

# OPINIONS

## CITY DEVELOPMENT

# Marcoux should remain

The rap against Rocky Marcoux in some circles is that the Department of City Development commissioner has focused too much on downtown Milwaukee and not enough on the city's neighborhoods. And so Marcoux stands in jeopardy of not being reconfirmed by the Common Council, despite the strong support of Mayor Tom Barrett.

The criticism is wrong on two levels. First, although not as dramatic as the boom in downtown development, or as much in the spotlight, there has been progress in the neighborhoods in housing and commercial developments. Second, the developments downtown — and the taxes they bring in — help feed growth in the neighborhoods.

### EDITORIAL

The two are interrelated; the city needs both to succeed, and it is getting both under Marcoux, although perhaps not always as fast or effectively as could be accomplished, as Ald. Tony Zielinski and other critics maintain. We understand Zielinski's points, and perhaps some of the criticism is warranted and Marcoux should continue to improve. But unhappiness over a few individual projects is not enough to push him out. The council should vote to confirm when his appointment is reconsidered later this month.

As Ralph Hollmon, president and CEO of the Milwaukee Urban League, told the Journal Sentinel, "I think that when you look at his entire body of work, he's done an outstanding job."

The controversy over Marcoux is nothing new; he faced a similar attempt at an ouster in 2012. Four years ago, we wrote that Marcoux deserved confirmation but needed to make some changes: "We think removal from office goes too far. But Marcoux needs to get the message that he should improve the way he does business and articulate a strategic vision

for city development. Right now, the city doesn't have one."

Now it does. And Marcoux told us this week that the 10-year strategic plan, "Growing Prosperity" is among the things he is most proud of. He also said he took to heart much of the criticism last time around and has made changes. We agree.

Development is moving forward, for example, at the massive Century City Business Park project in the 30th St. corridor, and while it hasn't taken off as fast as we'd like, neither did the Menomonee Valley at first, and there has been development nearby such as the M-WERC energy consortium. Century City is a work in progress with the emphasis on the word progress.

Other neighborhood projects that have not received the attention of, say, the Milwaukee Bucks arena or the Couture, include housing subdivisions such as Walnut Circle and more than 6,000 affordable housing units, commercial corridor grants, business improvement districts and developing green corridors.

In talking about his support for Marcoux to the Journal Sentinel, Barrett noted projects such as the Menomonee Valley redevelopment, Century City Business Park, the Pabst Brewery complex, the Water Council area and others, saying the city has invested tens of millions of dollars in neighborhood projects.

And Tim Sheehy, president of the Metro Milwaukee Association of Commerce, said of Marcoux, "My sense is that he's been making tough decisions for 12 years, and that doesn't leave everyone happy. But this isn't a business of making everybody happy. It's a business of Milwaukee using its assets in the best possible way to attract capital investment and jobs."

We think that, aside from a misstep here and there, that's what Marcoux has been doing. And what he should continue to do.

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