



Department of City Development
City Plan Commission
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

Rocky Marcoux
Commissioner
rmarco@milwaukee.gov

Martha L. Brown
Deputy Commissioner
mbrown@milwaukee.gov

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Ald. James A. Bohl, Jr., Chair
and Honorable Members of the Zoning,
Neighborhoods, and Development Committee
City Hall, Room 205

Dear Chair Bohl and Honorable Committee Members:

It is difficult to catalogue all the economic development accomplishments of the Milwaukee Department of City Development (DCD) over the past four years. However, this summary touches on a number of the prominent advancements.

No project has received more attention and accolades than the City's work on the Menomonee Valley. In the City-owned Menomonee Valley Industrial Center, three new projects added to the success: J.F. Ahern, Solaris, and Rishi Tea, all built new facilities. Standard Electric, a pioneer in the Valley, expanded. The Forest County Potawatomi built a major hotel, and work in the Reed Street Yards and along St. Paul Avenue took strides forward. The land use and economic development plan for the Menomonee Valley was updated with the new Menomonee Valley 2.0 plan.

At Century City, we are moving forward with our efforts to replicate the Menomonee Valley success. Since 2012, land has been cleared, environmental issues addressed, new landmark signage is in place, and a greenway is under construction on the east side of Century City. Benson Industries and its partner, Duwe Metals, are actively manufacturing in Century City's Building 36, constructing the exterior of the new Northwestern Mutual tower. And the City, in partnership with General Capital, has constructed Century City 1, the first new building on the site.

Manufacturing businesses all across the city grew over the past four years, and in many cases DCD supported the growth with land sales, tax incremental financing, or support for financing through the Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation. Here are a few examples: HellermannTyton grew substantially on the northwest side; Sic Lazaro, a Spanish company set up its U.S. operations on North Teutonia Avenue; and Miller Bakery maintained its facility just north of downtown while adding a brand new northwest side operation to produce Pretzilla buns. The Department's efforts contributed to Milwaukee's success in the competition to be named a Manufacturing Community by the Federal government.

We have welcomed a number of company headquarters that moved to Milwaukee from outside the city. Gardner Denver is now headquartered in the Third Ward. Zurn is constructing a new



home in the Reed Street Yards. Empower Retirement, along with hundreds of employees, is now downtown having moved from a suburb north of the city.

The vibrancy of the city is affirmed by the number of major new hotels that have opened in the City's center. The Hilton Garden Inn on Broadway, the Marriott on Milwaukee Street, Brewhouse Inn and Suites in the Brewery, SpringHill Suites on Fourth Street, and the Kimpton Journeyman in the Third Ward are all new. The Westin Hotel is under construction at Van Buren and Clybourn.

Several major projects have earned big attention including the new Northwestern Mutual tower, 833 East Michigan, and the new arena. The Department of City Development has played significant roles in each. The downtown Business Improvement District counts more than \$3-billion in development over the past decade.

At the same time, business improvement districts all across the City have new enthusiasm as the Department has worked to share best practices, assist with strategic planning, and deploy façade, retail, and white box grants. Those grants have totaled more than \$1-million in each of the last three years. The City has accelerated efforts to sell tax foreclosed commercial property – returning those properties to productive use.

Planning efforts are empowering local residents and businesses to chart their future all across the city. Coordinated efforts in the Harbor District, Walkers Point, Granville, Lindsay Heights, Layton Boulevard West, Bronzeville, South 27th Street, and Walkers Square are imagining what's desirable, what's fixable, and what's possible. On the west side, the power of partnership is on display as Harley Davidson, Marquette University, Aurora, Miller Coors, and the Potawatomi are all at the table helping to strengthen that area. In Westtown, a group called WAM DC has focused efforts on West Wisconsin Avenue and, along with the Department, it has started to restore quality development and residential strength.

Transportation projects are changing the way we get around and, importantly, these projects are also affecting development. The reconstruction of the freeway near the lakefront is opening new land for development, connecting downtown with the Third Ward, and improving the pedestrian experience near museums and Summerfest. BublR Bikes promote leisure traveling and offers those headed to a destination an alternative way to arrive. The Streetcar is set to get rolling, and we have already seen investment and development directly connected to this transportation addition.

We are promoting entrepreneurship with a variety of partners including the Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation, BizStarts, the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation, Scale Up, the Milwaukee Public Library, and others. The Department was instrumental in winning designation as a Kiva City so very small businesses can obtain capital. And, the Mayor's Entrepreneur Week is encouraging organizations and entrepreneurs to find ways to start and build businesses in Milwaukee.

The Department was an eager contributor to the Common Council's Local Business Action Team which has made recommendations on improving the interaction of businesses with City government.

Milwaukee's boundaries are fixed and every development project relies on the reuse of land. The Department is a national leader in the coordination and execution of brownfield redevelopment. Over the last four years, millions of dollars in grant money has been invested in neighborhoods all across the City so that new opportunities are possible on formerly contaminated land. In one case, Three Bridges Park, there is now a recreation amenity on land that was a brownfield.

The Department has helped imaginative people realize their dreams in some amazing projects. Look at the new St. Ann's Center for Intergenerational Care at 25th and North Avenue - Sr. Edna Lonergan brings young and old, people of varying abilities and life stages, together. When she wanted a north side campus, the Department worked with her to make it a reality. Larry and Sharon Adams imagined Innovation and Wellness Commons on North 16th Street and the Department used grant money from the State and some local money to assist – creating jobs and commercial activity.

At other locations around the City, DCD has worked collaboratively with new approaches to get things done. The Jackie Robinson School at 37th and Fond du Lac Avenue is now a residence for seniors. The new East Library includes apartments upstairs. And at 27th and Wisconsin, vacant City land now has an office building and, across the street, a gas station/convenience store that created neighborhood problems is now leveled.

Bronzeville is a neighborhood with both a great history and great promise. The Department has worked with partners to plan what's possible, to promote appropriate reuse, and to bring business people to the neighborhood. Gee's Clippers is now on Dr. Martin Luther King Drive; soon, Pete's Market will have a prominent location; and the Garfield School – along with the former site of America's Black Holocaust Museum – will be a residential and commercial development.

There is a remarkable story about housing in Milwaukee. Over the past twelve years, more than 1,400 building permits have been issued for single-family and duplex homes. Six thousand affordable housing units have been added in 13 of the 15 aldermanic districts. And, since the Great Recession hit our economy, 2,000 tax foreclosed properties have been put back into private hands – including homes and businesses. Sales have occurred in every Aldermanic District – and as a direct result, more than \$78-million in taxable property has been returned to the rolls.

Sometimes, it takes an outsider to remind us that we are on the right path. Amy Liu, a national expert on urban policy and Vice President of The Brookings Institution think tank, points to Milwaukee as a leading example of regional economic development cooperation in a recent

publication. Ms. Liu spent time in Milwaukee in mid-April at the invitation of the City of Milwaukee and the Milwaukee 7 regional economic development partnership. Citing examples such as the creation of industry cluster organizations, the City's Growing Prosperity plan, the development of Century City and the support of community-based economic development organizations such as Walnut Way, Ms. Liu concludes in her blog that "this region is proving that it's possible for jurisdictions, businesses and nonprofit organizations to join forces and remake economic development—embracing shared assets—to create durable, inclusive growth."

We are proud of what has been accomplished, but are always looking for ways to do more. We'll continue to look for new approaches and new opportunities to expand success across the city. In that light, the desire of the Common Council to see even more job and economic opportunity and commercial growth outside the greater downtown area is heard loud and clear, and is supported by the Department and Barrett Administration. To assist in this effort, DCD will be proposing a new position of Neighborhoods Economic Development Specialist. Not to be confused with our Commercial Corridors team, this position will work hand-in-hand with Common Council members to target new growth opportunities, fill business vacancies in your Districts and assist in carrying out Common Council member-led priorities and initiatives. In addition to this, I will commit to working with any Alderperson who wishes to have regular feedback sessions with a group of stakeholders of their choosing to discuss development issues and opportunities in their respective neighborhoods

My commitment to the Common Council is that DCD will not rest on its laurels. We are redoubling efforts to expand Department communication with your offices and work in partnership with Council members in carrying out our joint mission to add value and opportunity to every neighborhood throughout the city.

I appreciate your time and humbly ask for your support of my re-appointment as Commissioner of the Department of City Development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rocky Marcoux". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rocky" being more prominent and stylized than the last name "Marcoux".

Rocky Marcoux
Commissioner