

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **New reverse-commute service to Lake County begins March 4**

*Public-private partnership funds pilot project on Milwaukee District North Line*

CHICAGO (Feb. 20, 2019) –A two-year reverse-commute pilot project funded by a public-private partnership between Metra and Lake County businesses and governments will begin on March 4 on the Milwaukee District North Line, Metra announced today. The first phase of the new schedule, which accompanies this release, will change slightly in a second phase pending an agreement with Canadian Pacific (CP), which is anticipated soon

Metra and Lake County Partners, an economic development corporation affiliated with Lake County businesses and governments, worked together to investigate the viability of increased service and propose a pilot project. The groups will evenly split the \$1.4 million cost of operating one new reverse-commute train in each rush period as part of a two-year demonstration project. They also will work on a definitive agreement to divide the \$4.75 million cost of installing universal crossovers near Lake Forest, with the partners contributing \$2.75 million, Metra contributing \$1 million and local governments contributing \$1 million.

“We are excited to launch this test of new reverse-commute service between Chicago and Lake County,” said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. “We are hopeful that this initiative will build our ridership, help local businesses to recruit top talent and have a positive impact on economic activity in Lake County. This partnership also is an innovative way to test the demand for service to Lake County and potentially improve our infrastructure.”

The public-private partnership agreement was the culmination of a process that began with an appearance by Lake County officials at a Metra Board meeting in April 2018. The officials asked Metra to explore ways to improve reverse-commute service to Lake County in order for them to effectively recruit and retain employees living in Chicago. They also argued that better train service would reduce pollution and roadway congestion and improve employee productivity and satisfaction. AbbVie, Horizon Pharma, Trustmark Insurance, Tenneco, Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital, Lake County government, the city of Lake Forest and the village of Deerfield are participating in the agreement.

“With this new service, it is now easy to live downtown and work in Lake County,” said Lake County Partners President and CEO Kevin Considine. “This is a tremendous opportunity for city dwellers to build careers at any of our globally recognized companies.”

Metra's current schedule is not ideal for reverse-commute riders to and from the Lake Forest, Deerfield and Lake-Cook Road stations, the stations closest to several major employers, including AbbVie, Horizon Pharma and others. There are no morning outbound express trains, and the afternoon trains are either too early or too late for most workers.

Under the new schedule, Metra has added a new outbound express Train 2191, departing Union Station at 6:25 a.m. and arriving in Lake Forest at 7:15 a.m. The train will make all stops in Chicago between Union Station and Edgebrook and then operate as an express to Lake Cook Road. (Pending an agreement with CP, which is anticipated soon, this train will be moved to an earlier slot, departing Union Station at 5:35 a.m. and arriving at Lake Forest at 6:25 a.m.) Metra also changed the schedule of one inbound afternoon train (2146) to create express service from Lake County, and added a new Train 2194, departing from Lake Forest at 5:35 p.m. and arriving at Union Station at 6:26 p.m. The schedule of Train 2148, which now arrives at Union Station at 6:11 p.m., would be pushed back three minutes.

"Working with the private sector to achieve their employment goals by attracting talented young people who desire to live in Chicago is a win-win-win situation," said Metra Chairman Norm Carlson. "The city of Chicago, Lake County and the employers all benefit. Public assets and operating funds are leveraged by private investment to enhance rail service that is a green solution. We look at this partnership as being a prototype for future expansions of Metra's service to benefit the public. This is regional cooperation at its finest."

There would also be a few other schedule adjustments to help relieve crowding or to better reflect actual operating conditions:

- A new morning inbound Train 2192 will depart Lake Forest at 7:48 a.m., making stops at Lake Cook Road, North Glenview, Golf, Edgebrook and Western before arriving at Union Station at 8:40 a.m. That should relieve crowding on Train 2120, which will now make fewer stops and have a slightly adjusted schedule, and Train 2122, whose schedule will remain the same.
- Later evening Trains 2154 and 2160 will have their departure times shifted back by 5 to 8 minutes. North Central Service Train 120 (which uses the Milwaukee North tracks) will have its schedule moved up by 5 minutes.
- Outbound rush hour Trains 2145 and 2147, which now depart Union Station at 5:58 p.m. and 6:19 p.m., would now depart at 6:05 p.m. and 6:25 p.m.
- Pending an agreement with CP, which is anticipated soon, a new outbound Train 2193 will be added to the schedule, departing Union Station at 3:20 p.m. and making stops at Western, Healy, Morton Grove, Glenview, North Glenview, Northbrook, Lake Cook, Deerfield and arriving in Lake Forest at 4:14 p.m.

If the pilot project shows that there is a strong market for reverse-commute service and that the service is self-sustaining, the partners agree to enter into an agreement to fund the construction of new universal crossovers near the Lake Forest Station. A crossover allows trains to switch between tracks. Constructing crossovers at Lake Forest would allow Metra to turn trains around at that location, which would create an opportunity for better service in the morning and evening rush periods if demand supported it.

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