

March 11, 2004

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Mayor Marvin Pratt
City Hall
200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202-3570

Re: Next steps for green infrastructure in the Fond du Lac and
North Avenue Neighborhood



Dear Honorable Mayor Pratt:

On behalf of the NAACP, the African American World Cultural Center, Preserve our Parks, and everyone here at the Urban Open Space Foundation, I would like to thank you for supporting the green infrastructure initiative in the Fond du Lac and North Avenue Neighborhood. While additional changes to the language of the area's Comprehensive Neighborhood Plan still must be made, your expressed support has enabled us to work effectively with your staff, creating a solid foundation on which to collaborate. Further, I am pleased to tell you that UOSF has just received an award of \$91,500 from the US Forest Service to support the green infrastructure initiative in the Fond du Lac and North Neighborhood. These funds must be matched dollar for dollar, so we continue to seek monies from both the private and public sectors. These are important federal resources that will help this neighborhood realize the quality open space and streetscape goals clearly expressed in the Plan.

It is our goal to work closely with you and your staff. To aid our collaboration, I have outlined a series of *next steps* for how—together—we might proceed in accomplishing our shared goals. We anticipate this initiative will commence after the approval of the Comprehensive Neighborhood Plan, building upon and complementing the work done to date. We envision a green infrastructure process that will engage the community in identifying an interconnected network of plazas, streetscapes, vest-pocket parks, and public open spaces in order to make the neighborhood a more productive, healthier, and desirable place to live. Here's how.

Getting Organized

As with any urban initiative, it is essential that we begin by involving those key agencies and individuals that have a stake in this program's outcome. UOSF will organize and staff a broad-based *Working Group* of public agency, business, and not-for-profit agency representatives whose day-to-day decisions impact the environmental, social, and economic health of the neighborhood.

Officers

Dr. Nancy Frank, President
Acting Dean
UW Milwaukee School of
Architecture and Urban Planning

George Meyer, Vice President
Former Secretary
Department of Natural Resources

Rev. Dr. Michael Schuier, Secretary
First Unitarian Society of Madison

Earle Edwards, Treasurer
Retired President
Monona State Bank

Board of Directors

David Behrendt
Retired Editorial Page Editor
Milwaukee Journal

James Curtis
Marshall Erdman & Associates

Judith Guyot, CICSW

Stephan McCarthy
Milwaukee Metropolitan
Sewerage District

Donovan Riley,
Visiting Professor,
Loyola University

Joe Sensenbrenner
Former Mayor, City of Madison

Legal Council

John Murphy
Foley and Lardner

Staff

Heather Mann
Founder and Executive Director

Tom Klement
Business Manager

Briana Mcier
Restoration Manager, Troy Gardens

Chandler Poole
East Rail Corridor Project Lead

Geri Weinstein Breunig
Program Manager

Participation from the City of Milwaukee; Milwaukee County; Milwaukee Public Schools; the US Forest Service; Wisconsin Bureau of Forestry; UW Milwaukee; NAACP; the African American World Cultural Center; Walnut Way Neighborhood Association; Johnsons Park Neighborhood Association, the City Homes neighborhood group, Second Harvest; Legacy Bank; Columbia Savings and Loan and others will be encouraged.

Key responsibilities of the Working Group include helping identify physical and programming links, neighborhood assets, anchors of activities, barriers, connectors, and underutilized parcels for a green infrastructure system; helping shape community outreach efforts with the goal of involving the widest range of diverse voices in decision making; and assisting with community research and interviews to test ideas. Because we want to provide the community with early tangible results, the Working Group will also help cultivate proposals from the neighborhood for small grants that support on-the-ground forestry improvements.

Collaborating

UOSF will engage the talents and skills of the various cooperating agencies as appropriate. For example, UOSF is already collaborating with the UW Milwaukee School of Architecture and Urban Planning for the development of a project-specific GIS database and a preliminary green infrastructure assessment. UOSF will work with city staff to 1) jointly solicit and secure additional public and private sector funding, and 2) assemble additional relevant plans, reports, photographs, public meeting results, and local histories. It is essential that we understand and build upon everything that has been done to date.

The Technical Team

We will bring to the community expanded technical capacity for the green infrastructure initiative by assembling a top-notch project team. The team will include a project manager to coordinate all aspects of the initiative; an economist to conduct a market study assessing the fiscal impacts of an open space system and the resulting business opportunities made possible by that system; a landscape architect to truth-test background data through onsite analysis of environmental opportunities and constraints; and a community facilitator to design an iterative process that engages the neighborhood in creating and fine-tuning a green infrastructure vision. I, of course, will be actively involved throughout the program and available to you and your staff at any time.

Community Outreach

UOSF will create multiple opportunities for public involvement and actively cultivate local leadership for long-term green infrastructure stewardship and programming. One or more Town Hall Meetings, together with formal and informal community interviews will directly inform efforts to positively impact community appearance and image; communication patterns among residents and opportunities for friendship; community health and active lifestyles; the needs of families, elderly, and youth; neighborhood traditions and events; formal and informal outdoor educational opportunities; transportation; and safety, while reducing opportunities for crime.


The Result

Together, we will consider optimal land patterns prepared by the project team; we will develop a vision for a green infrastructure system through the Fond du Lac and North Avenue

Neighborhood. Further, we will publish a Green Infrastructure Plan of Action for the Fond du Lac and North Ave Neighborhood complete with a green infrastructure map; a description of key issues and problems; a green infrastructure economic analysis; at least 1 drawing to show what a specific place might look like; projects and programs targeted for completion within 5 years; detailed acquisition and construction budgets; and a work plan identifying roles and responsibilities for project implementation. This work plan will be used to raise additional monies and monitor progress.

Thank you for your leadership in securing a better and greener future for citizens of the Fond du Lac and North Avenue Neighborhood. I will contact Pat Algiers shortly to begin mobilizing our collective efforts. All of us here at the Urban Open Space Foundation look forward to working together in a successful public-private venture.

Warmest personal regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heather Mann', with a large, stylized initial 'H' and 'M'.

Heather Mann
Executive Director

cc: Sue Black
Fred Gordon
Willie Hines
Willie Wade
Marlene Johnson-Odom
Julilly Kohler
Bob Greenstreet
Pat Algiers
John Hyslop
Mike Maierle
Janet Grau
Phillip Rodbell
Lisa Burban