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Downtown BID supports streetcar plan

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Milwaukee Downtown BID #21 has thrown its support behind Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett's plan for a downtown streetcar.



The proposed streetcar line would pass through The Couture development.

The BID's board of directors voted Thursday in favor of the current \$123.9 million, two-and-a-half mile plan for the project.

According to the BID, the \$2.6 billion in private and public projects in and around the central business district since 2005, the \$980 million in projects that are currently under construction, and another \$1.2 billion in proposed projects have contributed to a vibrancy and growth trajectory in downtown Milwaukee. The city's 80,000 employees, 25,000 residents and 5.5 million annual visitors also convinced the BID that downtown could support the streetcar.

According to the BID, Milwaukee is one of only three of the top 25 most densely populated cities in the U.S. that does not have (or is constructing) fixed transit.

"Given the availability of significant federal funding and the potential for economic development in the central business district, Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 supports Mayor Barrett's streetcar plan, including funding the streetcar with tax incremental financing," said Joe Ullrich, chair of Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21. "The Milwaukee Streetcar aligns with the goals of our organization's strategic plan and is consistent with Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21's prior support of regional public transit."

"The Milwaukee Streetcar is a game changer for downtown," said Beth Weirick, chief executive officer of Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21. "We look forward to seeing this catalytic project come to fruition and know the success of the starter system will prompt expansions to near-downtown neighborhoods and beyond for the benefit of our city and region."

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