



# *Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors*

*Supervisor John F. Weishan, District 16*

## **WHY THE SMALL VISION FOR MILWAUKEE?**

**By Supervisor John F. Weishan, Jr., District 16**

Governor Scott Walker recently included in his 2015-17 budget a bond issue for construction of a new downtown arena within the confines of a few square blocks in downtown Milwaukee. Why not aim higher for the largest city and county in our state, home to one in five state residents?

We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to redevelop a major portion of our great American city.

This will require a bold new strategy that includes new ways to promote responsible growth through unified zoning and tax reform while putting the emphasis on empowering county government to transcend the chaos that rules the 19 municipalities that make up Milwaukee County.

Major action on issues such as transportation, street patterns and public buildings, commercial and residential real estate uses - and yes an arena - while preparing for future industrial growth will require more than half measures.

One million people of the state of Wisconsin living in Milwaukee County deserve the opportunity to control their own destiny. For almost a decade they have asked, including through referendum, for improved funding for parks and transit with little to no response from Madison.

We now have the opportunity of a lifetime. But because of anti-Milwaukee, anti-Milwaukee County politics in Madison, our opportunity continues to be diminished and may fade away entirely if we do not take bold action now.

To keep it simple for those in Madison, here is a bold new proposal that will transform our region. All the taxes collected in Milwaukee County should stay in Milwaukee County. All the revenue – from gas taxes, to income taxes, to vehicle registration, court fees and everything in between – stays in Milwaukee County in lieu of any state aid. In exchange, Milwaukee County is given full autonomy to make decisions regarding taxes and spending. This plan is the epitome of local control.

In recent years all local governments across the state have had to deal with the “state knows best” attitude that prevails in Madison, but none more than Milwaukee County.

We can no longer afford to be held back by the small-minded people in power in Madison who don’t understand Milwaukee and aren’t working for the greater good of our state and our local communities.

Milwaukee County is not begging for state help, we are only making a clear statement that we keep what is ours and that the state stay out of our way.

The challenge is Madison’s to accept. Free Milwaukee County to pursue its future without interference or continue to allow legislators to whine to their out-state constituents that all of Wisconsin’s problems are Milwaukee’s fault. We deserve better.

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