

From the Milwaukee Business Journal

:<http://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/blog/2015/01/oppermann-streetcar-may-reduce-property-taxes-for.html>

Oppermann: Streetcar may 'reduce property taxes for nearly 97% of the city'

OP-ED

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[Sheldon Oppermann](#), running counter to a core argument of streetcar opponents, said the downtown transit system could reduce property taxes throughout the city.

The streetcar would stop within a short walk of the City Center at 735 office building on North Water Street that **Compass Properties** and executive vice president Oppermann have revived over the past few years. Read other downtown property owners' reactions to the streetcar in [the Jan. 16 edition of the Milwaukee Business Journal](#).

Oppermann shares his thoughts on why the streetcar is a good project for all of Milwaukee, not only downtown:

See Also

- [Sobelman: 'I would never waste my own money' on the streetcar](#)
- [All aboard? Can the streetcar help downtown Milwaukee?](#)
- [All aboard? For opponents, money should be spent elsewhere](#)
- [Johnson Controls has 'keen interest' in Milwaukee streetcar vote as it considers expansion](#)
- [Polarizing streetcar debate leaves some businesspeople with more questions](#)

We are at a critical time for the City of Milwaukee.

To invest in our future or not?

The streetcar is an investment, no doubt. Investments aren't cheap. Forget politics, forget the grandstanding and consider facts. The time for this investment is now.

- (1) The city needs more jobs.
- (2) The streetcar can and will attract new employers to the city of Milwaukee.
- (3) The federal funds reserved exclusively for this investment are available now and will be lost to competing cities if not used here.
- (4) The tax incremental financing opportunity to make this public infrastructure investment is also most likely to be available now, with East Michigan Avenue developments.
- (5) There is potential for this investment to actually reduce property taxes for nearly 97 percent of the city.

These arguments run directly counter to those who are arguing that this project does not help the city as a whole.

Site Selector Magazine, the nation's industry leading publication for those who decide where companies will locate, has recently said that Transportation Infrastructure ranks No. 2 on the top 10 Most Important Site Selection Criteria for employers. It ranks second only to tax scheme, and is more important than land prices, ease of permitting and available work force. This tells us that those who choose where to put the jobs, are choosing based on infrastructure exactly like the streetcar and the Milwaukee Intermodal Station to which the streetcar connects.

Absent job opportunities, those we educate at our universities move to cities that have jobs and out of Milwaukee.

On property tax relief, the project could actually reduce residents' property taxes because 3.2 percent of all of the taxable parcels of land in the entire city are directly surrounding this project. Those 3.2 percent pay 18.6 percent of all of the city's property taxes.

Since the city will collect what it needs to run the city and the taxes will equal what the city spends: Approximately, a 5 percent property value increase that results in a 5 percent tax increase for those 3 percent of downtown properties reduces the tax burden on the other 97 percent of the property in the city by 1.4 percent.

Supporters and opponents of the investment contend that property values for the 3.2 percent will increase as a result of this project. To say that doesn't help the entire city is therefore simply untrue.

I am lucky to live and work in our great city. I vote and pay taxes in our great city. I also want more for our city. The time is now to make the investment in the future of Milwaukee.

— [Sheldon Oppermann](#)

Reporter Sean Ryan covers commercial and residential real estate for the Milwaukee Business Journal and through the [Real Estate Roundup blog](#) on the website. He also covers construction, highways and public transit.