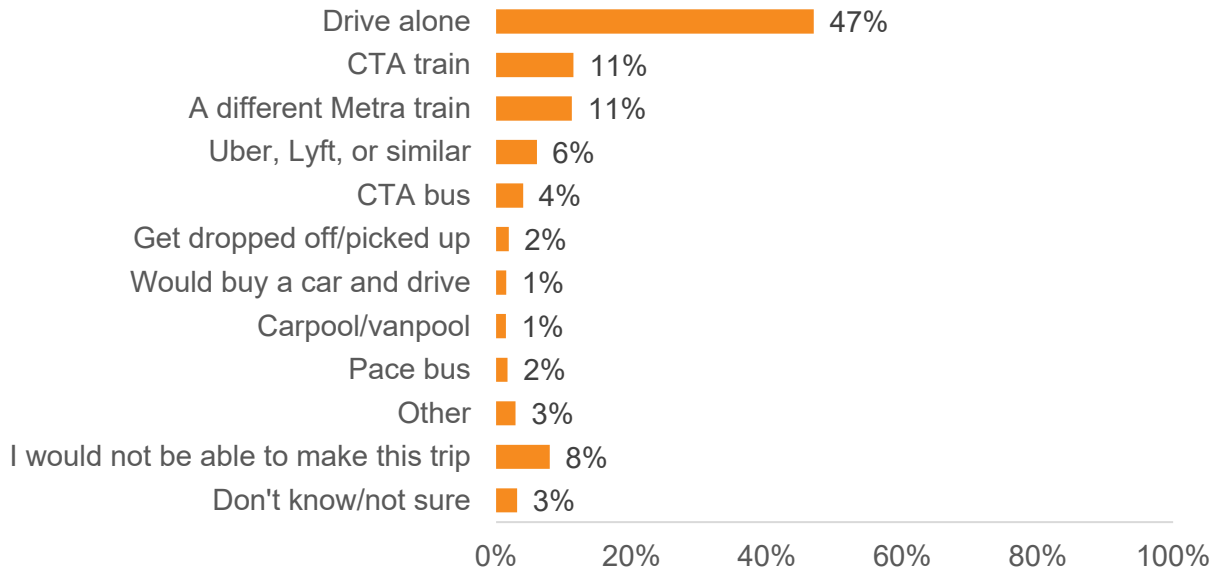
FIGURE 28: EGRESS MODE BY YEAR



Total, n = 15,428; 2025, n = 10,384; 2022, n = 5,044

If Metra service were unavailable, nearly half of riders (47%) said they would drive alone instead. Another 11% would switch to a different Metra train, and 11% would take a CTA train. Smaller shares would use Uber, Lyft, or similar services (6%), take the CTA bus (4%), or get dropped off or picked up (2%). A few riders said they would buy a car (1%), join a carpool or vanpool (1%), or use Pace bus (2%). Notably, 8% of riders said they would not be able to make the trip at all, while 3% were unsure or selected “Other” (Figure 29).

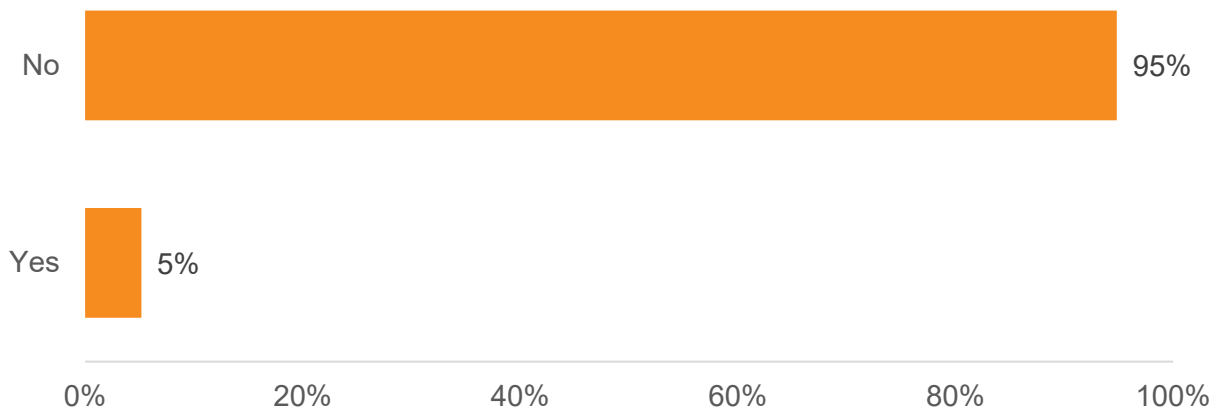
FIGURE 29: ALTERNATIVE MODE (2025 ONLY)



n = 10,384

Nearly all Metra riders in 2025 reported completing their trip without a transfer (95%), while just 5% made a transfer (Figure 30).

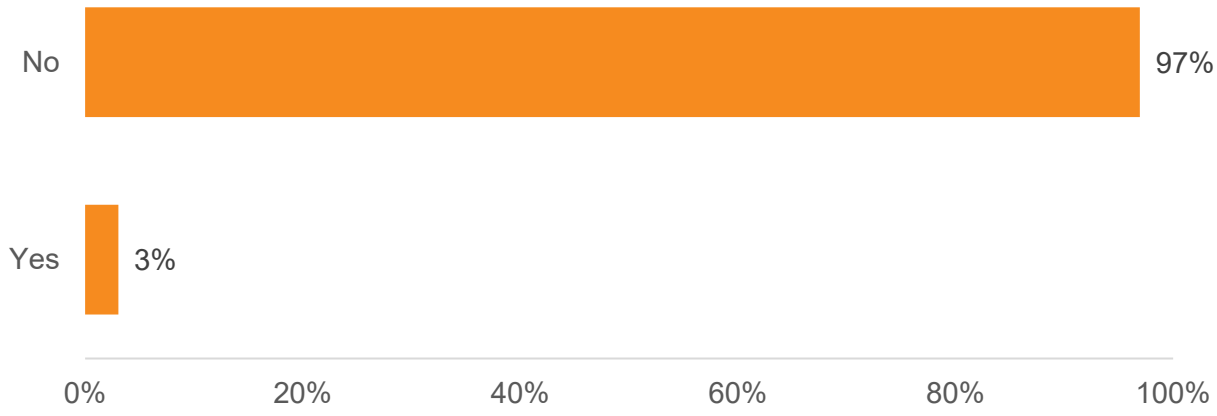
FIGURE 30: MADE A TRANSFER BETWEEN METRA TRAINS (2025 ONLY)



n = 10,384

A new question in 2025 asked riders whether they bring a bicycle on board, and 3% said yes. The vast majority, 97%, reported that they do not bring a bike when using Metra, indicating limited use of bikes as part of the overall trip (Figure 31).

FIGURE 31: BRING BIKE ONTO METRA (2025 ONLY)

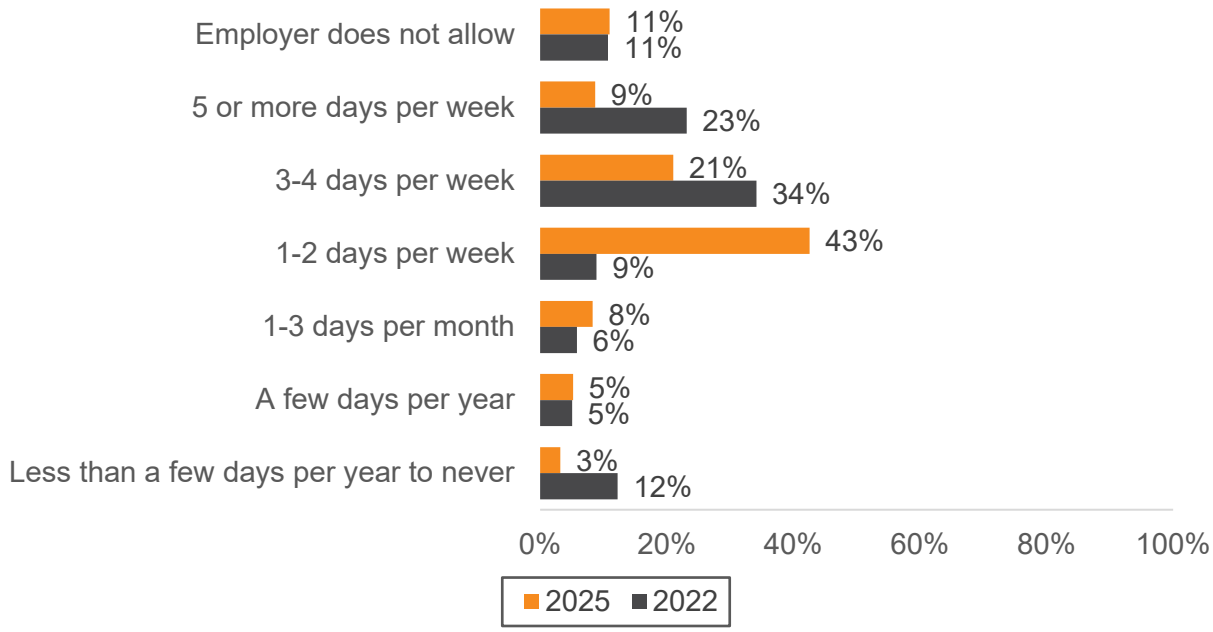


n = 10,384

Telecommuting and Transit Benefits

Figure 32 shows a notable shift toward less frequent telecommuting among full-time employees in 2025. The share of riders telecommuting 1 to 2 days per week increased sharply from 9% in 2022 to 43% in 2025, while those working remotely 3 to 4 days per week declined from 34% to 21%. Nine percent of riders reported telecommuting five or more days per week, down from 23%. The share of riders whose employers do not allow telecommuting remained unchanged at 11%. Fewer riders reported rarely or never telecommuting in 2025, with 3% selecting “less than a few days per year to never,” compared to 12% in 2022.

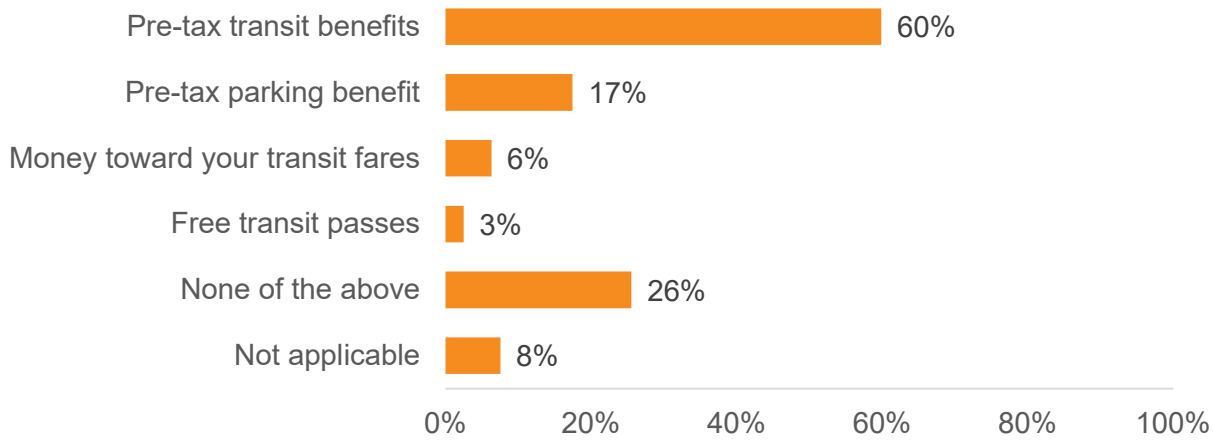
FIGURE 32: FREQUENCY OF TELECOMMUTING AMONG FULL TIME EMPLOYED RIDERS BY YEAR



Total, n = 11,262; 2025, n = 7,738; 2022, n = 3,524

In 2025, 60% of riders reported that their employer offers pre-tax transit benefits, making it the most common form of transit support. Another 17% said they receive a pre-tax parking benefit, while 6% receive direct money toward their transit fares and 3% receive free transit passes. About one-quarter of riders (26%) said none of these benefits apply to them, and 8% selected “not applicable” (Figure 33).

FIGURE 33: TRANSIT BENEFITS AMONG FULL TIME EMPLOYED RIDERS (2025 ONLY)

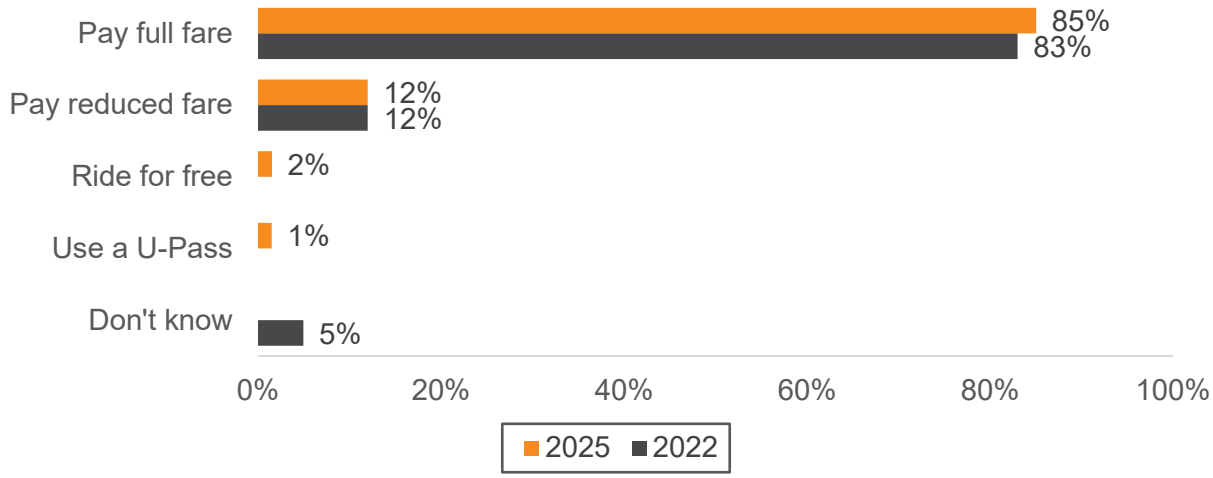


n = 8,178
**Note: Respondents could select all options that applied.*

Fare Information

Most Metra riders pay the full fare, with 85% doing so in 2025, up two percentage points from 83% in 2022. Another 12% reported paying a reduced fare in both years. Smaller shares of riders reported riding for free (2% in 2025) or using a U-Pass (1% in 2025), both new options in the 2025 survey. In 2022, 5% of riders said they did not know what type of fare they paid, a response that was not available in 2025 (Figure 34).

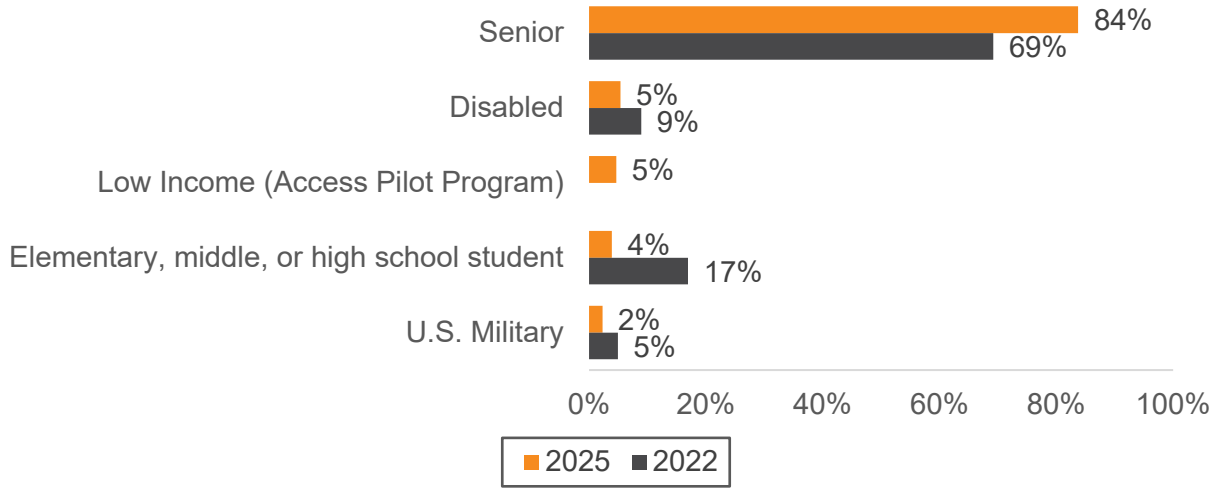
FIGURE 34: FARE LEVEL BY YEAR



Total, n = 14,124; 2025, n = 10,384; 2022, n = 3,740
**Note: "Ride for free" and "Use a U-Pass" were new options in the 2025 CSS survey. "Don't know" was not an option in the 2025 CSS survey.*

Figure 35 shows that in 2025, 84% of Metra riders receiving reduced fare benefits qualified as seniors, an increase of 15 percentage points from 69% in 2022. The share of riders identifying as elementary, middle, or high school students dropped significantly from 17% to 4%, and those qualifying due to a disability declined from 9% to 5%. Riders using military discounts fell from 5% to 2%. Five percent of riders in 2025 reported participating in the Low Income (Access Pilot Program), which was a new option in the 2025 survey.

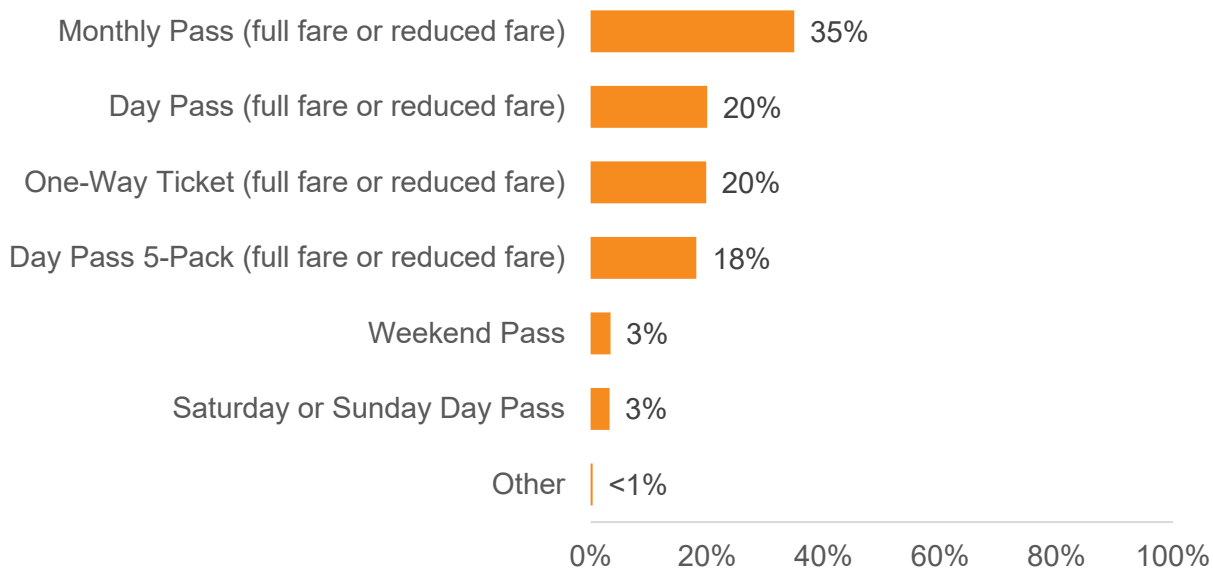
FIGURE 35: REDUCED FARE TYPE BY YEAR



Total, n = 2,075; 2025, n = 1,296; 2022, n = 779
**Note: "Low Income (Access Pilot Program)" was a new option in the 2025 CSS survey.*

Over one-third of riders (35%) used a Monthly Pass, either full fare or reduced fare. One-Way Tickets and Day Passes were each used by 20% of riders, while 18% purchased a Day Pass 5-Pack. Weekend Passes and Saturday or Sunday Day Passes each accounted for 3% of purchases, and no riders reported using “Other” fare types (Figure 36).

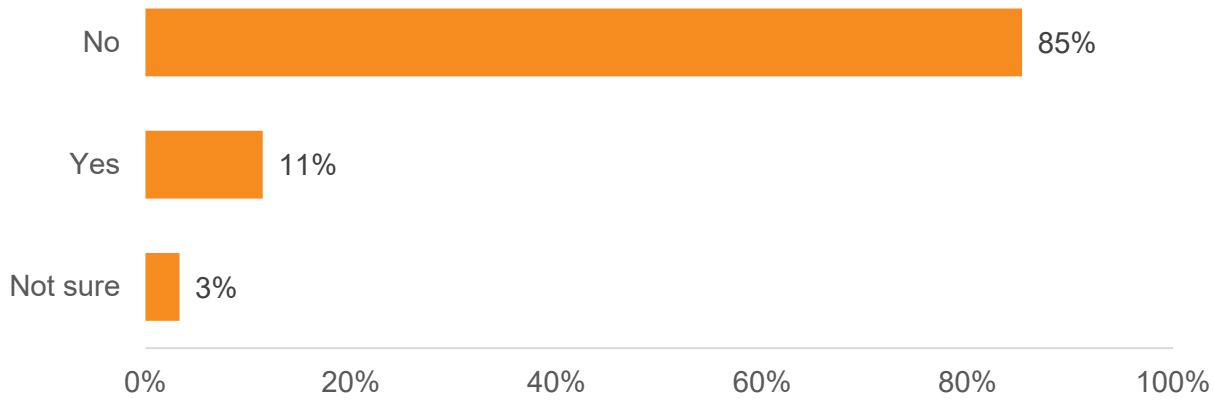
FIGURE 36: TYPICAL TRIP PASS/TICKET TYPE (2025 ONLY)



n = 10,094

Among riders who have a monthly pass, 11% reported purchasing the Regional Connect add-on. A large majority, 85%, said they do not purchase the add-on, while 3% were not sure (Figure 37).

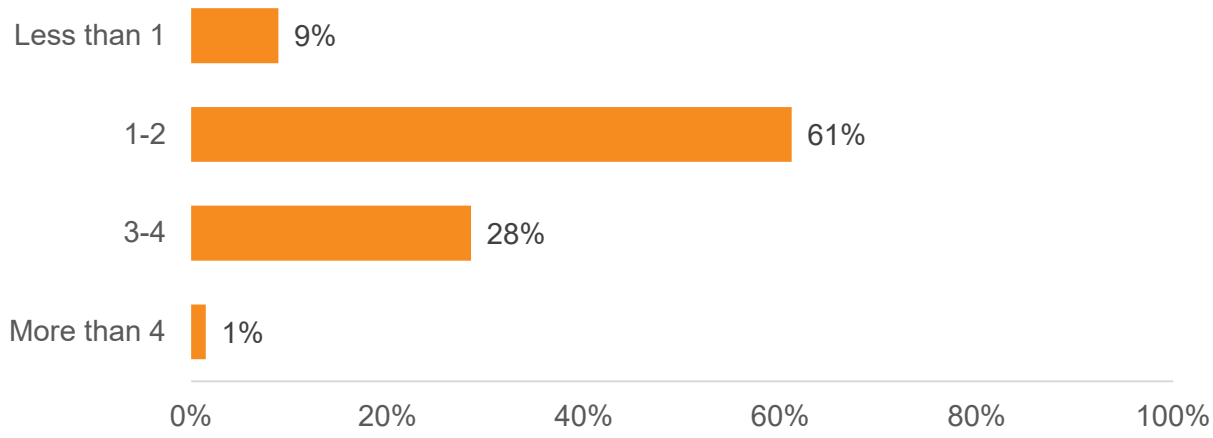
FIGURE 37: ADD ON REGIONAL CONNECT PASS AMONG MONTHLY PASS USERS (2025 ONLY)



n = 3,470

Among riders who pay using 5-pack day passes, most report using one to two passes per month. Specifically, 61% said they use 1 to 2 per month, 28% use 3 to 4, and 9% use fewer than one. A small share of riders (1%) reported using more than four per month, indicating that for most users, this fare option supports occasional rather than frequent travel (Figure 38).

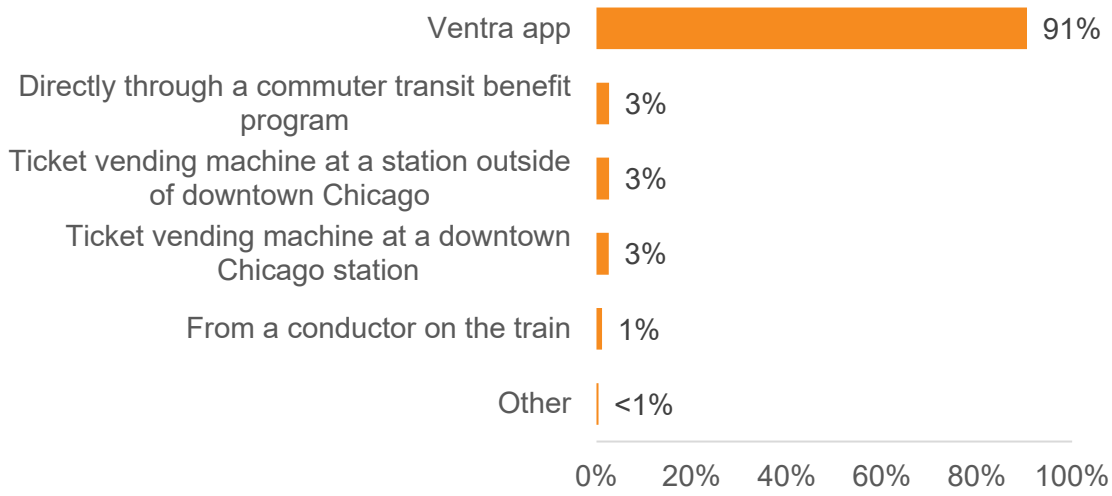
FIGURE 38: NUMBER OF DAY PASS 5-PACKS TYPICALLY USED EACH MONTH AMONG DAY PASS 5-PACK USERS (2025 ONLY)



n = 1,876

In 2025, the vast majority of riders (91%) purchased their tickets or passes through the Ventra app. All other methods accounted for minimal use, 3% each for direct purchases through a commuter transit benefit program, ticket vending machines at downtown Chicago stations, and ticket vending machines at stations outside of downtown, and 1% from a conductor on the train. Less than 1% of riders reported using “Other” purchase methods (Figure 39).

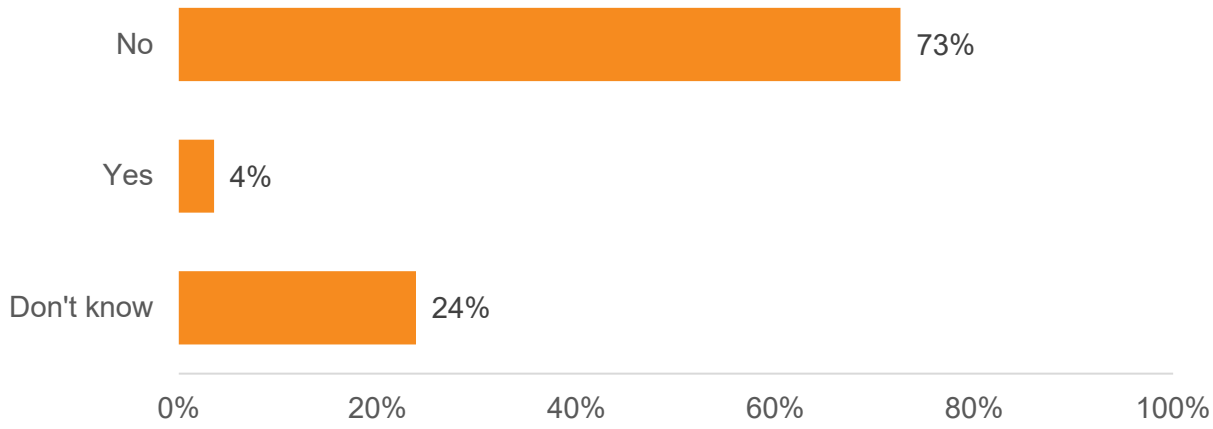
FIGURE 39: TICKET PURCHASE LOCATION (2025 ONLY)



n = 10,094

When asked whether they would qualify for any of Metra's other reduced fare programs if the RTA Access Program were not available, 73% of riders said no. Just 4% said they would still qualify through another program such as senior, disability, student, or military status. Nearly one-quarter (24%) were unsure of their eligibility, suggesting a potential gap in awareness or clarity around Metra's existing reduced fare option (Figure 40).

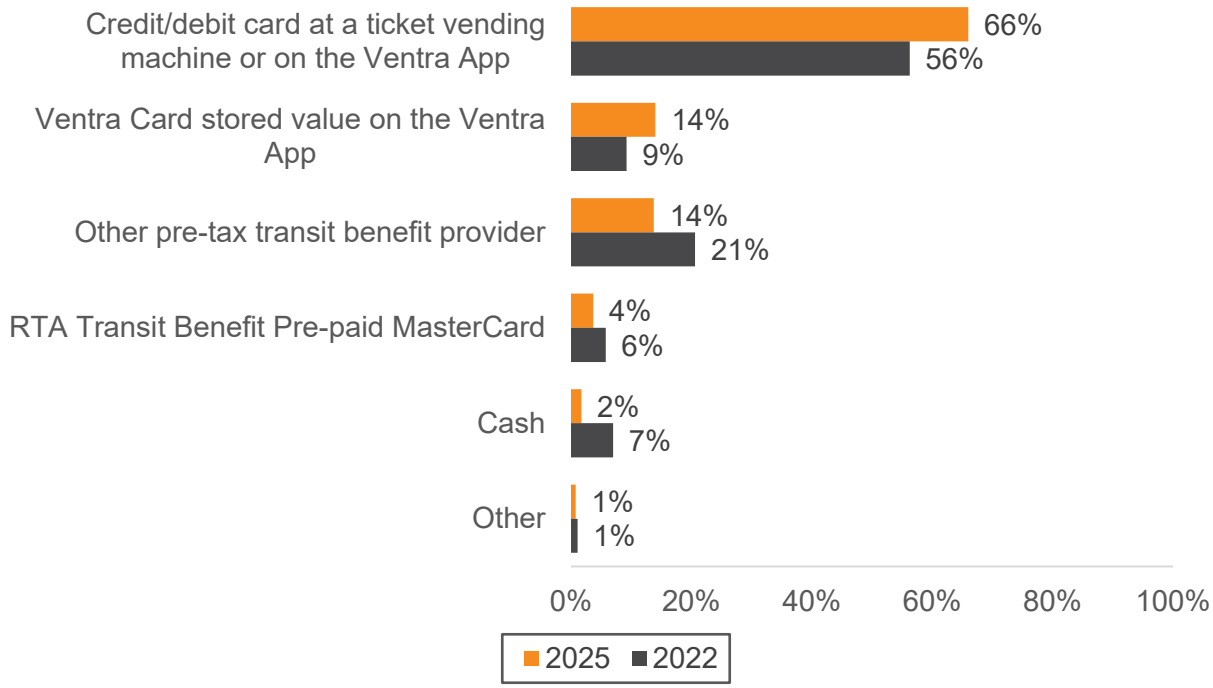
FIGURE 40: QUALIFY FOR OTHER REDUCED FARES (2025 ONLY)



n = 40
**Note: Small sample size; interpret with caution.*

Figure 41 shows an increase in riders using credit or debit cards to pay for Metra, rising 10 percentage points from 56% in 2022 to 66% in 2025. Use of stored value on a Ventra Card also increased, up 5 points from 9% to 14%. Fewer riders reported using cash, which declined by 5 points (from 7% to 2%), and the share using other pre-tax transit benefit providers dropped by 7 points (from 21% to 14%). Use of the RTA Transit Benefit Pre-paid MasterCard decreased slightly, from 6% to 4%. Use of "other" methods remained unchanged at 1%.

FIGURE 41: FARE PAYMENT METHOD BY YEAR

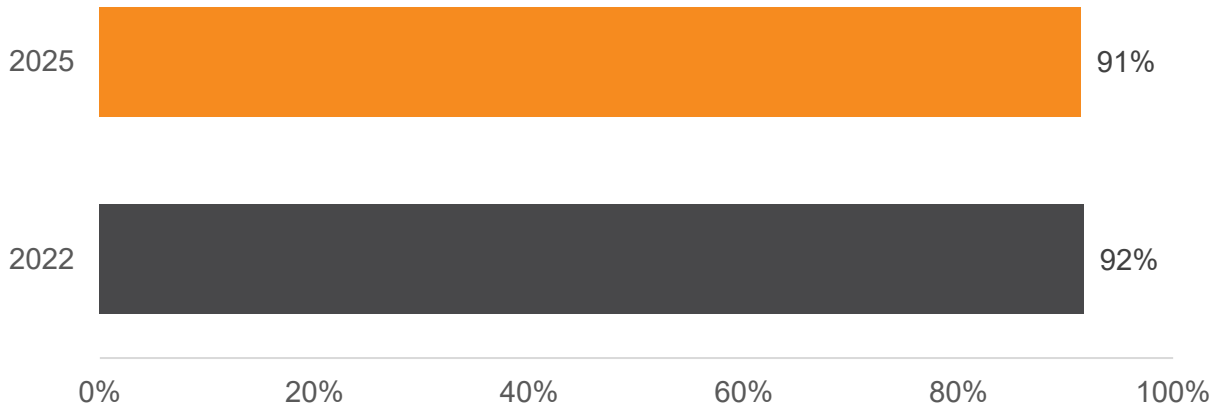


Total, n = 15,068; 2025, n = 10,094; 2022, n = 4,974

4.3 SATISFACTION

Overall satisfaction with Metra remained high and stable, with 91% of riders satisfied in 2025 compared to 92% in 2022 (Figure 42).

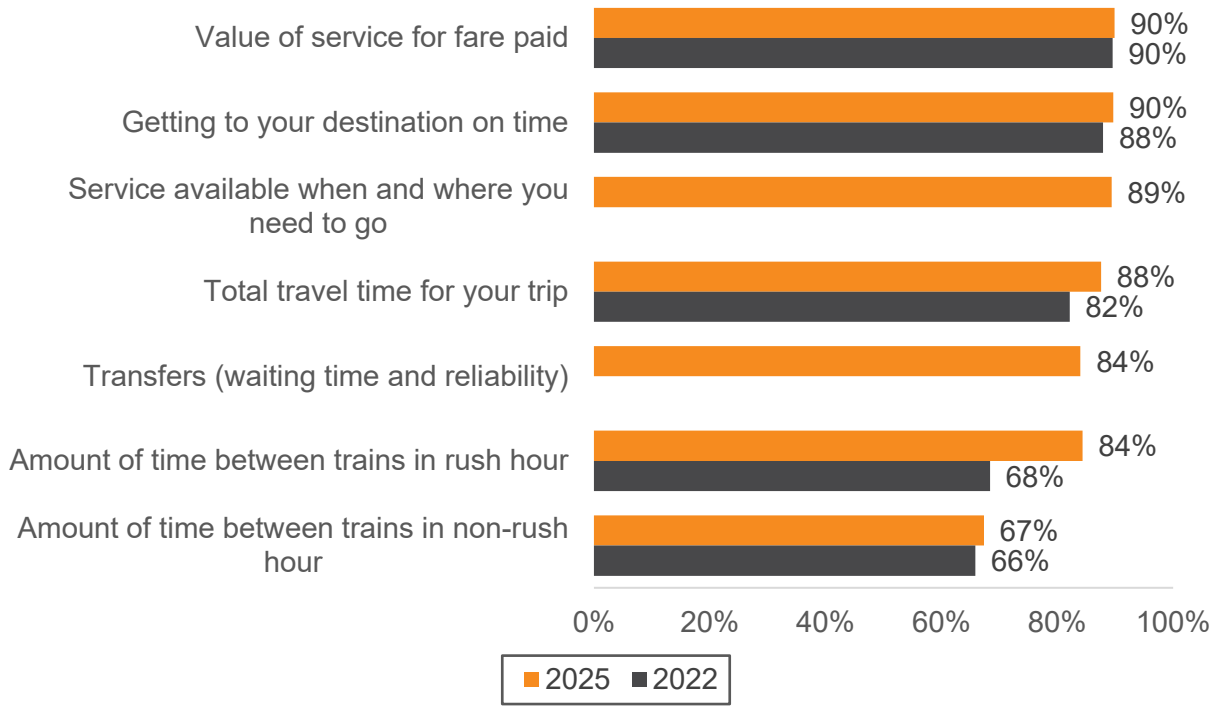
FIGURE 42: OVERALL SATISFACTION BY YEAR



Total, n = 14,069; 2025, n = 9,451; 2022, n = 4,618

Satisfaction remained high across all service attributes, including value. Ratings for the amount of time between trains during rush hour saw the largest percentage point increase, rising 16 percentage points to 84%. Nine in ten riders (90%) were satisfied with the value of service for the fare paid, unchanged from 2022. Ratings for "total travel time" rose from 82% in 2022 to 88% in 2025. Two new attributes introduced in 2025 also received strong marks: 89% were satisfied with "service available when and where you need to go," and 84% were satisfied with "transfers (waiting time and reliability)" (Figure 43).

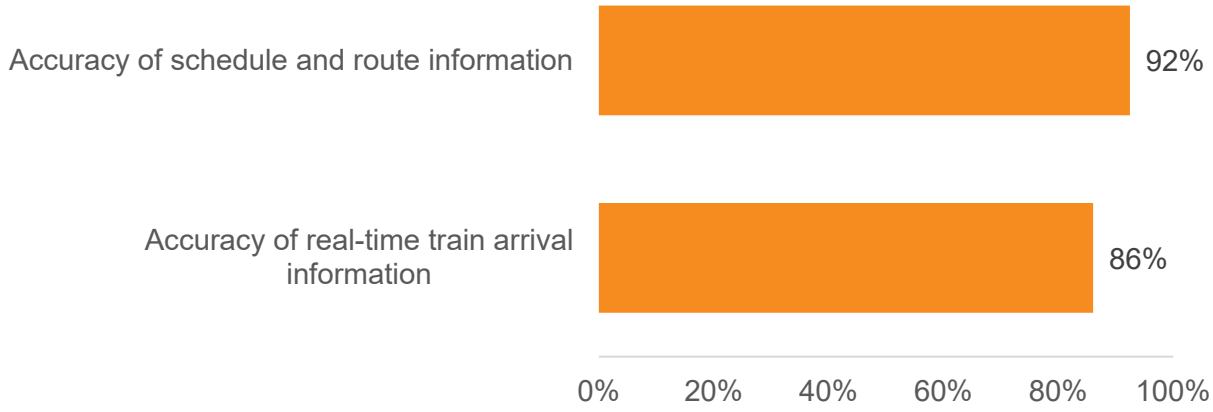
FIGURE 43: SERVICE DELIVERY SATISFACTION BY YEAR



Total, n = 2,602 to 13,786; 2025, n = 2,602 to 9,353; 2022, n = 2,893 to 4,433
**Note: "Transfers (waiting time and reliability)" was a new attribute in the 2025 CSS survey.*

In 2025, two new measures focused on information accuracy were introduced. Riders gave high marks to schedule and route information (92%) and also reported strong satisfaction with real-time train arrival information (86%; Figure 44).

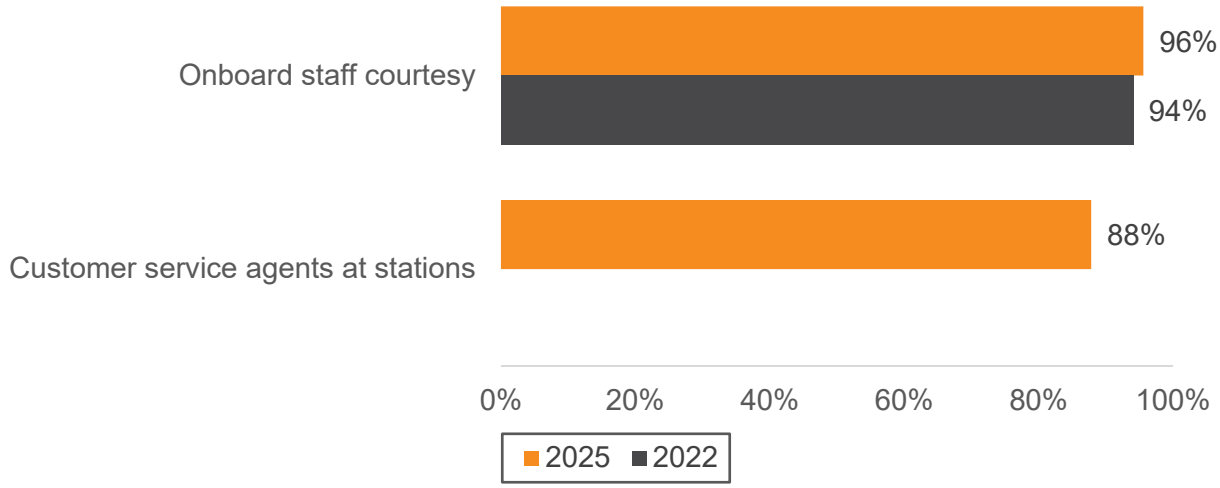
FIGURE 44: INFORMATION SATISFACTION (2025 ONLY)



n = 8,730 to 9,564

Satisfaction with onboard staff courtesy remained high, rising 2 percentage points from 94% in 2022 to 96% in 2025. Meanwhile, customer service agents at stations, a new attribute in 2025, received strong marks, with 88% of riders expressing satisfaction in 2025 (Figure 45).

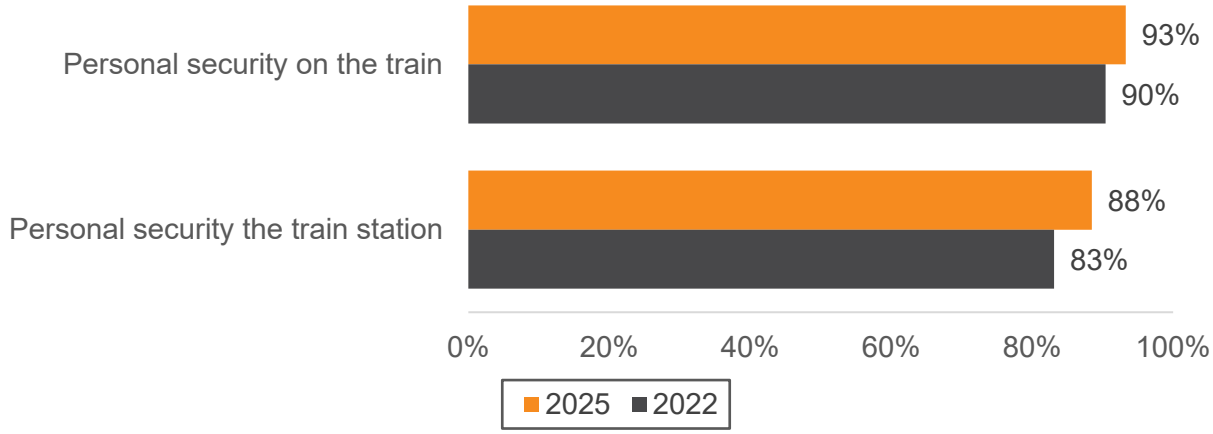
FIGURE 45: EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE SATISFACTION BY YEAR



Total, n = 5,376 to 14,581; 2025, n = 5,376 to 9,917; 2022, n = 4,664
**Note: In 2022, "Onboard staff courtesy" was phrased "Onboard personnel courtesy." Results are not directly comparable and should be interpreted with caution. "*Customer service agents at stations*" was a new attribute in the 2025 CSS survey.*

Satisfaction with personal security improved in 2025. The share of riders satisfied with security at the station rose 5 percentage points, from 83% in 2022 to 88%. Satisfaction with personal security on the train also increased 3 percentage points, from 90% to 93% (Figure 46).

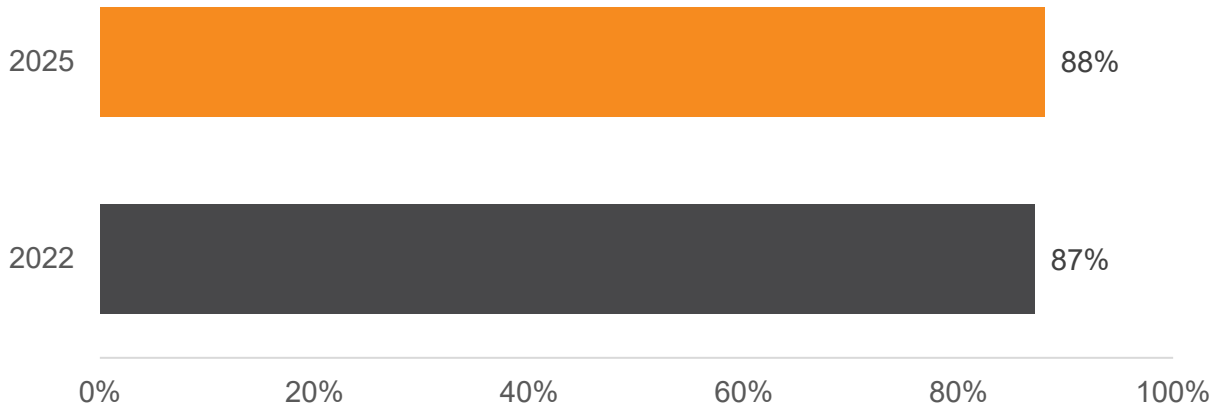
FIGURE 46: PERSONAL SECURITY SATISFACTION BY YEAR



Total, n = 13,012 to 13,941; 2025, n = 9,031 to 9,533; 2022, n = 3,981 to 4,408

Satisfaction with cleanliness remained steady, rising 1 percentage point from 87% in 2022 to 88% in 2025 (Figure 47).

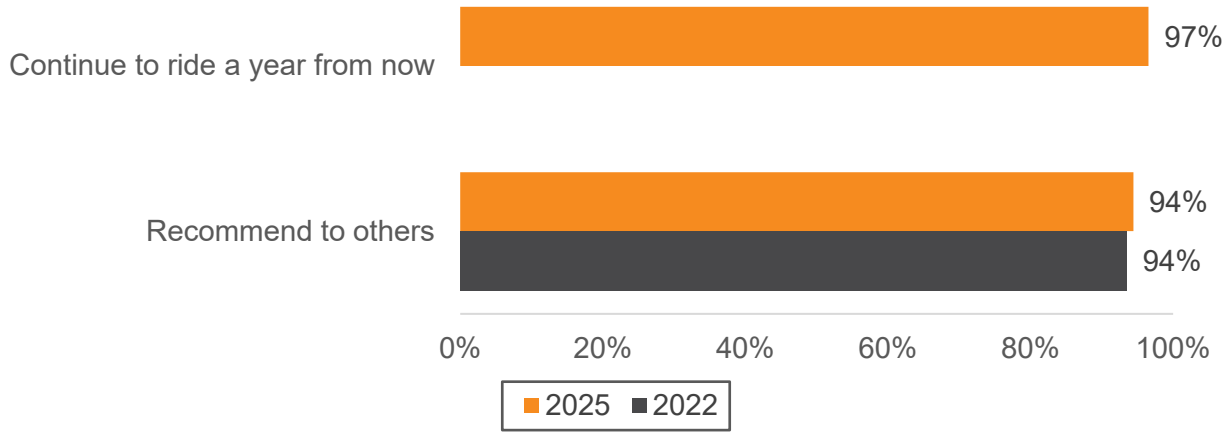
FIGURE 47: CLEANLINESS OF TRAIN INTERIOR SATISFACTION BY YEAR



Total, n = 13,518; 2025, n = 9,158; 2022, n = 4,360

In 2025, Metra introduced a new measure of rider loyalty: likelihood of continuing to ride a year from now. Nearly all riders (97%) said they were likely to keep riding. Likelihood of recommending Metra remained steady at 94%, matching 2022 (Figure 48).

FIGURE 48: LIKELIHOOD TO…

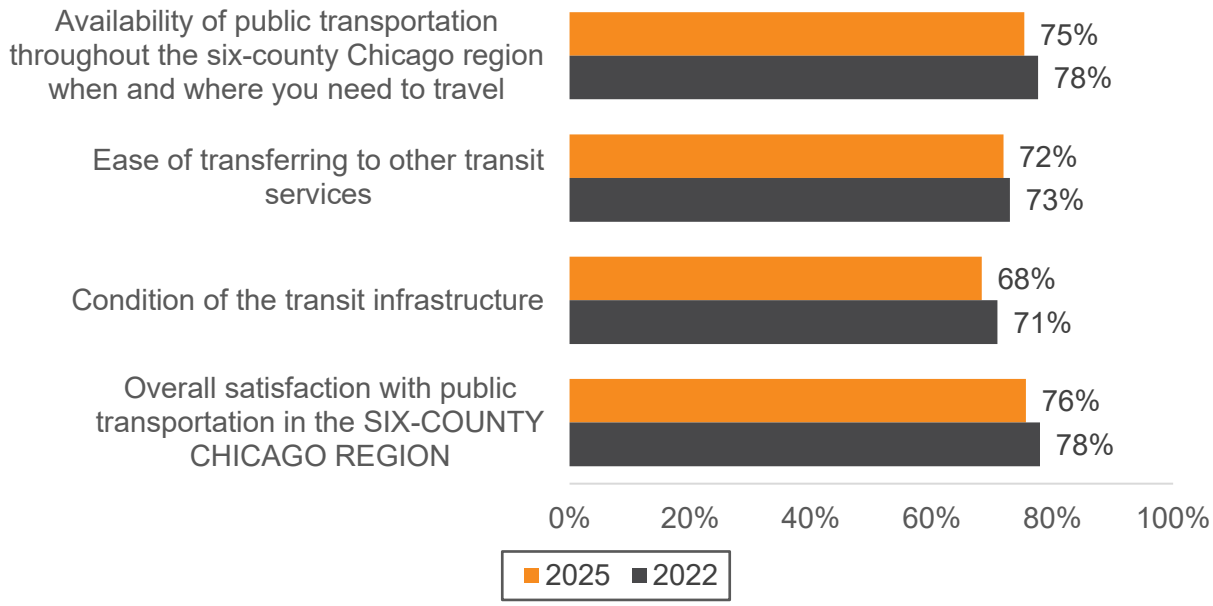


Total, n = 10,008 to 14,406; 2025, n = 9,730 to 10,008; 2022, n = 4,676
**Note: Likelihood to "Continue to ride a year from now" was a new question in the 2025 CSS survey.*

Regionwide Satisfaction

Satisfaction with public transportation across the six-county Chicago region held steady from 2022 to 2025, with slight decreases across all four measures. Overall satisfaction with public transportation in the region was 76% in 2025, compared to 78% in 2022. Perceptions of availability also declined slightly, from 78% to 75%, while satisfaction with the condition of transit infrastructure dropped from 71% to 68%. Ratings for ease of transferring to other transit services declined one percentage point, from 73% to 72%. Despite these modest declines, regionwide satisfaction levels remain relatively high (Figure 49).

FIGURE 49: REGIONAL SATISFACTION BY YEAR



Total, n = 7,685 to 10,232; 2025, n = 5,094 to 6,954; 2022, n = 2,591 to 3,278

4.4 KEY DRIVERS OF OVERALL SATISFACTION

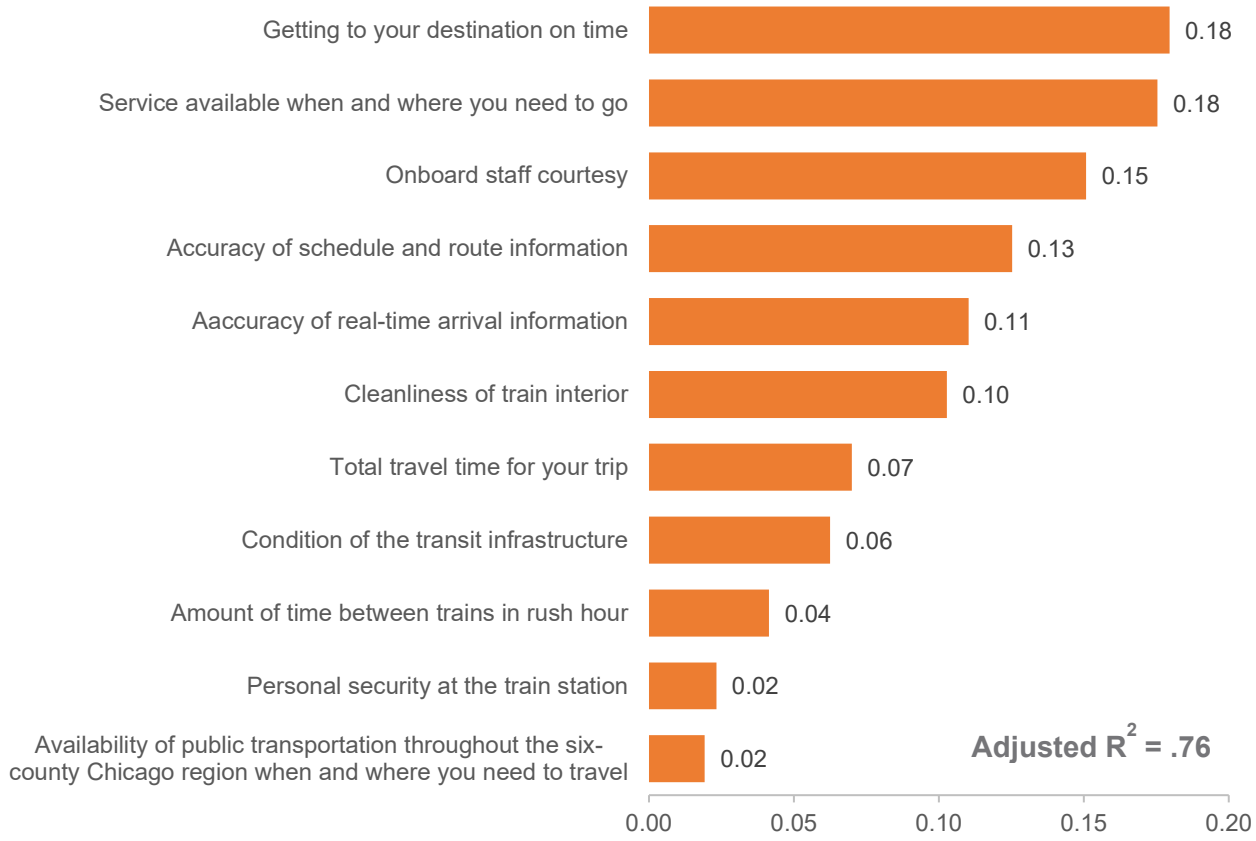
Understanding what drives rider satisfaction is key to improving the Metra experience. Rather than relying solely on riders' stated preferences, a statistical regression model was used to uncover which service attributes have the greatest impact on overall satisfaction. This approach identifies the factors that matter most, even if riders don't explicitly call them out.

The 2025 model included both individual service attributes and broader regional factors. Using a backward selection method, the model began with all candidate variables, 13 total, and removed those that did not show a meaningful relationship with satisfaction. General evaluative items like "value for fare paid" were not included in this modeling approach.

The final model retained 11 attributes (9 service-level and 2 regional), each significantly associated with overall satisfaction. The model explained a substantial share of variation in satisfaction, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.76. The size of each coefficient represents how strongly each factor contributes to satisfaction.

Riders place the most weight on reliability, particularly getting to their destination on time and having service available when and where they need it. Positive interactions with staff, clear and accurate information, and a clean environment also stand out as important contributors. While factors such as station safety and regional coverage matter less in comparison, they still influence overall perceptions of Metra (Figure 50).

FIGURE 50: 2025 DERIVED IMPORTANCE COEFFICIENTS



Compared to 2022, the 2025 results show a shift in what matters most to Metra riders. Metra's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which was a top driver of satisfaction in 2022, was not included as an attribute in the 2025 model. In its place, on-time performance and service availability emerged as the strongest predictors of satisfaction, pointing to a renewed emphasis on reliability. Courtesy of onboard staff remained a consistently important factor across both

years, while elements like the ability to communicate with Metra and station cleanliness had less influence in the updated model.

4.5 QUADRANT CHART

The quadrant chart below displays the relationship between derived importance and satisfaction for seventeen key service and regional attributes. This visualization helps identify where Metra can prioritize improvements to have the greatest impact on overall satisfaction. Attributes are plotted with importance on the vertical axis and satisfaction on the horizontal axis, divided at the average values for each measure. This creates four quadrants that reflect different strategic priorities.

Table 3 provides an overview of each quadrant's meaning and the recommended action for Metra based on where each attribute falls.

TABLE 3: UNDERSTANDING QUADRANT CHARTS

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

Attributes in the upper-right quadrant are those that riders consider highly important and also rate above average in satisfaction. For Metra, these include getting to your destination on time, having service available when and where it's needed, courteous onboard staff, accuracy of schedule and route information, accuracy of real-time arrival information, and cleanliness of the train interior. These are core strengths for Metra, and maintaining performance in these areas will be critical to sustaining high levels of customer satisfaction.

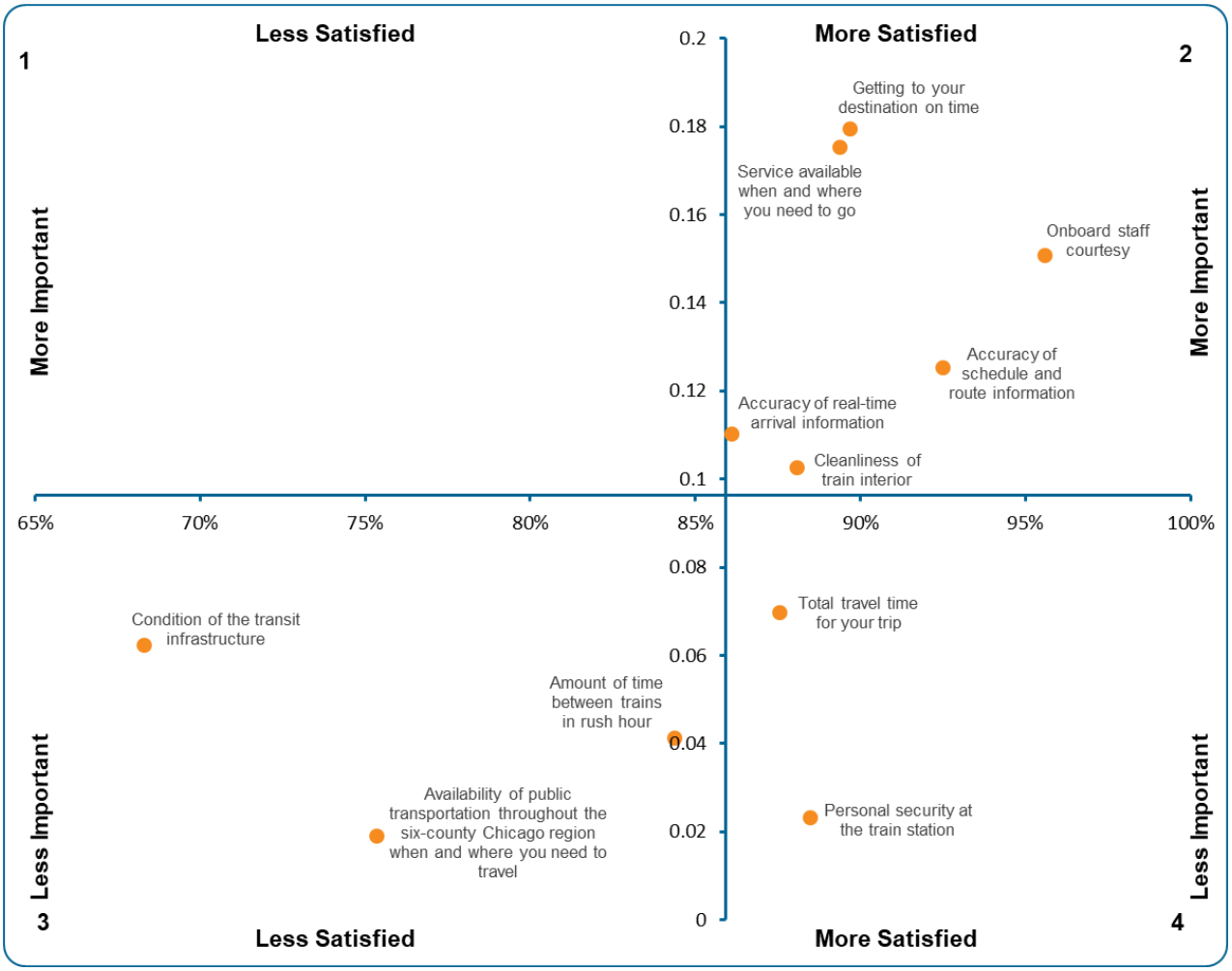
No attributes appear in the upper-left quadrant in 2025, indicating that Metra is performing reasonably well on the aspects of service that riders value most. This is a positive signal that key operational elements are aligned with customer expectations.

Attributes in the lower quadrants are rated below average in both importance and satisfaction. While these areas, such as station security, travel time, and regional availability—are less central to driving satisfaction, they may still represent opportunities for longer-term investments or targeted improvements.

Together, these results suggest that Metra should continue to reinforce its strengths in reliability, staff interactions, and service information, while monitoring lower-priority areas for emerging

concerns. Maintaining strong performance in the most valued service attributes will be key to sustaining high overall satisfaction.

FIGURE 51: KEY DRIVERS OF OVERALL SATISFACTION QUADRANT CHART



5.0 CONCLUSION

The 2025 Metra Customer Satisfaction Survey reflects a system adapting to new travel patterns and shifting rider expectations in a post-pandemic environment. While overall weekday ridership remains below pre-pandemic levels, growing weekend use, particularly on the UP-North and UP-Northwest lines, signals evolving habits and an expanded role for Metra beyond traditional commuting.

Satisfaction with Metra service remains high and stable, with 91% of riders expressing overall satisfaction, on par with 2022. Riders continue to view Metra as a reliable, clean, and efficient travel option, with especially high marks for on-time performance, courteous staff, and accurate schedule and arrival information. These elements were not only rated highly but also emerged as key drivers of overall satisfaction.

At the same time, changes in travel frequency and household demographics emphasize the importance of continued responsiveness to rider needs. More riders are telecommuting part-time, living in smaller households, and accessing Metra without a car—factors that may shape future expectations around service flexibility, accessibility, and affordability. The longer average ridership tenure reported in 2025 also suggests that many long-time riders may have temporarily paused their Metra use during the pandemic and are now returning. While no service elements fell into the “low satisfaction, high importance” category in 2025, Metra should continue to monitor rider concerns around travel time, station safety, and regional connectivity to prevent emerging gaps.

Together, these findings suggest Metra is meeting the needs of most current riders while also facing new opportunities to evolve. By maintaining strengths in reliability and customer service, and continuing to respond to who rides, how often, and why, Metra is well-positioned to remain a trusted and relevant part of the region’s transportation landscape.

APPENDIX A. SCREENSHOTS OF WEB SURVEY

FIGURE 52: SURVEY LANGUAGE

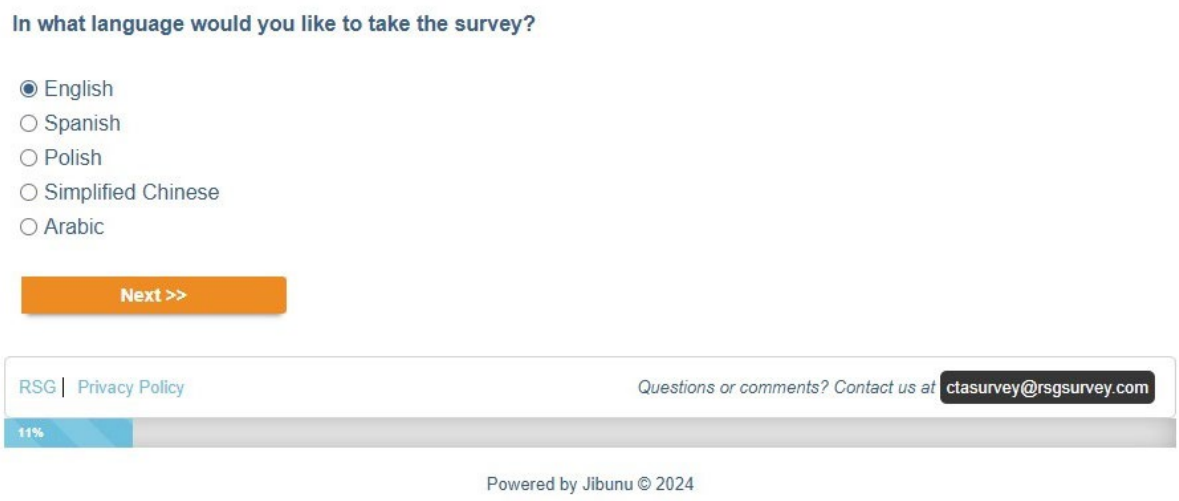


FIGURE 53: INTRODUCTION TEXT

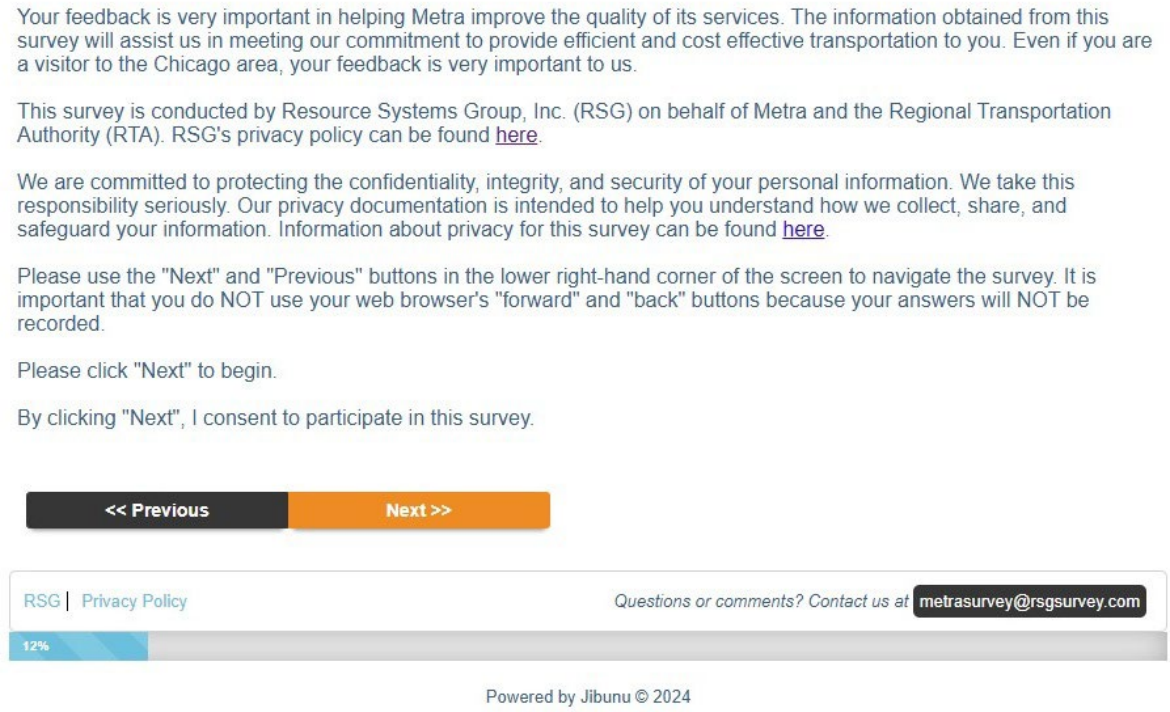


FIGURE 54: FREQUENCY OF METRA USE

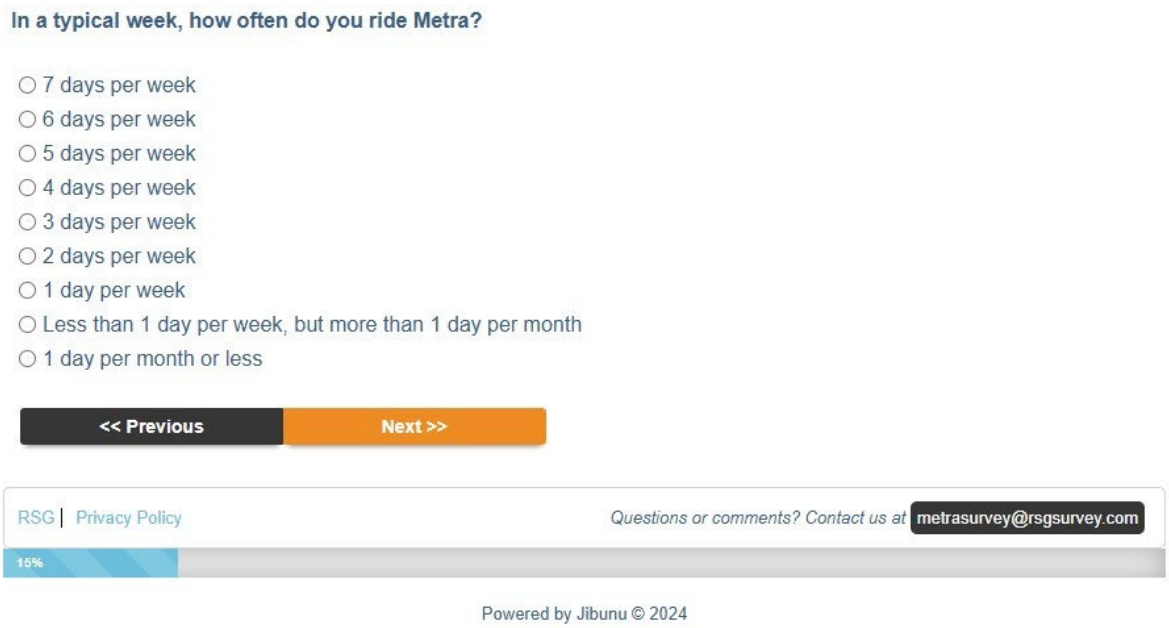


FIGURE 55: TYPICAL TRAIN LINE

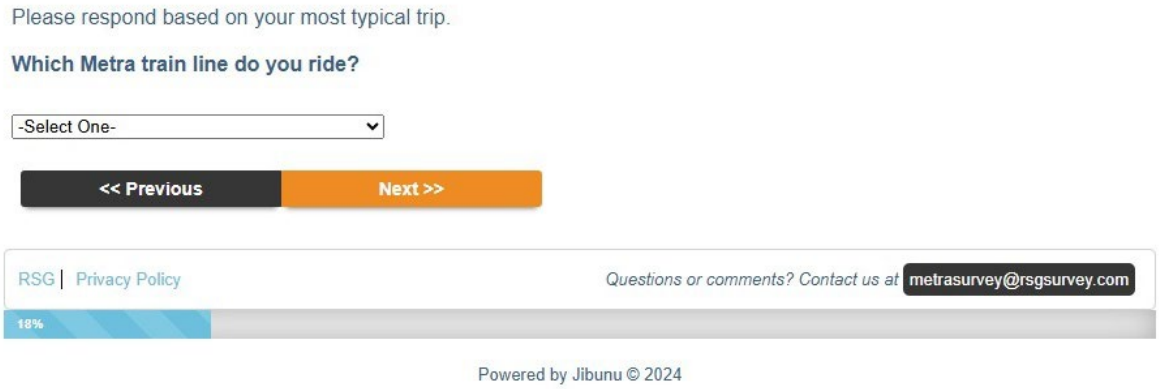


FIGURE 56: BOARD STATION

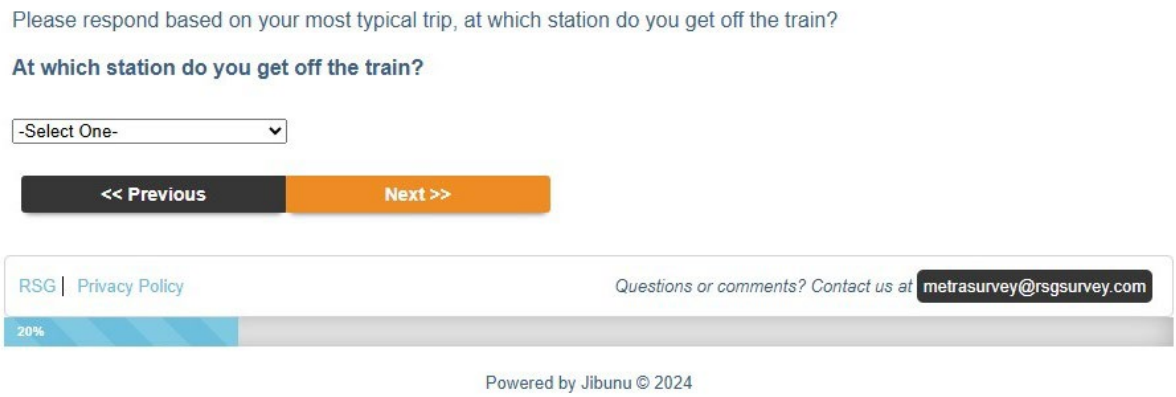


FIGURE 57: DESTINATION STATION

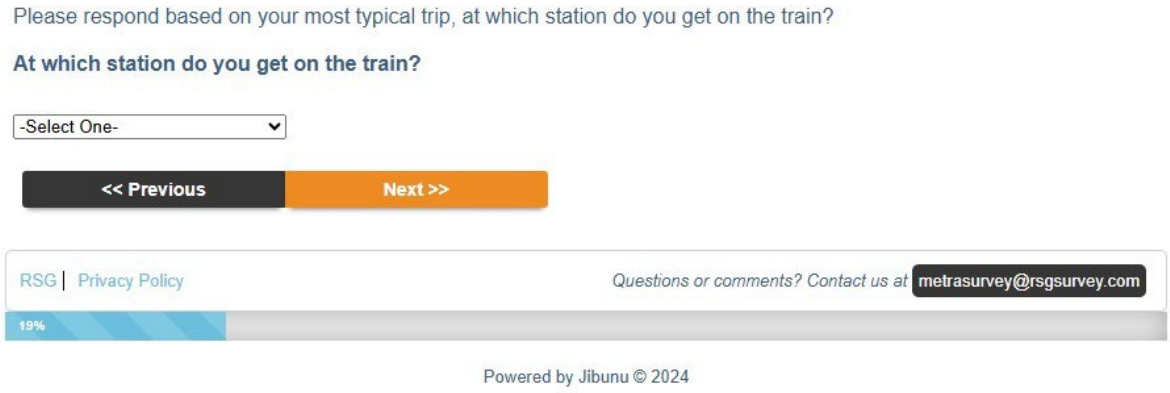


FIGURE 58: PURPOSE(S) OF USING METRA

FIGURE 59: PRIMARY REASON FOR RIDING

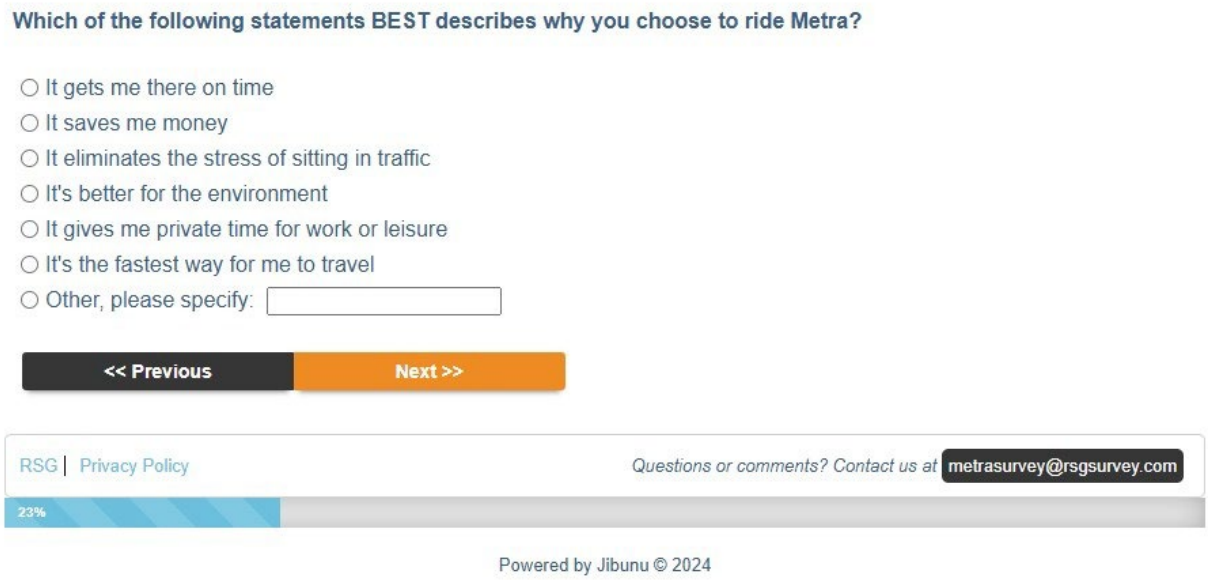


FIGURE 60: REGULAR RIDER DURATION

FIGURE 61: DAYS USED

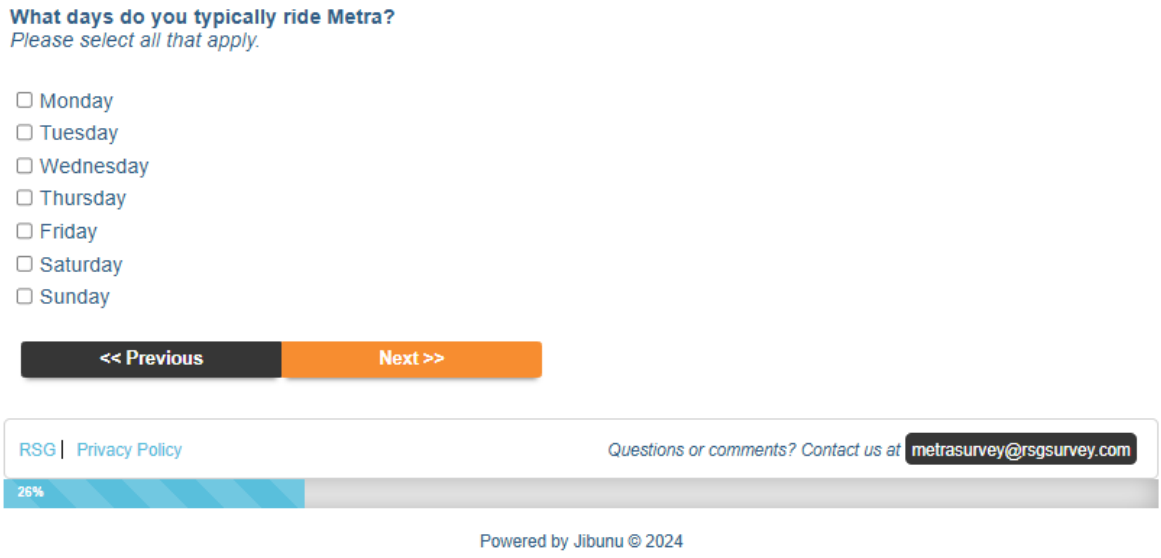


FIGURE 62: TIMES USED

FIGURE 63: ACCESS MODE

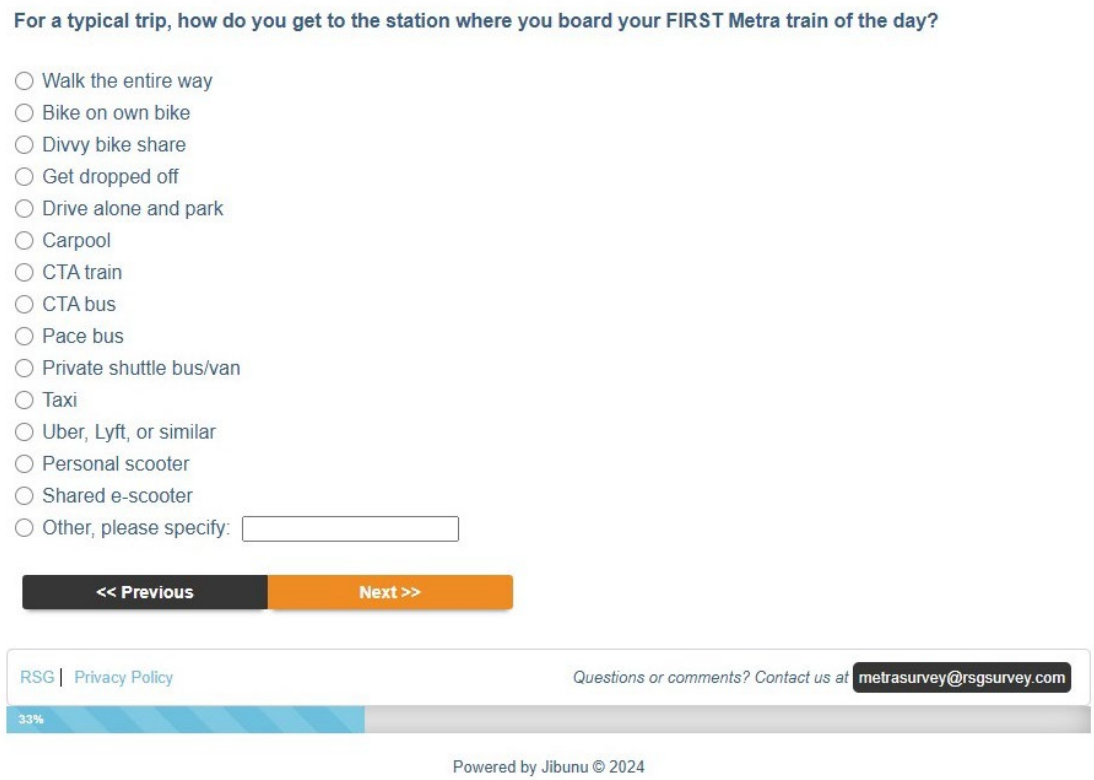


FIGURE 64: NUMBER OF TRANSFERS BETWEEN METRA LINES

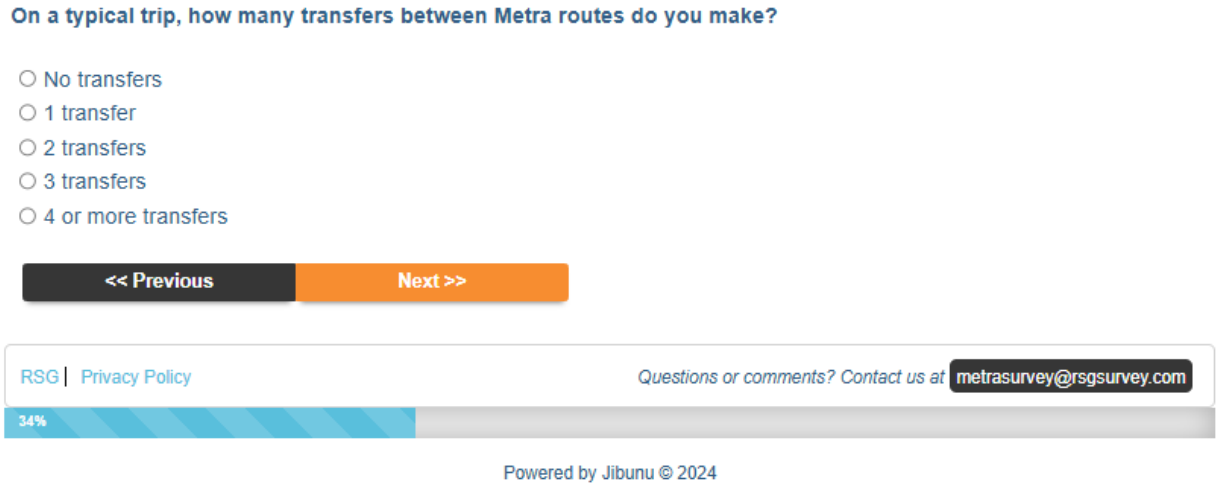


FIGURE 65: EGRESS MODE

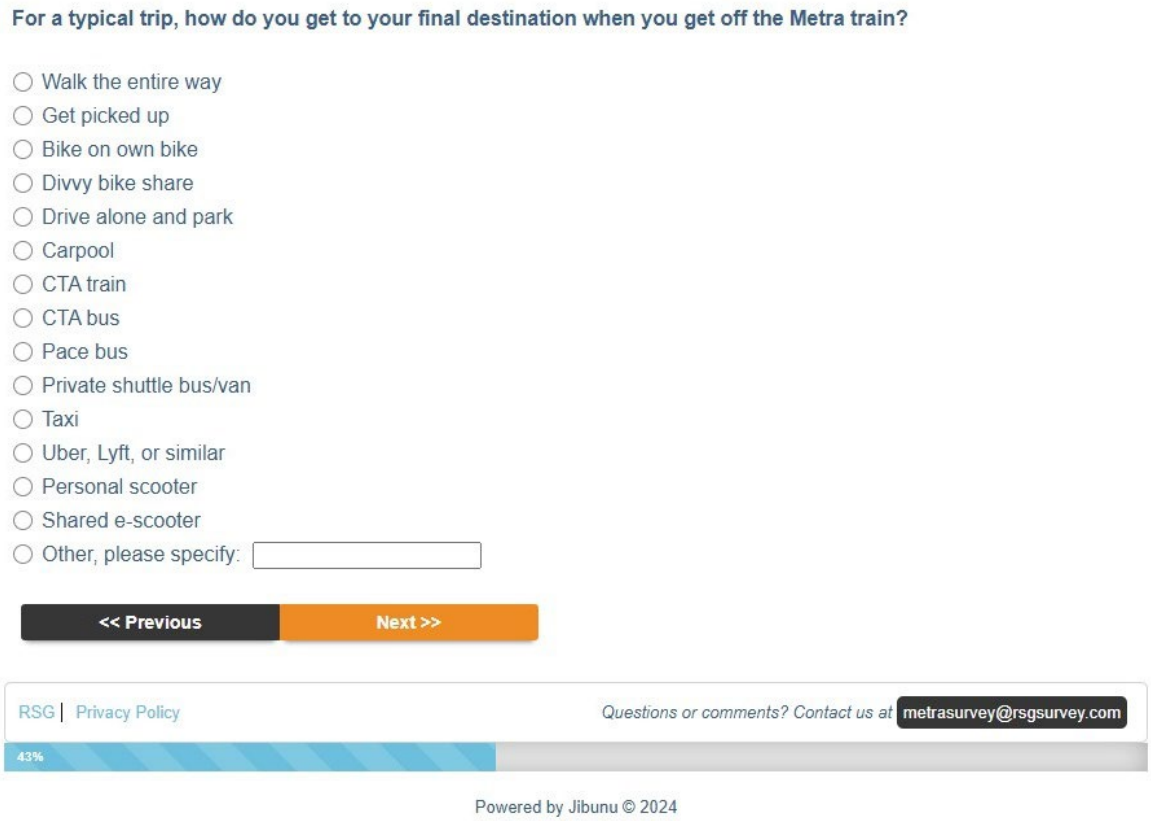


FIGURE 66: ALTERNATIVE MODE

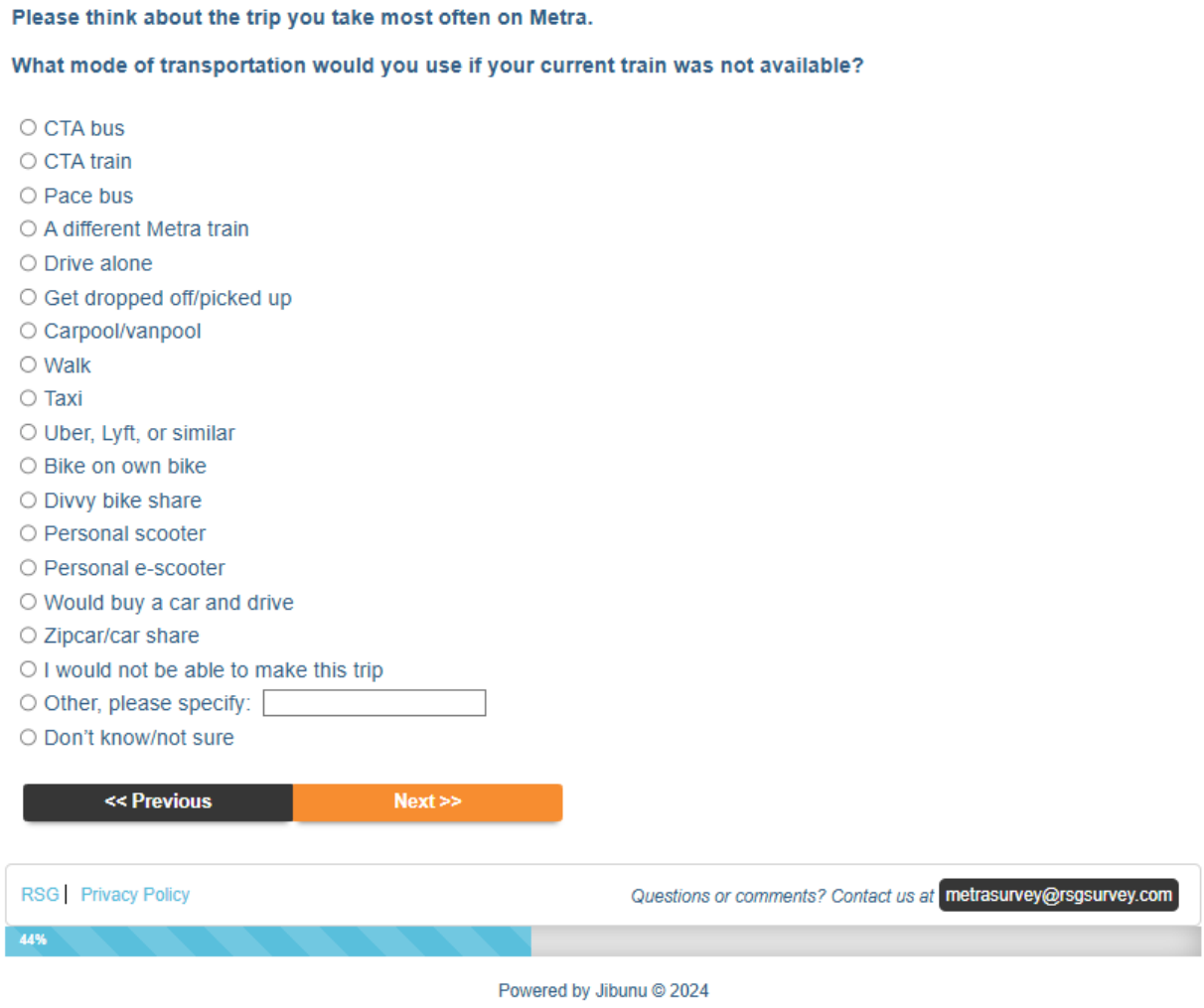


FIGURE 67: BRING BICYCLE ON TRAIN

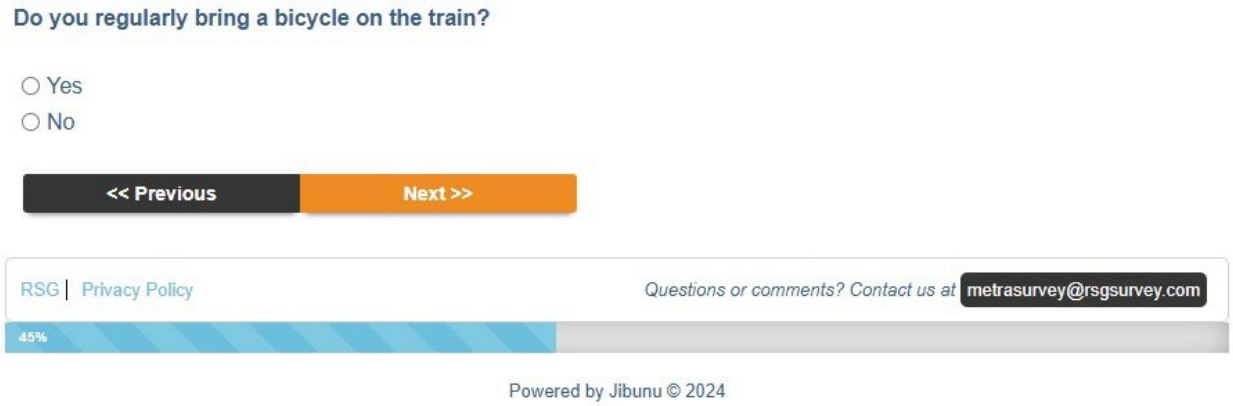


FIGURE 68: FREQUENCY OF TELECOMMUTING

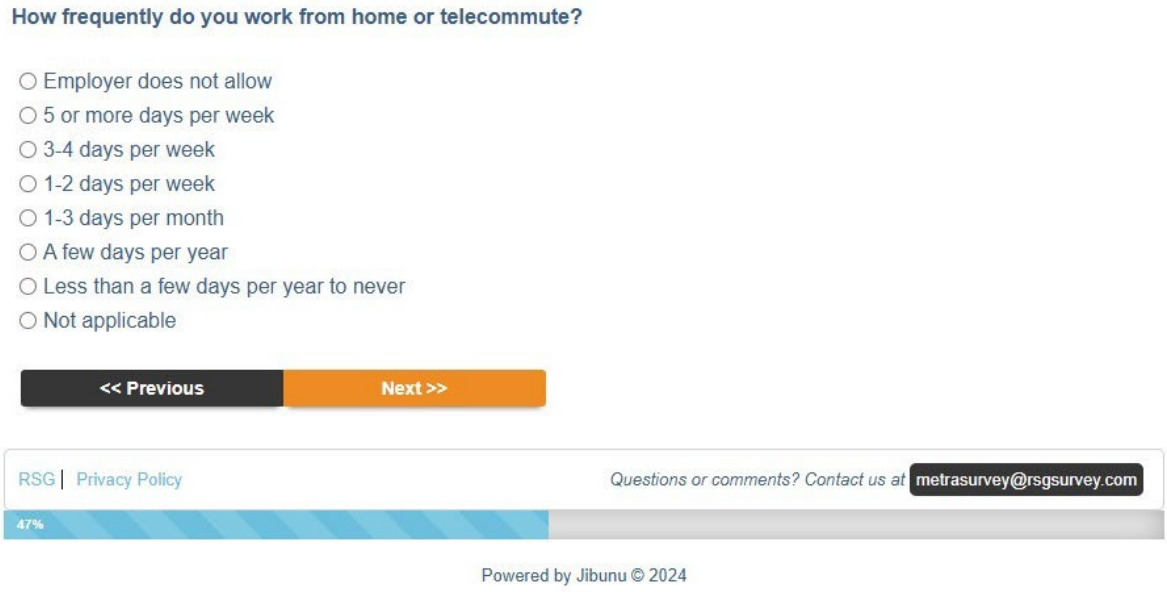


FIGURE 69: TRANSIT BENEFITS

FIGURE 70: FARE LEVEL

FIGURE 71: FARE LEVEL SPECIFIED

FIGURE 72: PASS USED

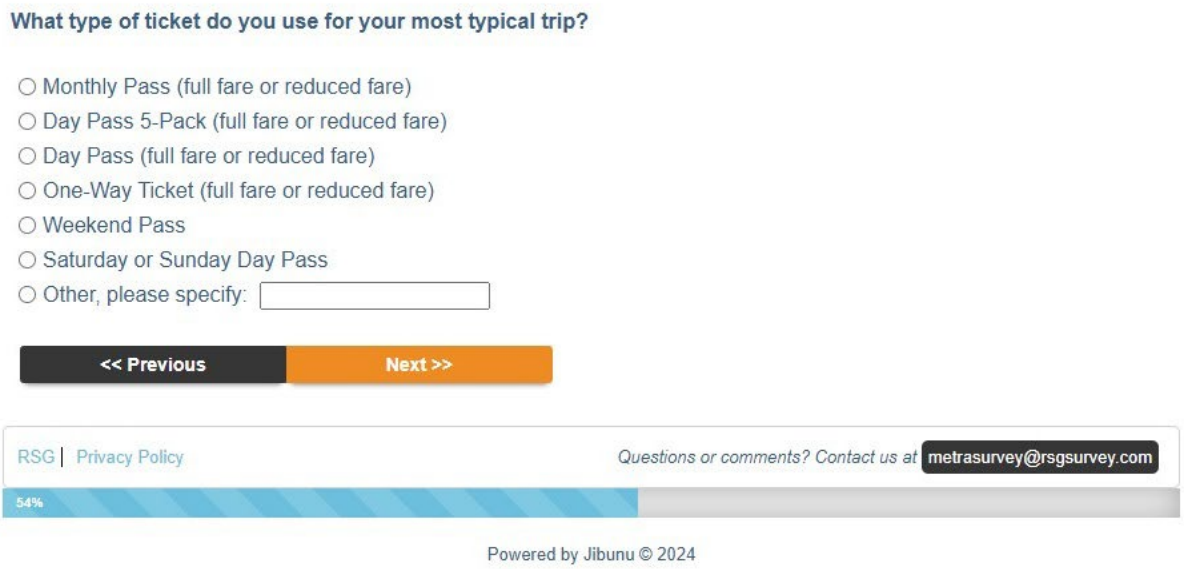


FIGURE 73: ADD-ON REGIONAL CONNECT PASS

FIGURE 74: NUMBER OF DAY PASS 5-PACKS USED A MONTH

FIGURE 75: OTHER REDUCED FARES

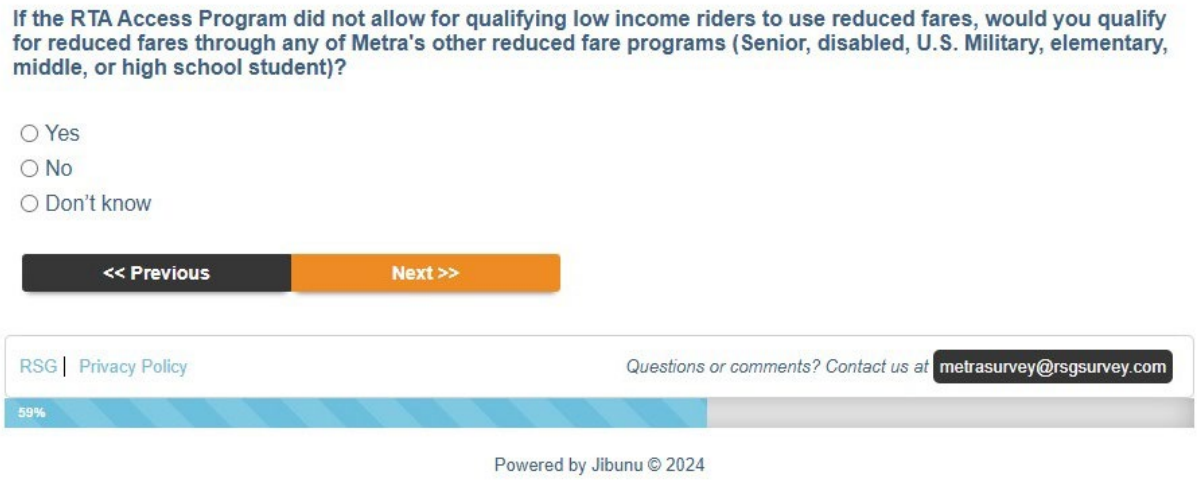


FIGURE 76: TICKET PURCHASE LOCATION

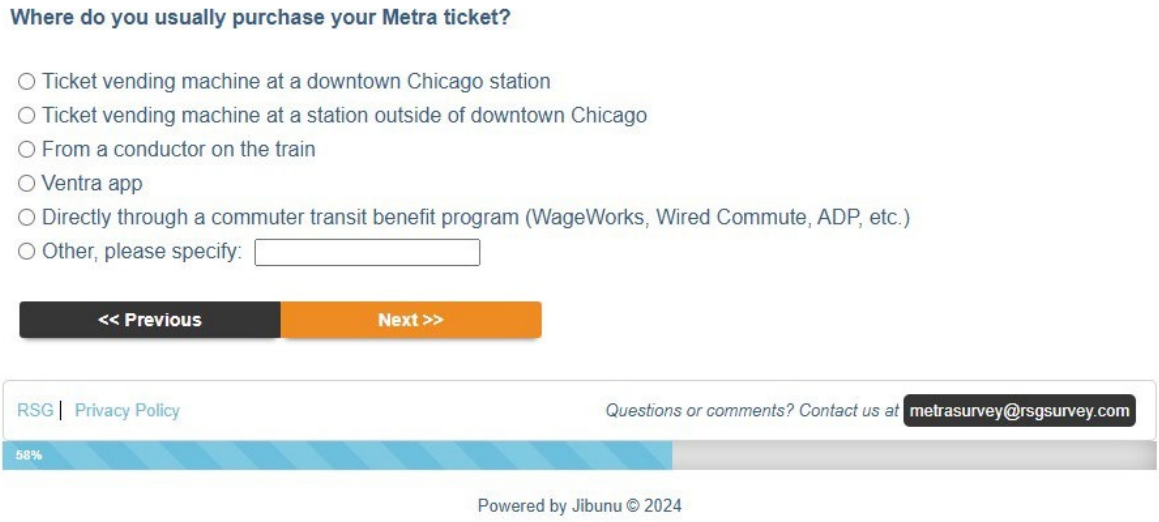
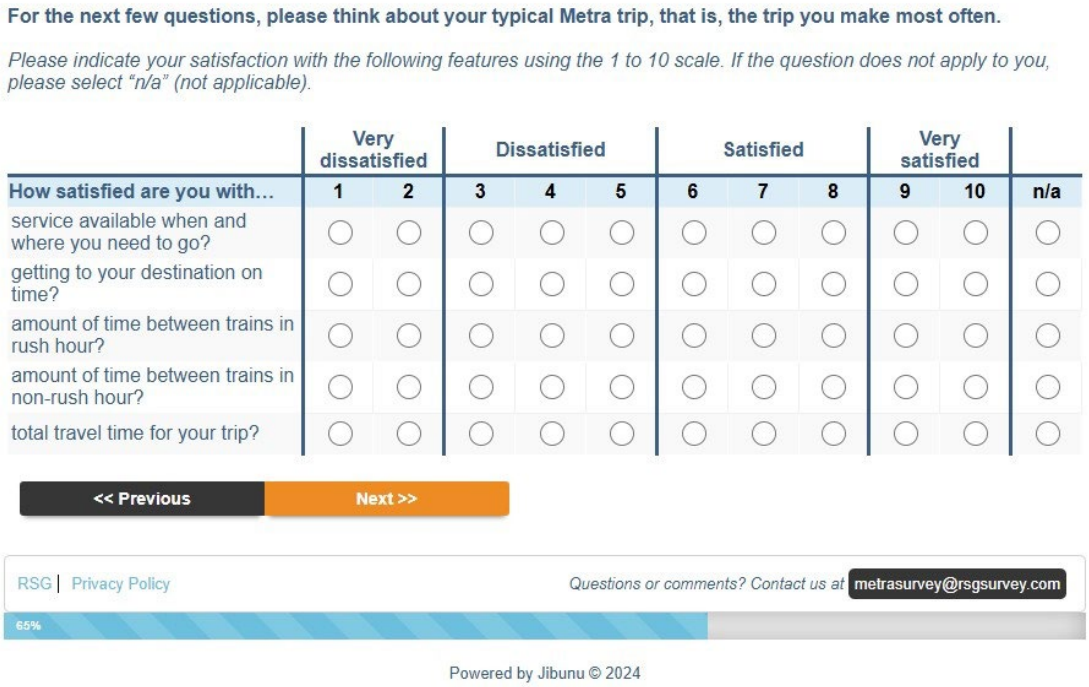


FIGURE 77: SATISFACTION (PAGE 1)

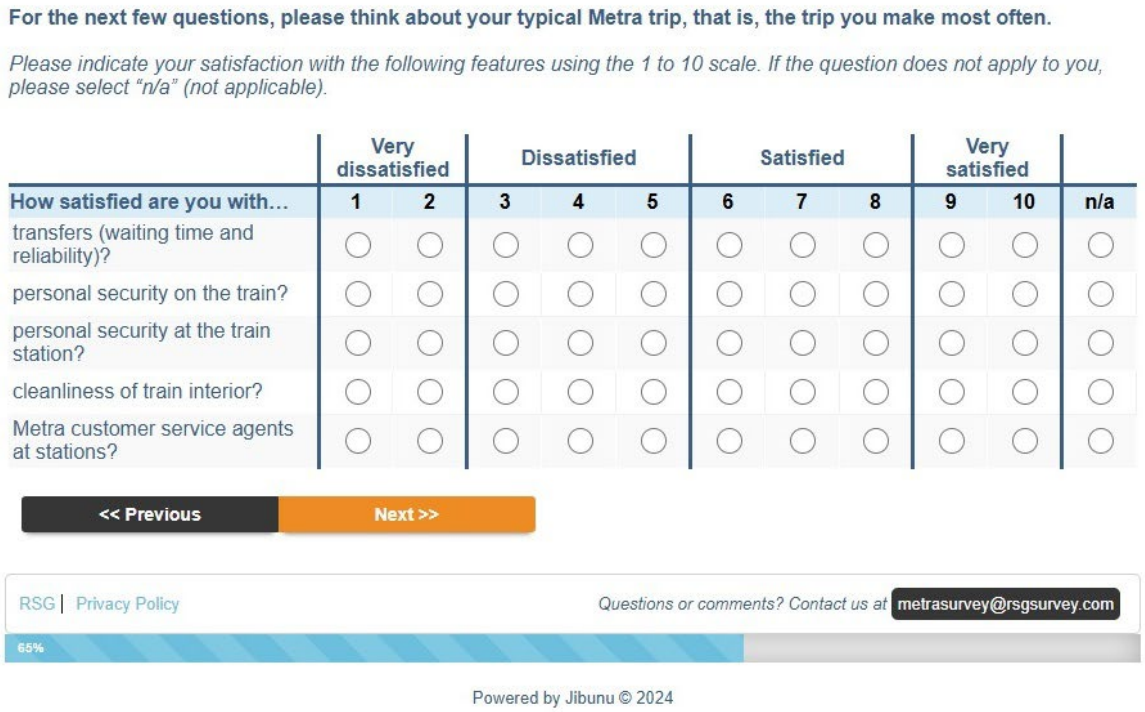


For the next few questions, please think about your typical Metra trip, that is, the trip you make most often.

Please indicate your satisfaction with the following features using the 1 to 10 scale. If the question does not apply to you, please select "n/a" (not applicable).

	Very dissatisfied		Dissatisfied			Satisfied			Very satisfied		
How satisfied are you with…	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**n/a**
service available when and where you need to go?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
getting to your destination on time?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
amount of time between trains in rush hour?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
amount of time between trains in non-rush hour?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
total travel time for your trip?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

FIGURE 78: SATISFACTION (PAGE 2)



For the next few questions, please think about your typical Metra trip, that is, the trip you make most often.

Please indicate your satisfaction with the following features using the 1 to 10 scale. If the question does not apply to you, please select "n/a" (not applicable).

	Very dissatisfied		Dissatisfied			Satisfied			Very satisfied		
How satisfied are you with…	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**n/a**
transfers (waiting time and reliability)?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
personal security on the train?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
personal security at the train station?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
cleanliness of train interior?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Metra customer service agents at stations?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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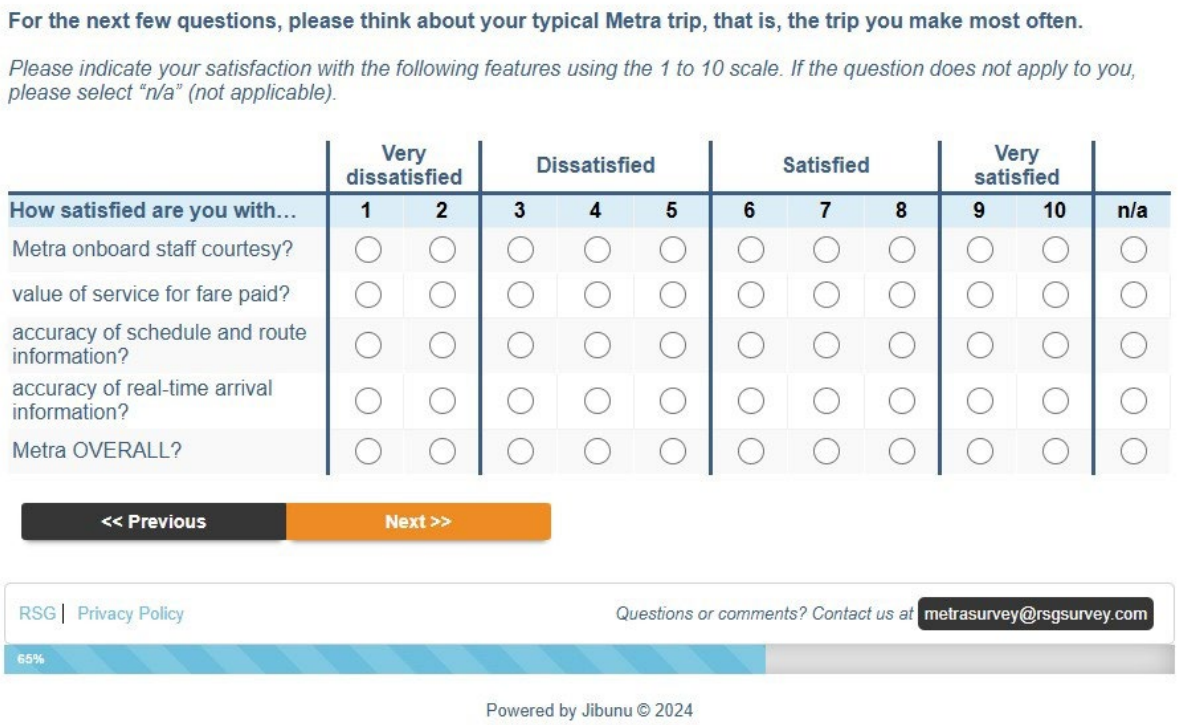
FIGURE 79: SATISFACTION (PAGE 3)

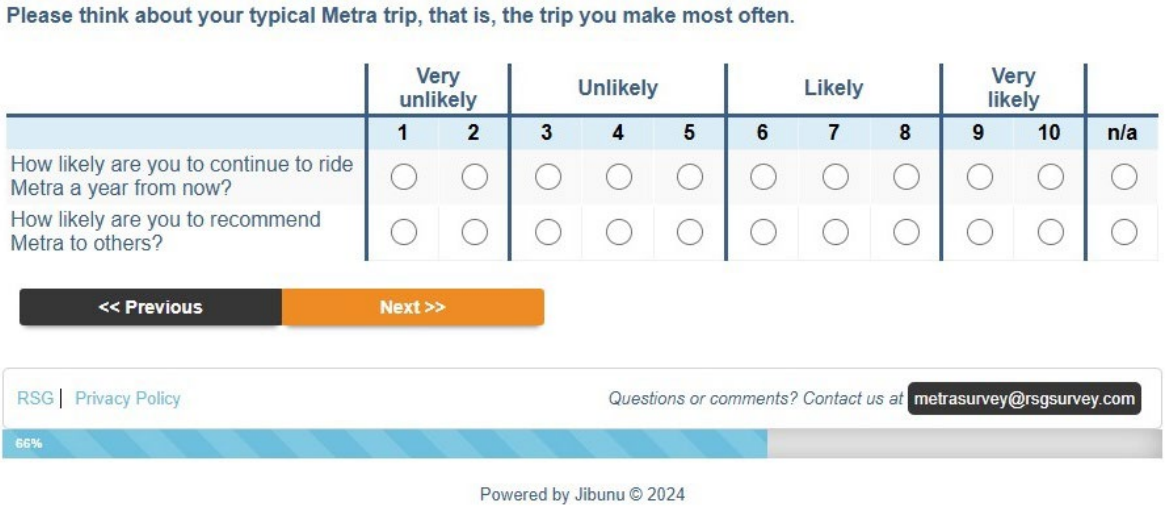


For the next few questions, please think about your typical Metra trip, that is, the trip you make most often.

Please indicate your satisfaction with the following features using the 1 to 10 scale. If the question does not apply to you, please select "n/a" (not applicable).

	Very dissatisfied		Dissatisfied			Satisfied			Very satisfied		
How satisfied are you with…	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**n/a**
Metra onboard staff courtesy?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
value of service for fare paid?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
accuracy of schedule and route information?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
accuracy of real-time arrival information?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Metra OVERALL?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

FIGURE 80: LIKELIHOOD TO...



Please think about your typical Metra trip, that is, the trip you make most often.

	Very unlikely		Unlikely			Likely			Very likely		
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**n/a**
How likely are you to continue to ride Metra a year from now?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How likely are you to recommend Metra to others?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

FIGURE 81: REGIONAL SATISFACTION

Please consider your ability to move throughout the Chicago region, using any and all of the available public transportation options (CTA, Pace, Metra) and indicate your overall regional satisfaction using the 1 to 10 scale. If the question does not apply to you, please select "n/a" (not applicable).

	Very dissatisfied		Dissatisfied			Satisfied			Very satisfied		
How satisfied are you with the...	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**n/a**
Availability of public transportation throughout the six-county Chicago region when and where you need to travel	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ease of transferring to other transit services (such as coordination of scheduling, payment, signage, walking paths, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Condition of the transit infrastructure (such as buses, trains, stations, bridges, signage, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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FIGURE 82: OVERALL REGIONAL SATISFACTION

Please consider your ability to move throughout the Chicago region, using any and all of the available public transportation options (CTA, Pace, Metra) and indicate your overall regional satisfaction using the 1 to 10 scale. If the question does not apply to you, please select "n/a" (not applicable).

	Very dissatisfied		Dissatisfied			Satisfied			Very satisfied		
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**n/a**
Overall satisfaction with public transportation in the SIX-COUNTY CHICAGO REGION	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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FIGURE 83: HOME ZIP CODE

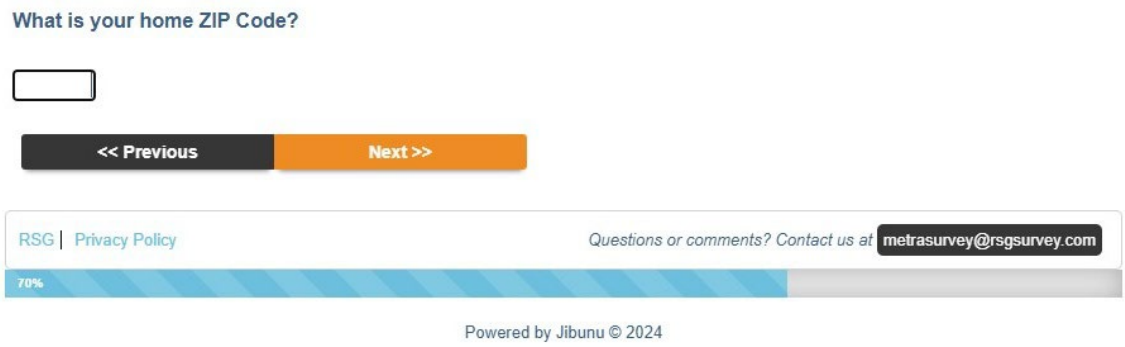


FIGURE 84: AGE

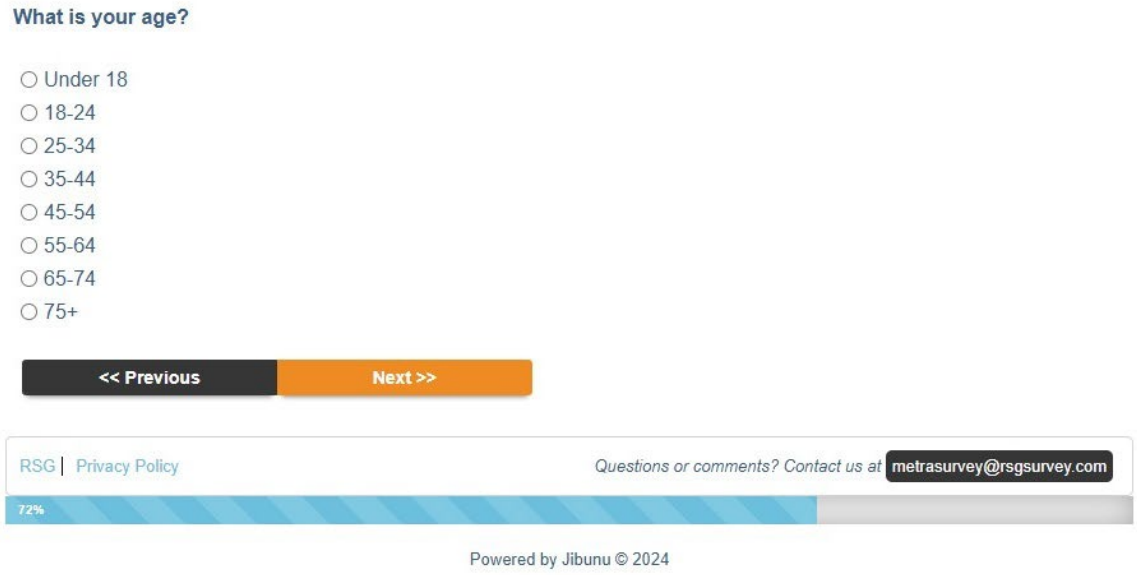


FIGURE 85: EMPLOYMENT STATUS

FIGURE 86: DISABILITY STATUS

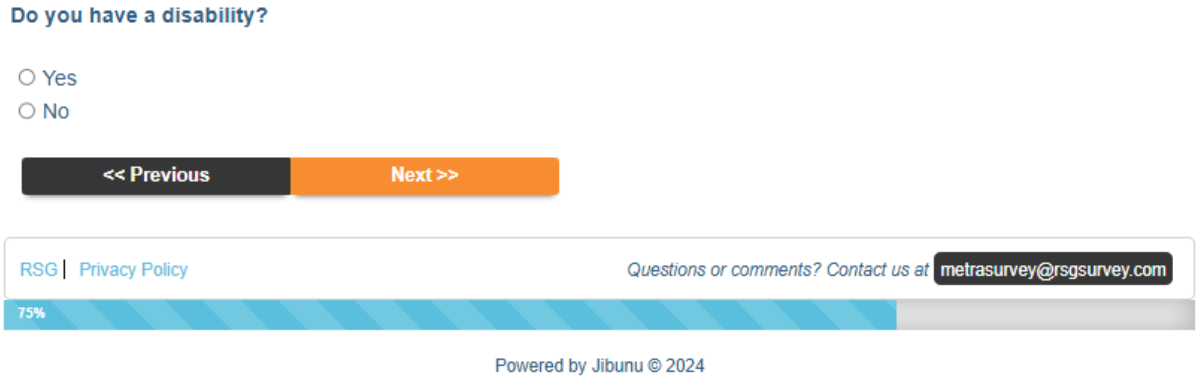


FIGURE 87: DISABILITY TYPE(S)

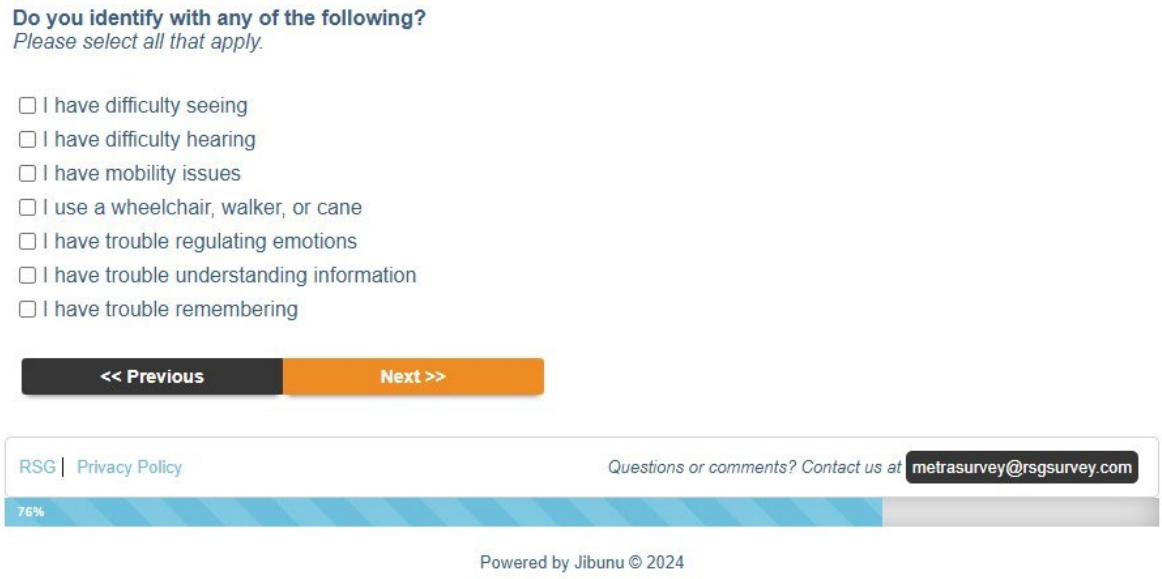


FIGURE 88: HOUSEHOLD SIZE, NUMBER OF CHILDREN, AND NUMBER OF VEHICLES

FIGURE 89: CAR AVAILABILITY

FIGURE 90: PRIMARY LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN HOUSEHOLD

FIGURE 91: ENGLISH ABILITY

FIGURE 92: EDUCATION STATUS

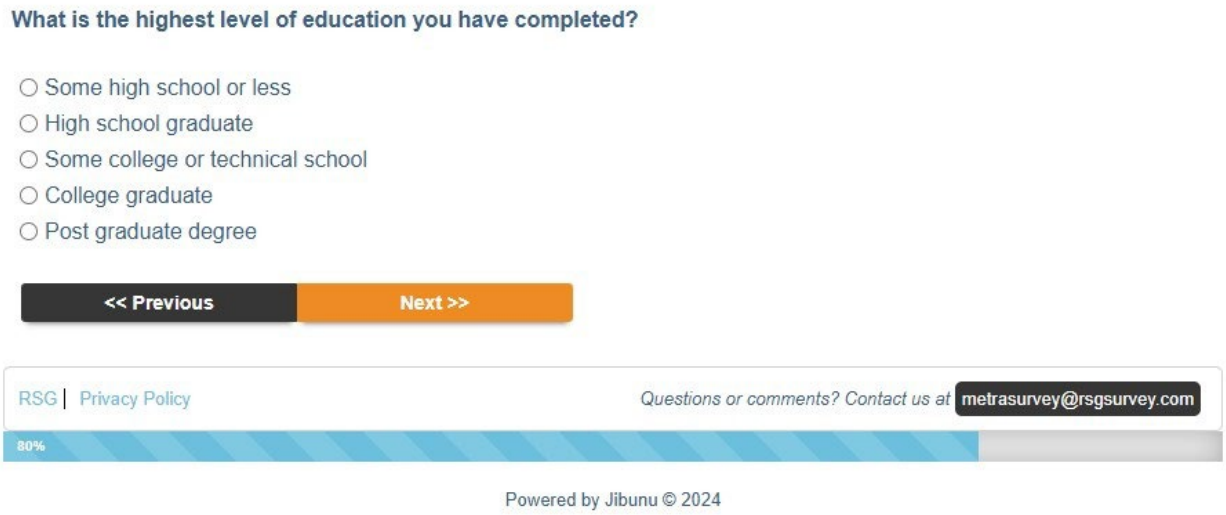


FIGURE 93: RACE AND ETHNICITY

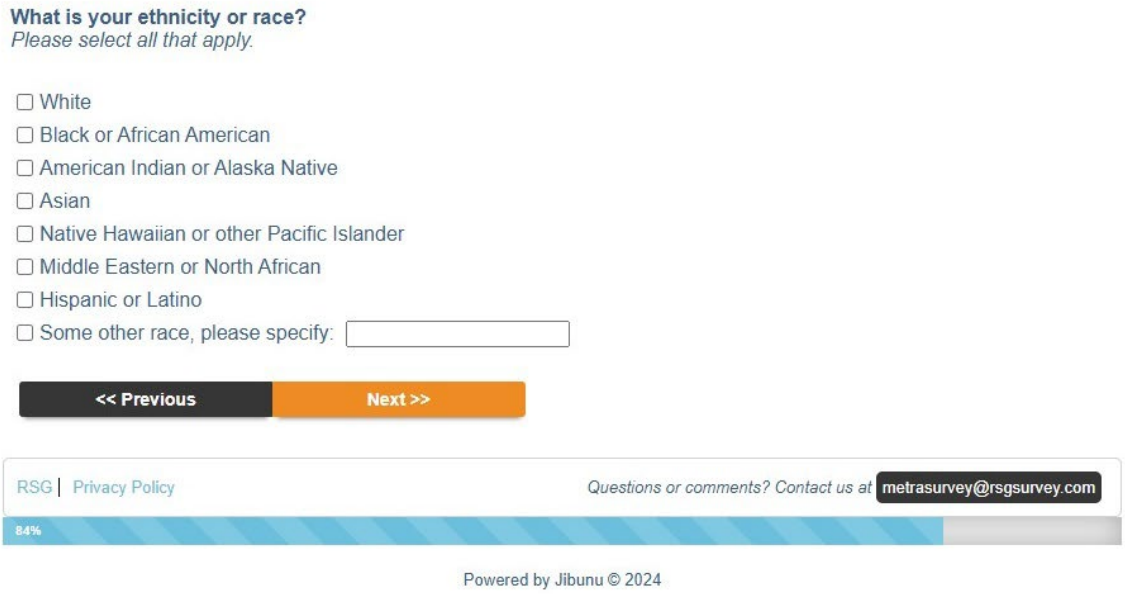


FIGURE 94: USE OF MOBILE DEVICE(S)

FIGURE 95: HOUSEHOLD INCOME

FIGURE 96: SNAP BENEFITS

FIGURE 97: GENDER

FIGURE 98: FUTURE CTA/RTA RESEARCH

FIGURE 99: EMAIL

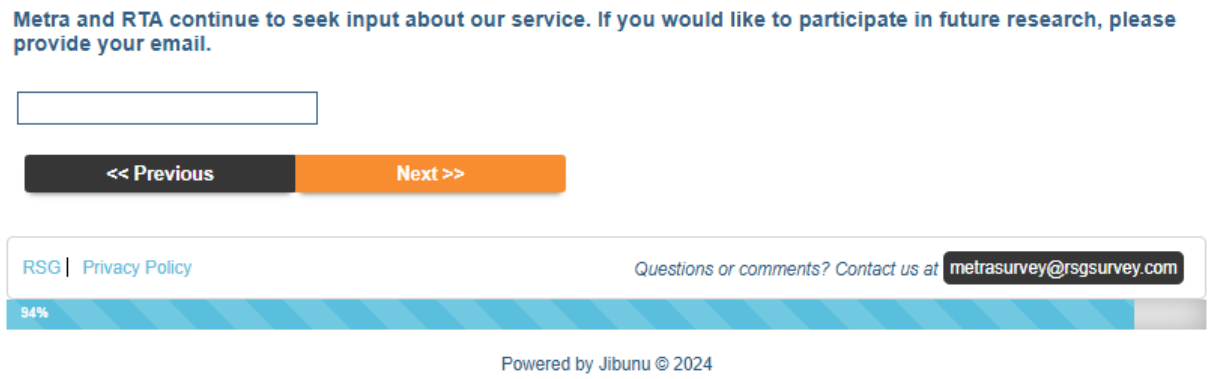


FIGURE 100: COMMENTS

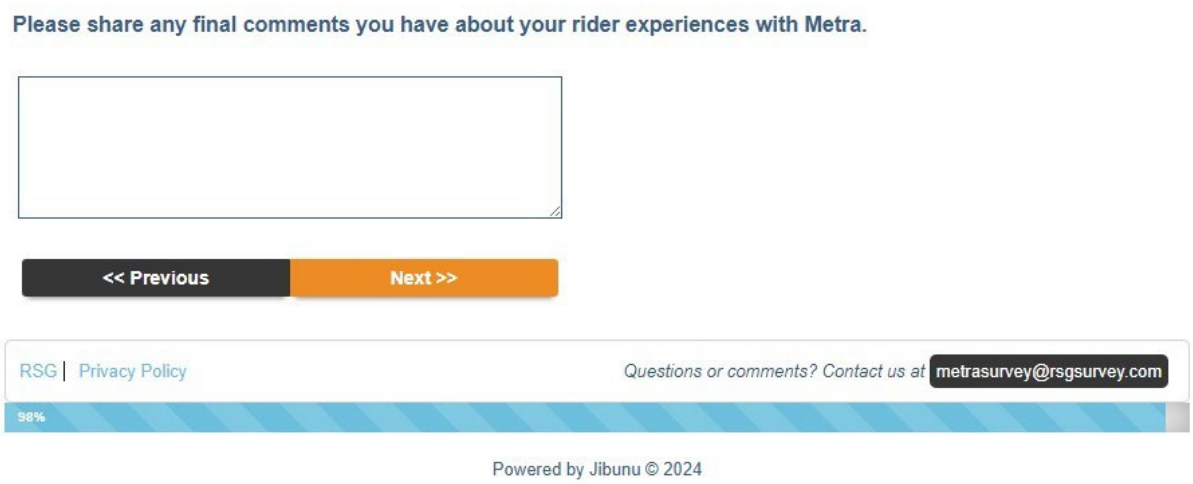
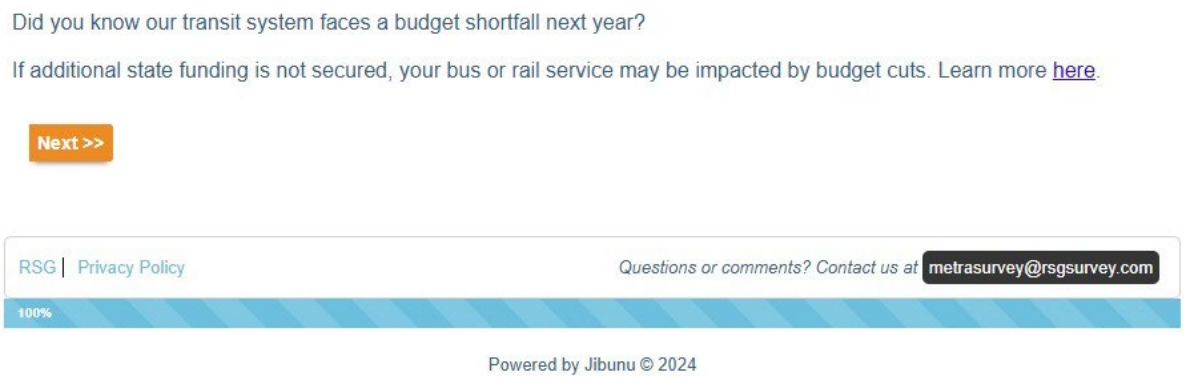


FIGURE 101: END TEXT



APPENDIX B. POSTCARD ALLOTMENT

TABLE 4: AMOUNT OF SEAT-DROP POSTCARDS ALLOCATED PER METRA LINE

METRA LINE	NUMBER OF POSTCARDS
HC	200
SWS	200
ME	500
MD-W	1,200
MD-N	1,500
RI	1,500
NCS	1,700
UP-W	2,200
UP-NW	3,000
UP-N	3,500
BNSF	4,500
Total	20,000

TABLE 5: AMOUNT OF POSTCARDS ALLOCATED PER DOWNTOWN HANDOUT LOCATION

METRA STATION	NUMBER OF POSTCARDS
Union	7,100
Ogilvie	7,600
LaSalle	1,300
Millennium	1,100
Van Buren	400
Total	17,500