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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Robert Bauman
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Data Shows Streetcar Line Compares Favorably to Busiest MCTS Bus Routes

The two streetcar routes being proposed for the Downtown Streetcar Circulator measure up well when compared to the busiest existing Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) bus routes, said Alderman Robert J. Bauman, who today unveiled ridership data culled from a nationally recognized transit database and from the MCTS.

Alderman Bauman, chair of the Common Council's Public Works Committee and a longtime public transit advocate, said the 2008 data he received from the National Transit Database – the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) primary national database for statistics on the transit industry – and 2009 data directly from the MCTS "clearly shows how the downtown streetcar system will measure up nicely in ridership" with MCTS Freeway Flyer and standard routes.

For instance, he said the 3.6-mile modern street car line is projected to generate daily ridership of 3,800 passengers, a ridership level which exceeds the ridership of all 11 MCTS Freeway Flyer routes and 12 of the 29 MCTS regular trunk routes. The shorter 2.05-mile street car route is projected to generate daily ridership of 1,800 passengers, or a ridership level which also exceeds all 11 Freeway Flyer routes and six of the 29 MCTS regular trunk routes.

When measured by Passengers per Bus Hour ("PBH"), a common industry measure of transit service effectiveness, Alderman Bauman said the Downtown Streetcar Circulator measures up even better. The 3.6-mile modern street car line would generate 51.24 passengers per bus hour. This level exceeds the MCTS system average of 40.33 PBH, far exceeds the PBH of all Freeway Flyer routes, and exceeds the PBH of 24 of the 29 MCTS regular trunk routes. Only MCTS routes 27, 62, 22 and 63 generate a greater PBH.

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Analysis Shows Streetcar Benefits/ADD ONE

The streetcar line would generate more passengers per bus hour than the popular route 30 which generates PBH of 50.9, the alderman said.

The shorter 2.05-mile streetcar line would generate PBH of 38.2. This performance level exceeds the PBH of all 11 Freeway Flyer routes and exceeds the PBH of 18 of the 29 regular MCTS trunk routes, he said.

Another common industry measure of transit service effectiveness is “Passengers per Revenue Mile.” According to Alderman Bauman, by this measure, the modern streetcar line also compares well to current MCTS bus service. The 3.6-mile line is projected to generate 5.67 passengers per revenue mile and the 2.05-mile line is projected to generate 4.78 passengers per revenue mile. Both measures exceed the MCTS system average of 3.15 passengers per revenue mile.

“It may surprise some people, but this data analysis indicates the Downtown Streetcar Circulator is an asset that will generate significant transportation benefits for Milwaukee transit users—benefits that are comparable to the busiest MCTS bus routes,” Alderman Bauman said.

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