



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

Lafayette L. Crump
Commissioner

Vanessa L. Koster
Deputy Commissioner

Ald. Coggs
6th Ald. District

CITY PLAN COMMISSION ZONING REPORT

File No: [240358](#)

Location: 616-618, 622, 626, and 628 West North Avenue, 2307 and 2317 North 6th Street, and 2316 and 2322 North 7th Street, between North 6th Street and North 7th Street, on the North side of west North Avenue

**Applicant/
Owner:** FIT Investment Group (applicant/developer)

**Current
Zoning:** Local Business (LB2), located in Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District Development Incentive Zone ([DIZ](#))

**Proposed
Zoning:** Approval of a new mixed-use building and conditional use within the Bronzeville DIZ

Proposal: This file refers to a proposal for a mixed-use building known as the Bronzeville Creative Arts & Technology Hub, within the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District DIZ. The DIZ overlay was created in 2022 and amended in 2024, and is intended to encourage development in Bronzeville that will support the growth of Bronzeville as a cultural and entertainment destination that highlights African American arts and culture. The overlay zone includes an allowable use list and building design standards to ensure that new developments align with these goals.

FIT Investment Group is proposing to construct a 4-story building that includes 60 residential units and approximately 29,000 square feet of commercial space that will anchor the corner at 6th and North. There will also be 3 live-work units and a public plaza located along North Avenue. Uses within the commercial portion of the building are anticipated to include a first floor café and 150-200 seat flexible performance space. Upper floor tenants of the commercial space are intended to have a focus on arts, music and technology. A STEM tutoring use will be located on the first floor of the residential portion. The proposed uses are allowed by the DIZ overlay, but the STEM tutoring use is classified as a Community Center, which

is a Conditional Use per the DIZ overlay and requires a public hearing by the City Plan Commission.

Several of the parcels within the development site are owned by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee, and are anticipated to be sold to the developer/applicant. There is also a Certified Survey Map underway to combine the parcels into one site.

DIZ Analysis:

Uses:

The following uses are proposed for this building:

Use	DIZ
Multi-family residential	Permitted Use
Live-work units on North Avenue	Permitted Use
School (specialty or personal instruction) Prospective tenant: Wisconsin Conservatory of Music (offices, rehearsal/lesson space, ensemble rooms)	Permitted Use provided the instruction is primarily in music, art, theater arts, or dance
Community Center Prospective tenant: STEM Programming Group (2-3 staff member offices, located in lobby of residential building)	Conditional Use - requires public hearing
Restaurant (café)	Permitted use provided it is not a formula business with more than 5 locations
General office at upper floors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office space for Community Theater Organization (approx. 1600 SF) • Creative co-working spaces (including open workstations, private offices, conference rooms, podcasting studios, recording studios, music rehearsal/practice rooms) 	Permitted Use except on ground floor
Theater	Permitted Use
Parking Lot (accessory use)	Permitted Use

Design standards:

The overlay’s site and building design standards are meant to ensure that new developments within the boundary align with the goals of supporting the growth of Bronzeville as a cultural and entertainment destination. Staff has reviewed the DIZ design standards alongside the development proposal and determined that the site plan and building design are consistent with the DIZ standards relating to building placement and setbacks, residential density, building height, windows and glazing, articulation and modulation of building facades, and lighting. Building

signage is anticipated to meet the overlay standards, and will be reviewed by Staff to ensure compliance.

The applicant has requested minor relief from one overlay standard related to the first floor height of the live work units. The DIZ requires a minimum ceiling height of 12' for nonresidential and live-work units and the applicant is proposing an approximately 11' – 4" finished ceiling height, for a difference of 7 1/8". It also requires a 10' minimum ceiling height for residential units and the proposal shows a 9' – 7/8" height, for a difference of approximately 11 1/8" at the walk-up units on 6th and 7th Streets.

The DIZ acknowledges that there might be unique circumstances that make strict adherence to a specific design standard impractical or causes undue hardship that can be mitigated via a minor relief from the standard, and allows the City Plan Commission to consider the minor relief request provided at least one of the following is demonstrated. If the Plan Commission determines that a standard is met and the proposal remains consistent with the spirit and intent of the DIZ, they may consider this in their review and approval of a proposal:

1. Alternative is consistent with the overall design principles.
2. Alternative better achieves intent of the design principles.
3. Alternative addresses unique site factor(s) that make the standard impractical.

The applicant has stated that the proposed height of the live-work units significantly exceeds typical multi-family construction and is the maximum possible height given the current site and project constraints. The first floor elevation of the residential building was established to balance the cut and fill, minimizing haul off of potentially contaminated soils from the site. From there, typical multi-family construction standards led to the 11' 4" floor-to-floor height of the primary building. Due to the overlapping volumes, the total height of the live-work units is limited by the height of the upper levels. The portion of the building containing the live-work units and residential lobby was lowered by 1' and the structural framing was reduced in depth to increase the ceiling height to the maximum amount possible. For the walk-up units along 6th and 7th Street, the applicant states that the ceiling height in these units is highly typical of multi-family construction. A combination of elevated terraces, 8' tall windows, and individual entry canopies at each of these units provide the look and feel of a much taller first floor. Staff has concluded that the applicant has demonstrated the need for this request, and meets all 3 criteria listed above.

Adjacent Land Use:

Surrounding land uses along North Avenue are zoned Local Business (LB2). There is Residential (RT4) to the north of this site.

Consistency with Area Plan:

The proposed development is highly consistent with the Northeast Side Area Plan

(NESAP), part of the City’s overall comprehensive plan. The Northeast Side Area Plan identifies the project site as a key redevelopment site within the Bronzeville Culture and Entertainment District, and encourages mixed-use development. New mixed-use development in Bronzeville has been a top priority of City plans for many years.

The site is also identified for redevelopment in the Equitable Growth through Transit Oriented Development Plan (TOD Plan), an official amendment to the Northeast Side Area Plan. The TOD plan refers to Bronzeville as an “arts and cultural district” and recommends high-density, mixed-use development to support walkability, economic activity, and investments in public transit.

The Northeast Side Area Plan supports the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized parcels and the introduction of high-density multi-family housing to commercial districts. Recommendations for the Harambee sub-area of the NESAP include to support the redevelopment of key sites by promoting mixed-use development that includes commercial and residential components; to strengthen neighborhood identity by creating a pedestrian friendly environment and promoting cultural activities with a focus on youth programs related to the arts; and to foster leadership, education and job creation by expanding the role of community centers and promoting educational opportunities for residents and youth. The proposed development will include a space for programming focused on empowering students from underrepresented backgrounds to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics (STEAM). This use has been classified as a community center. The proposed community center is consistent with the Northeast Side Area Plan.

The Northeast Side Area Plan encourages new development to build-out the street frontage with multi-story facades that support density and walkability. The proposed development is of an appropriate scale and includes an articulated façade with multiple building heights, which help to add variation and human scale to the façade. A small portion of the North Avenue façade at the live work units is below the minimum height specified in the DIZ, but is consistent with the surrounding context and complementary to the development overall. The proposed façade heights are consistent with the Northeast Side Area Plan.

Previous City

Plan Action:

3/25/2024 - City Plan Commission recommended approval of the 1st Amendment to the Development Incentive Zone known as the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District to make technical adjustments to the performance standards (FN [231709](#))

8/22/22 – City Plan Commission recommended approval of a substitute ordinance relating to the change in zoning from Two-Family Residential (RT4) to Local Business, LB2, for the properties located at 2317-25 North 6th Street, and 2316-18 and 2322 North 7th Street, on the north side of West North Avenue between North 6th Street and North 7th Street, in the 6th Aldermanic District. (FN [220400](#))

11/7/2022 – City Plan Commission recommended approval of the file to establish a Development Incentive Zone known as the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District on land located generally on the north and south sides of West North Avenue, at and west of North Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and east of Interstate 43 (FN [220772](#))

08/23/2021 - City Plan Commission recommended approval of the substitute resolution creating a study plan for the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District Interim Study Overlay Zone, as established by Section 295-1005 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances, for properties located along West North Avenue between North Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and Interstate 43, in the 6th Aldermanic District. (FN [210586](#))

**Previous Common
Council Action:**

4/9/2024 – Common Council approved the 1st Amendment to the Development Incentive Zone known as the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District to make technical adjustments to the performance standards (FN [231709](#))

9/20/22 – Common Council approved a substitute ordinance relating to the change in zoning from Two-Family Residential (RT4) to Local Business, LB2, for the properties located at 2317-25 North 6th Street, and 2316-18 and 2322 North 7th Street, on the north side of West North Avenue between North 6th Street and North 7th Street, in the 6th Aldermanic District. (FN [220400](#))

11/22/2022 – Common Council approved the file to establish a Development Incentive Zone known as the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District on land located generally on the north and south sides of West North Avenue, at and west of North Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and east of Interstate 43 (FN [220772](#))

09/21/2021 - Common Council approved the substitute resolution creating a study plan for the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District Interim Study Overlay Zone, as established by Section 295-1005 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances, for properties located along West North Avenue between North Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and Interstate 43, in the 6th Aldermanic District. (FN [210586](#))

Recommendation:

Since the proposed development is consistent with the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District DIZ overlay and the Northeast Side Area Plan recommendations, staff recommends approval of the subject file.

DIZ Building Design Standards Table

		DIZ Standards	Applicant Analysis of Proposal
Primary Street Frontage	Front setback, minimum	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets Standards 1'-9"
	Front setback, maximum	10*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets standards 9'-6" at café and performance area 5'-5" at commercial lobby 16'-7" at residential lobby (this space includes public bench, landscaping, stairs and a ramp to provide accessible entry) 13'-6" at live-work units (connected to residential entry plaza, includes landscaping, public benches, and bicycle parking)
	Minimum build-out, primary street frontage	75%*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets Standards 82.9% (191'-1") The 1-story residential lobby is not included in the percentages above, as it does not meet the DIZ height requirements. Total street frontage on North Ave = 230'-6"; All portions of the setback areas are used for public plaza and/or dining areas associated with the adjacent uses.
Secondary Street Frontage	Side street setback, min.	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets Standards 2'-3" from lot line at commercial (east) 7'-0" from lot line at residential walk-up units (east) 7'-4" from lot line at residential walk-up units (west)
	Side street setback, max.	10*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets Standards 2'-3" from lot line at commercial (east) 7'-0" from lot line at residential walk-up units (east) 7'-4" from lot line at residential walk-up units (west)
	Minimum build-out, secondary street frontage	None*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets standards 82.8% (6th street) 82.4% (7th street)
Rear	Rear street setback, min	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable/meets standards

	Rear street setback, max.	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable/meets standards
Side Setback	Side setback, min.	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets standards • 5'-0" at live-work units • 5'-2" at walk-up unit adjacent to 642 W. North Ave
	Side setback, max.	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets Standards • 5'-0" at live-work units • 5'-2" at walk-up unit adjacent to 642 W. North Ave
Rear Setback	Rear setback, min.	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets Standards • 2'-5" to fence; 27'-6" to building at north-east corner of site • 5'-11" min. at north-west corner of site
	Rear setback, max.	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets Standards • 2'-5" to fence; 27'-6" to building at north-east corner of site • 5'-11" min. at north-west corner of site
Lot Area per Dwelling Unit	Lot area per dwelling unit, min.	300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets standards • 805
	Lot area per dwelling unit, permanent supportive housing, min.	150; 300 for a unit with 2 or more bedrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable/meets standards
	Lot area per transitional housing client, min.	150	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable/meets standards
Height	Height, minimum	27*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets Standards • 27'-8" at live-work units (29.4% of frontage), 55'-6" at commercial building (56% of frontage). • Height minimum is met for 85.4% of the Building Façade on W North Ave.
	Height, maximum	60*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets Standards • 55'-6" at commercial, 50'-3" at residential

	Front street ground floor height, minimum	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not meet standards – minor relief requested Finished Ceiling height: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14'-6" at commercial building, 11'-4 7/8" at live-work units and res lobby 56% of the first floor meets the standards, 44% does not.
	Side street ground floor height, minimum	12 (non-residential) 10 (residential – except for live-work)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not meet standards, minor relief requested 14'-6" at commercial areas on N 6th Street, 9'-0 7/8" at all residential areas. Floor to floor height of all residential areas is 11'-4", typical of multifamily construction.
	Ground floor elevation (min/max)	0/2*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets Standards 0 at commercial spaces; range of 1'-6" to 1'-9" (depending on adjacent grades) at live-work. Approximately 4'-0" at residential areas on 6th and 7th streets
Windows and Glazing	Minimum glazed areas, primary street frontage	60%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets Standards 67.6% 150'-2" of 222'-1" (frosted glazing areas are not included in percentage calculations)
	Minimum glazed areas, secondary street frontage	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets Standards 48.5% on N 6th Street 70'-6" of 145'-3" 57.7% on N 7th Street 38'-0" of 65'-9" (frosted glazing areas are not included in percentage calculations)
	Ground floor sill height, maximum	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets Standards 0
	Ground floor window height, minimum	6*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets Standards 8' at residential; 12' at commercial
	Multiple principal buildings permitted?	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable/Meets standards one building proposed