

City of Racine, Wisconsin  
Office of the Mayor  
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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha Continue Passenger Rail Exploration with a Proposed Regional Commission**

**Racine, Wis.** – The Common Councils of Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha will consider a proposal authorizing the cities to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the Cities of Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha to form the Milwaukee-Area-Racine-Kenosha (MARK) Passenger Rail Commission, a collaborative body aimed at exploring the potential for future passenger rail service in Southeastern Wisconsin.

The agreement, authorized under Wisconsin Statutes § 66.0301, allows for further federal support to explore the potential of passenger rail service between the lakefront communities from Milwaukee to Kenosha, and continuing down to Chicago. This step does not commit the cities to launching rail service, constructing infrastructure, or expending funds, but creates a formal structure to begin coordinated regional planning. If approved, the MARK Passenger Rail Commission would serve as a multijurisdictional entity focused on long-term planning, public engagement, and access to state and federal programs.

The effort is modeled after similar collaborative commissions in other parts of the state and reflects a growing regional interest in improving intercity transportation options.

Participation in this initial phase involves no local funding obligation. The proposed agreement has no immediate fiscal impact on the Cities of Racine, Milwaukee, or Kenosha. The Commission would be eligible to apply for entry into the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development (CID) Program, a planning-focused initiative that provides federal support for rail corridor development. Entry into the Corridor ID Program does not require a local match, allowing the cities to advance early-stage study work without financial contributions.

#### **Next Steps**

If the councils approve the Intergovernmental Agreement, the MARK Passenger Rail Commission will be eligible to submit an application to the FRA Corridor ID Program to secure federal support for planning and project development and engage the public and regional stakeholders to gather input and identify community priorities.

These activities are preliminary in nature and represent one step in a longer, multi-phase process. Any future investment decisions or implementation steps would require additional public input, technical analysis, and council action.

### **Long-Term Vision**

While still in its early stages, the project reflects regional goals identified in long-range plans such as VISION 2050 and the Wisconsin Rail Plan 2050 to enhance sustainable and connected passenger rail networks. Potential long-term benefits include increased mobility, economic development, environmental sustainability, and greater regional connectivity, especially with Chicago and the broader Midwest rail network.

**Mayor Cavalier Johnson, City of Milwaukee:** “Milwaukee has long been a hub for innovation and regional collaboration, and this proposed Commission represents a measured, forward-looking step in exploring passenger rail as a future mobility solution. While no decisions are being made today about construction or investment, this partnership positions us to thoughtfully evaluate opportunities for enhanced connectivity across southeastern Wisconsin and into the broader Midwest.”

**Mayor David Bogdala, City of Kenosha:** “Kenosha welcomes this effort to coordinate regional planning around transportation. By forming the MARK Commission, we are taking a prudent approach, one grounded in data and collaboration. Our shared goal is to understand what rail could mean for our residents, businesses, and long-term economic development, while remaining mindful of the practical considerations ahead.

**Mayor Cory Mason, City of Racine:** “This proposed agreement allows us to participate in a critical planning process without committing local dollars, which is both responsible and strategic. Passenger rail has the potential to increase access to good-paying, middle-class jobs, reduce congestion, and contribute to a more sustainable future. The MARK Rail Commission provides a framework to explore these possibilities through careful analysis and public dialogue.”

For more information, please visit: [www.markrail.org](http://www.markrail.org)

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