

## MILWAUKEE NEWS

# Proposed fares, operating schedule announced for streetcar



Rides for the Milwaukee streetcar will cost \$1, and the car will operate from 5 a.m. to midnight Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to midnight on Saturday and 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday. Credit: Brookville Equipment Corp.

*By Hannah Schwarz of the Journal Sentinel*

Yesterday 5:21 p.m.

Officials with the city and business community announced Thursday the proposed fares and operating hours of the city's planned streetcar — and said part of the lakefront route may go off-wire.

Officials also defended themselves against criticism that the project is unnecessary and too expensive.

The streetcar is to be completed by late 2019.

Rides will cost \$1, and the streetcar will operate from 5 a.m. to

midnight Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to midnight on Saturday and 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday, officials said at a Milwaukee Press Club luncheon. The wait time between cars will be around 10 to 15 minutes, officials said. There will be 21 stops along the line.

"This is one important critical aspect of building a competitive city," said Beth Weirick, the CEO of downtown's Business Improvement District No. 21 and a member of Thursday's panel.

"There's a war for talent going on in this country," and to attract growing businesses, the city needs to pick up on what other metropolitan areas are doing, she said.

"We are such a car-centric city," but people in cities across the U.S. are increasingly shifting away from vehicles, Weirick said, adding that 30% of the 22,000 residents who live in downtown Milwaukee don't own cars.

Groundbreaking for the streetcar will be this fall, and the first vehicle will be delivered in December 2017. The first route will be completed by the end of 2018, and the second route will be completed by the end of 2019, officials said.

Each car will hold up to 150 passengers, and will include 32 seats, said Ashley Booth, planning and technical services director at HNTB, the firm consulting with the city on the streetcar project. Each car will be wheelchair accessible.

Part of the lakefront route will likely be off-wire, but only if the streets can accommodate an exclusive lane for the streetcar, said City Engineer Jeffrey Polenske. When off-wire, the streetcar would run on battery power.

Most of the first three years of operation will be funded by a grant from the federal government, but how the city will pay for operating costs — aside from fares — hasn't yet been determined, Polenske said.

The city is looking into developing sponsorship and advertising programs, he added. Once the streetcar is in operation for a couple of years, the city will be eligible for more federal funding.

Milwaukee doesn't have a dedicated revenue source for transportation, making it unusual among metropolitan areas, Booth said.

Booth addressed concerns about low ridership by pointing to Kansas City, Mo., where ridership at 6,000 per day is more than three times what city officials projected.

The streetcar's 2.5-mile route will encompass the downtown area and a loop around the lakefront.

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