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CAVALIER JOHNSON
ALDERMAN, 2ND DISTRICT

Threat to JobLines routes could mean jobs lost for city residents

Statement of Alderman Cavalier “Chevy” Johnson April 13, 2018

It is unconscionable to me that City of Milwaukee residents living in ZIP codes 53205, 53206, 53208, 53209, 53210, 53212, 53216, 53218, 53233 could soon be in danger of losing an important transportation (and employment) lifeline. The Milwaukee County Transit System’s routes 6 and 61 – also known as the JobLines – will disappear from these nine urban zip codes at the end of 2018 unless new funding sources are secured.

The JobLines routes were established in 2014 as a settlement with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin and Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH) to aid in transporting individuals living in urban neighborhoods to employment opportunities in Waukesha and Washington Counties. Route 6 runs west along Capitol Drive to Moorland Rd. and south through several New Berlin industrial parks. Route 61 runs northwest along W. Appleton Avenue into a busy business district in Menomonee Falls.

The loss would be especially troubling as the JobLines routes provide reliable transportation to 28,000 residents in the before-mentioned zip codes where nearly 20% of residents do not have access to a car for work. Additionally, ridership on the JobLines is healthy and is growing. Currently, about 1,000 daily riders depend on the JobLines to connect them with good-paying jobs at more than 150 employers in New Berlin, Brookfield and Menomonee Falls.

It’s time that southeastern Wisconsin, boasting the state’s greatest economic driver, had a sustainable transit funding source. If we can’t secure transportation to get workers from Milwaukee to immediate suburban communities then it doesn’t seem likely that we’ll be able to get thousands of workers from the city to Foxconn in southern Racine County.

The greater Milwaukee region has needed, does need, and will continue to need a Regional Transit Authority.

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