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Truth lies in the middle of Milwaukee Streetcar debate

**Statement from Common Council President Michael J. Murphy
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The debate on the downtown Milwaukee streetcar has been contentious and polarizing. Much of this can be attributed to the extreme language and scenarios being maintained by both supporters and opponents of the project. I'm a strong believer that the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

After much contemplation and attention to the merits on both sides of the issue, today I voted in support of the streetcar. However, I did so also recognizing the value of allowing for direct democracy on issues of great importance to the city at large. Because of this, I also voted in support of a procedural delay that allows opponents of the streetcar more time to gather the signatures required to force a binding referendum.

In the end, while I believe there is substantial support for the streetcar and that the project, along with other downtown initiatives, will create an urban environment that is robust and stimulates additional economic activity and employment, I am not naive to the fact that there is a constituency in the city that feels this is the wrong use of city resources.

Citizens of good will have been willing to go out in the middle of winter -- in some instances in below zero weather -- to share their opinions and collect signatures to determine if there is city-wide support for the streetcar (by passing direct legislation that would require the city to hold a binding referendum in order to construct any rail transit system costing more than \$20 million). Although these efforts may not reflect popular opinion in some districts, we should be careful not to carelessly or cavalierly disregard the wishes of those citizens. They too are Milwaukee.

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