



Legislation Text

File #: 051714, **Version:** 1

051714
SUBSTITUTE 1

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Substitute resolution expressing the City of Milwaukee's support for development of commuter rail service within Milwaukee County.

This resolution expresses the Common Council's support for:

1. Extending the proposed Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee commuter rail service within Milwaukee County to serve the 30th Street Rail Corridor and the West Allis Air Line Rail Corridor.
2. Using the \$91.5 million in federal funds reserved for public transit improvements in the Milwaukee area to construct commuter rail routes within Milwaukee County to serve the 30th Street Rail Corridor and the West Allis Air Line Rail Corridor.
3. The development of transit-oriented residential and commercial developments along the 30th Street Rail Corridor and along the West Allis Air Line Rail Corridor, as well as the construction of commuter rail passenger stations at various locations, including the corporate headquarters of Miller Brewing Company and Harley-Davidson, Inc., Tower Automotive site, the Master Lock and DRS manufacturing facilities, Miller Park, the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, State Fair Park and the Milwaukee County Zoo.

This resolution also authorizes and directs all City departments to take the actions necessary to expand the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Commuter Rail Study to include the 30th Street and West Allis Air Line corridors and to ensure that the \$91.5 million in federal funding is used to construct commuter rail routes serving these corridors.

Finally, this resolution directs the City's representative on the Milwaukee Transit Connector Study's Steering Committee to vote in favor of the "no build" option and to vote against moving any "build" option into the preliminary engineering phase.

Whereas, It has been 11 years since \$241 million in federal transportation aid (Interstate Cost Estimate or "ICE" funding) was allocated to the Milwaukee area pursuant to USDOT Appropriations Act for FY 1995; and

Whereas, A substantial portion of this allocation -- \$91.5 million - was, in 1999, designated for mass transit improvements in Milwaukee; and

Whereas, This \$91.5 million has remained unused, collecting no interest, as costs for transit vehicles and transit-system construction have risen substantially; and

Whereas, At the same time, service has been reduced and fares raised on the Milwaukee County Transit System in an effort to avoid property tax increases; and

Whereas, These service reductions and fare increases have disproportionately affected low-income residents of the City of Milwaukee, where the 25% of all households and 33% of African-American households (2000 Census) who do not own motor vehicles must rely on public transportation to reach jobs, education and health care and otherwise meet their day-to-day needs; and

Whereas, One proposed use for the \$91.5 million in unspent federal money is to partially fund a \$300-million, 2-route, 13-mile guided bus system (currently known as the "Milwaukee Connector") that would serve Downtown and Milwaukee's Near West Side, Near North Side and East Side neighborhoods; and

Whereas, The proposed guided-bus system would:

1. Use a technology that does not work well in snow and ice and has been implemented in only two cities in the world, both in France.
2. Simply replace existing bus service.
3. By truncating various bus routes and requiring transfers from buses to Connector vehicles, actually reduce the level of transit service in the corridors in which it would operate.
4. Disrupt traffic flow and hinder access to residential and commercial buildings, particularly during the construction phase.
5. Permanently remove hundreds of much-needed on-street parking spaces, hurting not only residents but also small businesses that do not have off-street parking for their customers.
6. Require demolition and reconstruction of many of the streets, sidewalks, curbs and gutters that have been recently constructed, or will be constructed in the near future, as part of the \$17.2-million Wisconsin Avenue streetscaping project.
7. Do nothing to improve mobility and access to jobs for low-income, unemployed or underemployed Milwaukee residents, particularly since it would not reach areas of job growth in outlying regions of Milwaukee County and other Milwaukee suburbs.

; and

Whereas, Construction of the proposed Milwaukee Connector system using guided-bus technology would require \$60 million to fund the local share of capital costs; and

Whereas, Rather than being used to fund a portion of the proposed Milwaukee Connector system, the \$91.5 million in federal transit funds could be used to fund a portion of the construction of the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee commuter rail route, as well as extensions of commuter rail service

through Milwaukee along the existing rail line that serves the north side of Milwaukee, the corporate headquarters of Miller Brewing Company and Harley-Davidson, Inc., the Tower Automotive site, and the Master Lock and DRS manufacturing facilities (the “30th Street Rail Corridor”) and the existing rail line that serves Miller Park, the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, State Fair Park and the Milwaukee County Zoo (the “West Allis Air Line Rail Corridor”); and

Whereas, The Letter of Agreement on the Allocation of ICE Dollars and on Milwaukee Transportation Projects dated April 20, 1999 between the State of Wisconsin, City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County that allocated the \$91.5 Million of ICE funds “to the projects that result from the study of local transportation options as determined by the Wisconsin District’s Transportation Study.” also provided that “the parties also agree to keep communications ongoing and to revise this agreement in the event that any of the mentioned projects fails to materialize through the study and public processes”; and

Whereas, Extension of commuter rail service from Downtown Milwaukee up the 30th Street Rail Corridor and along the West Allis Air Rail Line Corridor would provide vital transportation links between areas of high unemployment in the central city and areas of job growth in outlying areas of Milwaukee County; and

Whereas, Because it uses separate rights-of-way (namely, existing rail lines), commuter rail can operate at much faster speeds than guided buses (which operate on city streets), thereby providing a more effective transit connection between central-city neighborhoods and outlying areas of Milwaukee County; and

Whereas, Commuter rail service within Milwaukee County would not reduce the level of existing bus service on city streets because commuter rail service represents an entirely new transit service providing a high speed backbone that would connect with, not replace existing bus service; and

Whereas, Development of the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee commuter rail line is already entering the preliminary engineering phase; and

Whereas, A multi-county regional transportation authority has already been established to develop funding sources for the commuter rail system; and

Whereas, There is strong bi-partisan support at the state and local level for development of commuter rail systems in Southeastern Wisconsin; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the Common Council supports extension of the proposed Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee commuter rail service within Milwaukee County to serve the 30th Street Rail Corridor and the West Allis Air Line Rail Corridor; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Common Council supports the use of the \$91.5 million in federal funds reserved for public transit improvements in the Milwaukee area to construct commuter rail routes within Milwaukee County to serve the 30th Street Rail Corridor and the West Allis Air Line Rail Corridor; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Common Council supports the development of transit-oriented residential and commercial developments along the 30th Street Rail Corridor and along the West Allis Air Line

Rail Corridor, as well as the construction of commuter rail passenger stations that would serve the corporate headquarters of Miller Brewing Company and Harley-Davidson, Inc., Tower Automotive site, Master Lock and DRS manufacturing facilities, Miller Park, the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, State Fair Park and the Milwaukee County Zoo, among other locations; and, be it

Further Resolved, That all City departments are authorized and directed to take the actions necessary to:

1. Expand the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Commuter Rail Study to include commuter rail service along the 30th Street Rail Corridor and West Allis Air Line Rail Corridor.
2. Ensure that the \$91.5 Million in federal funds reserved for public transit improvements in the Milwaukee area is used to construct commuter rail routes within Milwaukee County serving these corridors.

; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City's representative on the Milwaukee Transit Connector Study's Steering Committee is directed to vote in favor of the "no build" option and to vote against moving any "build" option into the preliminary engineering phase.

LRB06173-3
JDO
04/17/2006