



## **Ald. Donovan continues to fight Milwaukee's streetcar project**

By: Bret Buganski – March 6, 2013

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MILWAUKEE (WITI) — Milwaukee's streetcar project has been approved by the city's Common Council and Mayor Tom Barrett — but one alderman is not giving up the fight against the project. The streetcar project is moving forward, but Alderman Bob Donovan is trying to bring the plan back to the table.

"Decades from now, people will look back at this and refer to it as perhaps one of Milwaukee's biggest public works 'boondoggles,'" Alderman Donovan said of the streetcar project.

Construction on the city of Milwaukee's streetcar is expected to begin next year. Alderman Donovan calls the nearly \$65 million project a waste of money.

CATO Institute Public Policy Analyst Randal O'Toole is joining Alderman Donovan in opposing the streetcar project — saying streetcars don't create economic development. He says cities like Portland that have streetcars grew because of subsidies, and says streetcars have hidden costs.

"I love trains. The very first job I ever had was restoring streetcars. All the reasons we replaced them with buses are just as valid today. Buses cost less. They cost less to build," O'Toole said.

Alderman Nik Kovac and Alderman Bob Bauman call O'Toole a mouthpiece for right-winged opposition groups who want the public and Milwaukee to fail.

"We're all going to need smart urban planning. We're going to issue subsidies if necessary, just like Portland did. The streetcar is part of that though," Alderman Kovac said.

"The facts here are totally irrelevant to these people, they want to stop this because it's a manifestation of urbanism that they fundamentally disagree with," Alderman Bauman said.

Regardless, Alderman Donovan is not giving up, and wants the city to reconsider.

"This issue is certainly controversial. It has gotten to the point where arguments and tempers have flared," Alderman Donovan said.

The city says it is about three years away from the project being complete. At this time, the project is in its final steps, and officials are going over engineering plans for the construction.