

**Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District Interim Study Overlay Zone
Study Plan
Common Council File No. 210586**

Overview:

a. The Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District Interim Study Overlay Zone (“BIOZ”) consists of the parcels outlined in the attached map (“Exhibit B”). This interim study overlay was initiated at the request of the local alderperson representing the Bronzeville area, based on input from the Bronzeville Advisory Committee and other Bronzeville stakeholders working on the ongoing development of the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District.

b. The geography covered by the proposed BIOZ includes properties located along West North Avenue between North Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Interstate 43, in the 6th Aldermanic District. The detailed boundary for both the BIOZ is outlined in Exhibit B. An interim study overlay is being proposed for this area to advance the goals of the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District, described in detail below.

Planning Background:

c. The original Bronzeville neighborhood served as Milwaukee’s primary African-American economic and social hub during the first half of the 20th Century. Originally centered along West Walnut Street in the heart of the African-American community, Bronzeville was a thriving commercial and entertainment district with hotels, restaurants, offices, cultural organizations, and numerous other Black owned businesses. It was also home to a vibrant nightlife scene anchored by a number of regionally known jazz clubs. The original Bronzeville area was disrupted by urban renewal, widespread housing demolition, freeway construction, and disinvestment. In the early 2000’s, elected officials, residents, and community leaders established a plan to recreate the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District along West North Avenue.

d. There have been a series of planning efforts, strategic land acquisitions, real estate developments, and community initiatives designed to re-establish the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District over the past 15 years.

e. The 2005 Bronzeville Redevelopment Plan was developed to establish a framework for a new Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District, a geographic area specifically focused on the attraction and promotion of African-American arts, entertainment and culture. The Redevelopment Plan envisioned Bronzeville being a year-round tourist destination celebrating a rich cultural heritage by offering authentic music, art and cuisine. As the District matures, the plan called for gallery space, more specialized retail opportunities, and regional theater. The plan established to improve the physical character of the commercial district and the surrounding residential neighborhood, create investment and employment opportunity, support tourism, and celebrate racial diversity. The Redevelopment Plan authorized the acquisition of key sites in the area by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee, and established allowable uses and design standards for their disposition.

f. The 2008 Northeast Side Plan was adopted as an element of the City of Milwaukee’s Comprehensive Plan, and included detailed land use, urban design, public realm, and economic development recommendations for Bronzeville. The Plan called for promoting mixed use

development that includes retail, restaurants, and entertainment uses. It also encouraged building and facade improvements that promote the district's image as a cultural, arts and entertainment district and redevelopment of blighted properties to attract new cultural, entertainment, and complementary uses.

g. In 2010, the Common Council established the Bronzeville Advisory Committee to make recommendations to City departments and the Common Council regarding matters impacting Bronzeville to ensure that the decisions of these bodies reflect the perspectives, interests and desires of businesses, property owners, residents and other Bronzeville stakeholders. The Bronzeville Advisory Committee has met regularly since 2010 to carry out this role, as well as to support a variety of Bronzeville activities, including Bronzeville Week.

h. A Bronzeville Design Charette was conducted in 2013 in partnership between the Department of City Development, Bronzeville leaders, local architects, and the UWM School of Architecture and Urban Planning. The Charette explored six key sites and resulted in design concepts to highlight the neighborhood as an African-American arts, entertainment, and cultural district. Local architects, developers, property owners, lenders, artists, Business Improvement District members, city staff and officials collaborated on this process to generate design concepts for the six sites including new housing, a hotel, cultural center, entertainment, retail, neighborhood grocery, and a variety of public spaces.

i. After a yearlong process that involved significant community engagement, the Common Council adopted the Equitable Growth through Transit Oriented Development ("TOD") Plan for King Drive as an amendment to the Northeast Side Plan in November of 2018. The TOD Plan updated the Comprehensive Plan recommendations for the Bronzeville District, and added a detailed public arts plan. The TOD Plan made detailed land use recommendations to build on recent successes to create new housing, commercial and cultural and entertainment uses. It called for ground floor uses to reinforce the theme and vision of the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District, prioritizing uses such as galleries, performance or cultural venues, eating and drinking establishments, and other specialty uses that reinforce Bronzeville as a regional destination.

k. All of these past planning efforts have made recommendations for land use and development strategies to advance the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District. This includes recommendations to attract specific types of uses that will collectively reinforce the vision for the area as an arts, cultural, and entertainment hub. There has been momentum in achieving these goals, including the relocation of the Urban League headquarters to Bronzeville, the launch of Bronzeville Week, the opening of the Griot and Garfield School housing development, businesses such as the Bronzeville Collective, and the pending reopening of America's Black Holocaust Museum.

l. While the 2005 Redevelopment Plan contains use and design standards that apply to publicly owned property, private properties in Bronzeville are generally zoned Local Business (LB2). The LB2 zoning district allows many of the uses that are desired within the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District; however, it also allows a number of uses that may not advance the goals of the district, or in some cases may be in conflict with them. The Bronzeville Advisory Committee, Historic King Drive Business Improvement District ("BID") and other local stakeholders desire to explore zoning changes, including the potential for an overlay district, that would align the zoning requirements for properties in Bronzeville with the land use recommendations contained within the planning documents described above, with a specific focus on ensuring future uses are compatible with a Cultural and Entertainment district.

Rationale:

g. The creation of the BIOZ is being proposed to provide for additional review of development proposals in Bronzeville while the Department of City Development (DCD) Planning Division works with the Bronzeville Advisory Committee, BID, area property owners, and other stakeholders to explore a longer-term zoning overlay that aligns with the recommendations of past Bronzeville planning efforts. This Interim Study Overlay is being proposed due to the fact that certain uses allowed under the current LB2 zoning may not be consistent with the long-term goals of the area, and if they are established within Bronzeville may ultimately hinder the ability to develop a thriving Cultural and Entertainment District in the area. Creating the BIOZ would allow for the exploration of a new overlay zone or other zoning changes and provide the time necessary to implement the zoning changes required to support stakeholders' vision for this area.

Effect:

j. The BIOZ would be effective for a period of up to twenty-four months following its date of adoption by Common Council. It is anticipated that DCD would work with the Bronzeville Advisory Committee, BID, and Bronzeville stakeholders over the coming 6-9 months to develop a potential new zoning overlay and recommend any other appropriate zoning changes for approval by the Common Council.

k. For parcels within the BIOZ, all permitted and limited uses, except for within planned developments, would become special uses and require approval by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BOZA), as called for within Milwaukee Code of Ordinances Chapter 295-311-2. Approval of a special use requires findings related to protection of public safety, health and welfare, protection of property, traffic and pedestrian safety and consistency with the comprehensive plan.

l. Proposed developments that have begun the development review process prior to the effective date of this BIOZ by applying for a special use permit; variance; zoning change or building or occupancy permit shall continue to be governed by the use table in the current zoning district and are exempt from BIOZ requirements.

m. Special Use Permits in the BIOZ: For parcels within the BIOZ, any applicant for a special use permit shall be required to obtain an additional finding that they meet BIOZ Interim Standards and do not conflict with or exacerbate the land use and development issues identified in the applicable study plans. The applicant shall provide BOZA with building design and site plan drawings for all proposed developments. These Interim Standards shall include the following:

- i. Proposed uses and all elements of building and site design shall be consistent with any applicable recommendations from the Bronzeville Redevelopment Plan, the Northeast Side Plan, and the Equitable Growth through Transit Oriented Development Plan for King Drive.
- ii. Proposed uses should advance and not conflict with the goals of developing Bronzeville as a Cultural and Entertainment District as called for in those planning documents.

n. Underlying Zoning: In all other ways the underlying zoning districts shall continue to apply to parcels within the BIOZ. In cases of conflicts between this overlay district and the remainder of the Zoning Code requirements, the overlay district shall govern.