

Black Metropolis National Heritage Area Feasibility Study

Chapter 6: Application of Interim National Heritage Area Criteria

Draft

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Relationship to National Park Service Thematic Framework

The Black Metropolis' interpretive themes and compelling stories are consistent with the NPS thematic framework for interpreting the role of historic sites in American history (<http://www.nps.gov/history/history/categrs/thematic.pdf>). The NPS thematic framework clusters American history into eight core themes bound together by shared sensitivity to the role of people, place, and time. In comparison with other national heritage areas, the Black Metropolis heritage area is suitable for interpretation of a range of themes that are not already interpreted by other national heritage areas. Its heritage resources fit all the eight categories:

Expressing Cultural Values

Arts & Culture (Aesthetics), Education, Religion & Church Activism

Transforming the Environment

Urban Design and Green Infrastructure, Industry & Labor

Developing the American Economy

Business & Entrepreneurial pursuit; Industry & Labor, Healthcare, Education, Recreation & Sports

Expanding Science and Technology

Industry & Labor, Education, Business & Entrepreneurial Pursuit

Changing Role of the United States in the World Community

Military Life & Patriotism, Politics, Social Justice & Civil Rights

Peopling Places

Great Migration, Industry & labor, Government & Politics, Social Justice & Civil Rights

Creating Social Institutions and Movements

Social Justice & Civil Rights, Government & Politics

Shaping the Political Landscape

Military Life & Government & Politics, Social Justice & Civil Rights

Application of NPS National Heritage Area Criteria



The following evaluation applies the NPS NHA criteria, described above, to assess the national significance of the proposed study area. Criteria 1 through 5 apply specifically to the composition and integrity of the resources contained within the study area. The remaining criteria apply to other aspects of feasibility such as community support, organizational capacity, and level of civic engagement.

1. The area has an assemblage of natural, historic, or cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use, and are best managed as such an assemblage, through partnerships among public and private entities, and by combining diverse and sometimes noncontiguous resources and active communities.

Bronzeville's natural, cultural, and recreational resources as well as the historic sites in the Black Metropolis make the area a distinctive landscape worthy of recognition, conservation, and interpretation. Its heritage resources are the primary focus of this heritage area concept and will be the vehicle for conveying the story of the Great Migration and the Black Metropolis to residents and tourists.

The project team has created an inventory of historical sites and figures, local organizations, and cultural and heritage resources located within the study area. The Great Migration and Black Metropolis narratives provide the unifying features around which the majority of these "assets" are organized. Overall, more than 200 assets were identified, and grouped according to relevant themes. The project team also performed mapping of study area assets by theme. It is the significance, both nationally and locally, of these narrative themes that argues for higher level organization and management of Bronzeville's assets.

Through massive upheaval and multiple rounds of urban revitalization, the South Side of Chicago retains numerous core cultural artifacts and physical features that date to the Great Migration Black Metropolis period. The proposed heritage area contains 76 buildings and structures considered National Historic Landmarks or listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Many of these are also included in an extensive list of Chicago landmarks within the study area. City historic districts such as the Cermak Road Bridge, Motor Row, and Prairie Avenue provide additional heritage components that relate to the industrial and commercial history of Bronzeville. Historic housing districts such as the "Gap" (Calumet-Giles-Prairie District), also designated by the City, serve to highlight both architectural elements and narrative themes relevant to the story of the Black Metropolis – principally racially-segregated housing patterns. Bronzeville's historic boulevard system links the residential and commercial districts to the historic lakefront area, and to the larger City network. Several large, urban parks exist within or adjacent to the study area, and a number of community parks provide additional open space.



The natural, cultural, and historic sites within the Black Metropolis can be effectively assembled into a conservation and interpretation framework that will both tell the stories of the Great Migration and the Black Metropolis, and contribute to the local economy through heritage tourism and economic development. Organizations like the Bronzeville Alliance, Bronzeville Tourism and Visitor Information Center, and the Bronzeville Community Development Partnership are currently engaged in efforts to develop interpretative programs and formalize existing, ad hoc collaborations within the study area. While their efforts have been far-reaching, at this time their emphasis is on marketing and promotion rather than resource protection and interpretive programming. Moreover, the effectiveness of some community efforts relating to heritage preservation and tourism have been limited by a lack of institutional cohesion within Bronzeville, possibly stemming from the social and economic stresses of the post-war years. A larger coordinating framework has the potential to bring some these disparate elements together, so they can more effectively access funding and technical assistance for conservation and interpretive purposes.

2. The area reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folk life that are a valuable part of the nation's story.

The Great Migration brought thousands of African-Americans from the south to Chicago. The Great Migration's enormous scale fueled explosive growth and the creation of a city-within-a-city, called the Black Metropolis. Today, the proposed heritage area stands as a memorial to the Great Migration and the Black Metropolis, as well as providing a vibrant community for south side residents. Its national significance, however, is the important role that the study area played in the evolution of America's African-American community. As the destination of southern migrants, Chicago's south side became the capital of Black life in America, and a place where traditional restrictions on Black life were shattered. In this way, the historic places and heritage resources of Bronzeville provide a rare look at what life *was* like for Blacks, and then another view into what it *would become*. The fact that Chicago and Chicagoans would continue to play prominent roles in the civil rights movement, so many years after the Great Migration and Black Metropolis period, further speaks to the importance of the study area in an evolving, nationally-significant story

Although the Great Migration was the definitive event in Chicago's rise to prominence in Black culture, African-Americans have played a prominent role in the City's development since the 18th Century. In fact, Chicago's first settler was a Haitian man of African and French descent, Jean Baptiste Point DuSable who settled in the area as early as 1779. In the antebellum period, before slavery was outlawed, Chicago was an important center of abolitionist activity and a stop on the Underground Railroad, the system of routes and way-stations that helped escaped slaves reach freedom in Canada. Bronzeville's churches, including Quinn Chapel AME and the First Presbyterian Church of Chicago, served as stations, with congregants opening their homes and businesses to those moving north. Many of the Chicagoans involved were themselves free Blacks or fugitive slaves, part of a small but growing local Black community. John Jones, a



tailor, and his wife, Mary Jane Richardson Jones, headed anti-slavery efforts within the City in the mid-1800s, helping hundreds of escaped slaves on their way to Canada from their house at 119 Dearborn Street. Mary was born a free Black in Tennessee, while John was born in North Carolina to a free, mixed-race mother and a father of German descent. Despite the inherent difficulty of documenting Underground Railroad sites (originally meant to evade detection), many have been identified in the proposed study area. Today, several local tour operators focus on Underground Railroad stories in Bronzeville.

While conditions in Chicago were certainly preferable to those in the South, Blacks experienced a great deal of hostility in their daily lives. As in other parts of the country, their civil rights were severely limited by local laws, referred to in Chicago as the Black Laws, which enforced segregation and prohibited blacks from voting, testifying in courts against whites, or even gathering in groups larger than three. African-Americans living in the state were required to carry a Certificate of Freedom; otherwise, they were presumed to be slaves. An 1847 revision of these statutes even forbade free blacks from settling in Illinois.

In most ways, Chicago's pre-Migration black community experienced prejudice and discrimination that was typical of America at that time, although in no way as severe as that experienced by Southern Blacks. To put it simply, their situation was what Black life in America *was*. Into this traditional arrangement stormed The Great Migration, transforming Chicago and other northern, industrial cities. More importantly, the Migrations and the Black Metropolis that emerged would change the way many African-Americans lived. The Great Migration marked a turn from an agrarian, southern existence to a more urban, industrial life for Blacks. The Black Metropolis also shattered many of the limits that society had placed on Black participation, achievement, and expression. The result, both on the south side of Chicago and nationally, was an African-American community that would no longer be relegated to second-class status, or to the limited levels of societal participation that had been permitted pre-Migration.

Chicago's south side tells the story of the Great Migration and the evolution of Black life in America better than anywhere else, for this place was the place where the traditional "*was*" turned into the forward-looking "*would become*." It is within Bronzeville's dense housing blocks and along its boulevards that a nationally significant narrative unfolded. It was from printing presses on the mid-south side that Robert S. Abbot's aspirational writings on Chicago were put to paper, eventually spurring thousands to board rail cars headed north. The higher wages, unleashed energies and massive population increases resulting from the Great Migration, combined with segregated housing policy, fueled explosive, localized growth. Upon this foundation, in the heart of Bronzeville at 35th and State Streets, emerged the Black Wall Street, the cluster of banks and insurance companies that served as the financial foundation for the Black Metropolis. Black Metropolis corporations with names such as Binga, Gillespie, and Overton achieved on entirely new scales, and they did so by catering to Black consumers. While most of State Street's corporate headquarters have fallen, the archetype of the African-American corporate leader, and the value of the Black consumer remain powerful forces today.



If the Black Wall Street provided the financial underpinning of the Black Metropolis, the churches and jazz clubs along State Street served as its cultural heart. South State Street, from 31st to 39th Street was known as the “Stroll,” and famous clubs along this stretch introduced southern jazz and Mississippi blues music to the world. Jazz greats such as King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, and Jelly Roll Morton, all originally from New Orleans, attracted large crowds. A local legend had it that a trumpet held up at the corner would magically play itself – testament to the intensity and vitality of the local jazz scene. Other venues in Bronzeville would introduce new musical forms such as gospel, rhythm and blues, and soul. Innovation and creativity also extended to literature and visual arts on the south side. The 1930s witnessed an artistic flowering among Black authors and poets, referred to as the Black Chicago Renaissance. As was the case with jazz and other artistic forms, the tumultuous nature of the times and ongoing racial strife caused these figures to search for meaning and identity in new ways. Literary figures such as Gwendolyn Brooks, Lorraine Hansberry, and Richard Wright would quickly win national audiences with their realistic portrayals of urban life. Their success reinforces the centrality of Chicago in the national narrative of African-American life.

Bronzeville’s narrative of change and transformation is also evident in the area’s political and social justice movements. From its political bases in the area’s Second Ward and the First Congressional District, which were under the leadership of Edward “the Iron master” Wright, Chicago’s Black Metropolis proved itself a political center for all African-Americans, producing the first Black to sit in Congress in the 20th century, Representative Oscar DePriest, as well as the first African-American Democratic congressman, the Honorable Arthur W. Mitchell. Mirroring a national shift, Chicago’s Black political class realigned itself, from Lincoln’s Republican party to the party of FDR and then to Daley’s Democratic machine. Eventually, congressional power broker William “Boss” Dawson would pave the way for national firsts, such as the election of Carol Moseley Braun as the first female, Black Senator, and ultimately the election of the country’s first African-American President, Barack Obama.

Ultimately, the narrative of change that Bronzeville represents is an ongoing one. Generations of Chicagoans after the Black Metropolis would build on the social-justice and civil-rights foundations that were created then. Early reformers such as Ida B. Wells would not live to see the civil rights movements of the 1950s and 60s, but many of the institutions they formed would prove useful in later years. Moreover, the path from the Great Migration to civil rights was not an easy one, as Bronzeville can attest. In the years after the multiple waves of southern migration, south side neighborhoods would endure alternating cycles of urban deterioration and renewal. Public housing would be built, destroyed, and rebuilt. Many residents would leave the area for the south suburbs. This too is an important part of the African-American experience in Chicago, and in the national evolution of African-American life. In Chicago, projects such as the future National Public Housing Museum provide a model for conservation and interpretation of these complex legacies. A Gospel Museum is nearing completion at 43rd Street and King Drive, which will highlight the city’s rich religious history in music.



3. The area provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, historic, cultural, and/or scenic features.

Natural areas

Since the study is located in an urban environment, there are no large tracts of land available for establishment of new parks. Environmental restoration efforts could focus on maintaining healthy habitat in existing open space. Additional restoration could be done at Oak Woods Cemetery to improve pond habitat. Small plots of vacant land can be developed into community garden plots or community native gardens. IDNR has been working in the Millennium Reserve area to set up community native garden plots through the Neighborhood Roots program.

Based on the resources present in the study area and restoration efforts under way, additional programming could include community work day to assist with installation of trees in Burnham Wildlife Corridor; community involvement in removal of invasive species; programming related to migratory bird species in Burnham Park; and citizen science projects to further monitor resources in the study area.

Historic and cultural conservation

As expressed in Chapter 3: Themes, there are four themes that are a good starting point for historic and cultural conservation. In terms of music, the Chicago Blues Museum is presently a travelling collection of artifacts that illustrate and preserve the legacy of the blues in Chicago. The Chicago Jazz Institute has also proposed a National Jazz Museum that would recognize the community's contributions to jazz. The completion of these two projects should be a priority for the coordinating entity.

In regards to civil rights and social activism, the coordinating entity should also focus on highlighting the many contributions and firsts that the Great Migration and Black Metropolis helped to foster. This includes the election of Chicago's first African-American mayor, Harold Washington, the housing and civil rights history that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. brought to Chicago in the 1960s, and the legacy that President Barack Obama and his political beginnings in Chicago.

The opportunities for conservation in both the business and entrepreneurial pursuits and industry and labor themes include a variety of educational tours and support for present day organizations that have begun to promote these areas. The BVIC could be supported by resources or partnerships to offer additional heritage tours that could cover each theme area. Partnerships with the Pullman community, the Museum of Science and Industry, and possibly the National Public Housing Museum are all ways in which these important stories could find lasting homes.



4. The area provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities.

Chapter 3: Themes outlines the significance of the study area in four major theme areas, as well as detailing opportunities for conservation, recreation, and education for each of the four themes. There are countless opportunities for recreation and education – many of these opportunities have been discussed, whether the opportunity is an educational tour, gallery or museum, preservation, or implementation of local heritage signage and wayfinding. The Bronzeville community has, on its own, albeit with limited capacity, worked to preserve historic assets of the community and educate Chicagoans and tourists about the importance of Bronzeville to the story of the Great Migration.

Every plan or study completed for the study area has highlighted the numerous opportunities and assets that the community possesses. From heritage tourism, to recreation and educational opportunities, the options are limitless. The opportunities highlighted in Chapter 3: Themes highlights a variety of projects that are tangible and implementable. However, there are hundreds of local historic places, people, and other assets that still exist today, and can be found in Appendix 8: Asset Matrix. Without the continued preservation of these assets, the community's story would not be as compelling.

The opportunity for the coordinating entity lies in their ability to look at existing plans and past studies to be able to bring together the focus and resources it will take to ultimately implement the numerous recommendations of local planning effort. The community has been behind these efforts for decades but is in need of a champion to convene local stakeholders and lead the process. NHA designation may also present additional opportunities through the collaboration and technical assistance provided by NPS.

5. Resources that are important to the identified theme or themes of the area retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation.

The Black Metropolis is characterized by many resources of national significance, beginning with a number of National Historic Landmarks and resources on the National Registry. Other cultural sites within the study area are included on Chicago's landmark list, or form parts of locally-designated historic districts. These heritage assets are of outstanding importance and are obviously capable of supporting relevant interpretation, since they have been doing so for many years. Other sites have not been fully evaluated for official heritage designations, but possess sufficient history to offer opportunities for interpretation of the study area's narrative themes. For instance, the historic Bronzeville neighborhood that defined the restrictive covenants offers numerous opportunities to interpret aspects of major themes identified for the heritage area.

Figure 14. Total Black Metropolis Assets by Theme, summarizes historical designations and integrity ratings for resources found within the proposed national heritage area. Overall, the City of Chicago identifies 1,617 individual buildings or sites within the study area as "historic."



The vast majority of these have been found to retain sufficient integrity to support interpretative efforts. According to the City's list, only 313 of the 1,617 historic sites lack significance or are too altered to support interpretive efforts. There are currently 98 sites among the overall number that are not recognized by any formal historic designation, or associated with any existing historic district. These historic structures represent heritage opportunities for the community. Additionally, 77 sites are on the historic list even though they were built after 1940. These historic, albeit recently constructed, places represent further opportunities for preservation and interpretation.

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Table 1. Black Metropolis Historic Resources

National Historic Designation	Total Sites and Districts located within Bronzeville
National Historic Landmark (NHL): Officially recognized with a historic distinction	16
National Registry (NR): Officially recognized with a historic distinction	62
City Historic Designation	
Chicago Landmark (CL): Officially recognized with a local historic distinction	42
Chicago Historic resources Survey (CHRS) Red (RD): Properties possess some architectural feature or historical association in the broader context of Chicago, the state of Illinois or the U.S.	9
CHRS Orange (OR): Properties possess some architectural or historical association in the boarder context of the surrounding community	475
Calumet Giles Prairie District*	170
North Kenwood Multiple Resource District*	217
Douglas District*	43
Greenwood Row House District*	20
Hyde Park-Kenwood District*	214
IIT District*	20
Motor Row District*	54
Black Metropolis-Bronzeville District*	10
Oakland District*	109
Prairie Avenue District*	26
Washington Park Court District*	33
Hyde Park Apartment Hotel Thematic District*	7
Not officially recognized	98
CHRS Green (GR), Yellow-Green (YG), Yellow (YL): these properties are considered too altered or lacking significance	313
CHRS Blue (BL): properties constructed after 1940	77

* Districts include a collection of historic properties identified collectively and designated as a district on the National Register designation.



6. Residents, business interests, non-profit organizations, and governments within the proposed area are involved in the planning, have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants including the federal government, and have demonstrated support for designation of the area.

The size of the proposed Black Metropolis NHA, and the diversity, quality, and quantity of its assets demands meaningful collaboration. The Commission continues to collaborate with public, non-profit and private organizations to access additional talent and funding sources that can broaden its reach. Collaborating with other stakeholders will help the coordinating entity attract financial support from public agencies, private foundations and individuals, and businesses. As an example, State initiatives like the Millennium Reserve have been important local partners in public relations efforts, helped spread the word regarding heritage preservation in Bronzeville to new audiences.

Through various agencies, the State of Illinois has been instrumental in promoting the heritage area concept. The State's marketing initiatives use websites, brochures, and informational maps placed at welcome centers and rest areas along the interstates. IDNR manages various programs within the region including a number of natural resources along Lake Michigan. IDNR staff has been a strong supporter of the heritage area and even volunteered to lead the writing of the sections related to natural resources for the feasibility study. The future role of IDNR will include researching and documenting cultural and natural resources, assisting the CPD with lakefront restoration, providing expertise in educational materials, and assisting with tours in the Heritage Area.

Another potentially key player at the state level is the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Future projects with IDOT could include creation of roadway signage for the Black Metropolis National Heritage Area, and also coordinating transportation improvements in and around the heritage area to complement cultural tourism.

At the county level, Cook County has been a dedicated ally of the proposed Black Metropolis NHA. Numerous Cook County Board presidents have supported the NHA project, since the idea of an NHA first surfaced over 20 years ago. Current President Toni Preckwinkle served previously as the Alderman of the 4th ward, located in the heart of Bronzeville, and has consistently supported designation. Cook County has provided financial support to Commission and sponsored a resolution in 2004 in support of NHA project. Cook County's involvement remains critical as it is a potential provider of local funding, the local match that is needed when applying for federal funding. The County, as the operator of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, also plays a significant role in educating the public and encouraging continued conservation of heritage assets. It has also provided staffing, mapping, and technical expertise in planning and economic development.



The City of Chicago also supports the heritage area designation, and has directly participated by providing mapping, data, and landmark reports. The City has also developed a number of plans (see Coordination with concurrent studies and past plans) and has implemented land use policies that promote historic preservation, cultural heritage, and economic development in greater Bronzeville. The City's continued partnership in promoting heritage themes through events programming and planning will be of great value to the coordinating entity.

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is also critical to the proposed heritage area. In the past, CPS has collaborated with heritage area organizations to fund and produce educational programs on Black history. With several schools within the proposed study area, and a majority African-American student population, CPS has much to gain from greater recognition of Bronzeville's national significance. Designation will create new interpretive opportunities for CPS students across the City. It is fitting, then, that CPS is represented on the Educational Advisory Committee for the Heritage Area.

The federal government is represented in the project through the Commission's coordination with NPS's midwest regional office. The regional office has provided continuous guidance and expertise to the Commission during the feasibility study process. The PAC envisions an active, ongoing role for NPS. An example of a successful, past NPS contribution to Bronzeville heritage conservation and interpretation was the creation of an educational curriculum on the Black Metropolis as part of the Teaching with Historic Places program.

A number of academic institutions including IIT, Roosevelt University, University of Chicago, and Northeastern Illinois University have supported the work of the Commission and the feasibility study process, by providing subject expertise and research on heritage themes. In particular, IIT and Roosevelt University are founding members of the Commission, and both are represented on the PAC. To date, university staff has been instrumental, assisting with historical research and reviewing draft documents. IIT has hosted several PAC meetings and it is envisioned that they will continue to provide office space for the future coordinating entity.

Local businesses have joined this effort because increased tourism will boost demand for shopping, dining, overnight stays, and other economic activities. Many local businesses are already working to preserve heritage resources as a way of encouraging future tourism that is anticipated to lead to increased economic development. Partnership efforts will continue to focus on programs that will strengthen tourism while protecting heritage assets. Operators of heritage area venues that have not been active in the NHA project will be encouraged to be part of this effort.

The coordinating entity will seek funding from philanthropic organizations and individual donors with similar interests and philosophies. Protecting open space, historic preservation, and creating entertaining, educational offerings are interests shared by philanthropic organizations like the MacArthur Foundation, Prince Charitable Trust, The Chicago



Community Trust, The Conservation Fund, the Trust for Public Land, and many other local and national foundations. The coordinating entity will continue to reach out to organizations such as these for financial support (see Appendix 3).

Community organizations like the Partnership, BVIC, Bronzeville Chamber of Commerce, the Bronzeville Alliance, and Camp Douglas have been key drivers of the Heritage Area designation initiative. Each organization is committed to historic preservation and documentation of the area's heritage. These community organizations will continue to provide research to document Bronzeville's history for educational displays and marketing materials, and will remain vigilant in protecting vital assets in the study area.

7. The proposed coordinating entity and units of government supporting the designation are willing to commit to working in partnership to develop the heritage area.

The preferred coordinating entity for the Black Metropolis NHA would have representation from local governments, as well input from a wide range of organizational and citizen interests. The study team has considered using a federal commission, a state- or city-operated coordinating entity, or a private, nonprofit organization (see Management Alternatives for discussion of each) as the coordinating entity. The study team has found the greatest local support for a federal commission (federally-designated coordinating entity) because local stakeholders believe it could most effectively involve federal, state, and local government, as well as nonprofit economic-development, cultural, historical, environmental, and civic organizations. Stakeholders believe that a commission structure would provide a necessary departure from fragmented organizational dynamics at work within the community.

Congressman Bobby Rush, State Senators Mattie Hunter and Kwame Raoul, IDNR, Cook County, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD), Chicago Park District, and City of Chicago divisions and departments including DHED, CDOT, and HPres have met with the Commission and feasibility study team and expressed interest in supporting (and, in some cases, serving on) a National Heritage Area management entity. DCASE, which is dedicated to enriching Chicago's artistic vitality and cultural vibrancy, and the Illinois Office of Tourism have been active in developing cultural tourism in Chicago. They recognize that a Heritage Area can improve the image of Bronzeville, develop new attractions, and serve as a vehicle for better coordination of existing heritage initiatives. A recent example of the City's interest in the Black Metropolis and Great Migration narrative was the selection of Isabel Wilkerson's *The Warmth of Other Sons: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* as the featured book in the year-long, *One Book, One Chicago* program. The program, officially administered by the Chicago Public Library, will use films, performances, lectures, storytelling and art to foster discussion of the migration theme. Local public broadcast television station, WTTW¹, is currently showing a

¹ WTTW, Du Sable to Obama: Chicago's Black Metropolis, <http://www.wttw.com/main.taf?p=76,3>.



2011 prize-winning production entitle “Du Sable to Obama: Chicago’s Black Metropolis” that highlights the Bronzeville story from 18th century to the present.

A NHA designation would complement and expand upon the City’s ongoing efforts to revitalize Bronzeville. Key to the heritage area’s success will be the enhancement of opportunities to create links among tourist attractions and amenities as well as to expand partnerships between the proposed coordinating entity and the City and state departments and agencies. Defining actual commitments, rather than general support for designation, has been hampered because the public and government agencies involved in the process have not yet been able to focus on the management alternatives contained in this feasibility study. As the public engagement process continues, stakeholders will express specific support for their preferred alternatives, and specific commitments and partnerships that may be available, involving local governments and area organizations working with the coordinating entity, will be discussed further.

8. The coordinating entity proposed to plan and implement the project is described.

The study team has been working with local officials and citizens to determine the most appropriate coordinating entity for the proposed heritage area. The three, management-entity forms under consideration are a federal commission, a state-/city-operated commission, and a local, private nonprofit organization. Descriptions of these coordinating entities and their possible advantages and disadvantages are included in Chapter 5: Management Alternatives.

9. The proposal is consistent with continued economic activity in the area.

In the 1920s, Chicago’s Bronzeville neighborhood established itself as a national center of Black entrepreneurship. State Street housed a cluster of banks and financial firms, earning the area the label of the “Black Wall Street.” Bronzeville’s unique concentration of buying power and newfound financial strength promoted growth among small businesses and service providers in the area, with several large business empires eventually forming. Overall, the Metropolis period, and the post-war years corresponding with the second wave of migration to Chicago, witnessed great vitality in the local economy. However, intervening decades have seen a loss of industrial employment and a large decline in population in the study area. These are macro trends that have been accompanied by a range of localized effects, affecting different areas of the study area in different ways. The result is an area that contains several vibrant retail and commercial districts, but also large amounts of vacant land and sub-optimal business uses.

Over the last several decades, local groups and the City, most recently through its Neighborhoods Now initiative, have established an economic development agenda to revitalize Bronzeville’s commercial districts. This effort includes many local planning efforts, ranging from neighborhood cultural and quality of life plans, to streetscaping and redevelopment proposals. The City and the Chicago Housing Authority have removed nearly all of the high-



rise, public housing complexes that were built during the post-war period. These complexes have been replaced with mixed-income, mixed-use housing and commercial developments that promote more vibrant street life on major Bronzeville thoroughfares such as State Street. Other efforts have resulted in the installation of community gardens and other green infrastructure meant to make the Bronzeville area more appealing to residents and visitors.

Tourism plays a central role in redevelopment and economic growth in Bronzeville, due to the area's proximity to downtown Chicago and to the well-known institutions and destinations which are found locally. Several planning efforts have targeted the heritage tourist and visitor. To date, the jazz and blues narrative themes have motivated most of these. 47th Street, a historic retail corridor in Bronzeville, has been defined as a jazz and blues district, and enhanced with decorative streetscaping and sculpture to highlight the area's musical legacy. The Harold Washington Cultural Center is also on 47th Street, providing another musical destination in the area. However, the area continues to search for entertainment and dining venues that will serve as anchors for continued development.

McCormick Place, a major convention center located in the northern portion of the study area, is the area's largest tourist draw, and a central piece in Chicago's overall tourist economy. Nearby is the Motor Row Historic District, which has recently been slated for large-scale development as an entertainment district. Motor Row is a historic neighborhood, with several sites that are linked to the Great Migration and Black Metropolis narrative. Its vicinity to McCormick Place makes the area an ideal place to serve as a gateway to the sites of the heritage area, as well as a tourist draw in its own right. Convention attendees looking for entertainment or dining will find a range of options in Motor Row. They will also be exposed to cultural and historic sites associated with the Great Migration and the Metropolis. McCormick Place has been a supporter of heritage efforts within the local community, but the development of the Motor Row district calls for a more expansive relationship with institutions and community partners within the core Bronzeville area in order for both groups to capitalize on increased tourism and convention business.

NHA designation is consistent with the aims of these efforts, especially considering the important role that tourism, and specifically cultural tourism, plays in development plans at the City and community level. Bronzeville's story is significant, and combined with the neighborhood's proximity to downtown Chicago and to multiple transit modes, provides a solid foundation for development. However, for cultural tourism to contribute to overall development, the narrative of the Great Migration and the Black Metropolis must be told in ways that are approachable and appealing. This involves better connections between cultural institutions, and their programming and events, and the physical sites and historic places that exist in Bronzeville today. The heritage area may also help the community to find funding to maintain physical assets, increase available programming, and strengthen marketing links that draw visitors to the Black Metropolis. These strategies, many of which have been advanced in



previous plans, will benefit from greater exposure and opportunity presented by a Heritage Area designation.

A National Heritage Area will provide the proper mechanism for organizing Bronzeville's significant story, and support the efforts of existing entities such as the Bronzeville Visitor Information Center, Bronzeville Alliance, Bronzeville Community Development Partnership, and BMNHAC. These groups, and the City, realize that Bronzeville's heritage is its true asset, and that cultural tourism and local economic development are interdependent. Furthermore, the application for Heritage designation displays a commitment on the part of the City and local community to seeking development that conforms to unique history and character of Bronzeville.

10. A conceptual boundary map has been reviewed by the public.

A study area map with conceptual boundaries for the proposed Black Metropolis Heritage Area alternatives may be found in Appendix 1: Examples of nationally distinctive landscapes in the Black Metropolis. The map was developed by the Commission, the City of Chicago, BVIC, and a number of neighborhood organizations. Input was also gathered from elected officials and community residents. Conceptual boundaries were discussed at a community wide public meeting and at numerous smaller meetings. Meeting participants were generally supportive of the proposed boundary. The public will have more opportunity to provide input regarding the proposed heritage area boundary at future public meetings.

Conclusion

CMAAP began assisting with the feasibility study in 2012, at the request of the Commission. Based upon the analysis of natural and cultural resources in the study area, evidence of an effective thematic framework, the potential for effective public and private partnerships, opportunities for the protection of natural and cultural resources as well as recreation, education and public support for a national heritage area designation, the study team concludes that the study area meets a number of the NPS interim criteria for designation as a National Heritage Area.

Bronzeville's historic sites and cultural institutions memorialize the significance of the Great Migration and the Black Metropolis period, as well as the continued evolution of African-American life. With an extensive array of heritage sites, including landmarks listed on the National Historic Register and City landmark list, Bronzeville's physical landscape provides a venue for interpretation of nationally important narratives. The Great Migration and Black Metropolis narratives provide a straightforward means of organizing and curating Bronzeville's sites, as well as giving local cultural institutions an accessible avenue for continued programming and education. Additional opportunities for heritage conservation and storytelling in Bronzeville are extensive, including both stories and assets that pre-date the main narrative and modern legacies of the Metropolis era.



There currently exists widespread support for a NHA designation, and positive expectations that the designation could foster partnerships that enhance the area's quality of life. The extensive activities of the local non-profit organizations supporting the national heritage area designation indicate the feasibility of establishing a NHA, as does the participation of the City of Chicago, through multiple departments. As an area of cultural significance, Bronzeville features prominently in the City's cultural agenda, with a host of programming planned that ties in to heritage preservation and promotion efforts of all types. These events, along with the constant stream of cultural offerings from institutions and organizations within Bronzeville make the study area a place where recreation and education are effectively linked. Similarly, cultural tourism and local economic development support each other in Bronzeville. Both can be enhanced by the designation, and existing development and planning efforts will be bolstered by the designation.

Therefore, the study concludes that the Black Metropolis exhibits all of the criteria for establishing a national heritage area. It contains nationally important resources and represents important national themes as described by the 1996 NPS Thematic Framework. It is a singular geographical and cultural area that has made significant national contributions through its literary, artistic, musical, recreation, political, civic, architectural and military achievements and experience. This combination of themes and related resources makes the Black Metropolis suitable for national heritage area designation.

