

# THE JOURNAL RECORD

Opinion

## **Mashburn: Continue the transformation**

December 2, 2009

MAPS and MAPS for Kids have unquestionably raised the quality of life in Oklahoma City and built up a level of civic pride we have never before seen. To say MAPS has transformed this community would be an understatement.

There is more to MAPS than quality of life. The economic benefits of the original MAPS are widely known and have been widely publicized. In the early '90s we invested \$365 million, one penny at a time, into our community's future. It has been estimated we have now seen a \$3.1 billion return on that investment, with \$1.9 billion more yet to come. Think about that. We have gotten back 10 times what we originally invested.

As someone who has been involved with construction and built homes in Oklahoma City for 50 years, I've seen firsthand how large-scale initiatives like MAPS can stimulate the economy and create not hundreds of jobs, but thousands.

Beyond, however, the construction and hospitality jobs that MAPS creates, perhaps the greatest benefit of MAPS is that we have made our city a city where others want to live – where entrepreneurs and business leaders want to do business. As a result, for the past year, Oklahoma City has consistently had the lowest unemployment rate in the country. A passage of MAPS on Dec. 8 could solidify that ranking for years to come.

In economic times like these, some ask if now is the right time to reinvest in our city. My reply, if not now then when? Oklahoma City has weathered this recession like no other city in the nation. So when the economy starts to bounce back, Oklahoma City will be better positioned to emerge as a city that is the envy of the rest of the country. And we can all thank the success of MAPS for that.

Across the nation, cities are cutting back and putting their plans on hold. Not in Oklahoma City. The Devon Tower is the only skyscraper currently being constructed in the world. The relocation of Interstate 40 is one of the biggest projects being undertaken right now in the U.S. Add the impact of this new MAPS program to that and you quickly see how there is no better time than now.

The success and ingenuity of MAPS is unrivaled in any other American community. Now it is the time to continue that momentum that we worked so hard to create.

To me the decision is easy. With a yes vote on Dec. 8 we can create thousands of new jobs. With a yes vote on Dec. 8 we can raise the quality of life in our community. With a yes vote on Dec. 8 we can continue to transform Oklahoma City into one in which we are all proud to live. Join me in voting yes for MAPS on Dec. 8.

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