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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Robert J. Bauman
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County Exec's Transit Plan Far From SMART

Milwaukee Ald. Robert J. Bauman today blasted Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker's most recent transit plan, which proposes spending \$70 million on two bus rapid transit lines that will not connect with Mitchell International Airport or the downtown Amtrak depot.

Ald. Bauman, a key transit proponent and chair of the Common Council's Public Works Committee, said Walker's plan "demonstrates an incredible lack of understanding about public transit and development activity in Milwaukee County."

"As public transit systems around the country seek to provide enhanced connectivity between different transportation modes and improved links between major transportation hubs, Walker's plan goes in the opposite direction," the alderman said.

The county exec defends the decision to bypass the Amtrak depot, the airport and other major transportation hubs on the basis that there's little current bus ridership generated by the airport or the Amtrak depot, Ald. Bauman said. "He is absolutely right -- there is little bus ridership generated at the airport or Amtrak depot because his bus system provides very poor bus service at these two facilities," he said.

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Walker Transit Plan Blasted/ADD ONE

For example, the Amtrak depot is served by one bus route that provides infrequent service and does not circulate through downtown, and Walker's bus system provides very poor signage regarding the service that does exist at the Amtrak depot so a visitor to Milwaukee would find it impossible to use this route, he said. "It is a simple axiom of public transit: if you provide poor service you will have low ridership," he said.

Even more astounding, Ald. Bauman said, is that Walker is apparently unaware that the Amtrak depot is undergoing a \$15 million renovation that will convert the facility into an intermodal terminal for intercity rail and intercity buses as well as proposed commuter rail service. "Walker is apparently unaware that Amtrak ridership at the Milwaukee depot has been growing year after year and the transfer of intercity bus service to the depot will bring an additional two thousand passengers per day to the facility -- many of whom use local public transit to access the depot or reach their final destination," he said.

"Walker needs to go back to the drawing board to craft a transit plan that actually serves Milwaukee County's major transportation hubs," Ald. Bauman said. When he has finished that task, he can then take a walk downtown to acquaint himself with the development activity that is underway such as the Amtrak depot renovation."

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