



Locally farmed meats at Eastern Market's Shed 5 | Marvin Shaouni

[Home](#) | [Neighborhoods](#) | [Features](#) | [Development News](#) | [Job News](#) | [In the News](#) | [Photo Essays](#) | [FilterD](#) | [Sign Up](#)

## Full Steam Ahead: City Advocate, Quicken Exec Talks Streetcars Along Woodward

By: Jon Zemke




January 27, 2009



The group of private investors pushing for a streetcar line up Woodward has played it close to the vest. However, one of the leaders of that group, Matthew Cullen, spoke to Model D's Jon Zemke about the

**THE SHOPS @ COMPUWARE.**

**COMPUWARE**   
[www.compuware.com](http://www.compuware.com)  
 Easily located at Woodward and Monroe Streets. Access FREE Visitor and Detail

project.



Cullen serves as the CEO of the project. He is also an executive with Quicken Loans, shepherding the firm's move to downtown. Before that he was an executive in charge of economic development with General Motors for years. The University of Detroit-Mercy graduate played significant roles in moving the automaker to the [Renaissance Center](#) and establishing RiverWalk project.

He's looking to make the same thing happen with the proposed Woodward streetcar line. The \$100-million project calls for creating a streetcar line between Jefferson and Grand Boulevard, connecting downtown and New Center. The streetcar would also serve as a feeder line for the proposed commuter rail line connecting Detroit, Metro Airport and Ann Arbor.

Cullen sheds a little light on when we can expect to see the proposal become a reality, why it will work and how it will change Detroit's greater downtown area.

**Q: As a Cass Corridor resident and someone who appreciates real mass transit, I just want to say thank you for pushing this project forward. With that in mind let me ask the elephant-in-the-room question that is on everyone's mind: When can we expect construction to begin and to have the system up and running?**

**A:** It really is a terrific opportunity for the city of Detroit. A lot of people believe, I am certainly one of them, that its one of things that could bring significant change for the city so it can go forward. As far as timing, we really don't have a definitive time that I would like to announce at this time, but we're working through it. It is a project that, now that we have the enabling legislation, we are really excited about. We feel we have a lot of the financial aspects of it finished. We need to do some more. We need to work through the design and really start ramping up on it.

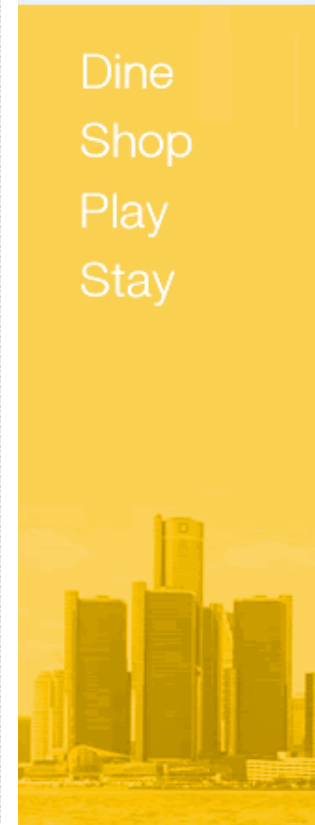
**Q: Come on, can't you give us a little something to hope for here as far as a potential timeline goes?**

**A:** Again, I can't say when we'll be in the ground. We certainly would like to be in the ground within the course of the next couple of years, maybe earlier than the end of that time. We've got a lot of work to be done and it doesn't really make a lot of sense to give a date and then not make it. We're moving full speed ahead though.

**Q: On the other side of that coin, dozens of rapid transit plans have come and gone in Metro Detroit over the last 50 years. Why should we believe this one will come to fruition?**

**A:** Why should you believe in it? I think you should believe in it because of the work the governor has done together with the speaker of the house and Mike Bishop in the senate and everyone else -- together with the private-partnership aspect of Roger Penske and Dan Gilbert and the Ilitches, and a lot of other folks. It feels for me a lot like the Riverfront project where we have a great public-private partnership coming together to get it done. I think that is the most effective way.

**Q: When we look down lower Woodward 10-20 years from now, what will we notice is different about it besides the streetcars going up and down it?**





a lot the vitality out of a downtown. It makes it inconvenient for people to move around and recreate and work. I don't think they're incompatible and I do think they'll be successful in Detroit.

**Q: What about the arguments that a population in love with the automobile won't ride a train or that light rail won't spur economic growth in a region where big-box stores, strip malls and McMansions in township cul-de-dacs are the norm?**

**A:** Look at Denver. Look at Minneapolis. Look at other areas that have been very automotive focused and big land areas and so on. Transit has been a huge enabler.



**Q: Why start with Woodward? More specifically, why start with this section of Woodward?**

**A:** Woodward is the central spine of the Detroit metropolitan area. It connects to the station in New Center and the core of downtown and the People Mover, which will become a distribution vehicle as it was always intended to be. On a

bang-for-the-buck standpoint there is no link that is more important. ... That relatively modest 3.5 mile link creates a lot of opportunities immediately. It also becomes a match opportunity for other links in the rail system as we go forward.

---

Jon Zemke is the Innovation + Job News Editor for Model D. He is also the News Editor for Model D's sister publications [metromode](#) and [Concentrate](#). His last feature for Model D is [Detroiters Want to Recycle Here](#) and his most-recent feature on mass transit is [The Future of Metro Mass Transit](#). He misses the experience of commuting on the Red line of Washington, D.C.'s, [Metro](#) subway system.

Send feedback [here](#). And [sign up here](#) to get Model D in your e-mail inbox each Tuesday.

---

Photo:

Aerial view of Downtown Detroit

Matt Cullen

Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project, now 70% complete

Map of streetcar line along Woodward Ave

Amtrak

Evening rush hour on I-75 & Trumbull Ave

**All photographs by Detroit Photographer [Marvin Shaouni](#)**


Marvin Shaouni is the Managing Photographer for [Metromode](#) & [Model D](#).

● Neighborhoods: [Midtown](#)





[Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Signup for E-Newsletter](#) | [Detroit Links](#)

[Have a tip for us?](#) | [About Model D](#) |  [RSS](#)

© 2005 Model D LLC. - All content subject to copyright