
Black Metropolis National Heritage Area

Feasibility Study and Project Overview

1. What is a National Heritage Area (NHA)?
2. The Black Metropolis National Heritage Area Commission
3. NHA Feasibility Study Overview
4. Moving Forward



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What is a National Heritage Area (NHA)?

- Designated by Congress as a place where natural, cultural and historic resources together form a cohesive, nationally important landscape
- A lived-in landscape that tells a nationally important story and celebrates our nation's diverse heritage
- NHAs receive technical assistance and funding through the National Park Service (NPS)



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The Black Metropolis National Heritage Area Commission

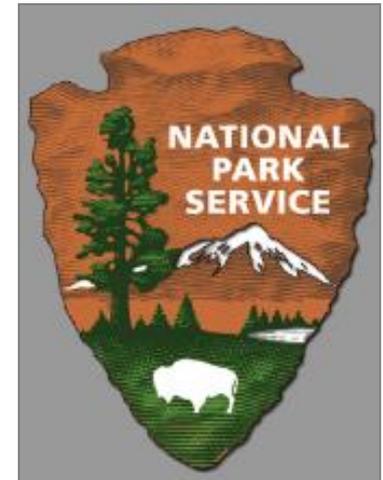
- Created in 2004 as the steering committee for the Bronzeville Community Development Partnership
- Focus on developing the Black Metropolis NHA by:
 - promoting heritage and cultural tourism in Bronzeville
 - developing and executing a management plan for the NHA
 - raising funds to support the NHA
 - building consensus



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NHA Feasibility Study Overview

- A feasibility study is the first step to achieving NHA designation.
- A document that provides information to Congress and the National Park Service (NPS) about the suitability of the study area for NHA designation.
- Helps to inform whether NHA designation is the best way to preserve and promote the area's natural, cultural, and economic resources.



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Feasibility Study Project Advisory Committee

Christopher Reed PhD., Roosevelt University

Christopher Vaughn, WTTW Chicago Public Television Community Liaison

Delmarie Cobb, Black Metropolis National Heritage Area Commission

Kimberly Brown, community resident

Leroy Kennedy, Illinois Institute of Technology

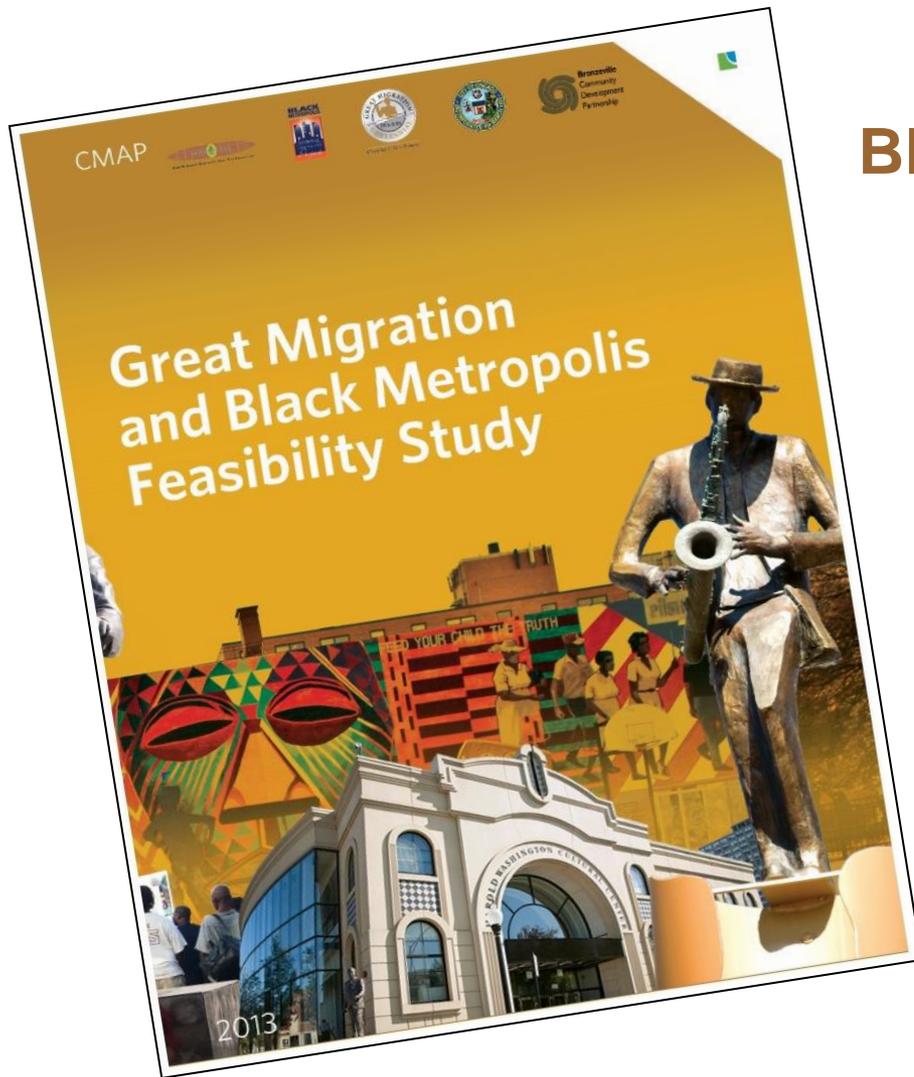
Paula Robinson, Bronzeville Community Development Partnership

Yvette Le Grand, community resident

City of Chicago, Department of Housing and Economic Development (DHED)
and Division of Historic Preservation (HPres)

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Staff





Black Metropolis Bronzeville National Heritage Area Feasibility Study



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Chapter 1: Study Area

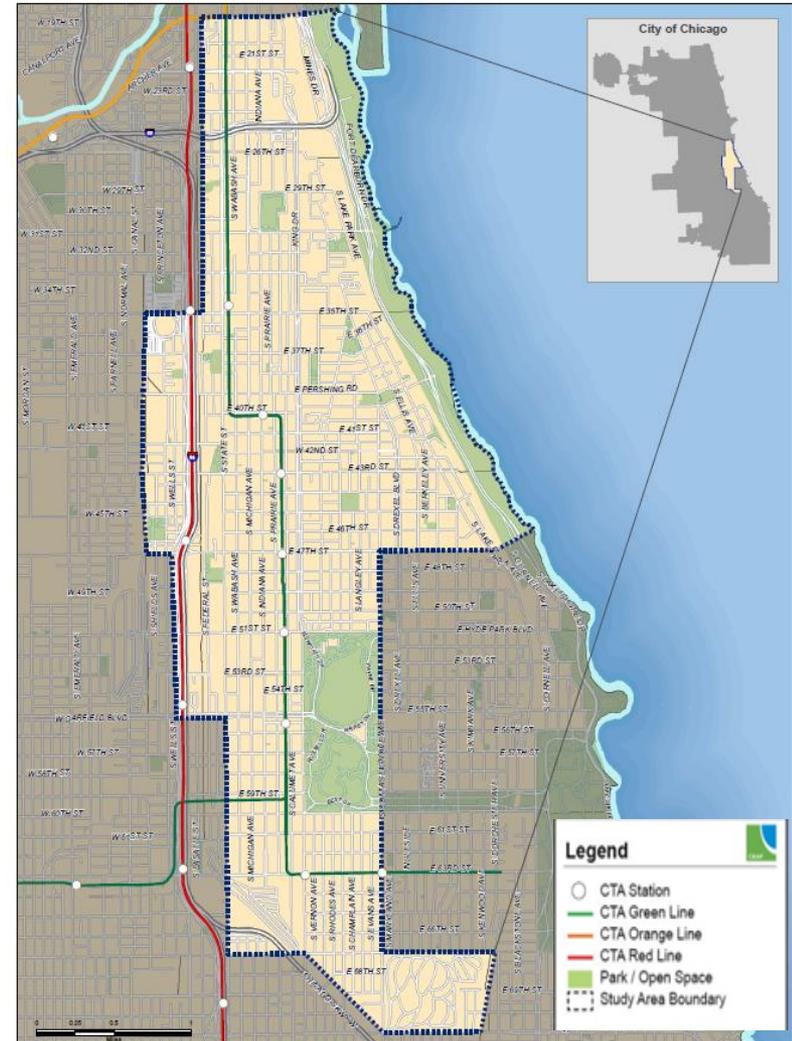
- Chicago's traditional Black Belt and the areas settled by most Blacks during the Great Migration
- From the South Loop to Woodlawn

18th Street to the North

71st Street to the South

Lake Michigan to the East

Canal Street/Dan Ryan to the West



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Chapter 1: Coordination with studies and past plans

Local plans

- 10 existing local plans recommend strengthening tourism and building on the community's history of arts, culture and music

Illinois Heritage Areas

- Abraham Lincoln NHA, Calumet NHA (proposed), Illinois & Michigan Canal NHA, Pullman National Historic Park (proposed)

National NHAs focused on African-American history and experience

- Alabama Black Belt (proposed), Gullah Geechee NHA, Mississippi Delta NHA, Mississippi Hills NHA, Detroit MotorCities NHA



Chapter 2: Study Area History and Contributions

1800s: Growing Black population

- Bronzeville churches served as stations on the Underground Railroad
- Black population increased from 1,000 in 1860 to 16,000 in 1890
- Despite “Black Laws” restricting daily life, a dynamic and stable Black presence laid the groundwork for the Black Metropolis



1910 – 1930: Key drivers of the Great Migration

- Jim Crow laws and Black Codes of the South
- WWI, industrialization and recruiting of Blacks to fill labor shortages in the North
- The Chicago Defender newspaper campaigned for migration
- Creating the Black Metropolis, a mecca of African-American business, arts, music and culture, politics and more that would influence our nation



Chapter 2: Study Area History and Contributions

1930s and beyond: Migration continues

- Great Depression stifled the community's financial and economic success
- WWII and industrialization created job opportunities and resulted in a second wave of migration – in 1940, Bronzeville had 337,000 residents
- Black Metropolis evolved into a segregated, overcrowded residential enclave and its residents faced employment and housing discrimination, causing them to push for additional employment and housing opportunities
- With segregation and lack of access to fair housing and equal credit, residents pushed for restrictive covenants to be overturned
- Court challenges ended use of restrictive covenants and federal laws opened up additional employment and housing opportunities in the 1940's



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Chapter 2: Study Area History and Contributions

1930s and beyond: Migration continues

- Fair housing opportunities expanded as part of the 1960's Civil Rights Legislation and the passing of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) of 1977 increased residents' access to mortgages and other financial products
- Urban renewal and expanded opportunity transformed the landscape and social fabric of the Black Metropolis in the 1950's and 1960's.
- The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) attempted to repair the impacts of urban renewal (concentrated poverty) with its Plan for Transformation starting in the late 1990's
- A changed economic structure and employment market has slowed all redevelopment plans, public and private.



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Chapter 3: Themes

Describe the Black Metropolis' contribution to American history:

1. Arts and Culture

- Literature, music, and visual arts

2. Civil Rights and Social Activism

- Chicago's abolitionist movement, access to fair housing, banking, and education

3. Business and entrepreneurial pursuits

- Pioneering Black entrepreneurs, Black-owned businesses, Black Wall Street

4. Industry and Labor

- Labor unions, stockyards, meat packaging and steel industries, Illinois Central Railroad, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters



Chapter 3: Themes *Arts & Culture*

Changing the face of Literature: Newspapers, Writers, Playwrights, Poets

- Associated Negro Press, Chicago Bee, Chicago Defender, The Conservator
- Poet Gwendolyn Brooks and authors Lorraine Hansberry and Richard Wright

Influencing music worldwide through Jazz, Blues, and Gospel

- Jelly Roll Morton, Joe “King” Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Nat King Cole, Thomas A. Dorsey, Mahalia Jackson
- Clubs/Venues: Dreamland Café, Grand Terrace, Pekin, Regal Theatre, Savoy, Sutherland Lounge

Creating Chicago’s Black Renaissance

- Du Sable Museum, South Side Community Arts Center



Chapter 3: Themes *Civil Rights and Social Activism*

Participating in the Abolitionist movement

- Quinn Chapel AME and the Underground Railroad



Shaping civil rights

- Ida B. Wells and the national campaign against lynching
- *Hansberry v. Lee* outlawed use of racially-discriminatory housing covenants
- Open casket visitation of Emmett Till drew 100,000 people, fueled public outrage and was a catalytic moment of the Civil Rights Movement

Birthing civil rights organizations

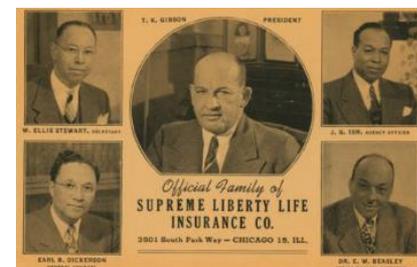
- Chicago Urban League, NAACP, Rainbow PUSH, Wabash Avenue YMCA



Chapter 3: Themes *Business and Entrepreneurial Pursuits*

Developing our nation's economy through African-American pioneering businesses and companies:

- **Douglass National Bank** – first nationally chartered African-American owned bank
- **Overton Hygienic Building** – headquarters of the nation's foremost producers of African-American cosmetics
- **Supreme Life Insurance Company** – most successful early African-American owned insurance company and birthing place of Johnson Publishing Company (the world's largest Black-owned and operated publishing company)
- **J.T.H. Woods** – nation's first Black-owned hardware business



Chapter 3: Themes *Industry and Labor*

The study area was home to many Black workers who contributed to the nation's labor movement, including:

- Meat Packaging Industry - The Stockyard
- Steel Industry - South Side Steel Works
- Railroad Industry - Illinois Central Railroad
- The Porter's labor union - Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (former slaves who worked on Pullman's trains and trolley cars)



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Chapter 4: Affected Environment

This chapter assesses the physical assets of the study area, including:

- Land form and physiography
- Water resources
- Air quality
- Vegetation and endangered plant species
- Wildlife and endangered animal species
- Protected lands

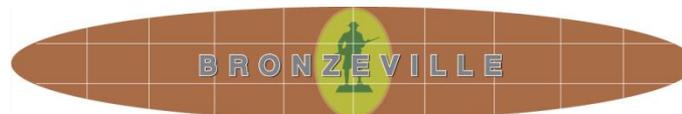


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Chapter 5: Management Alternatives

Evaluation of **three** different alternatives for managing the proposed NHA based on the potential to:

- Identify, preserve and promote NHA resources
- Secure funding for NHA
- Build partnerships with private and public entities
- Convene groups to tell the story of NHA



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Chapter 5: Management Alternatives

What if no federal action is taken?

- Assumes that no federal action is taken and business as usual continues
- No high-level of coordination
- Local organizations, community leaders, institutions and the City of Chicago continue to independently run local events, exhibits, and programming activities (historic tours, lectures, and educational programming) focused on heritage themes
- Without a centralized coordinating entity, the heritage area will not reach its full potential



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Chapter 5: Management Alternatives

Could a local government operate a heritage area in Bronzeville?

- The responsible unit of government (city, county or state) would designate an agency to coordinate the proposed heritage area activities
- Same potential benefits as a federally-designated NHA
- City, county and state have limited resources to coordinate, implement and manage heritage area activities.
- The full potential of the heritage area will not be realized



Chapter 5: Management Alternatives

What if Bronzeville receives NHA designation?

- Assumes NHA designation is granted by Congress and NPS would provide support
- A local coordinating entity is created to organize efforts related to the Black Metropolis NHA
- Would result in partnerships that focus on economic development opportunities and cultural heritage tourism
- The most preferred management alternative, which would foster economic development through heritage-based tourism programs



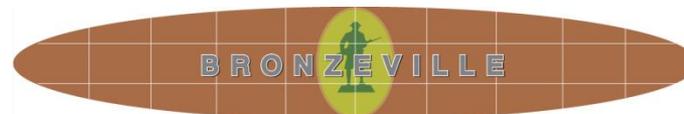
Chapter 6: Application of interim NHA criteria

- Describes how the proposed NHA meets the criteria set forth by NPS, including:
 - Area has an assemblage of natural, historic, or cultural resources worthy of preservation;
 - The area reflects the traditions, customs, beliefs that are valuable to the nation's story;
 - There are outstanding opportunities for preservation and conservation;
 - There are outstanding recreational and educational opportunities;
 - The existing resources retain a degree of integrity to support interpretation;
 - There is a collaborative effort involved in planning and have stated support for the NHA;
 - Local government is willing to commit to working in partnership to develop the NHA;
 - There is a plan;
 - The proposal is consistent with economic activity in the community; and
 - A conceptual boundary is included and has been reviewed by the public.



Chapter 7: Vision Statement

“The Bronzeville - Black Metropolis NHA seeks a future where community inspired actions and a shared vision will strengthen the heritage area’s natural, historic, and cultural resources as well as the community fabric; instilling pride in its resources and reinforcing its identity.”



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Moving Forward

The Black Metropolis National Heritage Area Project will continue to:

- **Engage** community residents and stakeholders
- **Campaign** to increase and solidify community partners and stakeholders
- **Develop** a local coordinating entity
- **Continue** to develop local events and activities that support the NHA proposal
- **Coordinate** with other Great Migration themed NHAs to build broad-based national support



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Resources

For additional information visit:

- <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/bmnhac/>
- <http://www.blackmetropolisnha.com/>

To get involved, contact:

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