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Common Council President

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15th District Alderman

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**Willie L. Hines, Jr.**  
*City of Milwaukee Common Council*

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## “Pothole Fee” Eliminates Street Assessments, Far Better than Increasing Property Taxes

This morning, the Public Works Committee passed a new ordinance (4-1) that would systemically upgrade the way Milwaukee repairs its roads, while simultaneously relieving the financial burden that property owners currently bear.

I recognize the leadership of Alderman Robert Bauman, Alderman Robert Donovan and the eight other co-sponsors, including myself, in taking up this issue. Leadership is not always popular, but it is always necessary. Make no mistake about it – the condition of our roads is a serious problem, and the Common Council has stepped forward to offer a viable solution that does not simply pile onto the property tax.

The current system is intolerable. City assessments for residents are too high. When a residential street is scheduled to be replaced, property owners on that street must pay \$2,500 - \$3,500, depending on the size of their lots. That is the situation in which we currently find ourselves, and it is overly burdensome to the citizens of Milwaukee.

Nine other aldermen and I have put forth a pro-active, cost-effective solution. The assessments for street repairs will be totally eliminated, according to our plan, replaced with a \$20-per-year vehicle registration fee. You can call it a “wheel tax,” but “pothole fee” is probably more fitting. The fact is that we have to pay for the upkeep of our infrastructure, and a minimal fee is the best option available. Keeping these costly assessments and increasing the property tax is not acceptable. The Common Council has proposed that we eliminate assessments, hold the line on property taxes, and add a \$20 registration fee.

It’s the right decision, and I am proud to be part of a large group of city leaders – across socioeconomic, geographic and racial lines – who are working to point the City of Milwaukee in the right direction. Once again, I commend my fellow colleagues for their sound leadership toward a better city and an improved quality of life for our residents.