
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

July 30, 2008

Ald. Willie L. Hines, Jr.
Ald. Robert J. Bauman
(414) 286-2221

Council Approves Vehicle Registration Fee Initiative & Assessment Adjustments

The Milwaukee Common Council today voted 10-4 to adopt an amended vehicle registration fee initiative and revisions to its special assessment process.

In adopting the measure the Council approved an amendment to cap the fee at \$20 until the term of the current Council expires in April 2012, and approved a second amendment specifically setting aside 10% of the fee revenues for street maintenance purposes, according to Ald. Robert J. Bauman, chair of the Public Works Committee and the measure's chief sponsor.

Common Council President Willie L. Hines, Jr. said the approved ordinance will allow the city to do a better job of maintaining key infrastructure. "This measure not only infuses our infrastructure with a dedicated revenue stream, it also saves property owners thousands by eliminating the overly burdensome street (maintenance) assessments," he said.

The measure now goes to Mayor Tom Barrett, who is threatening to veto it.

According to the Legislative Reference Bureau, a veto by Mayor Tom Barrett will cost the city more than \$500,000 in additional 2008 revenue from the state Department of Transportation (DOT). Ald. Bauman, Ald. Hines and the measure's nine other co-sponsors are calling on the mayor to sign the legislation immediately to avoid the loss in "critical state revenue."

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Vehicle Registration Fee Passes/ADD ONE

“Our budgetary situation is such that it would be unfortunate for the mayor to proactively and knowingly throw away a half million dollars that is vitally important for our 2008 infrastructure costs,” Ald. Bauman said.

Specifically, Ald. Bauman said the city needs the state DOT revenue to help resolve 2008 budgetary problems which have been caused by higher snow and ice control expenses and higher fuel costs.

If implementation of the \$20 vehicle registration fee is delayed by a veto, the city budget office has indicated that the Snow and Ice Control fee will have to increase in the fourth quarter of 2008, the alderman said.

The annual \$20 vehicle registration fee will be assessed on automobiles, trucks, and station wagons whose gross weight is 8,000 pounds or less. The fee, billed in addition to the annual state vehicle registration fee, will be assessed to eligible vehicles that are customarily kept within the city limits. Revenues derived from the fee can only be used to defray city costs associated with transportation related purposes, including but not limited to the design, operation and maintenance of streets, alleys, bridges, public way lighting, traffic signs, and other similar items.

The Council’s action to approve the ordinance creating the registration fee also adjusted the recovery ratios for certain assessable reconstruction improvements by eliminating the recovery ratio of 60% for paving improvements, reducing the recovery ratio for alley improvements from 90% to 60%, and reducing the recovery ratio for walk improvements from 70% to 50%.

The registration fee will take effect 61 days after the city clerk notifies the DOT of the ordinance’s passage, and the recovery ratio adjustments for assessable improvements will impact any affected city projects approved by the Council on and after April 15, 2008.