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**ROBERT G. DONOVAN**

Alderman, 8th District

February 19, 2014

Governor Scott Walker  
115 East Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Walker:

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett recently asked that some of the State's surplus transportation funds be directed to Milwaukee to help the City repair its crumbling streets. I agree with the Mayor that Milwaukee's streets – which now have a near-record number of potholes thanks to the harsh winter weather – are in dire need of additional maintenance. However, Mayor Barrett also continues to pursue development of the Milwaukee Streetcar, despite minimal public support and considerable public opposition to this project. I believe that the time has come to put an end to this nonsense and reallocate funding for the Streetcar to more pressing needs, most notably stepping up the pace of repairing city streets and connecting Milwaukee residents with available suburban jobs.

While more local funding has been directed to fixing Milwaukee streets in recent years, the City is still woefully behind where it needs to be in terms of bringing all of its streets up to an acceptable condition. Not only would additional funding lead to safer, smoother streets for all Milwaukeeans, it would also create meaningful employment opportunities for unemployed Milwaukee residents.

Milwaukee's other serious need in the area of transportation is better transit connections to available jobs in suburban locations. A recent report by the Public Policy Forum highlighted the "spatial mismatch" in metro Milwaukee's job market: most available jobs are located in suburban areas not accessible by public transit, yet the unemployed city residents who could fill these positions often do not own automobiles, making it difficult or impossible to get to the jobs they so desperately need. A recent report by the UWM Center for Economic Development found that as many as 40,000 Milwaukeeans lost access to jobs in the 2000s because of funding cuts to transit services.

To address both of these problems – the deteriorating condition of Milwaukee's streets and inadequate transit connections to suburban jobs – I suggest creation of a State/City partnership to reallocate the \$54.9 million in federal funding earmarked for the Milwaukee Streetcar to meet these needs. Under this partnership, half of the Streetcar funds would be directed to Milwaukee's street paving and reconstruction program to help the City make progress in bringing all of its streets up to an acceptable condition.

The other half of the funds would be reallocated to initiatives to improve access to suburban employment. This money could be directed to the Milwaukee County Transit System to extend routes, purchase buses, increase service frequency or make other improvements that would help Milwaukee residents reach suburban employment opportunities. Alternatively, the reallocated funds could be used for other innovative transportation strategies to better connect the unemployed with suburban jobs.

As I have previously indicated, I believe – and have had confirmation from Sen. Ron Johnson’s office – that the Milwaukee Streetcar funds can be reallocated for other uses through an agreement between the Governor, the Milwaukee County Executive and the Mayor. I stand committed to making this proposal a reality by working together with you to bring it forward. I will contact your office shortly to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can make this happen.

I appreciate your past support and look forward to working with you on this proposal as well. I believe that, working together, we can make significant progress in addressing two of Milwaukee’s greatest transportation issues – the need to fix the City’s crumbling streets and the need to better connect unemployed Milwaukee residents with available suburban jobs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert G. Donovan".

Robert G. Donovan  
Alderman, 8<sup>th</sup> District