



Department of Administration
Environmental Collaboration Office (ECO)

Tom Barrett
Mayor

Sharon Robinson
Director

Erick Shambarger
Environmental Sustainability Director

September 15, 2017

Dear Bronzeville Advisory Committee,

I'm sorry that my staff and I are not able to attend the Bronzeville Advisory Committee meeting on September, 20th due to prior engagements. Nevertheless, I'd like to provide an update on our activities. The Environmental Collaboration Office (ECO) through its HOME GR/OWN program works to add value in Milwaukee's neighborhoods with "greenscaping" projects that are visually appealing, create a healthier environment, and help Milwaukee adapt to threats posed by climate change. I'm pleased to inform you that greenscaping work has been completed at two locations in Bronzeville: 7th and Garfield and 6th and North. Both sites involve "passive" beautification, meaning they are not intended for public use. As a result, *they are still available for development* or other uses.

7th and Garfield

With input from other city agencies, Alderwoman Cogg, and the Bronzeville Advisor Committee, ECO improved a large vacant lot at 7th and Garfield. One goal was to create a more attractive entrance to the neighborhood and Bronzeville from the North Avenue exit ramp from I-43. To this end, we removed 3/5 of an acre of pavement. We replaced that with topsoil and grass (temporarily under straw to establish the plants). Existing trees and bushes were pruned. Native grasses were planted and mulched on two sides of the property. Native grasses have become standard on our North Avenue vacant lot beautification projects because they are low maintenance, they collect less litter like plastic bags, and they preserve sightlines into the space for safety. Strong Neighborhoods signs were added. We are currently exploring whether to add soil amendments to allow the site to hold more rain water during major storm events. The improvements to the site could still accommodate different signage or public art at the initiative of the Bronzeville Advisory Committee.



Figure 1: 7th and Garfield before improvement



Figure 2: 7th and Garfield (After)



6th and North

6th and North is a Bronzeville development site. Due to possible underground environmental issues, this it has been designated by DCD as a “do not dig” site. For years, the site has been characterized by broken concrete protruding from the earth. In December 2016, HOME GR/OWN project manager Tim McCollow presented a concept to develop an active public space with a boardwalk structure resting on top of the concrete. The Bronzeville Advisor Committee rejected the concept for a variety of reasons. Most importantly, the Committee wanted to preserve the site for development. To this end, ECO, in consultation with other city agencies, simply added top soil to cover the existing concrete and added grass (temporarily covered by straw). In 2018, the site will appear to be a grassy vacant lot with a small hill. The site remains available for development or other uses at the direction of DCD and the Committee. ECO intends to take no further action on this site.



Figure 3: 6th and North before improvements.



Figure 4: 6th and North after topsoil and grass were added.

At this point, ECO has no additional plans or proposals for sites in Bronzeville. We believe we made improvements that reasonably accounted for the feedback we received from the committee. The limited improvements we have made complement the greenscaping work ECO has done on North Avenue between 8th and 27th Streets in the Lindsay Heights Neighborhood, and the new Fondy Park next to the Fondy Food Center. We hope that the improvements on North Avenue can contribute to positive perceptions of the City and continue the momentum for community reinvestment in Milwaukee's neighborhoods.

I look forward to your feedback, and wish you continued success in developing Bronzeville around the community's vision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erick Shambarger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Erick" being more prominent than the last name "Shambarger".

Erick Shambarger
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