

Milwaukee council OKs streetcar plan

By Crocker Stephenson

Updated: 9:54 a.m.

A streetcar connecting the Milwaukee Intermodal Station with the city's lower east side was approved by the Common Council Tuesday, bringing to a pause at least decades of sometimes acrimonious debate.

The council approved, on 9-6 vote, a measure that established the project's \$124 million capital budget, its estimated \$3.2 million operating and maintenance budget and its 2.5 mile route, which includes a lakefront spur connecting the line to the proposed \$122 million, 44-story [Couture](#).

The council, by the same margin, also agreed to create a new tax incremental financing district at the east end of Michigan St. that would generate \$31 million and to amend a TIF district on E. Erie St. that would generate another \$18.3 million.

Some \$9.7 million would come from the already existing Cathedral Square tax incremental financing district. The remaining capital costs would be covered by an existing \$55 million federal grant and an applied-for \$10 million federal grant.

A federal grant will also cover 80% of operating costs for the line during its first 18 months. City officials say they believe they extend that grant an additional 18 months.

Groundbreaking is anticipated in late 2015 with full operation by mid-2018.

Voting in favor of the measures were Aldermen Ashanti Hamilton, Nik Kovac, Bob Bauman, Milele Coggs, Willie Wade, Jose Perez, Terry Witkowski, Russell Stamper and Common Council President Michael Murphy.

Voting against were Aldermen Joe Dudzik, Joe Davis, Jim Bohl, Bob Donovan, Robert Puente and Tony Zielinski.

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<http://www.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/milwaukee-council-set-to-vote-on-approve-streecar-plan-b99441994z1-291390051.html>

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