

COMMUNITIES EMBRACING MICRO MOBILITY



**OLATUNJI
OBOI REED**

PRESIDENT &
CEO, EQUITICITY



**JOHN
ADAMS**

FOUNDER &
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR,
BRONZEVILLE
TRAIL TASK
FORCE



**ALEX
PEREZ**

ADVOCACY
MANAGER, ACTIVE
TRANSPORTATION
ALLIANCE



**DAVID
POWE**

ASSISTANT
COMMISSIONER,
CDOT



MAY 29, 2025 | 12 - 1:30PM

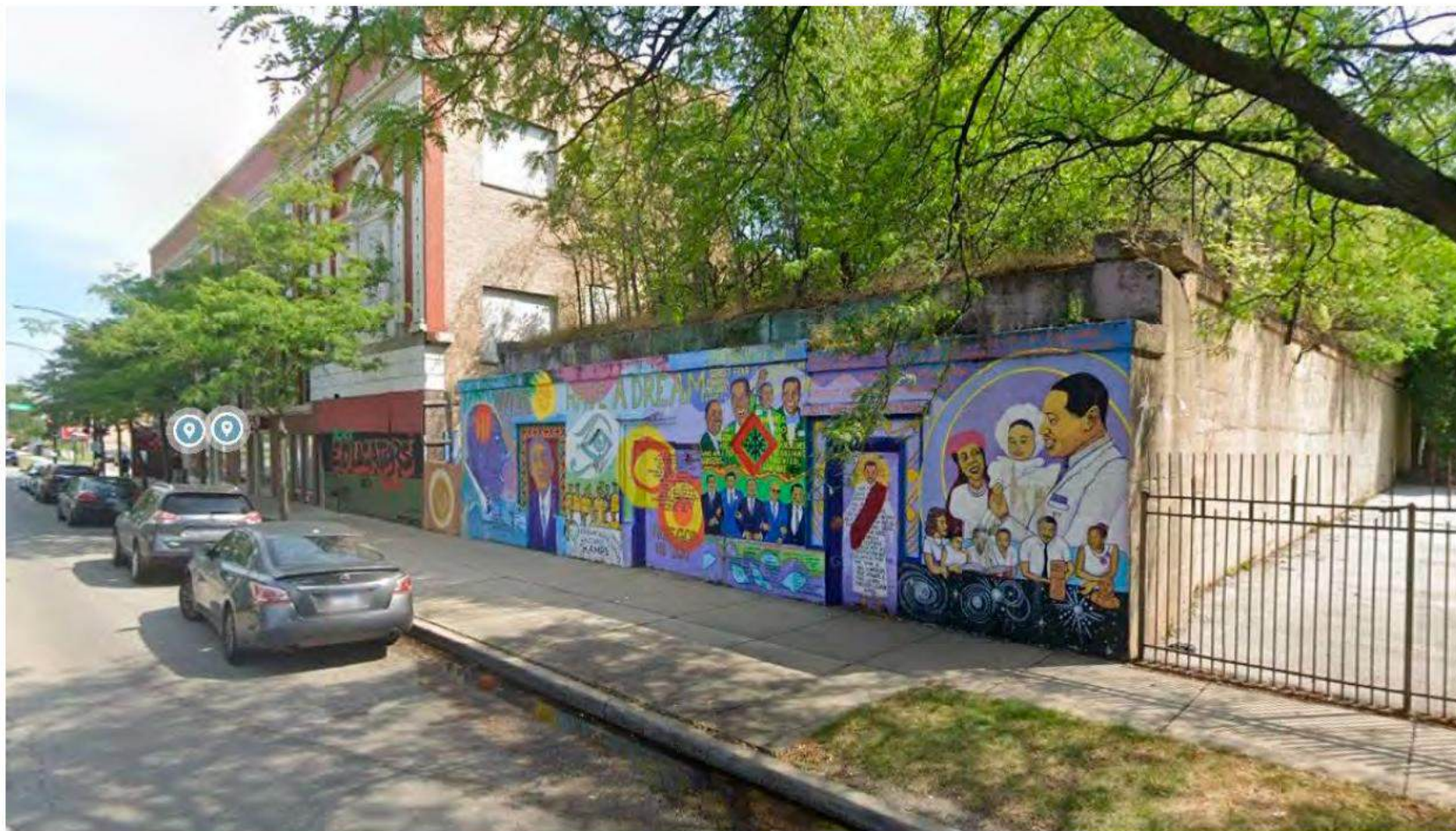
Bronzeville Trail Task Force

Thursday, May 29, 2025



JOHN ADAMS, CPA

Bronzeville Trail Task Force
Founder and Executive
Director



ABOUT BRONZEVILLE TRAIL TASK FORCE



A group of community-based stakeholders came together as a volunteer group and incorporated the Bronzeville Trail Task Force, Inc. (BTTF) on September 8, 2020. The mission was simple. The Kenwood 'L' Embankment that runs East-West through Bronzeville along 40th/41st street, had been abandoned for nearly 70 years. BTTF had one singular objective and that was to persuade the City of Chicago and Cook County to develop the embankment into a 2-mile walking, jogging, and biking trail. We are the developers of this rails-to-trails project in the historic Bronzeville community on the South Side of Chicago.

On March 31, 2022, Mayor Lori Lightfoot, as part of her citywide vision for connecting trails to transit, housing, and parks, indicated that the redevelopment of the Kenwood 'L' embankment represents a "potential project" that can become a new outdoor asset and catalytic community investment.

The Kenwood 'L' embankment is a remnant of the Chicago Union Stock Yard Line and has significant ties to the Great Black Migration. The Chicago Union Stock Yards employed thousands of African American butchers, stock yard and meat packing workers that established Chicago's thriving meat packing industry and earned Chicago the nickname, "Hog Butcher to the World!"

The Bronzeville "Rail-to-Trail" Project dates back to 2005

Back in 2005, a group of Bronzeville residents led by Patricia Abrams, Executive Director of The Renaissance Collaborative, the organization that rehabbed the historic Wabash YMCA and Danielle and Charles Sutton of the Bronzeville Urban Development, led the initiative to convert the abandoned Kenwood "L" Line embankment to a walking, running, and biking trail. "We went as far as identifying the owners of the property, getting them to agree to deed the property over to us. We went to the city, but were told the liability would be too much, especially since it would entail walkways over streets in order for it to happen." - *Patricia Abrams*

See the next page for Bronzeville Trail 2025 Goals.

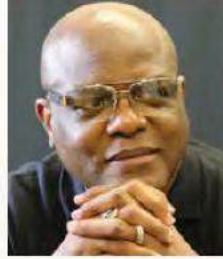
BRONZEVILLE TRAIL TASK FORCE



John E. Adams
Founder/Project Director



Walter A. Freeman
Chairperson



David D. Ali
Vice Chair



Karen Riley, Esq.
Secretary



Robert Young, CPA
Treasurer

MISSION To serve as the community stewards of the Bronzeville Trail, offering an independent voice while working closely with all stakeholders to ensure that the Trail is a vibrant, inclusive part of the Bronzeville Trail Community corridor

- GOALS**
- To sponsor and promote open communication on all matters relating to the Bronzeville Trail, between all community stakeholders and users of the Trail.
 - To promote robust community engagement in the arts, health, economic development, and housing as part of the trail master development plan.
 - To ensure a healthy balance between the Bronzeville Trail as a neighborhood amenity and as a regional and international attraction.
 - To investigate and preserve the history and life of the community adjacent to the Bronzeville Trail from the 19th century to the present.
 - To raise funds and secure resources for the construction of the Bronzeville Trail.



2025 BRONZEVILLE TRAIL GOALS:

- 1ST Q: The "Bronzeville Trail Framework Plan" Task Order released on March 14th, 2025 (Cost = \$750,000)
- Following completion of the Framework Plan, "Phase One Construction" (Cost = Approximately \$2 Million)

In this photo taken on October 15, 2024 is Alderman Pat Dowell (3rd Ward), Ms. Clere Boatright, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Planning and Development & Staff, and Commissioner Tom Carney, Commissioner Department of Transportation & Staff.

DEVELOPMENT TEAM MEMBERS

DEVELOPER



CO-DEVELOPER MOODY NOLAN



CO-DEVELOPER, LANDSCAPE AND URBAN DESIGN

BOTANICAL CITY



CO-DEVELOPER, URBAN PLANNING, MOBILITY, TRANSPORTATION

SMITHGROUP



CO-DEVELOPER, CIVIL ENGINEERING, BRIDGE, STRUCTURAL DESIGN

INFRASTRUCTURE ENGINEERING



DEVELOPER REPRESENTATIVE

VERNON WILLIAMS ARCHITECTURE



PARTNERSHIPS / COMMUNITY SUPPORT

ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Gov J.B. Pritzker, Illinois
- Mayor Brandon Johnson, City of Chicago
- Mayor Lori Lightfoot, City of Chicago
- Alderman Pat Dowell, 3rd Ward
- Alderman LaMont Robinson, 4th Ward
- Congressman Jonathan Jackson, 1st District of Illinois
- Congressman Danny K. Davis, 7th District of Illinois
- Senator Mattie Hunter, 3rd Legislative District of Illinois
- President Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board
- Commissioner Bill Lowry, Cook County Board of Commissioners, 3rd District
- Representative Kimberly Du Buclet (D) 5th District



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- Bronzeville Community Development Partnership
- Black Metropolis Heritage Area Commission
- Bronzeville Historical Society
- BCSD-PX Culture Collaborative
- Rails to Trails Conservancy
- Active Transportation Alliance
- 41st/Berkeley Neighborly Association
- Jacob H. Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies (Northeastern Illinois University)
- Illinois Tech (formerly, Illinois Institute of Technology)
- Illinois Labor History Society
- Dawson Technical Institute





2025 CITY OF CHICAGO COMMITMENT:

- 1ST Q: The "Bronzeville Trail Framework Plan" Task Order released on March 14th, 2025 (Cost = \$750,000)

2026 CITY OF CHICAGO COMMITMENT:

- Following completion of the Framework Plan, "Phase One Construction" (Cost = Approximately \$2 Million)



Rails To Trails Conservancy Trails Grant 2023 Grant (\$15K)

The Trails Grant was used to help build organizational capacity and bring more inclusive and equitable programming to trail and active transportation networks.



Mellon Foundation Humanities in Place 2024 Grant (\$900K over 3 years)

The Bronzeville Trail Landscape Initiative documents and creates a community-based landscape narrative, guidelines, and tools to inform the future of the Bronzeville Trail along the decommissioned Kenwood rail line.



City of Chicago, Department of Planning and Development Feasibility Study 2022 Investment (\$250K)

The Chicago Department of Planning and Development commissioned this Feasibility Report to evaluate the existing embankment and associated infrastructure for potential redevelopment. The report concluded that repurposing the embankment to a linear park is feasible.



Landmarks Illinois Timuel D. Black Jr. Grant Fund 2024 Grant (\$2.5K Matching)

\$2,500 Matching Grant from the Timuel D. Black, Jr. Fund for Bronzeville Trail marketing materials.

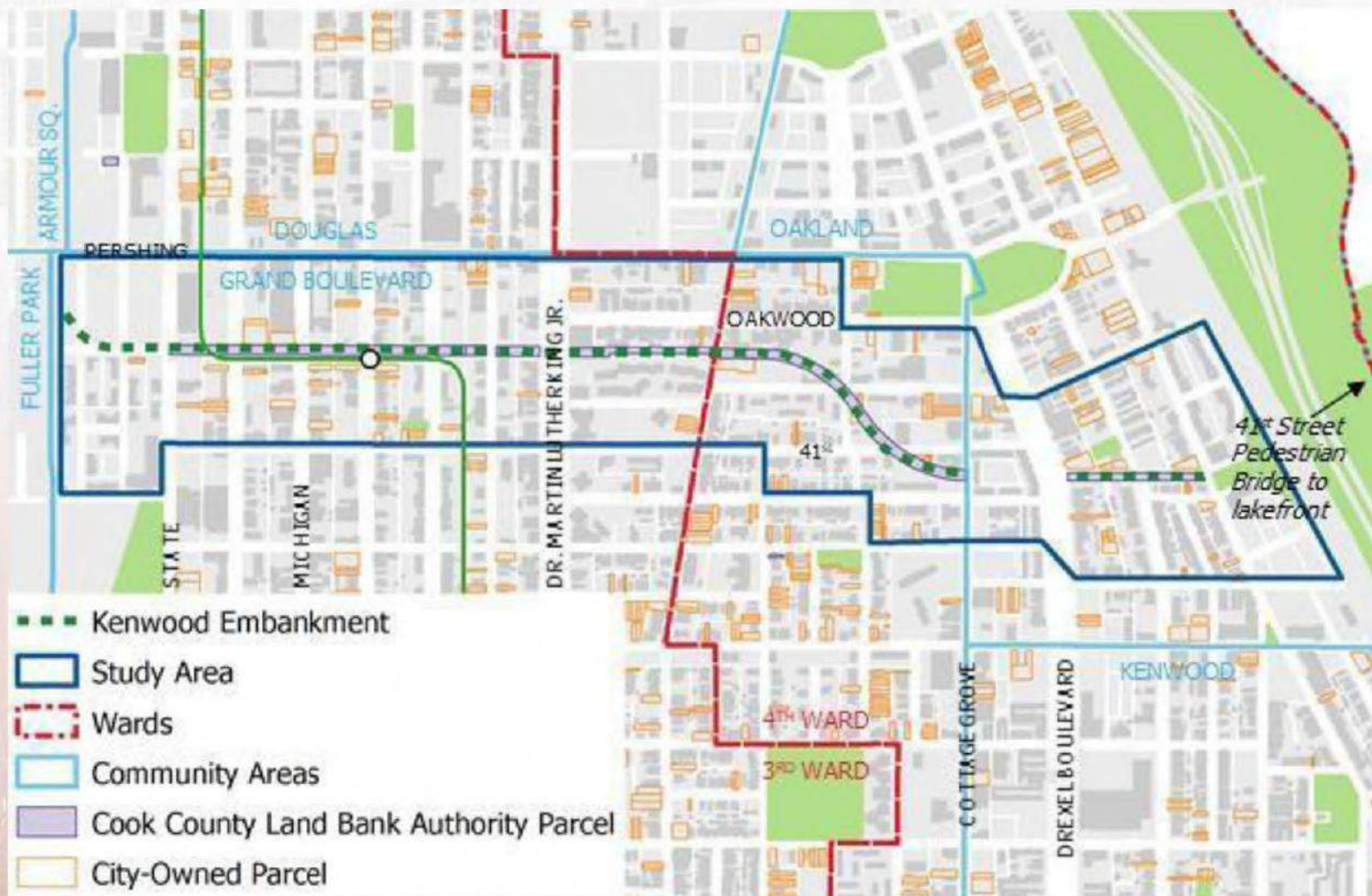


Chicago Community Trust Pre-Development Grant 2022 Grant (\$75K)

In this early phase of the Bronzeville Trail planning process we engaged the community and completed preliminary site analysis to begin a cohesive community vision for the future of the trail, the Bronzeville community, and the City of Chicago.



Preliminary Study Area (City of Chicago)



HISTORY

A grayscale photograph of the Samuel R. Kress Foundation Fountain in Chicago. The fountain features a large statue of a man in a hat and suit, standing on a tiered pedestal. The word "HISTORY" is overlaid in large white letters. The background shows a city street with cars, trees, and buildings.

BRONZEVILLE TRAIL HISTORY

The “Bronzeville Trail” is **a story of migration, labor, transportation, and global business**, unique to Chicago, beginning in the 19th century. As African-Americans began to migrate from the South to the North, many pursued opportunities to live, work, vote, receive an education and start a family. Some were able to plan ahead for their departure, while others left with just the clothes on their backs. This collective journey was called **“The Great Migration”** and the community of “Bronzeville” was where they lived.



History of the Stock Yard Line

In order to provide freight access to the Stock Yard, the USY&T built an east-west rail line parallel and adjacent to 40th St., from the Stock Yards to the Illinois Central Railroad near 43rd Street and Oakenwald Ave.

The Stock Yards made Chicago the center of the American meat packing industry for decades and African Americans held many of the slaughterhouse jobs. At one point, more meat was processed from the Stock Yards, than any other place in the world. Some of America's first global companies were owned by Chicagoans such as Gustavus Swift and Philip Armour, who were well-known figures in the meat processing industry.

The photograph to the right was taken in 1919. Due to the race riots that were taking place in Chicago, African Americans could not get to work in the Stock Yards. The meat packing companies made sure that they received their pay by sending it to the Wabash Y.M.C.A., located on 38th & Wabash Ave. in Bronzeville, for distribution. The workers did not return to work until rioting ended and it was safe to do so.

Connecting Bronzeville And The Stock Yards

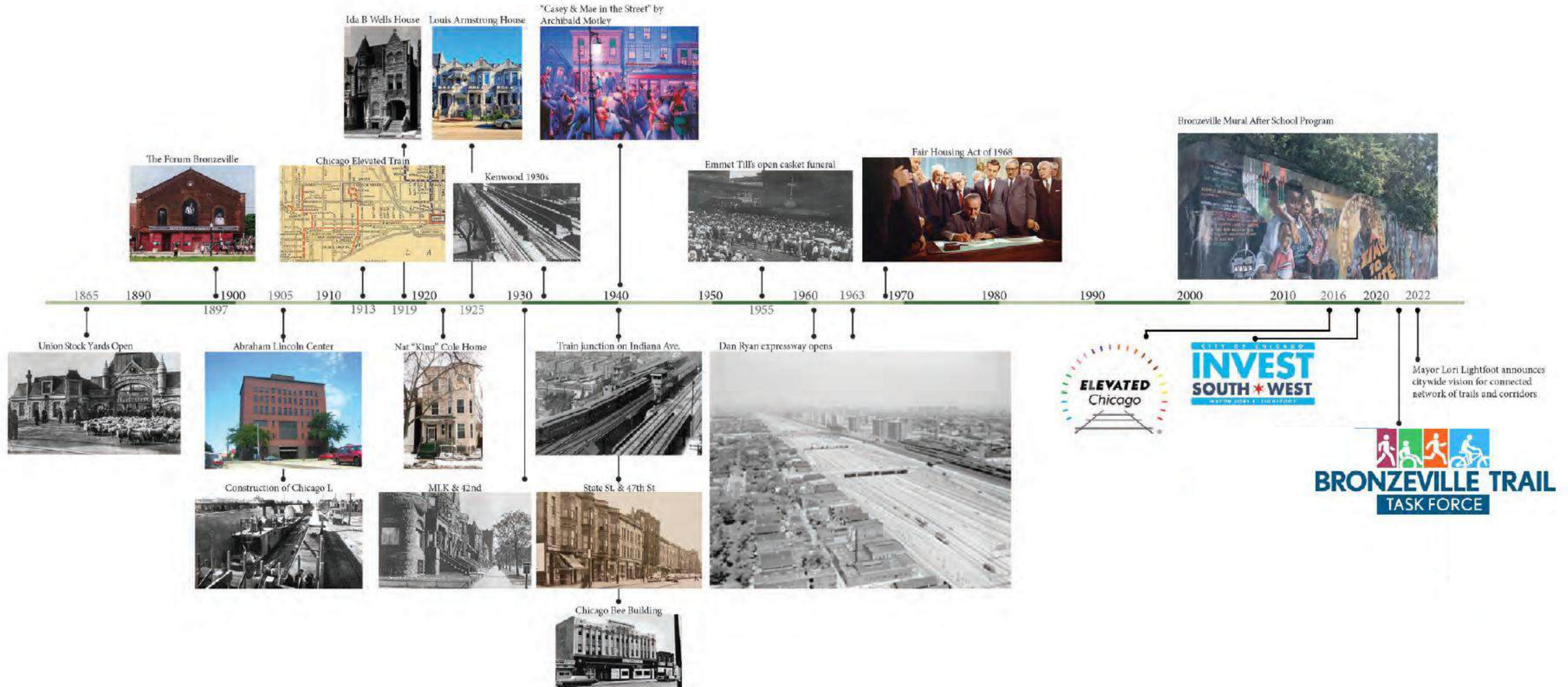
As early as the 1890's, many African Americans settled in a community in Chicago called Grand Boulevard. By 1920, more than 50,000 rural Southern blacks had migrated to Chicago to escape the cotton fields and the threat of lynching. Grand Boulevard became the hub of “Bronzeville,” the name created by the Chicago Bee newspaper. The rail line that serviced the Stock Yards for freight eventually became the transportation for thousands of African Americans from Bronzeville, to and from the stock yards. The railroad traveled at street level until 1903 when a city ordinance required service to be elevated to increase safety and reduce traffic congestion. In 1907 the railroad began operations as the Kenwood “L” Line as part of South Side Elevated Lines. At this time, the service extended east from the Indiana station to a terminal at 42nd Place and Oakenwald Ave. In 1947, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) assumed operation of the line. By the early 1950s the Stock Yards were dying, caused by decentralization into regional markets and packing operations. The Kenwood “L” Line remained operational until the branch closed on November 30, 1957.



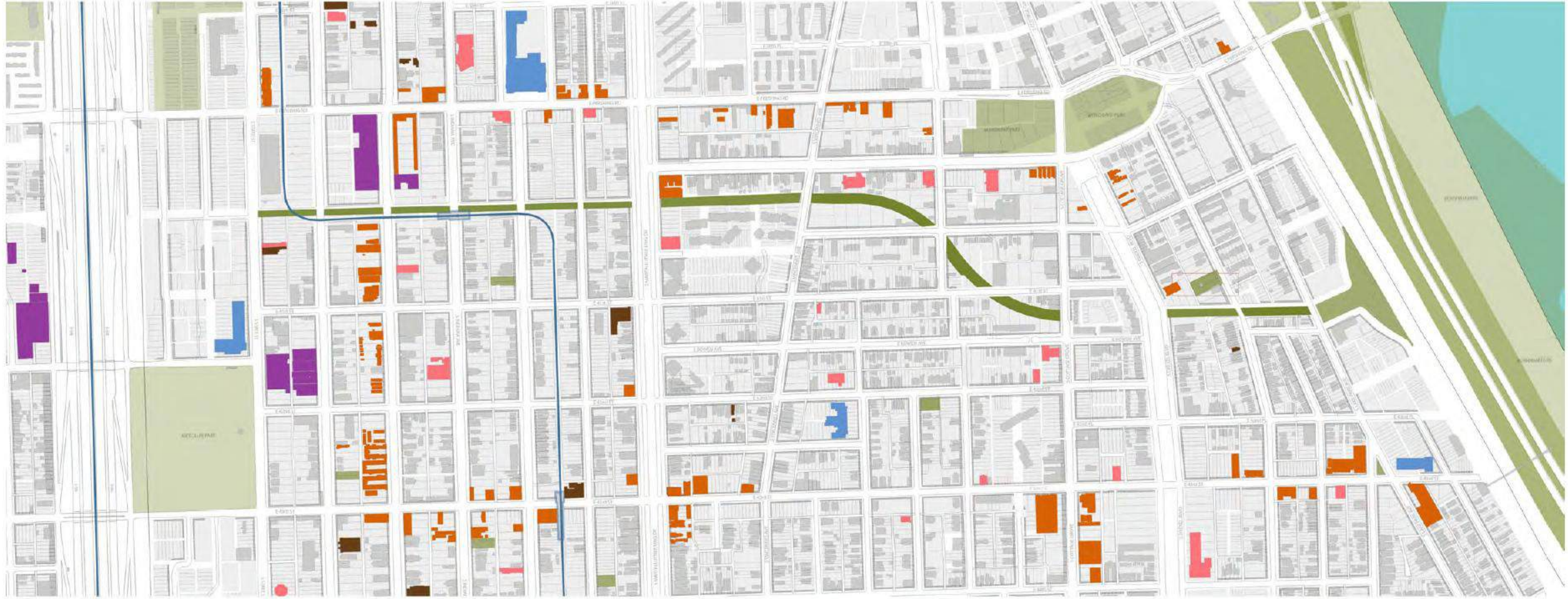
Today, almost the entire Kenwood “L” Line embankment is still intact and owned by the Cook County Land Bank. The envisioned adaptive reuse of this embankment is what we call the “Bronzeville Trail.” The meat packing industry provided African Americans an opportunity to work and build a better life for themselves and their families for over a half a century. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will provide much of the funding to develop an unused municipal asset, abandoned for over 60 years, into a vibrant community investment that spurs economic growth and encourages a healthy lifestyle for its residents. Furthermore, the Bronzeville Trail will connect the community to the Lakefront Bike Trail. The Bronzeville Trail History Project will research, examine, instruct, and publicize the role African Americans played in Chicago's world-renowned meat processing industry.

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN?

HISTORIC TIMELINE OF THE CHICAGO UNION STOCKYARD (KENWOOD) LINE



EXISTING CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS



MANUFACTURING



SCHOOLS



COMMERCIAL



LANDMARKS



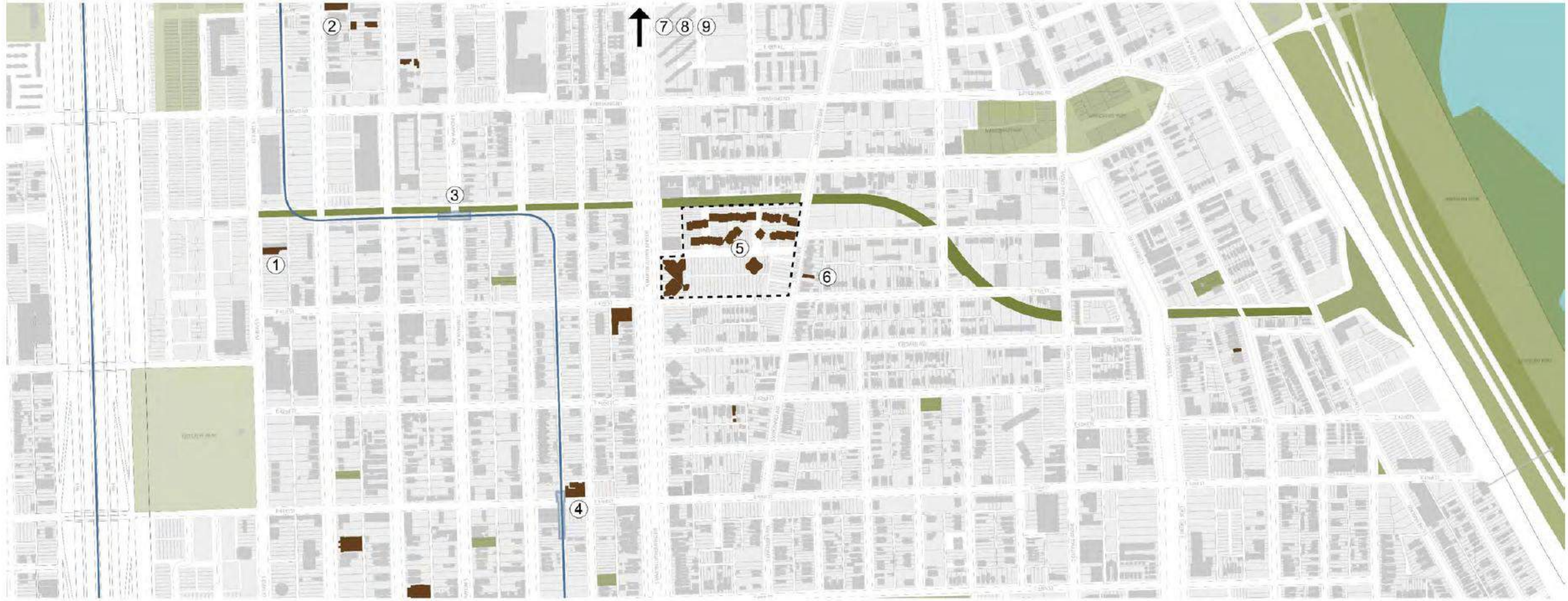
CHURCHES



PARKS



LANDMARKS



1 ROBERTS TEMPLE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST



2 WABASH YMCA



3 HOT HOUSE DEVELOPMENT



4 THE FORUM BRONZEVILLE



5 PAUL G. STEWART APARTMENTS



6 NAT KING COLE HOUSE



7 IDA B. WELLS HOUSE



8 WWI VICTORY MONUMENT

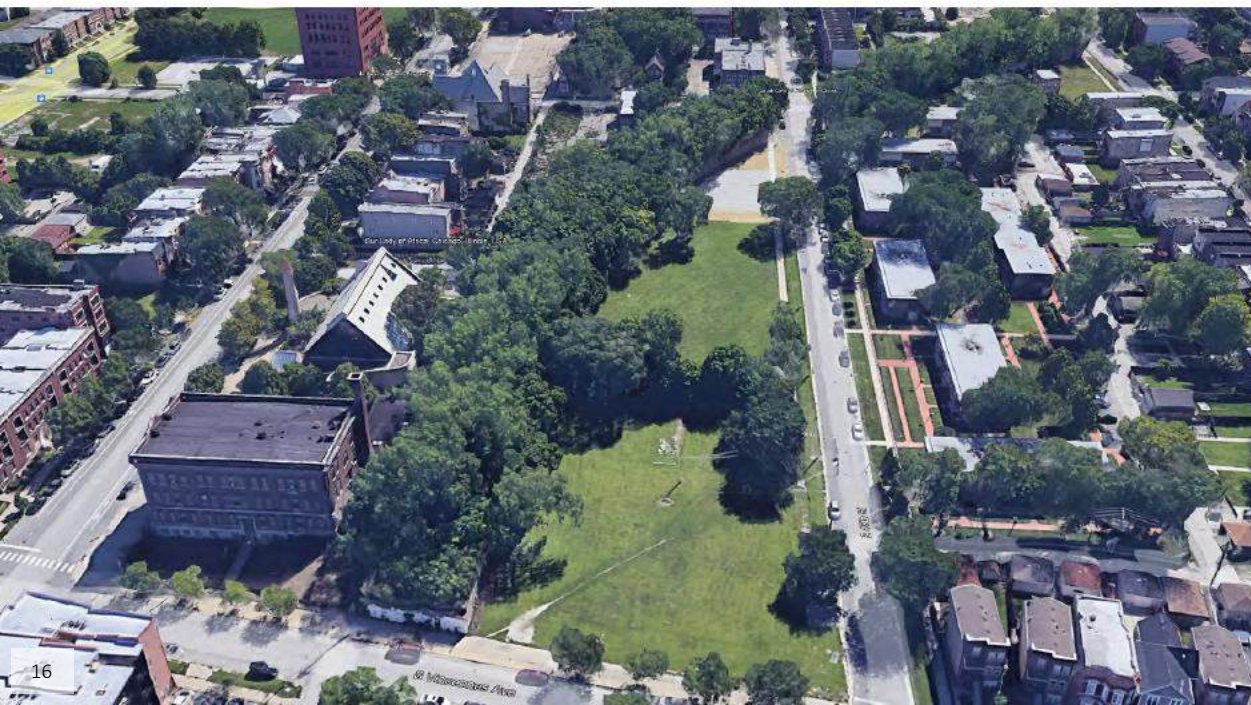


9 GREAT NORTHERN MIGRATION MONUMENT



TODAY... AND TOMORROW

EXISTING CONDITIONS



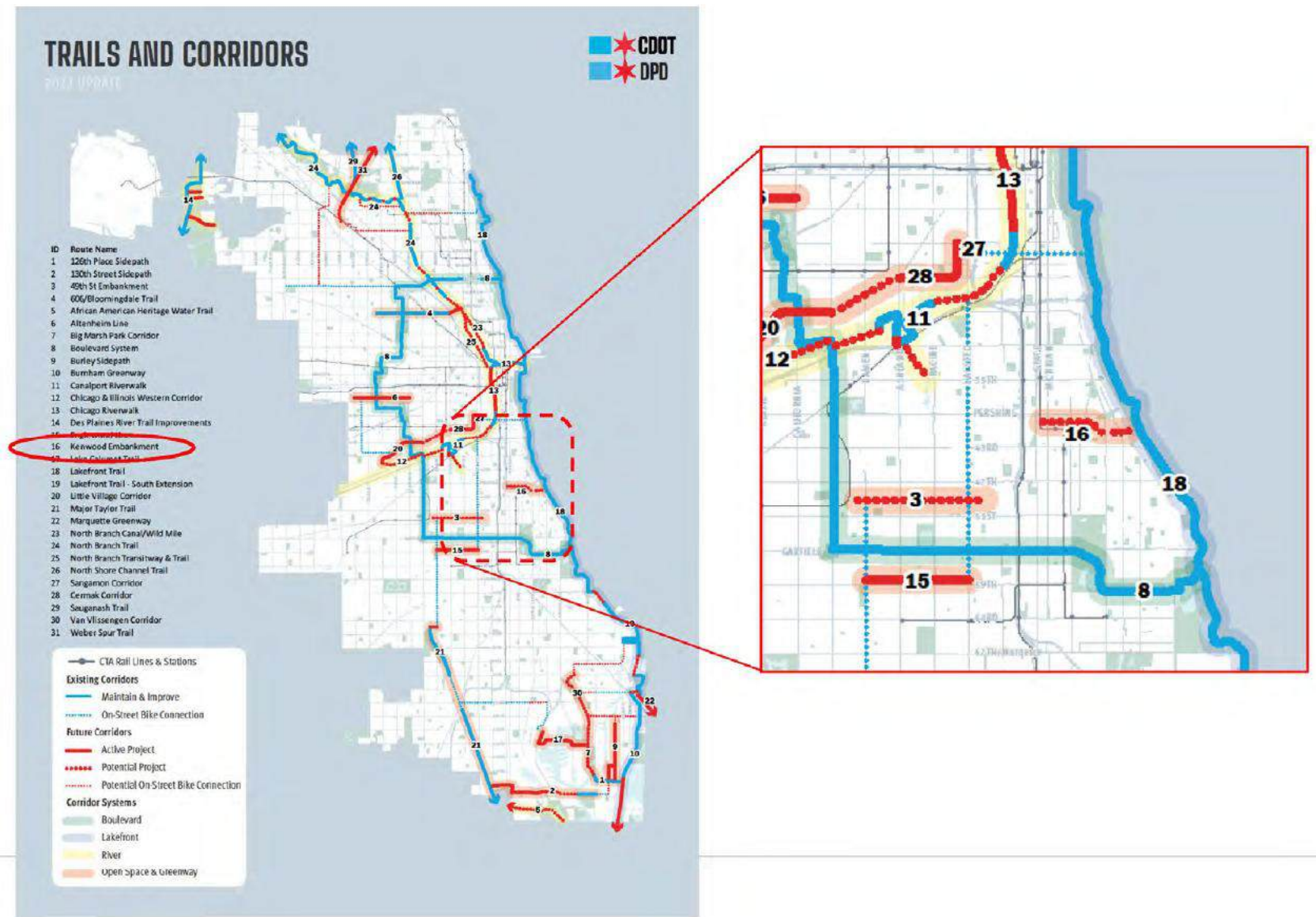
BTTF BOARD TOUR OF THE BLOOMINGDALE TRAIL

SEPTEMBER 2021



DPD LIST RELEASED BY MAYOR LORI LIGHTFOOT

MARCH 31, 2022



BRONZEVILLE TRAIL – CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST (CCT) GRANT

AWARDED APRIL 2022

STAKEHOLDER MEETING #1 RECAP

INTRODUCTIONS
GOALS
EXISTING CONDITIONS
CTC GRANT
EXPECTATIONS

COMMUNITY EVENTS

BTTF EVENTS
BLOOMINGDALE TRAIL VISIT
COMMUNITY WALKSHOPS

SITE DUE DILIGENCE

FINDINGS

NEXT STEPS

PUBLIC MEETING
VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

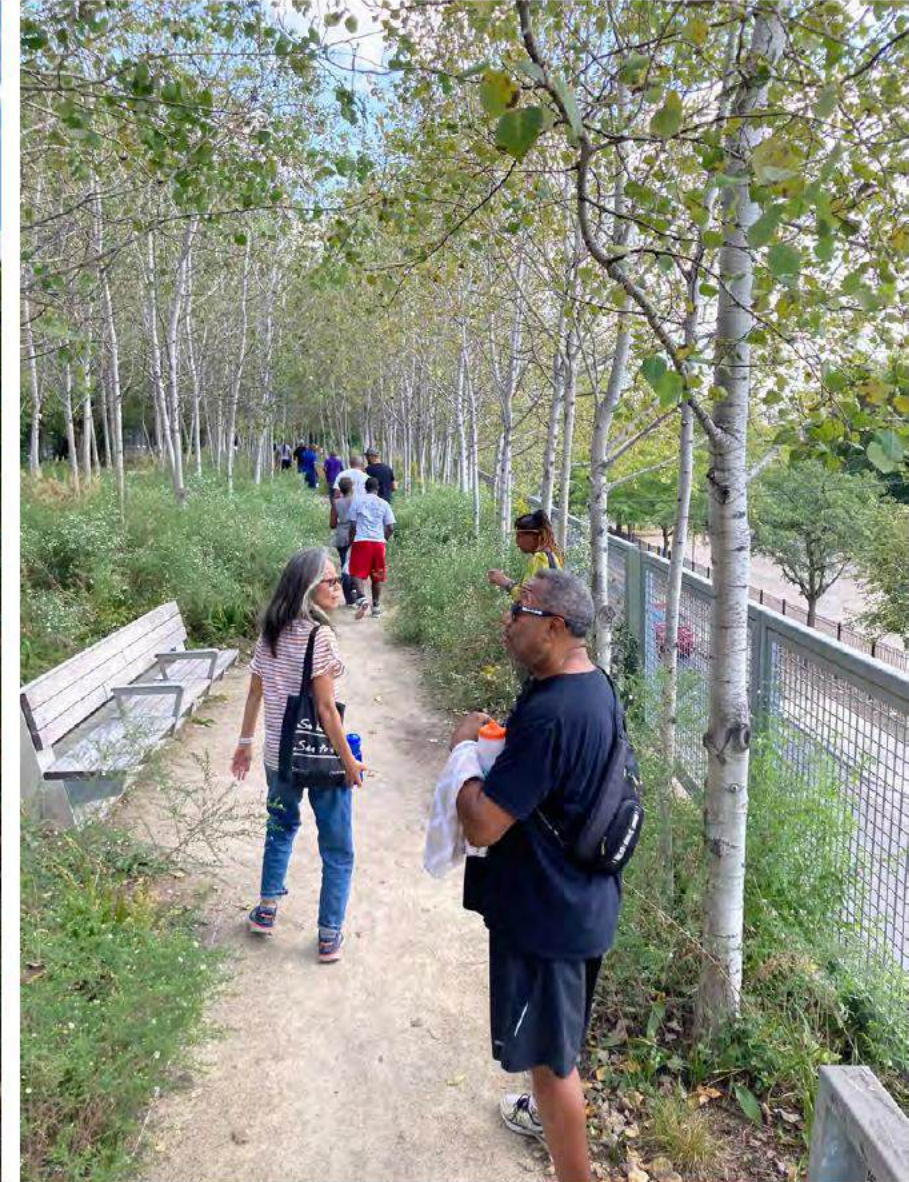
CCT GRANT PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT CALENDAR



BTTF ANNIVERSARY MONTH EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 2022

- 606/Bloomingtondale Trail Site Visit
- Minister's Breakfast
- Community Luncheon
- Bronzeville Night Live
- Community Walkshops (Next Page)



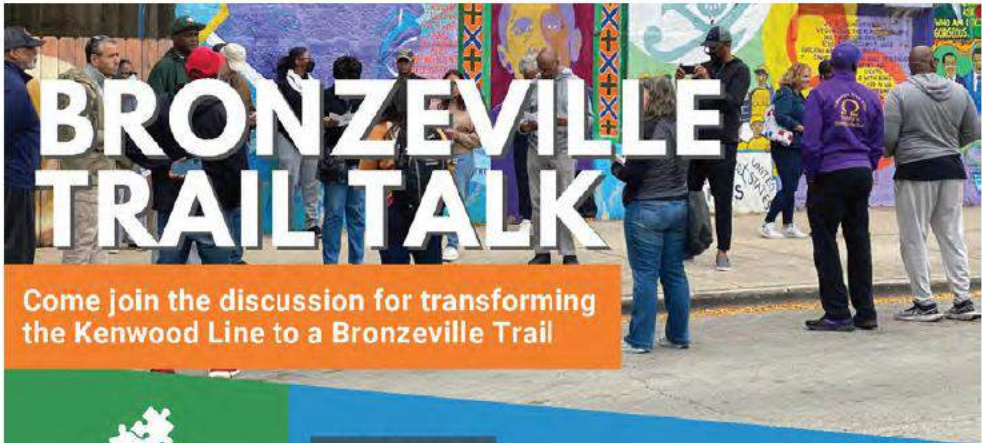
COMMUNITY WALKSHOP


SEPTEMBER 2022




COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

DECEMBER 8, 2022







Family Friendly



Food Provided



Prize Giveaway



Free Parking


WHEN

December 8th
5:30-7:30pm

It is an Open House – stay for five minutes or the entire time!

WHERE

Timothy Community Corporation
4351 South Drexel Blvd, Chicago, IL 60653



KENWOOD LINE FEASIBILITY REPORT

RELEASED DECEMBER 22, 2022



PREPARED FOR: CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Kenwood Line Feasibility Report

PREPARED BY: TYLIN

December 22, 2022



TYLin

A. STUDY LIMITS

This Feasibility Report studied the old rail corridor from Federal Street on the west limits, east and parallel to 40th Street, then across Martin Luther King Drive to Vincennes Ave through the S-Curve to Cottage Grove, around a residential development and east across Drexel to Lake Park Avenue.

B. SCOPE OF STUDY AND GOALS

The scope of this Feasibility Report includes the following:

- An evaluation of the structural integrity and environmental conditions of the embankment structure, bridges, and former passenger stations within the study area.
- Preparation of an Engineer's Estimate for the costs associated with remediation, rehabilitation, and demolition. These costs are provided in per-unit basis to assess different development concepts envisioning full, partial, or no demolition of existing embankment.
- Identification of potential funding sources for subsequent development and construction phases including eligibility restrictions regarding whether the final project is a green space or a bike/pedestrian pathway.
- Development of public facing materials for presentation at a public informational meeting to present the feasibility report findings and solicit input for the potential repurposing the infrastructure or development within the Kenwood corridor.

The goal of the Feasibility Report will ultimately inform future planning activities which may include repurposing the embankment infrastructure or reuse of the property as a community resource. The summary of findings is intended to be a basis of what can be possible for the Kenwood Branch and motivation to energize the community and stakeholders to advance the next steps of the development process.

C. FINAL SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- The existing embankment infrastructure is structurally adequate to accommodate anticipated future uses.
- If the embankment is to stay in place, state of good repairs to ensure safety and extension of service life.
- Repurposing the infrastructure will need to address existing environmental issues.
- The Feasibility Report is intended to be a basis of what can be possible for the Kenwood Branch and motivation to energize the community and stakeholders to advance the next steps of the development process.



TRANSIT +
COMMUNITY

DRIVING COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

HOW TRAILS DRIVE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT OUTCOMES



At ½ mile, typically no effect is observed. ½ mile is typically used only in highly car-dependent cities.

Up to ¼ mile, a limited increase in property value is possible. ¼ mile is typically used in denser pedestrian areas.

At the greenway's edge, the strongest effects emerge.



CAPITAL
COST

\$500M

NEW REAL ESTATE
DEVELOPMENT

\$4.1B

RETURN ON
INVESTMENT

8:1



\$187M

\$2B

11:1

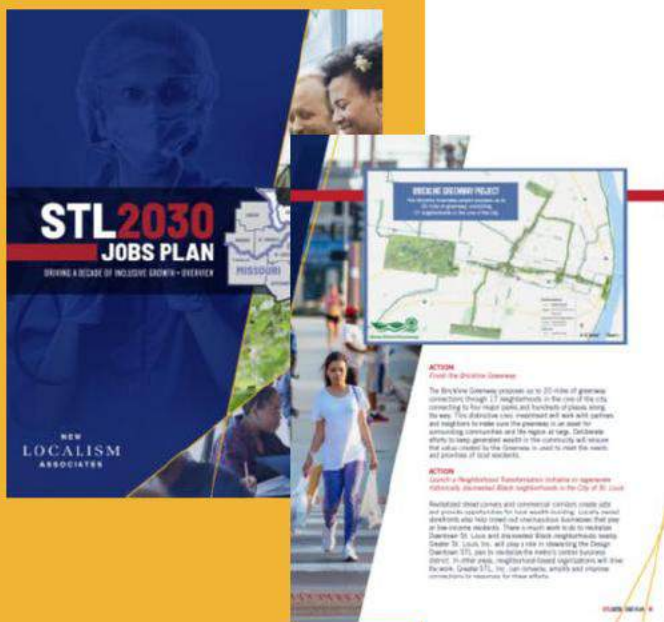


\$63M

\$1B

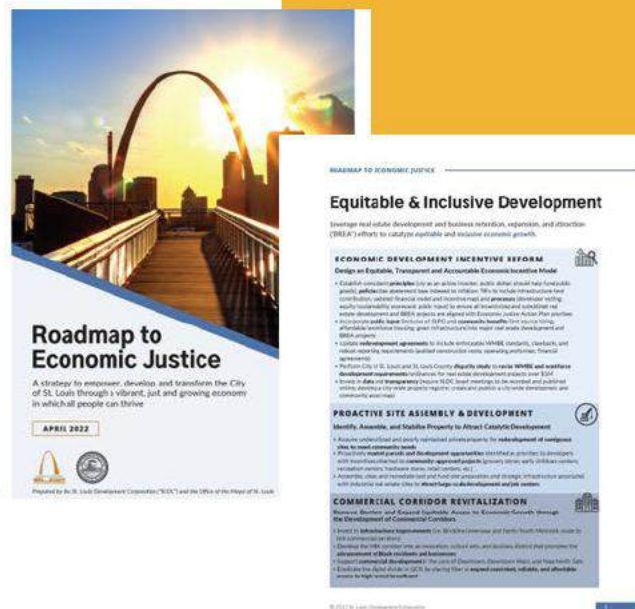
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HOW TRAILS DRIVE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT OUTCOMES



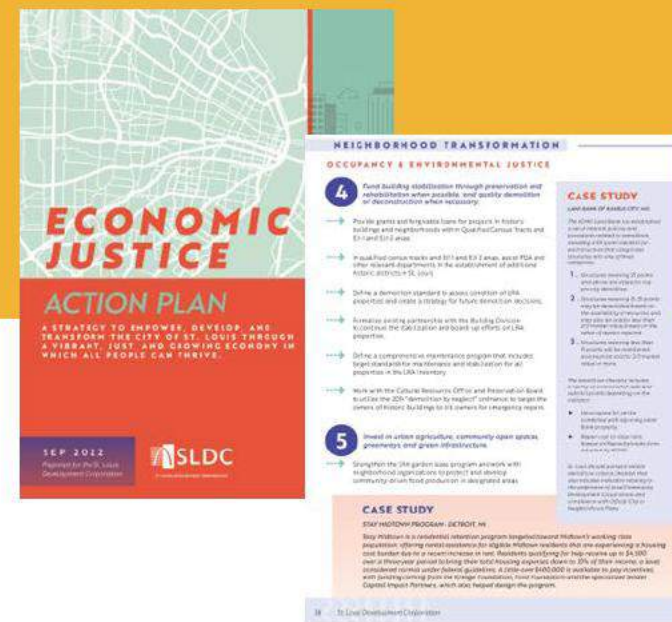
STL 2030 JOBS PLAN SAYS BRICKLINE GREENWAY WILL:

- Enhance quality of life
- Catalyst for attracting business & talent
- Contribute to overall economic development of St. Louis



ROADMAP TO ECONOMIC JUSTICE SAYS BRICKLINE GREENWAY WILL:

- Aid in removing barriers
- Expand equitable access to growth through developing commercial corridors



ECONOMIC JUSTICE ACTION PLAN SAYS BY PRIORITIZING GREENWAYS, THIS PLAN WILL:

- Create jobs
- Stimulate economic activity
- Uplift marginalized communities
- Contribute to a more just & inclusive economic landscape

An aerial photograph of Chicago, Illinois, showing the city's skyline and its proximity to Lake Michigan. A highlighted path, colored in yellow and green, runs along the Kenwood Embankment, extending from the city center towards the lake. The path is flanked by dense urban development on one side and the lake on the other. The text "OPPORTUNITIES ALONG THE KENWOOD EMBANKMENT" is overlaid in large, white, bold letters across the lower portion of the image.

OPPORTUNITIES ALONG THE KENWOOD EMBANKMENT

DPD & CDOT



TRANSIT + COMMUNITY

Legacy cities, often referred to as **shrinking**, or **post-industrial** cities, have experienced **sustained population loss** and **economic contraction**. In the United States they are largely within the **Rust Belt** that thrived during the first half of the 20th century. In the second half of the century, these cities declined in economic power and population leaving a **legacy of housing stock, warehouse districts, and infrastructure** that is ripe for revitalization.

St. Louis

<u>Population:</u>	<u>281,754</u>
<u>% lost since 1950:</u>	<u>67%</u>
<u>Physical Size:</u>	<u>62sqm</u>
<u>Density:</u>	<u>4,885/sqm</u>
<u>% non-white:</u>	<u>53.7%</u>
<u>Median household Income:</u>	<u>\$52,941</u>
<u>Walk Score:</u>	<u>66</u>
<u>Bike Score:</u>	<u>36</u>
<u>Park Score:</u>	<u>60.5</u>
<u>% households w/no car:</u>	<u>18%</u>

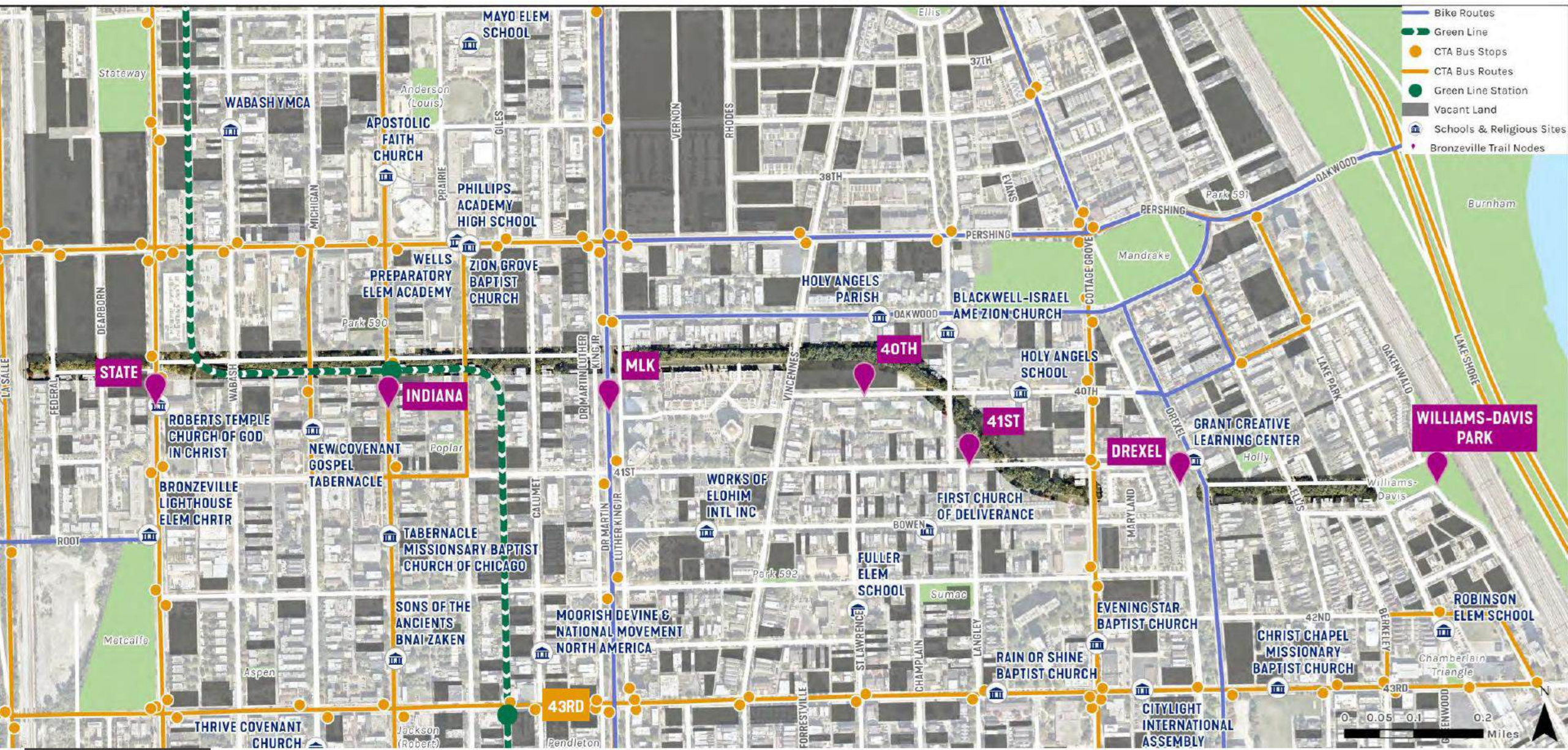
Chicago

<u>Population:</u>	<u>2,664,452</u>
<u>% lost since 1950:</u>	<u>26%</u>
<u>Physical Size:</u>	<u>228sqm</u>
<u>Density:</u>	<u>12,060/sqm</u>
<u>% non-white:</u>	<u>56.6%</u>
<u>Median household Income:</u>	<u>\$71,673</u>
<u>Walk Score:</u>	<u>77</u>
<u>Bike Score:</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Park Score:</u>	<u>71.8</u>
<u>% households w/no car:</u>	<u>27%</u>

Detroit

<u>Population:</u>	<u>633,218</u>
<u>% lost since 1950:</u>	<u>66%</u>
<u>Physical Size:</u>	<u>139sqm</u>
<u>Density:</u>	<u>4,607/sqm</u>
<u>% non-white:</u>	<u>87.8%</u>
<u>Median household Income:</u>	<u>\$37,761</u>
<u>Walk Score:</u>	<u>63</u>
<u>Bike Score:</u>	<u>43</u>
<u>Park Score:</u>	<u>47.2</u>
<u>% households w/no car:</u>	<u>21%</u>

MOBILITY



\$5 mil. for Bronzeville Trail in 2024

Plans include tribute to Black cycling champion Marshall 'Major' Taylor

BY PHYLLIS CHA, STAFF REPORTER
pcha@suntimes.com | @phyllischa

A planned two-mile biking, running and walking trail on the South Side, with a monument that pays tribute to a cycling champion who blazed a trail in sports for other Black athletes, will receive a boost of funding next year, including more than \$5 million from local and federal governments.

How exactly that money will be used has yet to be determined, John Adams, founder of the Bronzeville Trail Task Force, said Friday.

The task force, started in 2020, received a \$75,000 grant from the Chicago Community Trust in April 2022.

The trail will be good for the health of the Bronzeville community, Adams said. It would run from 40th and Dearborn streets east to 41st Street and Lake Park Avenue, with public art displayed along the route.

"It's going to be the most transformative, catalytic project in the history of Bronzeville," Adams said. "You can put a skyscraper at the heart of Bronzeville, but it would never be as transformative as the Bronzeville Trail."

Announced in 2022, the goal of the task force is to create a trail



John Adams, founder of the Bronzeville Trail Task Force, is shown last year near the embankment of the abandoned Kenwood L line. The task force wants to create a two-mile biking, running and walking trail on the South Side. PAT NABONG/SUN-TIMES FILE PHOTO

for the South Side that will be like the North Side's wildly popular Bloomingdale Trail, commonly called "The 606," which opened in 2016.

The plan is to use the abandoned Kenwood L embankment for the Bronzeville Trail. Adams expects the trail to be complete in six to

seven years.

The Bronzeville Trail is expected to cost nearly \$100 million, which is about as much as the 606.

The task force has been working closely with city planners, Adams said, and met with the city two weeks ago to talk about allowing access to parts of the trail even before

the entire route is completed.

There are also plans to have a monument built on the western end of the trail for Black cycling champion Marshall "Major" Taylor, who won a world championship in 1899 as well as two national sprint cycling titles, in 1899 and 1900. He was the first African American

sports hero and the first Black athlete to regularly compete in integrated competitions.

"He literally accomplished all of this during the throes of Jim Crow. He did not have Black fraternities or major civil rights organizations to advocate on his behalf," Adams said.

During his career, Taylor faced intense racism. Cyclists intentionally crashed into him, and he received death threats.

Taylor spent his final years living in the YMCA Hotel in Bronzeville before his death in 1932. He was buried in an unmarked grave before his body was exhumed and reburied at Mount Glenwood Cemetery 16 years later.

"He's forgotten, so it's way past time for him to have his rightful place in U.S. sports and civil rights history with respect to the impact he's made in this country," Adams said.

In January, the task force announced a plan to bring attention to Taylor's accomplishments in cycling, including asking Congress to award Taylor with a Congressional Gold Medal.

A bill introduced in the House of Representatives Thursday would do just that. Backed initially by Rep. Jonathan Jackson, D-Ill., and Rep. Jim Baird, R-Ind., it had 31 additional co-sponsors as of Friday night.

The task force worked with Jackson's congressional staff to draft the resolution, Adams said.

HOT HOUSE DEVELOPMENT VISION

ADJACENT TO THE BRONZEVILLE TRAIL



Image Credit: DMAC Architecture and Interiors

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS & DONORS THROUGH APRIL 30, 2025

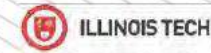
PRESENTING SPONSOR \$250,000+



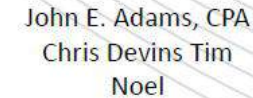
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TRAIL SPONSORS \$500 - \$2,499



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BRONZEVILLE TRAIL TASK FORCE





**TRANSIT +
COMMUNITY**

QUESTIONS