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## Milwaukee Mayor Barrett, business leaders to check out streetcar during Kansas City visit

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Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and a delegation of Milwaukee business officials on Monday will get a firsthand look at Kansas City's streetcar system.

The **Greater Milwaukee Committee** has set up a meeting with the **Kauffman Foundation** in Kansas City, Mo., to discuss startup businesses, said Julia Taylor, GMC president. Some of the group also want to see Kansas City's streetcar while they visit the community to hear more about its first month of operations and economic impact, she said.

"We're going to be right by the streetcar," Taylor said. "It just started operations in May, so it was a good opportunity."

Milwaukee this month will hire a contractor to lead construction of its downtown streetcar system. That \$128 million project includes a loop through downtown and a spur to the lakefront. The downtown loop is to start service in 2018, and the lakefront spur will open a year later. Planners also are working on a north-south extension along North Fourth Street.



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Kansas City's streetcar system started operation May 6.

Barrett, who is participating in the Kauffman Foundation meeting, has a get-together scheduled with Kansas City Mayor Sly James to discuss the streetcar, said Barrett's spokeswoman Jodie Tabak. It's an opportunity to discuss transit-oriented development around the system, she said.

Beth Weirick, CEO of Milwaukee Downtown Business Improvement District 21, said she also wants to hear more about development interest generated by Kansas City's streetcar. Weirick said she plans to get some firsthand information during a streetcar ride by asking commuters about their thoughts on the system.

"I'm obviously interested in seeing firsthand what at least the early stages of the streetcar have created in terms of impact on the community," Weirick said.

Milwaukee public works commissioner Ghassan Korban, who also will visit Kansas City on Monday, said he's looking forward to riding the streetcar even though it reportedly is generating lines of riders waiting to board. It offers a chance to learn best practices, and lessons learned, from Kansas City's experience building and starting up a streetcar line, he said.

"The goal is fact-finding and learning from our counterparts," Korban said.

Kansas City has had some mishaps, including a May 23 streetcar derailment that led to a five-hour service suspension. As of June 1, the system had counted 173,751 riders since starting service May 6.

**Sean Ryan**

Reporter

*Milwaukee Business Journal*

