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CONTACT:

Leslie Flynn
Communications Director
(262) 636-9266

Milwaukee–Racine–Kenosha Passenger Rail Commission to Hold Inaugural Meeting

Racine, WI – The Milwaukee–Area–Racine–Kenosha (MARK) Passenger Rail Commission will hold its inaugural meeting on **Friday, December 5, at 10:00 a.m.** in **Room 207 at Racine City Hall**. The meeting of commissioners will focus on establishing the Commission’s organizational structure and beginning the early coordination necessary to explore the feasibility of future passenger rail service in Southeastern Wisconsin, connecting the downtowns of Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee to Chicago and Northshore communities.

The Commission was created through an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) under Wisconsin Statutes § 66.0301 approved by the Cities of Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha. The agreement authorizes the three cities to work collaboratively on preliminary planning, public engagement, and eligibility for federal rail-planning programs. Formation of the Commission does not commit the municipalities to building rail infrastructure, launching service, or making financial expenditures; instead, it provides a formal structure to support long-range evaluation, coordination, and planning.

The approach follows similar collaborative transportation commissions established elsewhere in Wisconsin and reflects ongoing regional interest in examining improved intercity mobility options.

Purpose of the Inaugural Meeting

The upcoming meeting will introduce the Commission’s mission and initial objectives, and will include consideration of several foundational items:

- **Presentation of the Commission’s vision, mission, and strategic goals** for early-stage coordination.
- **Adoption of Bylaws**, establishing the Commission’s internal governance framework.
- **Election of officers**, including Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.
- **Review and approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Metra** to support future planning discussions.
- **Authorization to prepare an application to the Federal Railroad Administration’s (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development (CID) Program**, which provides federal planning support with no required local match.

These actions are administrative and preliminary in nature and are intended to position the Commission to engage with federal partners, regional stakeholders, and the public as early planning progresses.

No Fiscal Impact and No Commitment to Rail Service

Participation in the Commission's early activities carries no local funding obligation. The FRA Corridor ID program does not require a local financial match to enter the program, allowing the cities to pursue federal support for corridor-level studies without committing resources. Any future decisions involving investment, construction, or service implementation would require additional technical analysis, public input, and subsequent commission action.

Long-Term Planning Context

While the MARK Commission is in its earliest phase, the effort aligns with regional objectives identified in **VISION 2050** and the **Wisconsin Rail Plan 2050**, which note the potential benefits of improved intercity and commuter rail connectivity. Long-term considerations—should the project advance—could include enhanced mobility, economic development opportunities near station areas, broader access to jobs, reduced congestion, and improved connections to Chicago and Midwest rail networks.

To learn more, please visit <https://www.markrail.org/>.

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