

From the Milwaukee Business Journal:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/news/2016/05/09/here-is-what-the-milwaukee-streetcar-could-look.html>

## Here is what the Milwaukee streetcar could look like: Slideshow

May 9, 2016, 5:40am CDT **Updated: May 9, 2016, 7:53am CDT**

For those looking to see what the Milwaukee streetcar could look like, look no further than a new streetcar system that was launched May 6 in Kansas City. Check out the attached slideshow to see photos of the streetcar and its launch.

A group of Milwaukee officials made the trek to see the launch of the \$102 million, 2.2-mile streetcar line through downtown Kansas City. That group included Ashley Booth, associate vice president-planning and technical services director at HNTB Corp., the city's project manager on the streetcar.

Our sister paper in Kansas City provided extensive coverage of the project and the grand opening, including a time-lapse video of a ride by several of the staff members. Click on the links below to read their coverage.



ANDREW GRUMKE | KCBJ

- Here's a time-lapse video of KC Streetcar (Video)
- KC streetcar: Q&A with the person who's rolled through it all (Video)
- Mayor James to Kansas City: 'This is our moment' (Video)
- 155 reasons to ride the streetcar: We map your way to play
- This changes the way KC rolls (Video)
- Getting to the streetcar launch: A (recent) historical review
- Streetcar offers a rolling testament to Downtown's evolution

I caught up with Booth on Sunday after he returned from his visit to Kansas City.

**Q: What is your impression of the Kansas City system?"**It's a very similar length and with the same types of destinations along the route as Milwaukee's system will have. Kansas City has a great fixed-rail modern streetcar system. The vehicles and stations were simple, yet modern. The route is a little over two miles, connecting key destinations, such as: the public market, (River Market), the downtown core and its major hotels, the entertain District), a growing arts, restaurant and cultural district (the Crossro south at Union Station (Amtrak service) and Crown Center (office and hotel complex).

**Q: What was the community response in Kansas City to the launch of the streetcar?"**Extremely enthusiastic. The response was unbelievable (as) the vehicles on Friday and Saturday were jam packed. People riding the streetcars were a diverse group of local residents, tourists, families and people from all over the metropolitan Kansas City area."

**Q: How similar to what Kansas City is doing is what will be built in Milwaukee? Are there any major differences?"**The Milwaukee modern streetcar system will be very similar to Kansas City. Milwaukee's Phase I route is a little over two miles. The Milwaukee route connects to similar key destinations, Amtrak (Intermodal Station), growing warehouse district (3rd Ward), Public Market, core of downtown office/employment centers (East Town), major hotel facilities and major entertainment districts (Cathedral Square/Water Street).

"The Milwaukee streetcar will use the same rail type, similar stations and similar overhead wires. While we will have a different vehicle manufacturer, our cars, like those in Kansas City, will be modern, spacious, smooth and quiet."

**Q: What lessons have city officials learned from Kansas City that will be applied in Milwaukee? "**Milwaukee officials have taken best practices such as financial planning, FTA coordination and public engagement from other streetcar cities like Kansas City. The Milwaukee Streetcar team (designers and owners representatives) have worked on numerous projects throughout the country, like: M-1 RAIL (Q-Line) in Detroit, Charlotte, Kansas City and Dallas. In addition, project officials have talked to various cities, such as: Cincinnati, Portland, Seattle and Tucson to take lessons learned back to Milwaukee."

**Q: How can the streetcar be part of the larger redevelopment effort going on in downtown Milwaukee? "**A facilitator. The streetcar can act as a catalyst to provide a level of permanence and confidence to business owners, employers, investors and developers who may want to invest in the Milwaukee Region or downtown. It signals to interested parties that the city is very serious by investing millions of dollars to improve transportation options and mobility. That permanence reassures developers that a transit route would not be picked up and moved tomorrow.

"We saw many cranes and a ton of construction underway along the Kansas City route. We're already seeing new projects announced in Milwaukee that are citing the proximity of our streetcar route as a

key decision in the investment, projects like: the Couture, Mandel's recently announced Portfolio, improvements to the Mackie and Mitchell buildings, Milwaukee Post Office redevelopment, proposed office in 3rd Ward by Irgens, etc.

"Additionally, it provides mobility choice, therefore once the system is big enough it could potentially reduce the need for more structured parking, as residents no longer need one to two automobiles to make their daily trips. That encourages more residents and employers to locate in the city.

"Lastly, we've seen this time and again in other similar cities. In Kansas, there are hotels, office buildings, residential apartments under construction or just opening up and down the two-mile route. This has/is happening in other peer cities like Tucson, Portland, Detroit, etc. and has been well documented along other fixed-rail transit, like light rail."

**Mark Kass**

Editor-in-Chief

*Milwaukee Business Journal*

