

**Statement of Mil. 4th District Ald. Robert J. Bauman  
February 26, 2007**

**The Secret is Out: Scott Walker Opposes the Downtown  
Streetcar Circulator Because It Might Be Successful.**

A successful rail transit line would interfere with his plan to abolish public transit in Milwaukee County.

In a February 20, 2007 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel editorial, Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker let it slip: his goal is to abolish public transit in Milwaukee County, by, as he put it, growing the economy so that poor people who depend on transit can afford to buy cars. By implication, if everyone has a car, no one will use or need a public transit system.

In this context, the reason for Scott Walker's obsessive opposition to any form of rail transit becomes clear: he is afraid it will succeed!

It turns out that Scott has been paying more attention to the success of new rail transit systems across the country than anyone thought. He has no doubt observed that these lines attract new riders—often individuals with higher incomes who own automobiles and homes and vote—a potent political constituency. To his chagrin, he has noted that some of these new riders actually live in suburbs and support Republicans. If middle-class Republicans will use and support rail transit, then he has a real problem achieving his goal of abolishing the transit system.

He has no doubt observed that overall transit usage in cities with new rail lines has often increased thereby broadening the base of political support for transit in general. He may have even observed that new rail transit lines are popular with the business community in general and the real estate development community in particular— groups that could stand in the way of his plan to abolish all transit.

We now know why Scott cannot allow rail transit to be introduced in Milwaukee no matter how modest the plan: he has learned from the experience of other cities that new rail transit lines are popular and have even generated popular support for increased taxes to further expand and improve transit systems. Clearly, any investment in a rail transit line that has the potential of reversing the death spiral of MCTS and broadening the appeal of transit in general must be opposed at all cost because Scott knows that you cannot abolish a public service that is well funded, used by a broad cross section of the community and has widespread popular support.

Who would have guessed that the biggest problem with investing in a rail transit line in Milwaukee is that it might be successful?

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