A charette is a process of gathering information from various groups and working collaboratively to develop a feasible design and development solution that will spur additional investment in a neighborhood or community. The approach is both educational and creative, and includes interactive discussions amongst key stakeholders to address design, policy, economic development, and social issues.

Community Design Solutions (CDS) of UW-Milwaukee was approached by the Milwaukee Department of City Development to conduct a visioning charette for the Bronzeville area aimed at initiating redevelopment in the neighborhood. This report is a summary of initial data gathering as well as the work that was generated the day of the charette.

The CDS team collaborated with Alderwoman Coggs and the Department of City Development to identify key sites for redevelopment. CDS gathered available reports for the planning area and met with key stakeholders prior to the charette. A summary of the visioning effort and outcomes is presented on the following pages.
Project Overview

CLIENT
City of Milwaukee, DCD

CLIENT REPRESENTATIVES
Mayor, Tom Barrett
Alderwoman, Milele Coggs
Rocky Marcoux         Vanessa Koster
Rhonda Manuel         Greg Patin
DeShea Agee           Janet Grau

CDS STAFF
Aaron Loomans
Ben Penlesky
Amber Piacentine
Kristy Stelter
Andreya Veintimilla
Frank Zimmerman

CDS PROJECT ASSISTANT
Ryan Shortridge

CDS DIRECTOR
Carolyn Esswein

CDS was hired to oversee and direct a process of information gathering that led up to a visioning charette for the Bronzeville commercial area in Milwaukee’s Bronzeville Commercial Corridor. This process involved revisiting past plans for the area and examining the success of similar districts across the nation. A series of Focus Groups were held to garner information and input from various parties including lenders, developers, City officials, artists and other interested parties. This information was then disseminated to six teams of architects that were assigned to six respective sites within the focus area of the project.

All of this work was in preparation for a day long charette that was held at the UW-Milwaukee School of Architecture and Urban Planning. Throughout the day, different teams generated ideas for the individual sites and then shared them with the larger group to receive feedback. Following the initial input, the architectural teams reworked their designs and represented them to the group for more feedback.

The information complied in this report is the synthesis of this entire process, from initial information gathering to the final proposals that were generated at the charette. Recommendations and funding suggestions are potential ideas and not guaranteed by the City or landowners.
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The Bronzeville neighborhood was the business, economic, and cultural center to most of Milwaukee’s African American residents between the early 1900’s and 1960’s. The heart of the original Bronzeville neighborhood was along Walnut Street between King Drive and 12th Street. By the 1930’s, the number of African American owned businesses in this area exceeded all other areas of the city with the highest concentration between 6th and 9th Streets. Over several decades the area experienced a loss in the high income manufacturing sector. In the 1950’s parts of the area were cleared for “revitalization”. In the late 1960’s a portion of Walnut Street was demolished to make room for a freeway eliminating 8,000 homes. Quality of life issues in the area have been attributed to a shift from property ownership in-neighborhood to out-of-neighborhood absentee owners. Additionally, the increase in Brewers Hill property values threatens the economic stability of long term residents, particularly the elderly.

Despite these losses, the memory of Bronzeville remains strong in Milwaukee. The Bronzeville Redevelopment Plan sets out to create economic development in a predominantly African American neighborhood in a way that recaptures the enthusiasm and reverence of the original Bronzeville District. The overall planning of the 21st century Bronzeville district has involved public, private, and community stakeholder input.
Milwaukee Historic Bronzeville
Plan Overviews

Bronzeville Redevelopment Plan 2005

Promote Bronzeville as an African American arts, entertainment, and culture district; improve the physical character of the commercial and residential district, promote investment, expand employment opportunity, grow tourism, and celebrate racial diversity.

Bronzeville Community Visioning Sessions 2007

Involve local artists and community members in the planning of the district; help the city establish a commercial and aesthetic identity for Bronzeville; foster goodwill and partnership with the active members of the community; make Bronzeville into a destination for African-American history, economic development, and artistry.

Northeast Side Comprehensive Plan: Harambee

Empower residents to shape and define their community; strengthen neighborhood identity; expand education and job training; promote environmental and sustainable development programs; redevelop underutilized buildings and promote infill development; support housing development and ownership; prevent crime; and encourage business growth.

Northeast Side Comprehensive Plan: IB-Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District

Create a strong district identity; foster investment; create jobs; redevelop the North Avenue Corridor and surrounding neighborhood; and implement streetscape improvements.
General Recommendations

Use commercial buildings to define street edges, corners, walkways, open space, and focal points.

Promote pedestrian oriented street frontage

Ban use of visible security measures (i.e. window grates)

Incorporate public open spaces [4th and North Ave, Green roof on former Inner City Arts Council Building, adjacent America’s Black Holocaust Museum]

Eliminate signs of blight

Encourage rehabilitation and historical restoration

Establish design guidelines that follow the best practices in urban design and promote a district identity

Provide year-round entertainment venues

Promote mixed use development

Bronzeville_Milwaukee WI
支持建设Bronzeville文化中心

重建Brooks Plaza及周边停车场的部分

支持在I-43/ North Ave/ 7th St拟建娱乐项目的建设

增强Milwaukee都市联席会议总部大楼作为劳动力教育用处

开发MLK和North Ave交叉口作为零售集群和交通节点

促进坐下来的餐馆、剧院、文化机构、酒馆、艺术家工作室及广播设施

创建一个Garfield小学的文化中心
Emphasis On Artists

Create open markets and unique shops that are affordable for small business owners

Build art galleries, public theaters, and performance areas

Develop spaces for artists to live and work in the district

Fund public art installations

“Blanche”_Mutope Johnson, Milwaukee, WI

Public Interactive Art_Ontario Canada
Streetscape Design

Project a strong industrial feel through the use of metals (brass, copper, iron)

Support artist mosaics created with ceramics, glass, stones, and tiles

Create a “Walk of Fame” on the sidewalk commemorating key Wisconsin African-Americans

Design decorative crosswalks

Promote public art on benches, trash cans, bus shelters, and signage

Encourage a diversity of lighting opportunities
Vehicular Traffic Flow & Parking

Parking lots shall not be located in front of establishments and all surface parking facilities with 5 or more cars shall be screened from view.

Develop the minimum amount of parking necessary.

Provide adequate parking for businesses.

Encourage shared parking areas and encourage transit usage.

Utilize traffic calming techniques.

Evaluate circulation around the I-43/ North Avenue intersection.
Precedent Studies
Chicago, Illinois Bronzeville

Distance to Downtown Chicago: 5 miles

Area: 0.174 square miles

Population: 2,262

Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT)

The neighborhood contains the Chicago Landmark Black Metropolis-Bronzeville District

New residents are refurbishing Historic Homes

Strong Artist/Gallery community
Chicago Illinois Bronzeville

35th and MLK Drive
One of the “gateways” to Chicago’s Bronzeville. The wide boulevard provides for a grand entrance that clearly acknowledges when one is entering the district.

25th and MLK Drive
This Bronzeville Signage is visible from the Highway as well as from MLK Drive.

35th and State Street
An example of new development occurring in the Chicago Bronzeville area. These four-story buildings are mixed-use with commercial on the ground floor and housing above.
Precedents **Arts Districts**

**HISTORIC THIRD WARD, Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

The Historic Third Ward, located just south of downtown, is Milwaukee’s Arts and Fashion District. It offers the city’s most dynamic array of restaurants, spas, theaters, galleries, and unique boutiques all in an historic warehouse setting. The neighborhood was named a Top 12 ArtPlace in 2013 and is home to the award-winning Third Ward Riverwalk and the Milwaukee Public Market. Historic Third Ward Association [HWTA] is a 501c3 non-profit whose primary purpose is the promotion of the district. They are financed through the BID and by membership dues.

**ALBERTA STREET, Portland Oregon**

Public arts, small business seminars, all businesses in district display art, numerous committees and large board of directors, hundreds of businesses and numerous events. A Mini Grant Program will dollar match projects from $500-2500. Part of Main Street Program.

**GORDON SQUARE ARTS DISTRICT, Cleveland OH**

The Gordon Square Arts District is the economic cornerstone of Cleveland’s West Side where a powerful combination of housing, new businesses, the arts, and neighborhood beautification are sparking the development of new jobs for residents.

Already well underway, the Gordon Square Arts District is helping to infuse more than $500 million in economic development in the surrounding community. Gordon Square is home to numerous education facilities, and performing arts centers. Three unique theaters form the nucleus of the district, all within blocks of one another. Widened sidewalks promote street cafes and have the added benefit of slowing traffic.
Focus Area

FOCUS GROUP INPUT

City Staff
MLK Business Improvement District
Local Developers
Local Lenders
Property Owners
Friends of Bronzeville
Local Artists
Bronzeville Milwaukee

Bronzeville Visioning_2013
Charette Report
Bronzeville Milwaukee Opportunity Sites

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PRIVATE OWNED

SITE 1

SITE 2

SITE 3

SITE 4

SITE 5

SITE 6

PRIVATE OWNED

MPS OWNED
Bronzeville Milwaukee Opportunity Sites

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**KEY**

- Site Boundary
- Site Boundary Private Owned
- Site Boundary MPS Owned
- Parcel Boundary
- Bus Stop

Bronzeville Visioning_2013 Charette Report
On Monday, December 16th, 2013 the Bronzeville Visioning Charette was held at the University of Milwaukee School of Architecture and Urban Planning. We began the day with a brief overview of the preliminary study and then launched into the charette process. Architects, developers, lenders, city officials, artists and numerous friends of Bronzeville were in attendance. Countless conversations were held and ideas were traded. At lunch time, all groups presented their initial proposals to the group before revising them with the feedback that they received. We finished the day with each of the six groups presenting their proposals to the overall group.

PARTICIPANTS

Alderwoman Coggs, City Staff
MLK Business Improvement District members, MLK Economic Development Corporation members
Milwaukee Public Schools
Local Developers | Gorman Group, Impact Seven, Maures Development Group, Vangard Group
Local Lenders | LISC, Community Bank, Seaway Bank, Town Bank
Residents, Property Owners, Friends of Bronzeville, Local Artists, UWM Faculty
SITE 1_7th and North Ave West Gateway

Total Site Area: 63,758 square feet
SITE 1_7th and North Ave West Gateway

Focus Group Comments
1. Access concerns, both vehicular and pedestrian.
2. Potential closing of traffic lane immediately south of the site.
3. Need a vertical element, visible from I-43 and nearby arterials, that serves as a symbol for Bronzeville. Critical gateway site.
4. Interim uses [sculpture garden, farmers market, public market, industrial art, etc.]
5. Link site to park to south, gateway elements along the exit ramp.
6. Mixed support for housing. Some like housing as a mixed-use option, others felt housing is difficult. LITHC [low income housing tax credits] may work.

Charette Program Requirements
1. Gateway element -- use is flexible
2. On-site parking
3. Cultural art element -- determined by use and development
4. Funding options
This team came with an initial vision of re-branding the entire commercial corridor of North Avenue from the interstate to MLK Drive. They cited examples from various cities across the nation including Los Angeles and New Orleans. This concept includes cohesive concepts such as a lighting strategy for the corridor, signage for the individual buildings, new pavements or landscaping elements. Strategies would unite the entire corridor into one consistent experience, allowing individual businesses to join into a focused marketing.
SITE 1_7th and North Ave West Gateway

Engberg Anderson

Site 1 proposal was for an iconic vertical gateway element, visible from the highway. The team suggested a multi-story hotel attached to a jazz club, with digital or traditional billboards being attached to the hotel. The jazz club provides a cultural element and would also pay homage to the numerous music establishments that once graced the landscape of Bronzeville.

The team also proposed signage along the bridges that span over the highway, signaling the Bronzeville location.
SITE 1_7th and North Ave West Gateway
Engberg Anderson

The proposal for Site 1 was received with positive feedback, although there was some discussion of how the large development impacts the surrounding neighborhood. In response to this input the group suggested continuing their development eastward into the next block, gradually stepping down towards the existing built environment. They also emphasized the pedestrian link to the park south of the site.

The need for more hotel rooms in the immediate area could justify the economic feasibility of the project. Private funding was suggested.
SITE 2_Northside between 7th and 6th Street

Total Site Area: 41,987 square feet
SITE 2_Northside between 7th and 6th Street

Focus Group Comments
1. Shared parking along common alley is needed.
2. Depth of site may limit scale of development that could occur.
3. Mixed –use/Gallery Space – key site as you enter from the west.
4. High density housing upper floors/live work/destination uses on ground floor.
5. Explore tax credits with artists housing.

Charette Program Requirements
1. Mixed use
2. On-site shared parking
3. Cultural art element
4. Funding options

Bronzeville Visioning_2013
Charette Report
The initial proposal for Site 2 consisted of three distinct elements. A gateway that spanned over North Avenue to signify the district. The second was a multi story residential tower including commercial spaces on the ground floor. The third piece was a winter garden on the east end of the site; this piece is essentially a large greenhouse that could house public events and be rented by private groups. Similar to the domes at Mitchell Park, this would be a destination piece that could draw people to the Bronzeville District.
SITE 2 _ Northside between 7th and 6th Street
Miller Architectural Group
It was suggested the height of the residential piece of this project may be too tall in comparison to the surrounding context. The group reduced the proposal to a six-story building, while still maintaining a commercial component on the first floor. The upper floors could also be stepped back to have less of an impact on the street edge. Parking is located behind the building, creating a continuous zone between 6th Street and 7th Street.

Funding for the project could come from tax credits, private sector, and revenue from the winter garden space.
SITE 2_Northside between 7th and 6th Street
Miller Architectural Group

Bronzeville Visioning_2013
Charette Report
Focus Group Comments
1. Church south of site may impact type of development. Possible opportunity for shared parking and/or program with church.
2. Consider including two houses at the east end of the block face as part of the development, either reuse or demolish.
3. Shallow site may limit development and use on the ground floor.
4. Mixed-use – housing on upper floors with retail on ground floor with parking to the south.

Charette Program Requirements
1. Mixed use
2. On-site shared parking
3. Can expand site to include two parcels at the east end.
4. Cultural art element
5. Funding options
The core of this proposal was the creation of a mid-district gathering space, bookended by two residential buildings. There was a strong desire to create a street-edge and hold the corner of 6th Street and North Avenue. The team also created a visual connection to the adjacent Garfield School (Site 4). A commercial and/or cultural piece was suggested on the ground floor along North Avenue, while residential was proposed on the ground floor along 6th Street. Parking would be in the rear of the development. Funding for the project would be driven by its housing component, utilizing housing credits and market rate development.
SITE 3_Laundromat Site
American Design
SITE 3_Laundromat Site
American Design

North Avenue

GARAGE

2-Story Townhouses

courtyard entrance

public art

residential
commercial
parking
green space

6th Street

5th Street

40
SITE 3  Laundromat Site
American Design

North Avenue

- Residential
- Commercial
- Parking
- Green space

Floor Plan:
- Second floor
- North Avenue
- 5th Street

- 2 BR 2 BR
- 1 BR 1 BR
- 1 BR 1 BR
- 2 BR 2 BR

Bronzeville Visioning_2013
Charette Report
After initial feedback, this group decided to widen their sidewalks to accommodate outdoor seating. Widening the sidewalks could be accomplished by reducing the size of the building, or by narrowing the travel lanes, which would also slow traffic. The scale of the building fit well with the context, with separate buildings allowing flexibility for financing and phasing. Public spaces helped to divide the development, while creating amenities for the area.
# SITE 4_Garfield School

Total Site Area: 86,449 square feet

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Focus Group Comments
1. Reuse for housing with a public use component.
2. Create a connection to North Avenue.
3. Shared parking lot that serves the larger district, not only the tenants of the school.
4. Neighbors to the south may limit the type and/or uses of the parking area.
5. Auditorium and Gym on top floor – technology and space may not be appropriate for some modern day performances.

Charette Program Requirements
1. Housing and cultural center. Cultural center needs to be equivalent in size to a full floor and have public access.
2. On-site shared parking, serving the larger district.
3. New development along North Avenue, possibly with a public space.
5. Funding options
SITE 4_Garfield School
SITE 4_ Garfield School
Quorum Architects

This development features a cultural and creative destination, combined with housing. Cultural uses could include music, theater and arts. The team proposed reusing the existing school building to generate revenue and to reuse the pagoda structure on the north side of the site as an outdoor structure. Parking could integrate stormwater management into the site. Two public plazas on the site would draw people into the building and through the spaces. Artist housing was proposed as the primary residential component.
SITE 4_Garfield School
Quorum Architects
A cultural use and community space that serves local artists and residents creates an amenity for the neighborhood. Reusing the historic building as residential was well received, providing housing choices within walking distance of the commercial corridors. A public plaza at the northeast corner would draw people into proposed ground floor retail space and activate the corner. The existing pagoda helps to identify the public space, while creating separation from the street. Parking is divided to allow for separate spaces, including stormwater management.
SITE 4_Garfield School
Quorum Architects
The new building is distinctly different from the historic Garfield School structure. The pagoda structure has been converted into an outdoor building, though it's iconic roof-line has been retained and serves as a gateway to the site. Tax credits and market rate housing could fund this development.
SITE 4_Garfield School
Quorum Architects
SITE 5_Brooks Plaza

Total Site Area: 175,964 square feet
Focus Group Comments
1. Utilize existing space for a use that activates both MLK and North Avenues.
2. Signature site, needs a signature use.
3. Demolish and go vertical with new construction [may require code adjustments].
4. Include public space at the corner.
5. Make it walkable/connected, include shared parking on site.
6. Move Value Village into Brooks Plaza so that Value Village building could house a small grocer.
7. Convert existing building into Public Market that activates the street, is a destination use, and can have flexible performance space.

Charette Program Requirements
1. Signature development, can be new construction, reuse, or combination.
2. Mixed use -- may include grocery, retail, entertainment.
3. On-site shared parking.
4. Public space/feature.
5. Cultural art element.
6. Funding options
Site 5 is the Eastern Gateway to the Bronzeville Commercial Corridor. The proposal for this site included a grocery store and community theatre at the ground level, with housing on the upper floors. Existing businesses that occupy the MLK side of the site would be integrated into the new building. A public plaza was proposed at the corner of MLK and North Avenue, with a grocery cafe at the corner of the building. Parking for the development would be on the interior of the block.
SITE 5_Brooks Plaza
Korb Tredo Architects

The second proposal for Site 5 replaced the ground floor grocery store with a cultural center. A large public plaza creates a link to a public garden on the northern portion of the site.
The final proposal includes options for a grocery (full scale or boutique), cultural component, housing, and various retail uses. Market concerns about a grocer will need to be further explored. It is critical that the southeast corner of the site create a strong identity for the district with a use that activates the space day and night. Options might include a theater, outdoor plaza, or cultural use.

Dividing the building into multiple sections allows flexibility for developers to be involved and phasing opportunities. The proposed parking structure includes a pedestrian link to the grocery store (or cultural use). Delivery and site circulation will need to be coordinated between building users and the City.
SITE 5_Brooks Plaza
Korb Tredo Architects

VIEW FROM NORTH AND MLK
SITE 6_Coakley Building

Total Site Area: 111,078 square feet
Total Building Area: 470,000 square feet
Focus Group Comments
1. 470,000 square foot opportunity, 80,000 square foot usable ground floor.
2. First floor should be single user, not divided or partially built out.
3. Consider demolishing the southwest corner to allow for structured parking.
4. Potential grocery store, offices, shared artists spaces, live/work units, government user.
5. Move loading area to Lloyd and 4th Street.
7. Historic impact along the street if facade is rehabbed.

Charette Program Requirements
1. Mixed use -- options are flexible
2. On-site shared parking
3. Facade improvement
4. Cultural art element
5. Funding options
SITE 6_Coakley Building
SITE 6_Coakley Building
Continuum Architects and Planners

The scale and location of Site 6 have the potential to make it a significant catalytic project for the area. Both exterior and interior aspects of the building have historical value.

The team proposed retail on the ground floor with market rate housing on the second and third floors. A public market may work on the first floor due to the continuous available space. Returning the building facade to its historic glory would make the building more marketable and could be achieved through the use of historic tax credits. An alternative use is a satellite arts campus where multiple institutions could collaborate on the ground floor.

Parking could be located along the west side of the building.
SITE 6_Coakley Building
Continuum Architects and Planners

VIEW FROM GARFIELD AVENUE
SITE 6_Coakley Building
Continuum Architects and Planners

VIEW FROM MLK DRIVE
PHASE ONE
First Floor - Retail/Commercial
15,000 sf
Floors Two thru Four - 33 units
15,000 sf/ flr
11 Units/ flr
800 sf/unit

PHASE TWO
First Floor - Commercial
21,000 sf
Floors Two thru Five - 52 units
21,000 sf/ flr
13 Units/ flr
800 sf/unit

PHASE THREE
First Floor - Retail/Commercial
11,000 sf
Floors Two thru Five - 32 units
11,000 sf/ flr
8 Units/ flr
800 sf/unit
Honoring the past, celebrating the present, embracing the future.

Since the charrette, strategies and partnerships are being discussed amongst property owners, funders, and developers. Alderwoman Coggs will present the charrette outcomes at a neighborhood meeting to gather additional feedback. The goal of this effort is for the ideas and development concepts to become reality based on input from all key players. Success will be defined by how new investments add value to the neighborhood and serve as amenities for the businesses and residents who reside here.