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### **Midwest Connect Passenger Rail Project Gains Momentum with HNTB's Expertise**

*July 23, 2024*— The City of Fort Wayne, in partnership with the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), has retained HNTB Corporation to assist with the implementation of the Midwest Connect Corridor ID Grant.

In December of 2023, the City of Fort Wayne received a \$500,000 Corridor ID grant from the Federal Railroad Administration. The federal grant funds Step 1 to develop a scope, schedule, and budget for performing corridor planning and preparing a Service Development Plan to implement passenger rail service from Pittsburgh to Chicago via Fort Wayne & Columbus.

The selected consultant, HNTB, brings vision and extensive experience, having worked on over 40 passenger rail corridors nationwide. With over 110 years in transportation planning and design, HNTB is no stranger to the Midwest Connect corridor, having analyzed sections of the route over the past decade. They provide fully integrated services for all project phases, including feasibility studies, planning, environmental review, conceptual design, final design, and construction management.

“It’s encouraging to see this progress as Fort Wayne continues to lead an effort that will have a lasting and meaningful impact,” said Fort Wayne Mayor Sharon Tucker. “As work continues with our partners, it’s our belief that this latest effort gives us the best chance to restore passenger rail services to Fort Wayne.”

The Corridor ID program garnered additional support from several key stakeholders, including the Northern Indiana Passenger Rail Association (NIPRA), Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG), Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC), Lima/Allen County Regional Planning Commission (LACRPC), Licking County Area Transportation Study (LCATS), Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association (OMEGA), and Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission (BHJTS). The program also received advocacy from the Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania Departments of Transportation.

“We are thrilled to have HNTB on board as our consultant for this project. Their extensive experience and vision will be invaluable as we move forward,” stated City Councilman Geoff Paddock. “The momentum of this initiative is inspiring, and while we recognize that there is a long road ahead, we are confident that with the support of our dedicated stakeholders, we can navigate this journey successfully.”

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