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ROBERT G. DONOVAN
Alderman, 8th District

Common sense prevails on downtown streetcar project

Statement from Alderman Bob Donovan
May 9, 2013

Needless to say, I am pleased with the action today by the Legislature's budget committee to approve a budget motion that very likely means the end of the line for the downtown streetcar project.

The budget motion, submitted by **Rep. Dale Kooyenga** (a member of the legislature's Joint Finance Committee who represents a district that includes Brookfield, Wauwatosa, and Milwaukee), bars utility companies from passing along costs to rate payers that are associated with moving utility lines related to a streetcar project.

With the cost of moving those utility lines estimated to be approximately \$70 million – all placed on the shoulders of Milwaukee taxpayers – I believe chances are slim to none that the full Common Council will stand pat and let the project go forward.

That said, I want to make it clear that while I certainly respect my colleagues and their opinions, we simply do not agree with one another on the streetcar project. But now we need to move forward and come together on a plan that seeks to secure an approved reallocation of the \$54 million. I believe that money should be used to fix our crumbling streets, and I have a Legislative Reference Bureau estimate stating that for \$54 million we could re-pave 1000 blocks of city streets!

In my view, that kind of infrastructure project would go a long way toward creating jobs and stimulating the local economy.

To me, that would also be a project that would have the very strong support of our citizens – the people we are working for.

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