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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Robert Bauman
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Billions for Milwaukee Freeways; Vending Machines for the Renovated Amtrak Depot *Alderman Says Local Lack of Commitment to Transit Extends to Food and Beverage Plans at Newly Renovated Facility*

Let them eat Twinkies and Sun Chips.

That's the message being sent to users of Milwaukee's new \$15.8 million Amtrak Depot/Intermodal Facility as the state Department of Transportation and Wilton Partners, the California-based operator of the facility, have decided to lease the 3,200 square foot restaurant space to a vending machine company who intends to install a convenience store and a vending machine emporium, Ald. Robert J. Bauman said today.

"Just six months after the celebration and speeches at the VIP ribbon cutting ceremony we find there will be no counter service, no cocktail bar, no sit down food service, and no breakfast, lunch or dinner served at this magnificent facility any time soon," said Ald. Bauman.

"Forget the Oyster Bar (a reference to the famous restaurant in New York City's Grand Central Station) or the multiple restaurants at Washington D.C.'s Union Station -- Milwaukee travelers will have to settle for plastic wrapped sandwiches, soda pop and potato chips," he said.

Ald. Bauman, whose 4th District includes downtown, the Historic Third Ward and the area where the Amtrak/Intermodal facility is located, has been a strong proponent of the remodeled transit facility and expressed his displeasure and frustration about the food and beverage options being pursued there. "Several years ago the city and the federal government stepped up to the plate to provide additional funds to upgrade WisDOT's bare-boned remodeling of the Amtrak Depot resulting in the magnificent facility that all Milwaukee residents can be proud of," he said.

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Vending Food At Amtrak/Intermodal Facility/ADD ONE

“Unfortunately WisDOT and Wilton Partners are once again trying to do the job on the cheap. Instead of working to develop an affordable leasing opportunity that would attract a full service restaurant, they have settled for vending machines and a convenience store. This is a disgrace,” he said.

Ald. Bauman, chair of the Council’s Public Works Committee, continued: “It is indeed ironic that WisDOT has no problem spending billions of dollars expanding Milwaukee area freeways, but when it comes to their Amtrak Depot/Intermodal Facility, vending machines will suffice. The citizens of Milwaukee did not make this investment in order to see this iconic facility degraded after only six months (of operation).”

WisDOT, Ald. Bauman said, “must immediately instruct its operator, Wilton Partners, to revamp the lease terms for the restaurant area in order to attract a quality local restaurateur. Failing that, WisDOT should terminate their relationship with Wilton Partners at once.”

“The citizens of Milwaukee, as financial partners in this venture, will stand for nothing less,” he said.