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MILWAUKEE NEWS

Milwaukee seeks \$20 million grant for streetcar extension



This is a rendering of a Brookville streetcar in Milwaukee's Third Ward. The city is applying for a \$20 million federal grant to extend the Milwaukee Streetcar north along 4th St. Credit: Brookville Equipment Corp.

By Mary Spicuzza of the Journal Sentinel

April 29, 2016

The city is applying for a \$20million federal grant to extend the Milwaukee streetcar north to the new Bucks arena.

The route extension would run on N. 4th St. from W. St. Paul Ave. to W. Highland Ave.

"We're taking one extension at a time," said Ghassan Korban, Milwaukee's Department of Public Works commissioner.

He said the proposed extension would also move the streetcar route closer to Bronzeville.

The earliest the extension would open would be 2020, Korban said. The downtown streetcar route is expected to be open for passenger service in 2018, with the lakefront loop opening in 2019.

Korban said that the federal grant announcements are typically made in late September, and he expects the same this year.

The northern end of the planned extension would reach the "doorstep" of the new Milwaukee Bucks arena, which is expected to break ground this summer.

Korban said the city is excited about the extension because it would be shovel-ready, and will connect key attractions such as existing hotels as well as planned attractions.

"The idea all along has been that the original route needs extensions to make the streetcar route more successful and efficient," Korban said. "And this is the first next step in terms of having a meaningful extension to add to the success of the streetcar increasing connectivity downtown."

He said that if the city receives the \$20 million grant, it would cover about 50% of the estimated costs for that extension. The city could cover the rest using a tax incremental financing district, like how it financed the first phase and lakefront loop.

"We're very excited about this opportunity, and trying to keep the momentum going," Korban said.

The federal grant money would come from the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, or **TIGER**, grant program.

The city in November picked Brookville Equipment Corp. to build its first four streetcars.


Earlier this month, the city **opened bidding** for companies hoping to oversee the streetcar project. Contractors have until June 1 to submit proposals to lead the project, which would involve serving as construction manager and general contractor for the 2.5-mile downtown streetcar route and lakefront loop.



About Mary Spicuzza

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