

On Jun 14, 2023, at 6:08 PM, John December <johndecember@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Alderman Bauman and Council President Pérez,

I write in support of your effort to preserve the ability of Milwaukee to use Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) to fund The Hop streetcar expansions. TIF is an entirely appropriate and logical means to fund the streetcar, as transportation research has revealed that the relationship of streetcar transportation to building development along streetcar routes has been one of dynamic and mutually-reinforcing factors. The streetcar supports development by providing a transportation link in the neighborhood it serves. This motivates development that can make use of that transportation. Then, the development leads to trip generation (passengers) and increased transportation demand for the streetcar service. This is a mutually-reinforcing process; hence, the use of the value added by the development along the route for funding the streetcar is entirely within this positive development cycle. Most importantly, this development and streetcar dynamic corresponds to the transit-oriented development goals of the city and the distinct advantages that electric streetcar service provides (December, 2021)[see the References list at end of this letter for citations] to serve activity clusters in urban areas.

Transportation research has examined the dynamic relationship between streetcars and development. While there had been an initial motivation to find a causal relationship, research has revealed a more nuanced and symbiotic relationship between streetcars and development. In 2010, a synthesis summary of literature documenting streetcar impacts on the built environment concluded with "the need for further empirical analysis" (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2010). Later, researchers Mendez and Brown (2019) studied Portland and Seattle and found that "in certain contexts, streetcars are associated with increased development activity" and that the results suggest the need for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between streetcars and development. These researchers caution that the function of the streetcar system as transportation is critical: "the more effective a streetcar is as a transportation service, and the more widely used it is by patrons, the more likely it is to have development effects" (Brown and Mendez, 2018). While some research shows that streetcars have been used for spatial planning (development) but not transit planning (King and Fischer, 2016), the hundreds of operating streetcar systems worldwide demonstrate their use as transportation systems.

The researchers Ramos-Santiago, Brown, and Nixon (2016) examined the role of streetcars for transportation strategy as well as development motivator and pointed out both functions are being pursued. Researchers Brooks and Lutz (2019) examined land use and population density near historic streetcar stops on The Los Angeles Railway. They observed that even after over fifty years of not operating, the land near the historic streetcar stops showed statistically significant higher population and building density that diminished with distance from the historic stops. They suggest "the weight of the evidence as most consistent with land use regulation and agglomeration acting as mutually reinforcing pathways" (Brooks and Lutz, 2019).

This research shows a relationship between streetcars and development involving catalytic, dynamic, and mutually-reinforcing factors. On The Hop route, I see the value of streetcars as supporting existing, emerging, and planned development by providing a transportation link. The added trip-generating result of these completed developments leads to passengers utilizing the Hop streetcar service for transportation.

Here is a brief summary of the completed development, significant refurbishments, development under construction, and proposed development along The Hop's route in the timeframe since the streetcar opened:

Completed Development

- 1) The Ascent, 700 E Kilbourn Ave: the world's tallest timber structure when it officially opened on July 20, 2022; consists of apartments and ground-floor retail space; 25 floors, 284 feet, 86.6 meters; Area: Cathedral Square
- 2) Dwight and Dian Diercks Computational Science Hall, 1025 N Milwaukee St: Milwaukee School of Engineering; this artificial intelligence research center, opened in 2019, marks Milwaukee's entry into the fourth industrial revolution; Area: Cathedral Square
- 3) BMO Tower, 790 N Water St: 25-story building, 328.0 feet, 100 meters; Completed 2020; mixed-use office building; Area: City Hall (Wells Street)
- 4) Holiday Inn Express, 525 N Jefferson St; Area: Third Ward (Public Market) (2021)
- 5) Tru Hotel, 515 N Jefferson St; Area: Third Ward (Public Market) (2021)
- 6) Home2 Suites, 515 N Jefferson St; Area: Third Ward (Public Market) (2021)
- 7) 321 N Jefferson St: apartments; electrical substation; (2022); Area: Third Ward (Public Market)
- 8) Huron Building, 511 N Broadway: 11-story building, 129.0 feet, 39.3 meters; Completed 2020; mixed-use office building; Area: City Hall (Wells Street)
- 9) Cambria Hotel Milwaukee, 503 N Plankinton Ave: hotel and 414 Bar + Kitchen; completed 2019; Area: Plankinton Avenue

Major Refurbishment

- 1) Hermann Viets Tower, 1121 N Milwaukee St: 12-story building, 113.1 feet, 34.5 meters, completed 1965 as Roy W Johnson Residence Hall; addition completed 2021;

Area: Juneau Avenue

2) Refurbishment of Cathedral Square Park: a county park outside St John's Cathedral; formerly called Courthouse Square from 1836 to 1939 as the site of Milwaukee County's first courthouse on the north end; presently the site of numerous festivals, concerts, unique displays, and farmer's markets; Jazz in the Park; Major Refurbishment (2021-2022): Framing the Square; Area: Cathedral Square

3) Milwaukee Athletic Club Refurbishment, 758 N Broadway: 12-story building, 160.0 feet, 48.8 meters, completed 1917; refurbished 2021; a private athletic club with residential apartments; Area: City Hall (Wells Street)

4) Streetcar Flats, 828 N Broadway: refurbished office building; formerly known as the Underwriters Exchange Building; built in 1924 as an insurance exchange housing offices of many insurance companies; also known as the Association of Commerce Building; Streetcar Flats being refurbished (2023); Area: City Hall (Wells Street)

5) Central Standard, 320 E Clybourn St: Craft Distillery; downtown Milwaukee distillery experience; Central Standard; Area: Wisconsin Avenue

6) Drury Plaza Hotel Milwaukee Downtown, 700 N Water St; Area: Wisconsin Avenue (opened 2019)

7) Kinn Guesthouse, 600 N Broadway: hotel and The Wolf on Broadway dining; (2022); Area: Wisconsin Avenue

8) Riverwalk Commons: west of Milwaukee Public Market and Water St on the Milwaukee River; includes pickleball courts and greenspace; Area: Third Ward (Public Market); refurbishment into 2023

9) The Explorium Brewpub, Pritzlaff Building, 143 W Saint Paul Avenue: beers and dining; small batch, hand-crafted beer; Area: Plankinton Avenue

10) Refurbishment of the Pritzlaff Building, 315 N Plankinton Ave: historic building built from 1875 to 1922, former Pritzlaff Hardware store; Area: Plankinton Avenue

11) 3rd St Market Hall, 275 W Wisconsin Ave: 3rdstmarkethall.com; A food hall, shopping, events, and gathering place; includes food vendors, a market bar, and games area; part of The Avenue, which includes residences, offices, media studios, and more; it is just a short walk from the Intermodal stop to The Avenue: up N Vel Phillips Ave and then cross through Zeidler Park to the south entrance of The Avenue at 3rd and Michigan, about a 5-minute walk, 375 meters; Area: Intermodal Station

12) The Avenue, 275 W Wisconsin Ave: multi-story, multi-use, mixed-used, multi-building complex; includes 3rd St Market Hall, Plankinton Clover, Playbill Flats, offices; formerly The Grand Avenue Mall; Area: Intermodal Station

13) Fiserv Global Headquarters, 640 N Vel R Phillips Ave; Area: Intermodal Station

14) HUB 640, 640 N Vel R Phillips Ave: mixed-use building including retail, office, and residential; major refurbishment of a former Boston Store department store; Area: Intermodal Station

Under Construction

1) 1333-1339 N Milwaukee St: UNDER CONSTRUCTION 2023; a six-story, 197-unit apartment building; Area: Ogden Jackson (East Pointe)

2) NovaMKE, 1237 N Van Buren St: UNDER CONSTRUCTION 2022; residential apartments; formerly parking lot (2018); Area: Juneau Avenue

3) Juneau Village Towers Resident Amenities Building, 1029 N Jackson St: residential amenities building for this three-tower residential complex UNDER CONSTRUCTION 2023; Area: Juneau Avenue

4) Milwaukee School of Engineering - MSOE Athletic Field, 1025 N Milwaukee: playing field; 2023: UNDER CONSTRUCTION: women's college baseball stadium; Area: Cathedral Square

5) 333 North Water Street: UNDER CONSTRUCTION 2023 apartment tower; 31-story residential apartments; expected 31 floors, 342 feet, 104 meters; Area: Third Ward (Public Market)

6) Milwaukee Tool Office, 501 W Michigan St: major refurbishment of a former insurance company building; UNDER CONSTRUCTION 2023; Area: Intermodal Station

7) The Couture, 909 E Michigan St: UNDER CONSTRUCTION 2023; Expected 44-story building, 537 feet, 163.6 meters; apartments, retail

Proposed Development

1) 1550 N Prospect: UNDER DEVELOPMENT 2023; 25-story residential apartment tower at the historic Goll Mansion site; Goll Mansion built 1898 will remain as part of the development; Area: Burns Commons

2) Renaissance site at N Farwell: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT at the site of the Renaissance Place event center at 1451 N. Prospect Ave, the Mexican Consulate, 1443 N. Prospect Ave and the parking lot to the west on N Farwell; a proposed residential

apartment tower; photos: parking lot site; Area: Burns Commons

3) Downtown Milwaukee Dog Park, approx 490 N Plankinton Ave: an IN-DEVELOPMENT dog park and riverwalk section; in-development 2023 (not yet open); Area: Plankinton Avenue

4) Foxtown Landing, approximately 490 N Plankinton Ave: an IN-DEVELOPMENT riverside restaurant and riverwalk right next to the proposed dog park; in-development 2023 (not yet open); Area: Plankinton Avenue

5) Vel R. Phillips Plaza, a PROPOSED transit hub and pedestrian plaza: includes retail, flex space for markets or food trucks, art, and green space at the southwest corner of West Wisconsin Avenue and North Vel R. Phillips Avenue (first proposed in 2019; re-introduced in 2023); Area: Intermodal Station

6) Lakefront Gateway Plaza, PROPOSED pedestrian plaza: east of The Coutre Building and the Lakefront Station stop of The Hop streetcar and BRT; includes walkway from Couture transit hub over Lincoln Memorial Drive to a four-season plaza serving as the gateway to the Lakefront

References

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Regards,

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