

CITY OF MILWAUKEE Comprehensive Plan

Fond du Lac and North Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan

Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

March, 2004

**City of Milwaukee
North Avenue Community Development Corporation
30th Street Industrial Corridor Corporation
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation**

**Planning and Design Institute, Inc.
Farr and Associates Norris and Associates
Hurtado Consulting, LLC**

Fond du Lac and North Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan

Executive Summary



The Fond du Lac and North Neighborhood Plan is the culmination of a 3-year community-based planning effort that builds upon the momentum created by recent revitalization activities, and current neighborhood assets, including: close proximity to downtown, easy access to freeways and major bus routes, historic and architectural charm, and most importantly, dedicated and active neighborhood associations. The plan establishes priorities for strengthening these assets in the areas of neighborhood housing, business, retail, industrial, transportation, recreational, open space and cultural assets. The plan promotes investment and provides guidance for public and private development initiatives. The final plan is available on the [DCD Fond du Lac and North Neighborhood Plan website](#).

In preparing the plan, city staff and consultants were informed by a **Contract Team** of community (and funding) partners; a **Working Task Force** of elected officials who represent the area; a **Citizen Advisory Group** of business, homeowner, and community-based organizations; and a number of **concerned citizens** who actively and diligently work to achieve better neighborhood development.



The key recommendations of the plan are:

Housing: Build on existing successes in the neighborhood (City Homes, Lindsay Heights, Habitat for Humanity); cluster new houses in 18 areas where vacant lots are available (Josey subdivision development is already underway); promote single family, duplex, and town houses and home ownership, not big rental multifamily buildings; preserve the character of the traditional neighborhood (windows and doors facing the street, pedestrian and transit friendly design, parking behind or on the side of buildings)



Industry: Build on existing successes in the neighborhood (Capital stamping, American Ornamental Iron, Metal Processing); concentrate industrial efforts where large lots are adjacent to one another and can be assembled; create a campus-like district/industrial park

Commercial: Build on existing commercial success stories (Lena's, Columbia Savings and Loan, Jewel Osco, Legacy Bank and the Northside YMCA); focus development at high profile intersections (Fond du Lac and North, a landmark of the neighborhood; Fond du Lac, 27th, and Center; Teutonia and North); provide parking plazas along Fond du Lac Avenue



Key findings are as follows. These are derived from the consultant team's analysis, stakeholder and neighborhood public input, which included one-on-one interviews, focus groups, surveys both written and visual, community workshops, and public information meetings. They are listed as follows:

- The sheer concentration of people and households presents a large buying public, which is not reflected in current availability of goods and services. The strong concentration of buying power within the neighborhood **is just beginning to be recognized by national retailers.** The area around the intersection of Fond du Lac and North Avenue area has 13,288 people per square mile and an income per square mile of approximately \$72 million (19)
- The industrial corridor on the west side of the neighborhood makes this a Walk to Work neighborhood. However, in addition to having good access to rail and freeways, the industrial corridor needs high visibility design or image control that will result in an overall uniform and distinctive appearance of buildings, and a definable campus that lets visitors know that they have entered an industrial park.
- The neighborhood has two historic retail corridors, Fond du Lac and North Avenues, which are currently in the process of organizing a Main Street Initiative, one of the first urban areas in the State and the country to do so. Main Street has historically been a small town economic development and historic preservation tool, and is relatively new for urban areas like Milwaukee.
- This neighborhood has some the oldest and the newest housing stock in the metro area. Construction of new housing in this neighborhood was significant during the 1990s, and compares favorably in quality and affordability to its suburban counterparts.
- There are a significant number of businesses with a long tenure in the neighborhood and significant customer loyalty.
- The neighborhood has seen evidence of redevelopment and revitalization, most recently the multi-million dollar reconstruction of Fond du Lac Avenue.
- Overall, crime statistics trending downward for this area, as they are for the city as a whole.
- The neighborhood is underserved in open space. Roughly 10% of the land area in the county is in public open space. However, in the Fond du Lac and North Avenue Neighborhood, the percent of open space is estimated at slightly more than 4%.
- The Fond du Lac and North Avenue area has a larger African American population than other areas of the City, and a relatively young population, which can play a key role for future development in the neighborhood. Approximately 42% of the population is under 17.

The plan is organized into land use and policies that apply to the neighborhood as a whole, strategies for districts and corridors, and eight high-profile catalytic projects. Catalytic projects leverage investment and increase the value of surrounding properties, represent a significant and visible change in the neighborhood, and have the potential to change the course of development.

The catalytic projects are summarized as follows:

Catalytic Project A: Former Sears Block

The intersection of North and Fond du Lac Avenues is a key node of identity for the neighborhood. A new signature building combined with substantial redevelopment of the surrounding property, will reinforce the commercial potential of this node and will serve as the landmark for the community.

Catalytic Project B: Fond du Lac and 20th Street

Fond du Lac Avenue at 20th Street and Johnson's Park is a recreational center, community gathering place, and visual entry into the neighborhood. The park and adjacent historic buildings provide amenities and identity for the area, and serve as a gateway to the key intersection of Fond du Lac and North Avenues.

Catalytic Project C: Walnut Node Area

The vacant building and large parking lot offer a highly visible site made up of two contiguous parcels across from a successful new housing development. The site is zoned for commercial and is on the proposed Milwaukee Connector route.

Catalytic Project D: Fond du Lac Parking Initiative

Fond du Lac Avenue businesses desire on-street and off-street parking options that are available at all times of the day. Some on-street parking was lost as a result of Fond du Lac Avenue reconstruction. This lost on-street parking needs to be replaced with a comparable amount of accessible off-street parking.

Catalytic Project E: 30th Street Industrial corridor Area - Campus Identity

The 30th Street Industrial Corridor is one of the largest industrial developments in the City of Milwaukee, with good rail and highway access, and over 17,000 employees available from the surrounding neighborhood. To remain competitive, the corridor needs to reinvent itself as a modern urban industrial campus.

Catalytic Project G: Teutonia and North Area

The area surrounding Teutonia and North is experiencing redevelopment interest and should build on its investment momentum. The new YMCA is the anchor for the area, with new infill housing being developed throughout the surrounding blocks, and North Avenue becoming more of a neighborhood shopping street.

Catalytic Project H: Residential Clusters (18 Identified)

Existing residential cluster developments have been successful in the neighborhood and continue to add value to surrounding properties. Some of the successful residential housing clusters include Lindsay Heights, City Homes, Habitat for Humanity and New Covenant.

Public input is and will remain key to achieving plan goals that are valuable to the neighborhood and create the sense of community ownership necessary for the plan's success. The plan was revised to include the major points raised (and often repeated) during the public participation process, such as:

Open space and recreation:

- This neighborhood needs more and better-programmed open space, community gardens and parks, as well as a greater variety of recreational options.
- Undertake a community-based green infrastructure initiative. Support an interconnected network of plazas, streetscapes and public open spaces that makes the neighborhood a more desirable place to live.

Transportation:

- A modern transit plan (bus, rail or trolley system) that connected the 70,000 neighbors to the mentioned business districts and catalyst projects would add value and effect the marketing projections for each area.

Safety/security:

- There should be open neighborhood meetings between homeowners and business owners to establish common ideas on how to better secure the neighborhood. Always include a law enforcement representative to provide ideas and promote neighborhood relations.

Housing and housing-related:

- Allow existing homes to remain and offer grant money for exterior improvements on owner and rental occupied buildings.
- Continue to provide options for homeowners that include affordable new construction.
- Develop affordable housing units for individuals who do not want to own a home.

Plan implementation:

- Engage residents in the details of plan development.
- Set up mini information centers to promote the ongoing projects and promote homeownership.
- Business Improvement Districts should pursue a Main Street approach to redevelopment.

Ideas for new development:

- Please provide upscale retail.
- Main artery initiatives should be businesses that support the neighborhood.
- Fill in the gaps, no blighted properties should be allowed to exist within the area that is actively changing.

- Provide more education and training for ma and pa neighborhood stores. They need to know how to stock a store with merchandise, how to keep inventory, etc. Better-educated business owners will help keep the neighborhood a place where people value and want to spend their money.

General comment:

- From seeing redevelopment projects in other states, the concept of maintaining the character of the community is wonderful. Too much urban sprawl is erasing the character of the inner cities.
- Assure resources and support for local business and talents of local residents.

Plan implementation will be achieved through the public-private partnerships developed for the catalytic projects, regular citizen input at city and county boards and commissions as projects are approved and regulatory decisions are made, and the efforts of grass roots organizations that give meaning to plan goals by developing, interpreting, and strengthening community-based initiatives.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

Milwaukee Branch
3500 NORTH 26th STREET
MILWAUKEE, WI 53206
(414) 871-1000 FAX (414) 871-1091

March 8, 2004

Alderwoman Marlene Johnson-Odom
City Hall
200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202-3570

Re: Fond du Lac and North Comprehensive Plan

Dear Alderwoman Johnson-Odom:

We are excited about the opportunities presented by the Fond du Lac and North Comprehensive Plan. Nonetheless, we have one request pertaining to certain language in the plan. We are sending similar letters to Mayor Marvin Pratt, and Aldermen Fred Gordon, Willie Hines and Willie Wade.

As you may know, the NAACP is working in partnership with the Urban Open Space Foundation, Preserve our Parks, the African American World Cultural Center and others to build upon the proposed Fond du Lac and North Ave Comprehensive Neighborhood Plan by creating a detailed open space plan as the next step for neighborhood transformation. Based on results achieved in similar urban communities, strategic planning, acquisition, and development of open space would have a catalytic impact on the local economy and spur neighborhood reinvestment. It would improve air, water, and soil quality. Also, a well designed and maintained open space system would serve the social, cultural, recreational, and spiritual needs of residents who have experienced long-standing open-space inequities in Milwaukee County.

While there are many aspects of the current proposed Comprehensive Plan that we support, we continue to be troubled by one section and seek to have it removed. This is where we request your assistance.

On page 85 the plan states: "Public and private uses may be combined within neighborhood parks when it serves the broader interests of the neighborhood. When possible and appropriate, displaced park space should be replaced within the neighborhood." We request this language be stricken altogether for three important reasons.

- 1) This language was included in the Comprehensive Plan as a way to mitigate the impacts of the development proposed by the African American World Cultural Center. In a recent conversation with Rick Norris, our partners learned that the Center no longer intends to build in Johnson's Park. Their board has

responded to community input opposing the location within the park, and they have decided to downsize and refocus their program. Consequently, this language is no longer necessary.

2) We and our project partners are about to solicit and invest significant public and private resources in increasing the quantity and quality of open space in this neighborhood. The suggestion that the city would support development in public open spaces undermines the confidence of open space investor's in the long-term value of their investment.

3) It is counterproductive (and illogical) to have our partnership working to retrofit high quality open space into the neighborhood while the city encourages developing open space for other uses. If we work at cross-purposes, we will never gain ground in rectifying the serious open space inequity that exists.

On **March 16, 2004** the draft plan goes before the Zoning and Neighborhood Design Committee. We respectfully request that you take appropriate action to remove this language from the current plan.

Thank you for being attentive to the open space needs of the Fond du Lac and North Ave. Neighborhood down to this seemingly small but very important detail. With this change, we at the NAACP together with our project partners will enthusiastically place our full support behind the document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerry Ann Hamilton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jerry Ann Hamilton
President
NAACP

200 N. Blount Street
Madison, WI 53703

March 11, 2004

phone 608.255.9877
fax 608.255.6793

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

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 Schuler, 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

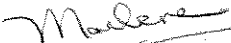
Heather Mann
Founder and Executive Director

Tom Klement
Business Manager

Briana Meier
Restoration Manager, Troy Gardens

Chandler Poole
East Rail Corridor Project Lead

Geri Weinstein Breunig
Program Manager


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.

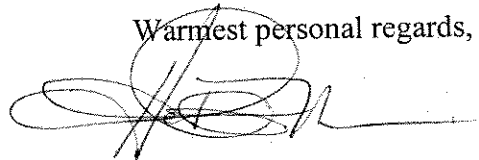
Getting Organized

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.

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 flourish extending to the right.

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