

Letters

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Streetcar good for Milwaukee

Somehow, we have instilled in our taxpayers the idea that the proposed Milwaukee streetcar is going to lose money and eventually cause tax increases.

Wrong. Although it is impossible to accurately predict the profit and loss of such facilities, it cannot be analyzed in a vacuum of cost and ridership alone. Many, many other positive factors must be considered, and that is exactly why some 90% of all large North American cities have built or are building light rail or streetcar routes. Studies have shown they are a part of a city's growth, and growth brings about prosperity.

After so many years of complacency, Milwaukee is on the threshold of waking up. The streetcar, in concert with the many new projects already starting here recently, will present the outsider with an image of progress, attracting even more new developments in the coming years.

More commerce, more jobs, more activity in downtown Milwaukee will result from the hidden benefits of the streetcar. It will help to bring about increased commerce and growth, and having convenient, modern transportation will be a big part of that growth. It will also broadcast an image of a city on the move.

The Common Council's vote on tax incremental financing for the streetcar is only for the "spur" going to the lakefront, by the way, and that part is likely to be profitable on its own simply because it will be very popular with Summerfest, the Art Museum, Discovery World, the Betty Brinn Museum and the new Couture shopping center and apartments. The rest of the streetcar financing is federal.

Michael J. Cudahy

Milwaukee

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