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ALDERMAN, 8TH DISTRICT

Promises Not Kept

Statement from Alderman Bob Donovan August 28, 2018

I cannot believe it will soon be four years since Mayor Barrett tied the fate of the Milwaukee Streetcar to the development of the Couture apartment high-rise.

But, as the *Journal Sentinel* reminded us last week (<https://www.jsonline.com/story/money/real-estate/commercial/2018/08/17/milwaukee-has-plan-b-streetcar-loop-if-couture-tower-isnt-built/988718002/>) all the orange barrels, flashing barricades, and dangerous streetcar tracks now littered over downtown would not have been possible without three Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) districts, one of which was to help fund the Couture.

Now, let me be clear: I supported the Couture. I still do. I think it is a visionary project situated on one of the most desirable pieces of real estate in the state of Wisconsin.

What I cannot understand is why the Mayor chose to hang the Streetcar around its neck like the Ancient Mariner's albatross.

And, as the article asks, what if the Couture does not happen? The Mayor's staff continues to insist the Streetcar will go forward – funded by TIF districts that would otherwise dissolve.

And the Streetcar's route through that area will apparently be an ugly one without the Couture. Remember the lovely drawings we were all shown promising an ultra-modern Streetcar servicing the housing complex of tomorrow?

My colleague, Ald. Robert Bauman, no Streetcar opponent he, is quoted in the article as saying, "If we don't have some connection there, we basically have two long rail sidings."

That's a fine way to welcome visitors to our lakefront.

Here, as in so many other areas, the people of this city deserved better than Tom Barrett, a mayor who offers no vision, no direction, and only a basket of broken promises.

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