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Let's get moving and build the streetcar

PUBLISHER'S NOTEBOOK

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The streetcar is a boondoggle, a mistake, the start of something big, too small, great for millennials, a boon to economic development, a train to nowhere.

You name it, the streetcar project has done a wonderful job of riling up Milwaukee's talk show hosts — you know, the guys who say they aren't naysayers, but generally are. And it has others shrugging with "what's the big deal" statements. After all, streetcars in many other United States cities haven't caused zombie apocalypses.

Federal money will pay for the majority. The city of Milwaukee and those with pipes and wires beneath the streets are generally in sync on payment.

So let's start digging.

I'm convinced that the streetcar will be a positive. No, it won't solve any of the major transportation issues in this region — but it won't make them worse.

And no, we don't need a referendum. The money the city will spend on this is minor in comparison to the overall budget and it stands to reason that those not impacted will have little reason to vote.

Mayor [Tom Barrett](#) has shown real leadership on this project — Tom, we need more of it in other areas — and his judgment is sound.

If anything, the streetcar will add another push to the significant downtown economic development we are seeing with the new Northwestern Mutual headquarters, Irgens' 833 office project and the Couture development, more residential housing and hopefully, a new arena.

So let's build it. I bet they — the riders — will come.

Mark Sabljak is Publisher of the Milwaukee Business Journal.