

Milwaukee procuring streetcars for transit project

By: Matt Taub, matt.taub@dailyreporter.com April 6, 2015 8:34 am

Milwaukee is seeking contractors to supply streetcars for the city's recently approved downtown streetcar project.

The proposal was issued Monday by the Department of Public Works. It calls for proposals that would allow the city to procure four streetcars, along with associated spare parts, materials and services. The commissioner of Public Works has reserved the right to reject any and all proposals and accept only those that are in the best interest of the city.

"It's the biggest single expense in terms of a piece of equipment we'll buy," said Alderman Nik Kovac. "We want to make sure we're getting the best deal."

On Feb. 10, Milwaukee's Common Council approved plans to build a \$124 million, two-mile downtown streetcar project connecting the city's central business district with Milwaukee's Intermodal Station and nearby neighborhoods.

Kovac said the contract deals with the part of the streetcar system that is likely to make the most immediate impression on the public. Custom-designed cars will allow travelers to "roll right on" with a bike or wheelchair, he said, and experience a means of getting around that is similar to a subway or light rail.

The plan to build the streetcar system relies on \$54.9 million in existing federal money, as well as local money from new and expanded tax-increment-finance districts. In general, TIF districts collect taxes generated by rising property values and new developments in particular area and set the money aside to finance public projects in the same place.

Alderman Robert Bauman said city officials looked into the procurement efforts could be joined to those of other cities that are also building streetcar systems. But few opportunities of that sort, he said, exist right now.

For suppliers interested in selling streetcars to Milwaukee, the city's request for proposals and supporting documents can be found at the [Department of Public Works Official Big Notice website](#). A pre-proposal conference is scheduled for 9 a.m. April 14 in Room 501 of the Frank Zeidler Municipal Building, 841 N. Broadway, Milwaukee. Submissions are due by June 5.

The downtown streetcar is planned to be a starter system that will connect parts of the city's downtown, Third Ward, Lower East Side and the lakefront. City leaders have talked about using later extensions to connect downtown to other neighborhoods, including the North Side, Walker's Point, the near west side and the east side of Milwaukee.



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