



## Legislation Text

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051610

SUBSTITUTE 2

030566

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Substitute resolution expressing the City of Milwaukee's support for the Milwaukee Connector public transit project.

This resolution expresses the Common Council's support for a Locally Preferred Alternative for the Milwaukee Connector project that consists of guided street tram technology on a 2-route, 13-mile system. It further directs the City's representative on the Milwaukee Connector Steering Committee to support this alternative and to vote in favor of moving the project forward to the preliminary engineering phase. The resolution also directs all City departments to support the efforts of the Milwaukee Connector study.

With this resolution, the Common Council also expresses its opposition to any use of property tax dollars to fund construction of the Milwaukee Connector, as well as its support for:

1. Using \$91.5 million in federal transportation funds previously earmarked for the Milwaukee Connector project in a timely manner.
2. Having the operator of the Milwaukee County Transit System operate the Milwaukee Connector, as well.
3. Using innovative revenue sources, including but not limited to advertising fees, sponsorship of transit stations/stops and visitor benefit fees, to generate the funds needed for the local share of the Milwaukee Connector's capital costs.
4. Limiting the local share of the capital costs for the Milwaukee Connector to not more than 20 percent.
5. As preliminary design and engineering of the Milwaukee Connector proceeds, giving first priority to route alternatives or extensions serving major transit corridors in Milwaukee's 30th Street corridor and the South Side if additional funds become available or if the project as proposed can be delivered for less than the estimated total cost of \$300 million.
6. Including, in any future expansion of the Milwaukee Connector system, with respect to the South Side, a route that extends south on North Water Street, South 1<sup>st</sup> Street and South Kinnickinnic Avenue, at least as far as East Becher Street, and ultimately extends to General Mitchell International Airport.

Whereas, It has been 17 years since \$241 million in federal transportation aid (Interstate Cost Estimate or "ICE" funding) was allocated to the Milwaukee area and 6 years since the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County, in the spirit of intergovernmental cooperation, reached an agreement to use \$91.5 million of those funds to implement the recommendations of the Milwaukee Connector public transit project study; and

Whereas, This \$91.5 million has remained unused, collecting no interest, as costs for transit vehicles and 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, On July 31, 2003, the Milwaukee Common Council adopted File Number 030566, a resolution expressing the Council's opposition to any diversion of funds from the Milwaukee Connector project, reiterating the Council's support for the Milwaukee Connector study and the use of the \$91.5 million in federal funds for this purpose, and directing the City's representative on the Milwaukee Connector Steering Committee to immediately proceed with the next phase of the study; and

Whereas, The current phase of the Milwaukee Connector study, which involves preparing a draft Locally Preferred Alternative and Environmental Impact Statement, is now nearing completion; and

Whereas, In October, 2005, the Wisconsin Center District voted to direct its representative on the Milwaukee Connector Steering Committee to vote in favor of moving the project forward to the preliminary engineering phase and to support the guided street tram transit-technology alternative on a 2-route, 13-mile system; and

Whereas, In February, 2006, the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce Board of Directors unanimously authorized its representative on the Steering Committee to vote in favor of moving the project forward to the preliminary engineering phase and to support the guided street tram alternative on a 2-route, 13-mile system; and

Whereas, The guided street tram, which represents the new generation of bus rapid transit technology, is the best choice to fit into the urban fabric of Milwaukee and has twice the life span of a diesel bus; and

Whereas, The guided street tram would be easily recognizable, offer an attractive alternative to the automobile, and provide the convenience and ease of curb-level, multiple-door loading, allowing the elderly, handicapped and people with strollers to easily board the vehicle and making loading and unloading faster and easier than with a bus; and

Whereas, The guided street tram provides a flexible, environmentally-friendly dual-propulsion system operating on a guidance track primarily with electric overhead power, using hybrid diesel power as a back-up power source for "off-line" operation; and

Whereas, The proposed 2-route Milwaukee Connector system could generate an estimated 25% increase in transit ridership along the routes on which it would operate; and

Whereas, The Milwaukee Connector would improve the overall transit-use experience for current transit riders by reducing travel and wait times and employing on-platform ticketing and electronic messaging; and

Whereas, The proposed routes connect Milwaukee's major attractions, business centers, hotels, universities,

hospitals, sports and entertainment venues, museums, dense residential neighborhoods and other “trip generators” and destinations with modern public transportation, and also support the City’s “park once” concept; and

Whereas, The proposed 2-route, 13-mile Milwaukee Connector represents a “starter” transit system to which route extensions and/or new routes could be added in the future to serve additional Milwaukee neighborhoods; and

Whereas, It is possible to capture 80 cents in federal funding for every dollar spent on capital construction of the Milwaukee Connector, in part by using the \$91.5 million in federal money set aside for capital investment in public transit in Milwaukee that could be lost if not spent; and

Whereas, Operating cost estimates indicate that the Milwaukee Connector system, utilizing the guided street tram technology, will save taxpayers \$900,000 annually (2004 dollars) through operational efficiencies; and

Whereas, Studies indicate that for every \$1 spent on mass transit in Milwaukee, \$4.70 in economic benefit could be generated; and

Whereas, Construction of the Milwaukee Connector would create at least \$200 million in construction-contract work in Milwaukee, spurring economic development in several low-income city neighborhoods; and

Whereas, Fixed transit systems constructed in other cities have stimulated substantial economic development along their routes and around their stations and stops, to the extent that the publication “Emerging Trends in Real Estate” has indicated that sites near transit are the number one choice of developers and real estate investors; and

Whereas, A recent transit-oriented-development market study predicted the demand for transit-oriented housing will double by the year 2025; and

Whereas, The Milwaukee Connector project may be viewed as the first phase of a multi-phase program to improve mass transit in Milwaukee and to develop a truly multi-modal, world-class transit system for the city; and

Whereas, Adoption of the guided street tram technology for the Milwaukee Connector project does not preclude the use of other transit technologies, including but not limited to light rail and bus rapid transit, as part of this comprehensive, multi-modal system; and

Whereas, Given the limited financial resources available to Milwaukee for implementing the Milwaukee Connector, the guided street tram is an appropriate technology choice in that it offers many of the benefits of light rail (e.g., environmentally-friendly electric propulsion, longer vehicle life than buses, economic development stemming from fixed-transit infrastructure) at roughly half the capital cost; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the Common Council supports a Locally Preferred Alternative for the Milwaukee Connector project that includes guided street tram technology on a 2-route, 13-mile system; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Common Council reiterates its support for using the \$91.5 million in federal ICE funding for the Milwaukee Connector project in a timely manner; and, be it

Further Resolved, That, to assure operational efficiencies and seamless connections for users of both transit systems, the Common Council supports governance of the Milwaukee Connector system by the operator of the Milwaukee Country Transit System; and, be it

Further Resolved, That all City departments are directed to support the efforts of the Milwaukee Connector study, including the upcoming preliminary engineering phase, and to incorporate the Connector into the City's comprehensive plan; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City's representative on the Milwaukee Connector Steering Committee is directed to vote in favor of moving the project forward to the preliminary engineering phase and to support the guided street tram transit-technology alternative on a 2-route, 13-mile system; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Common Council opposes any use of property tax dollars to fund construction of the Milwaukee Connector; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Common Council supports using innovative revenue sources, including but not limited to advertising fees, sponsorship of transit stations/stops and visitor benefit fees, to generate the funds needed for the local share of the Milwaukee Connector's capital costs; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the local match for the estimated \$300 million in capital costs for the first phase of the Milwaukee Connector shall not exceed 20 percent; and, be it

Further Resolved, That, as preliminary design and engineering of the Milwaukee Connector proceeds, if additional funds become available or if the project as proposed can be delivered for less than the estimated total cost of \$300 million, route alternatives or extensions serving major transit corridors in Milwaukee's 30th Street corridor and the South Side be given first priority for consideration and implementation; and, be it

Further Resolved, That any future expansion of the Milwaukee Connector system with respect to the South Side shall include a route that extends south on North Water Street, South 1<sup>st</sup> Street and South Kinnickinnic Avenue, at least as far as East Becher Street, and ultimately extends to General Mitchell International Airport.

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