



Downtown's future is here.

## Jump aboard, it's OK

by **Jeff Sherman**

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I love your car, your bike, your shoes. You look good. Even you, you streetcar opponents. I don't, though, understand why you are so scared about a streetcar. Probably never will.

Oh well, that's life in the big city. Reality is that Milwaukee is behind the modern transportation times. Sure, we have other – some may say – bigger challenges. True. But we don't effectively connect our highly populated areas to jobs, and we haven't used fixed-guideway transit and streetcars as tools to help focus and direct economic development.

We haven't, yet. But, we will or better yet soon will. And, it's about time. So, if you care about the future of Wisconsin's largest city you should contact the mayor (<http://city.milwaukee.gov/mayor#.VLL13qatpdQ>) and/or your alderman (<http://city.milwaukee.gov/mayor#.VLL13qatpdQ>). Now. In advance of this week's council meeting.

All things happen as they should and as Milwaukee gets closer and closer to realizing the economic potential of a streetcar system it's time to think of this project for what it is – a part of our infrastructure that includes roads, cars, buses, trolleys, rail, bikes, trails, buildings and more.

The streetcar isn't a catch all solution to Milwaukee's problems nor is it a problem in and of itself. It will help shape the brand and identity of Milwaukee, though. Go to any city. They all have buildings, people, stores, etc. People talk about what's new, what got them from here to there. The Milwaukee streetcar will do this, and more. Watch a sporting event. What do the networks showcase in their opening city scene coverage? It's always pictures and video of water and a trolley, train or a streetcar. Always.

The streetcar is about economic development and building a more sociable and connected state. We already are a very sociable city, but it's hard to get from one part of town to another without a car. And today and into the future, people expect to have this option. Employers know this. So, don't forget that this is about recruitment and retention.

As a Downtown home owner and business owner, I'm truly looking forward to the next phase for our city's largest neighborhood. This includes the innovation that comes from modern transit and the streetcar's initial [route](http://onmilwaukee.com/myOMC/authors/jeffsherman/streetcarroute.html) (<http://onmilwaukee.com/myOMC/authors/jeffsherman/streetcarroute.html>). Key word in the last sentence? Initial. This is an initial route that begins in the heart of Downtown and eventually extends into other areas of the city.

Want more information on the streetcar? Below is a round up of recent coverage. Enjoy. And, Onward!

["Can The Streetcar Help Downtown Milwaukee \(http://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/print-edition/2015/01/16/all-aboard-can-the-streetcar-help-downtown.html?page=all\)?"](http://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/print-edition/2015/01/16/all-aboard-can-the-streetcar-help-downtown.html?page=all)

["Oppermann: Streetcar may 'reduce property taxes for nearly 97% of the city' \(http://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/blog/2015/01/oppermann-streetcar-may-reduce-property-taxes-for.html?ana=e\\_mil\\_rdup&s=newsletter&ed=2015-01-16&u=yzyE4tzqOYqYopw/KL/sfFuFoJG&t=1421418699&page=all\)"](http://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/blog/2015/01/oppermann-streetcar-may-reduce-property-taxes-for.html?ana=e_mil_rdup&s=newsletter&ed=2015-01-16&u=yzyE4tzqOYqYopw/KL/sfFuFoJG&t=1421418699&page=all)

["Johnson Controls has 'keen interest' in Milwaukee streetcar vote as it considers expansion \(http://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/blog/real\\_estate/2015/01/johnson-controls-has-keen-interest-in-milwaukee.html\)"](http://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/blog/real_estate/2015/01/johnson-controls-has-keen-interest-in-milwaukee.html)

["PolitiFact: Would Milwaukee's streetcar be a blast from the past \(http://www.politifact.com/wisconsin/statements/2015/jan/16/jim-steineke/rep-jim-steineke-says-milwaukee-streetcar-would-be/\)?"](http://www.politifact.com/wisconsin/statements/2015/jan/16/jim-steineke/rep-jim-steineke-says-milwaukee-streetcar-would-be/)

Web address: <http://onmilwaukee.com/articles/streetcarbuzz.html>

