

# **BRONZEVILLE TRAIL**

## KENWOOD FEASIBILITY STUDY & PREDEVELOPMENT SERVICES PUBLIC MEETING

DECEMBER 8, 2022





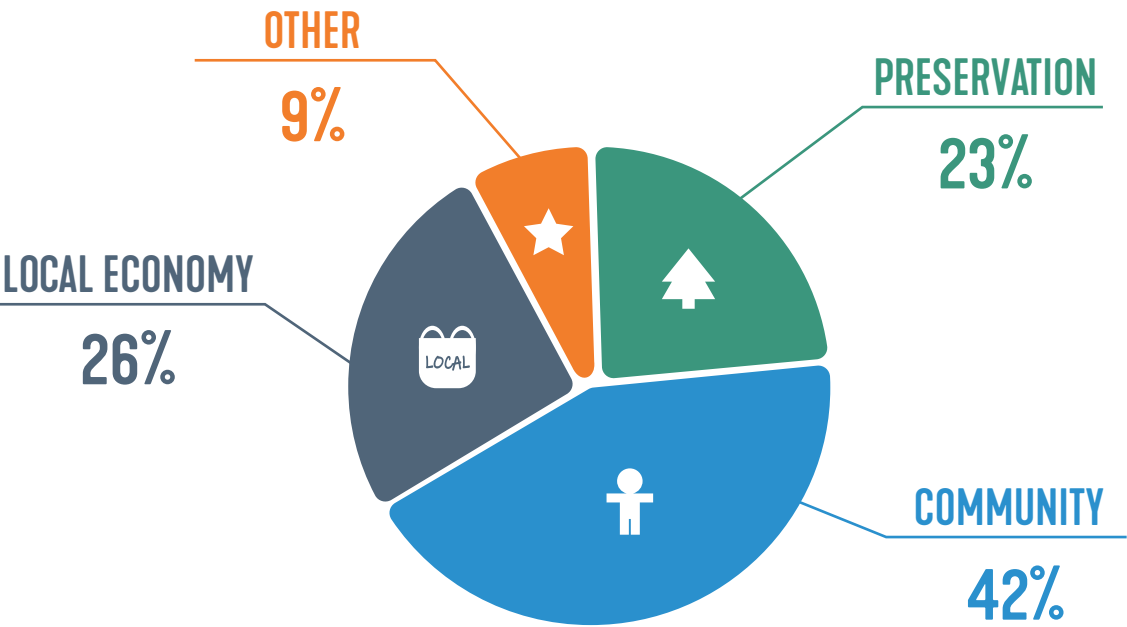
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bronzeville is a historic district in south Chicago, home to a community with a vibrant lifestyle full of art, dance, music, and theatre. This neighborhood’s roots run deep, having been established during the Great Migration of the early 20th century. There are connections to renowned artists such as Nat King Cole, Bessie Coleman, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Ida B. Wells. The rich history of this neighborhood has shaped the culture of its current residents; this report tells the story of Bronzeville and the value it holds for those who live there.

The people who live, work, and gather in this area want to see the Bronzeville Trail become a community asset that will stand the test of time. The overarching vision of the public engagement meeting was one of a sustainable future – achieving a balance of community, culture, commerce, and conservation. Residents overwhelmingly agreed that emphasis should be placed on preserving greenspace for spending time in nature while repurposing old train stations and vacant lots to create safe places to play, dance, and attend performances.

It is important for the Bronzeville Trail to represent the district’s rich history and serve the community as a connection that reaches across the neighborhood to give residents better access to nature, physical activity, art, and shopping. This space serves as an opportunity to provide much needed greenspace within the urban landscape of Chicago, bolster the local economy, and create a trail network for biking and walking that will support the health and wellness of the community.

RESPONSES FELL INTO THREE MAIN CATEGORIES:



### KEY COMMENTS:

- HIGHLIGHT LOCAL ART AND HISTORY
- CREATE A SAFE COMMUNITY SPACE FOR DANCE AND PERFORMANCES
- PRESERVE GREENSPACE AND ENHANCE TRAIL EXPERIENCE
- IMPROVE CONNECTION AND ACCESSIBILITY
- SUPPORT AND PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

63 ATTENDEES  
FROM ALL OVER THE  
BRONZEVILLE  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
CAME TOGETHER  
TO HAVE THEIR  
VOICES HEARD





# TELL US ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

## WHAT WE PRESENTED

To share their vision for the future Bronzeville Trail, residents were asked to participate in an interactive activity to help us understand the community from their perspective. Geospatial information was collected on a large aerial. Colored dots were used represent where participants live, work, and gather. Sticky notes documented perceived challenges and opportunities. and to identify areas of concern or prime locations for development and access.

## ? WHAT WE ASKED

- Q1A DESCRIBE YOUR VISION FOR THE TRAIL
- Q1B WHERE DO YOU LIVE/WORK/GATHER?
- Q1C HELP US UNDERSTAND OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES ALONG THE RAIL LINE



### WELCOME!

#### BRONZEVILLE TRAIL

KENWOOD FEASIBILITY STUDY & PREDEVELOPMENT SERVICES PUBLIC MEETING

THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST  
EQUITY • OPPORTUNITY • PROSPERITY

DPD  
Department of Planning and Development

BRONZEVILLE TRAIL  
TASK FORCE

#### today's GOALS

- Build community awareness of the Kenwood line potential
- Understand how the embankment currently impacts the neighborhood
- Report the existing conditions assessment
- Communicate cost of bringing the line to a state of good repair
- Explore high level solutions to establish a continuous trail path

#### HOW TO ENGAGE

Join us in exploring the stations around the room and engage in discussions surrounding:

**HISTORY**  
Understanding where we've been

**CONTEXT**  
Understanding where we are

**VISION**  
Determining where we're going

#### WHY

is it important to provide your feedback?

- You have a say in shaping the future of your neighborhood for future generations.
- The City is responsible for responding to the needs and wants of it's residents
- The final trail design should reflect the needs of you and your neighbors

PROJECT LOCATION

BRONZEVILLE TRAIL TASK | PUBLIC MEETING, KENWOOD LINE

## TELL US ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

### ENGAGE:

#### DESCRIBE YOUR VISION FOR THE TRAIL

01 What word in short phrase would you use to explain your vision for the future trail? Write on a sticky note and post below:

#### UNDERSTANDING EXISTING CONDITIONS

02 Where do you live/work/gather?  
● Live (place a green dot)  
● Work (place a blue dot)  
● Gather (place a yellow dot)

03 Help us understand opportunities and challenges along the rail line:

Place a RED sticky note in areas that are CHALLENGES within the community (this might be an underutilized or vacant building, or an area with lots of traffic)

Place a GREEN sticky note in areas that are OPPORTUNITIES (these are areas that are prime locations for access or development. Write on the sticky note what you'd like to see (retail, housing, parks and open space, community institutions etc.)

Engage on the pinned up map beside this board. Place a dot and write on a sticky note.

BRONZEVILLE TRAIL TASK | PUBLIC MEETING, KENWOOD LINE

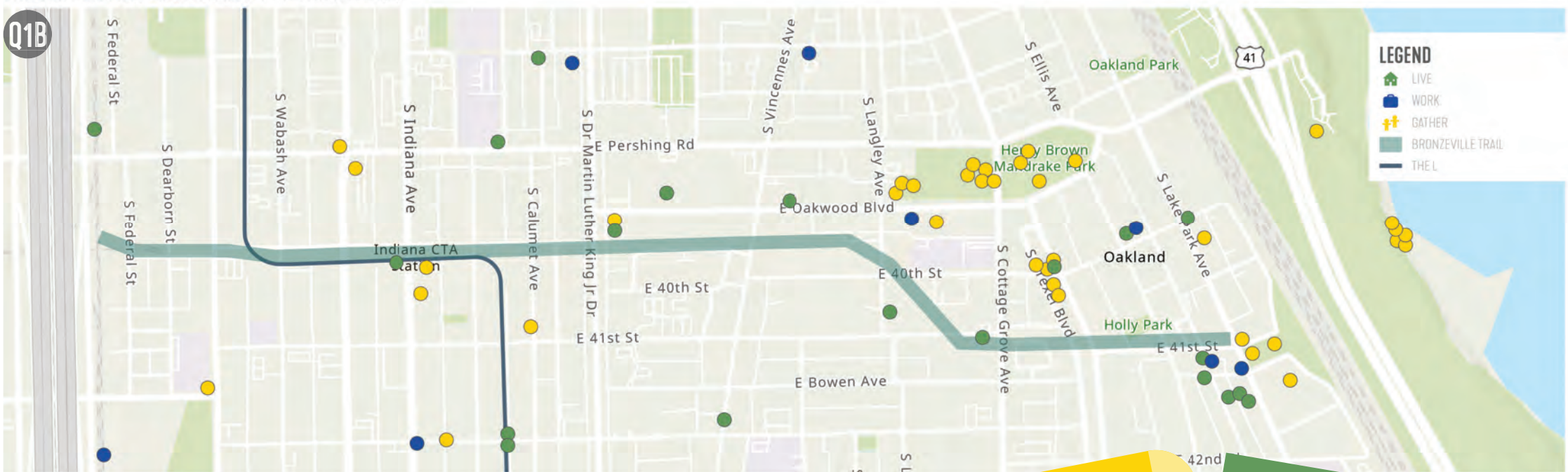


# TELL US ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY



## WHAT WE HEARD

PUBLIC MEETING RESPONSES 1/4 MILE FROM TRAIL



Q1C

Responses regarding the opportunities and challenges presented by the Bronzeville Trail from this study generally follow the following themes:

### OPPORTUNITIES

- › Carry on a dynamic legacy into the future
- › Community spaces for art, music, dance, theatre, and fitness
- › Balance community space, economic vitality, and preservation of greenspace

### CHALLENGES

- › Accessibility and safety
- › Privacy and security for homes along trail
- › Lack of restaurants and grocery stores
- › Wayfinding and parking



#### BRONZEVILLE TRAIL TALK

"I would like to see it completed in my life-time; I look forward to using it. I grew up in the neighborhood. My husband grew up in this neighborhood. He called this neighborhood sacred ground, and he would be very excited to see this happen."

**ZENOBIJA JOHNSON-BLACK**  
BRONZEVILLE RESIDENT

Q1A

DESCRIBE YOUR VISION FOR THE BRONZEVILLE TRAIL



### COMMUNITY

Q1A

- › A sense of belonging
- › Community-friendly
- › Local artwork
- › Safe space for kids

55%



### PRESERVATION

Q1A

- › Nature and bird-watching
- › Walking, biking, & skateboarding
- › Trail focused

27%



### LOCAL ECONOMY

Q1A

- › Legacy: development & growth
- › Opportunity: exercise & jobs

18%



# PLACEMAKING & OPEN SPACE

## WHAT WE PRESENTED

Placemaking is the art of creating spaces through purposeful planning, design, and management. The holistic approach involves those who will ultimately use the space, to fully understand the culture and needs of a community.

Boards for activation strategies were presented identifying vacant lots for community gathering, art, and programming. We asked residents how they would like to see these spaces used during pre-construction phases and what they hoped to see as more permanent, long-term solutions. Examples of what's possible for these spaces were provided as inspiration.

## ? WHAT WE ASKED

- Q2 WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE ON VACANT LOTS?
- Q3 WHICH SITE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ACTIVATED FIRST?



## PLACEMAKING & OPEN SPACE

**LONG-TERM ACTIVATION SITES**  
Help us understand where you see future activity happening within your community. "Activity" can be gathering space, community institutions and resources, outdoor recreation, programming, etc. See "What's Possible" to help spark some ideas and possibilities. Use the map below to understand where vacant sites, prime for activation, exist today.

- ENGAGE:**  
**WHAT'S THE VISION?**
- Q1 Where do you want to see open spaces? Place a green dot
  - Q2 What do you want to see on vacant lots? Write on a sticky note
  - Q3 What type of open space would you like to see? Write on a sticky note



## PLACEMAKING & OPEN SPACE

**SHORT-TERM ACTIVATION SITES**  
The following vacant lots have been identified as areas prime for community gathering, art and programming in the near future, before the trail is constructed.



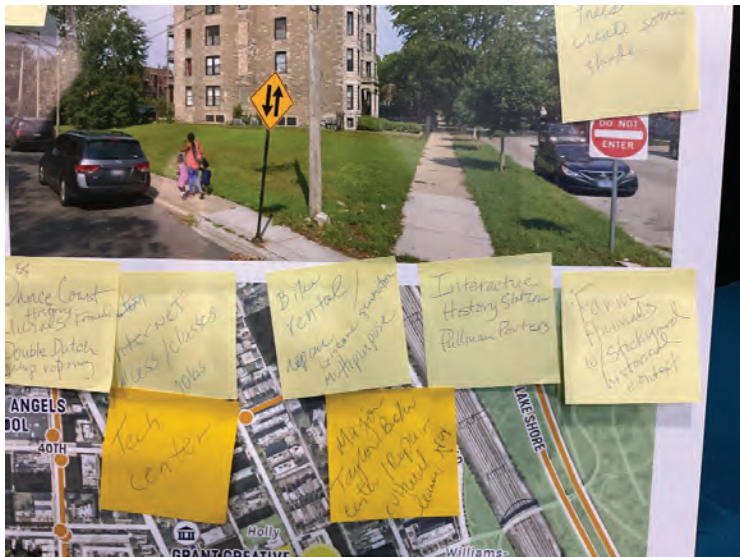


# PLACEMAKING & OPEN SPACE



## WHAT WE HEARD

- Q2 WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE ON VACANT LOTS?
- Q3 WHICH SITE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ACTIVATED FIRST?



### BRONZEVILLE TRAIL TALK

"I think the most exciting thing for me is that we finally get to see something old become new again. The finished product is this gem that is just cherished for another century so that's what excites me the most."

**CALEB LOGAN**  
BRONZEVILLE RESIDENT



## COMMUNITY

- Q2
  - > Art/murals
  - > Theatre/outdoor performances
  - > Year-round farmers' market
  - > Public patio for yoga/dance

36%
- Q3
  - > Public art/murals
  - > Dancing & performances
  - > Youth engagement
  - > Double dutch court

50%



## PRESERVATION

- Q2
  - > Trees & parks
  - > Public/community gardens
  - > Dog parks
  - > Trail at grade

28%
- Q3
  - > Trail support
  - > Community garden space

8%



## LOCAL ECONOMY

- Q2
  - > Gym/workout space
  - > Commercial retail
  - > Locally owned businesses
  - > Restaurants/coffee shops

24%
- Q3
  - > Charging stations
  - > Bike rentals
  - > WeWork & internet access
  - > Independent vendors

33%



## OTHER

- Q2
  - > Connectivity
  - > Utilizing bridges

12%
- Q3
  - > Food assistance
  - > Housing support
  - > Farm animals

8%



# INFRASTRUCTURE & OPPORTUNITY

## WHAT WE PRESENTED

With all rehabilitation efforts it is important to understand the integrity of the existing infrastructure and what may be necessary to support the vision. The existing bridges, walls, and stations will need remediation; the bridges are in good condition the walls and stations will require assessment. We asked residents where they might imagine new connections to the existing structures and how the old train stations might be repurposed.

## ? WHAT WE ASKED

- Q4 IMAGINE THE WHITE ARROWS ARE BRIDGES. COULD YOU SEE BRIDGES EXISTING WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY IN THESE LOCATIONS?
- Q5 HOW MIGHT THE OLD TRAIN STATIONS BE REPURPOSED?



## INFRASTRUCTURE & OPPORTUNITY

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Existing bridges in generally good condition
- Most likely have lead paint which must be remediated
- Would need repainting if reused
- Bearing replacement
- Some steel rehabilitation
- Limited steel member replacement



### ENGAGE:

#### WHERE'S THE CONNECTION?

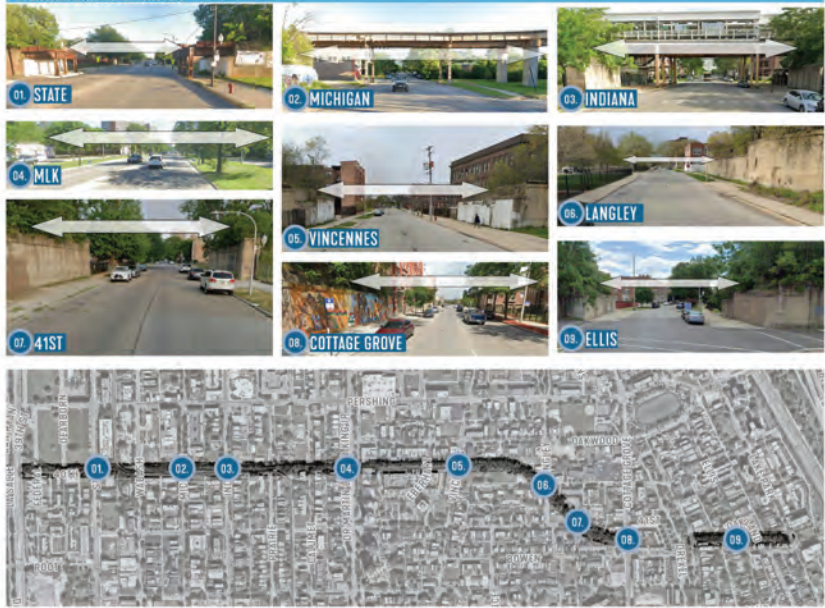
Write your ideas on a sticky note.

- Q1 Imagine the white arrows are bridges to connect the trail. Could you see bridges existing within your community in these locations? Place a red dot for "no" and a green dot for "yes."

### EXISTING BRIDGE LOCATIONS



### POTENTIAL BRIDGE LOCATIONS



## INFRASTRUCTURE & OPPORTUNITY

### STATIONS



### ABUTMENTS



### SCENARIO ASSESSMENT

To understand next steps, a scenario assessment was completed to compare alternatives.

#### SCENARIO 1: DO NOTHING



#### SCENARIO 2: DEMOLISH & REPURPOSE THE ENTIRE LINE



#### SCENARIO 3: DEVELOP RETAINED EMBANKMENT



### EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Asbestos and paint abatement restoration of the interior
- Vertical access may have to be reestablished
- Doors and windows structurally repaired or sealed
- Future use of station will determine level of remediation and structural rework
- Stations ceiling/embankment deck may require repair for new loads

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Backwalls and abutment seats need repair
- Seats may require adjustment for new bridge clearances
- Crack repair needed throughout
- Vegetation removal required

### ENGAGE:

#### WHAT'S THE VISION?

Write your ideas on a sticky note.

- Q1 How might the old train station space be repurposed?



# INFRASTRUCTURE & OPPORTUNITY

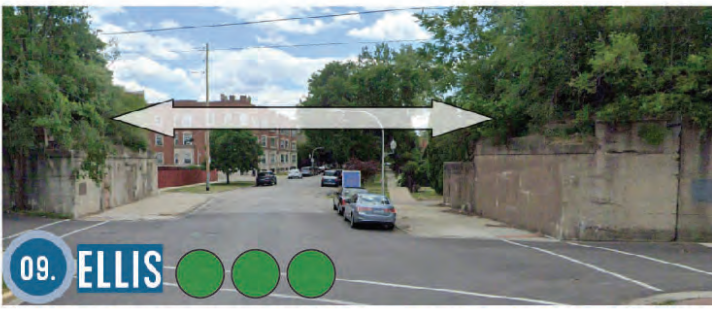
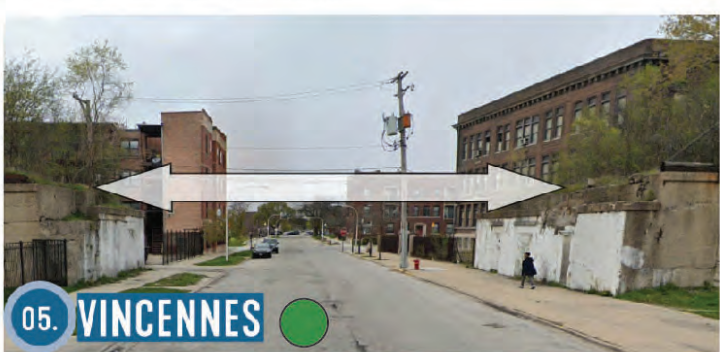


## WHAT WE HEARD

Q4 IMAGINE THE WHITE ARROWS ARE BRIDGES. COULD YOU SEE BRIDGES EXISTING WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY IN THESE LOCATIONS?

- Yes
- No

### POTENTIAL BRIDGE LOCATIONS



Q5

HOW MIGHT THE OLD TRAIN STATIONS BE REPURPOSED?



## PRESERVATION

Q5

31%

- Wayfinding
- Rehabilitation
- Tree canopy



## COMMUNITY

Q5

38%

- Anchor/Tender House
- Public art installations
- Wheelchair access



## LOCAL ECONOMY

Q5

8%

- Kenwood history
- Locally owned retail



## OTHER

Q5

23%

- Connectivity
- Utilizing bridges



# CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS

## WHAT WE PRESENTED

Since the Kenwood line was discontinued several bridges were removed. In order to have a continuous and connected trail accessible for community members of all abilities, additional access paths and creative street level solutions are necessary. We asked what accessibility challenges they have perceive, how to improve connectivity, and where might be the best places for the future trail to be at street level. Community members placed red dots on a map to show where they wanted access at street level and yellow dots to indicate community assets to which the trail should be connected.

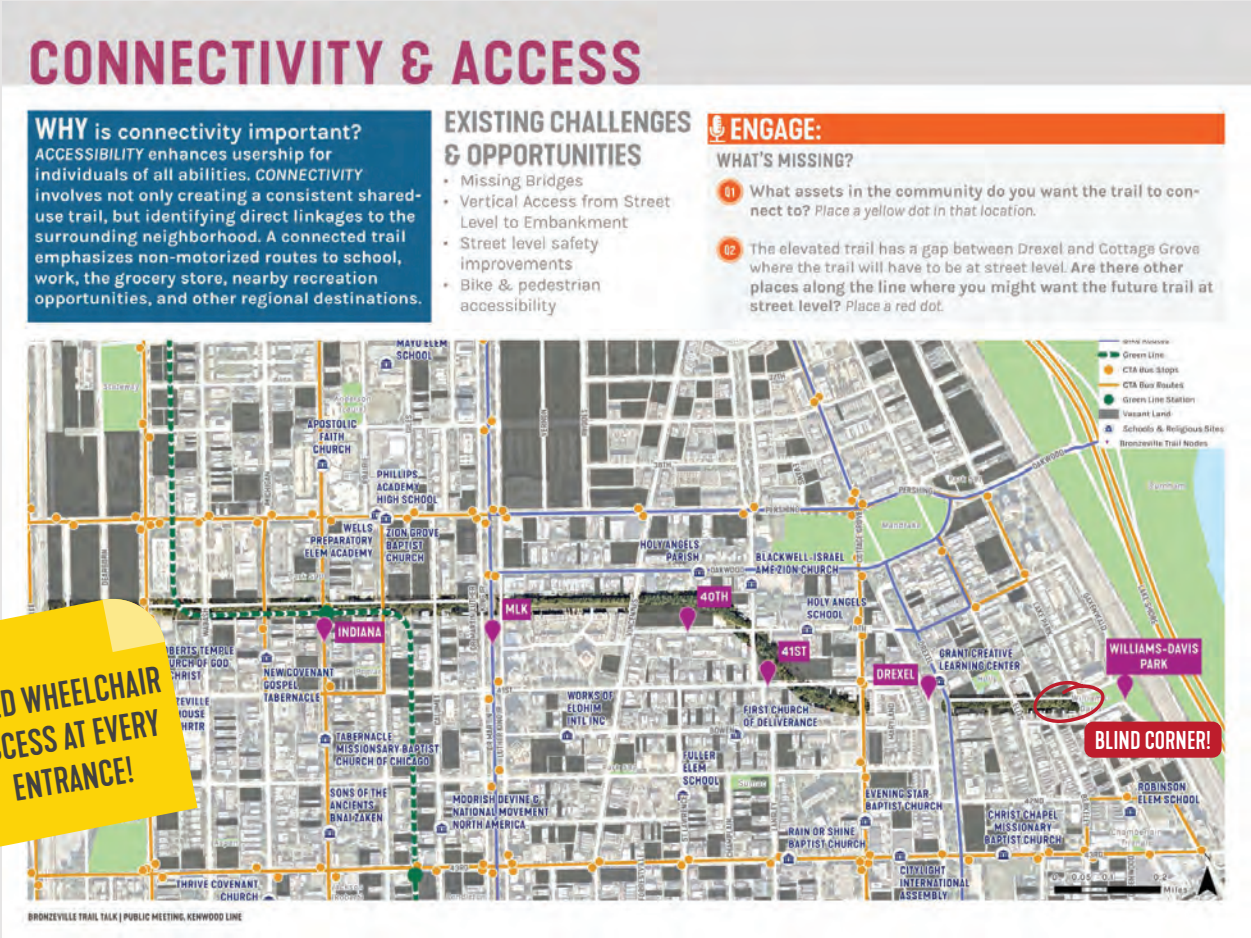
## ? WHAT WE ASKED

- Q6 WHAT'S MISSING ALONG THE TRAIL?
- Q7 WHAT ASSETS DO YOU WANT THE TRAIL CONNECTED TO, AND ARE THERE OTHER PLACES YOU WANT THE TRAIL CONNECTED AT STREET LEVEL?



## WHAT'S MISSING?

Here are some of the things that residents have noticed are missing along the rail line and would like to see included in the design of the Bronzeville Trail.



Q6

ACCESS POINTS

VISIBILITY AROUND CORNERS

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

COMMUNITY GARDEN

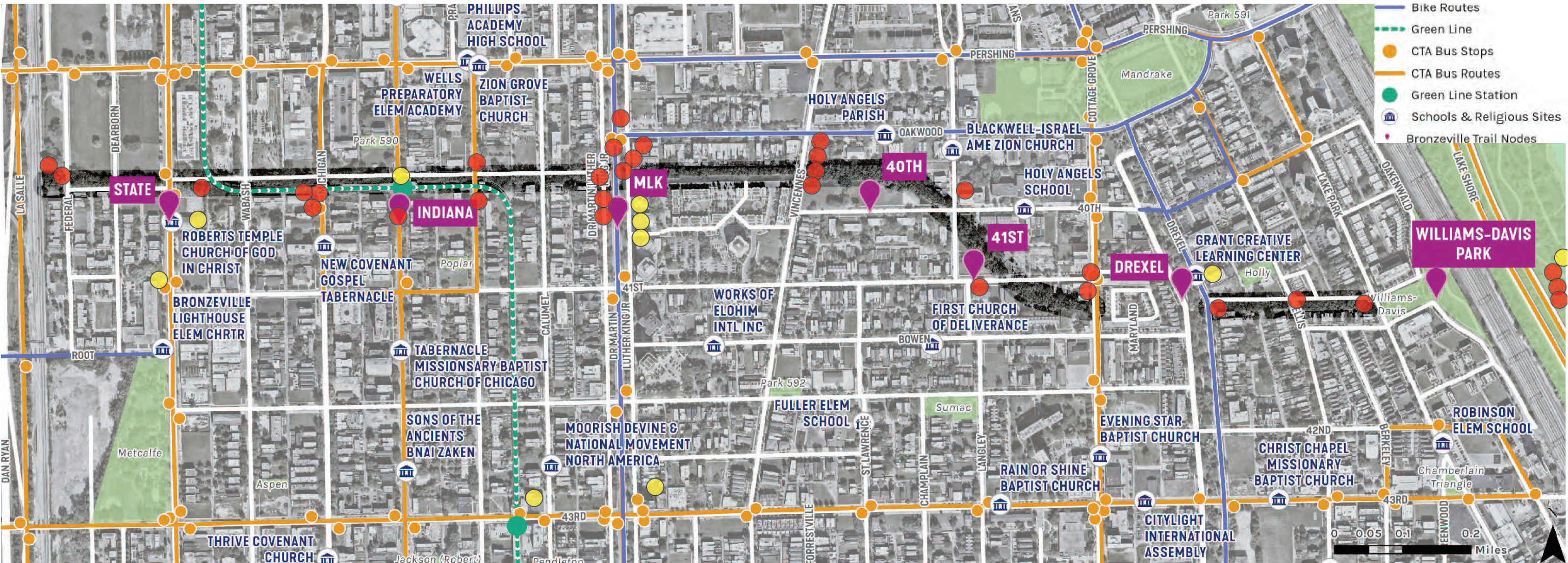


# CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS



## WHAT WE HEARD

Q7 WHAT ASSETS DO YOU WANT THE TRAIL CONNECTED TO, AND ARE THERE OTHER PLACES YOU WANT THE TRAIL CONNECTED AT STREET LEVEL?



- Yellow dots were used to identify community assets that should be connected to the trail.
- Red dots were placed along the line where residents might want street level access.

### STREET ACCESS TOP CHOICES

- › Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.
- › St. Vincennes Ave.
- › S. Michigan Ave.
- › Oakwood Beach

### TOP COMMUNITY ASSETS

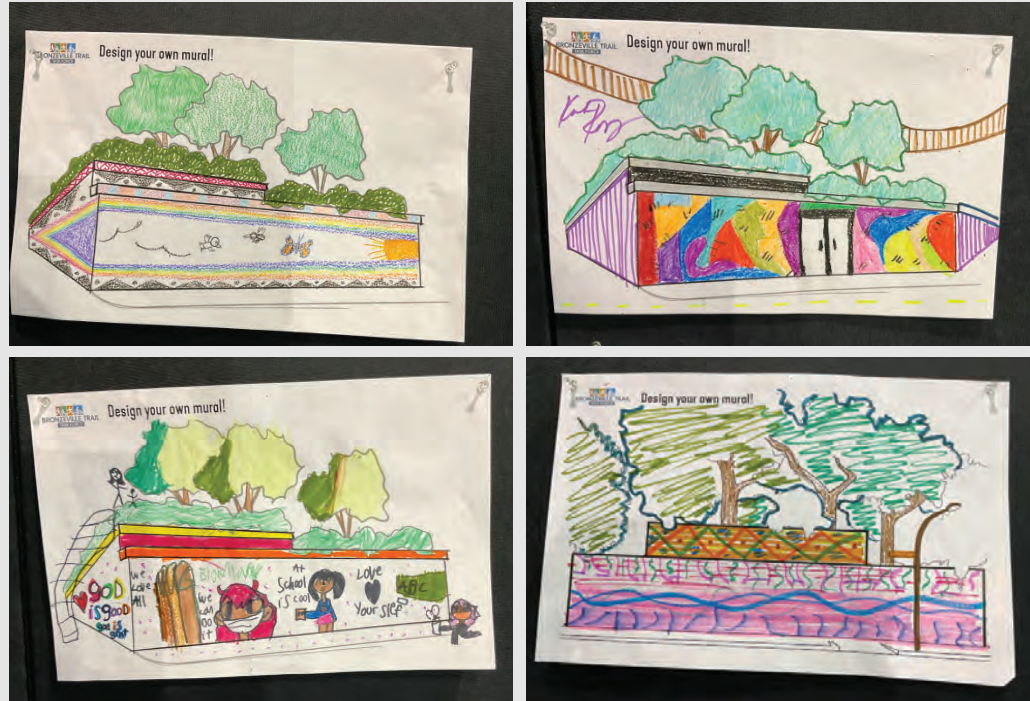
- › King Supermarket, Morning Star Baptist
- › Grant Creative Learning Center
- › Roberts Temple Church
- › WIC Grocery
- › THE FORUM



# ARTS, CULTURE, & HISTORY

## WHAT WE PRESENTED

The Kenwood Line and Bronzeville Neighborhood have a vibrant history with much to celebrate! With a community culture as robust as that of the Bronzeville district, it is as important to understand and honor the past as much as it is to make way for a resilient and fruitful future. To do this, we asked the community what stories they want to tell and how they hope the new trail will deepen their roots and act as a placemark for the continued recognition and perseverance of their culture.



WE ASKED THE COMMUNITY TO DESIGN THEIR OWN MURALS, HERE ARE SOME OF THE RESULTS!

## ARTS, CULTURE, & HISTORY

### 01. WHERE HAVE WE BEEN?

The Kenwood Line and the Bronzeville Neighborhood have a rich history, with much to celebrate, and many stories to tell. Here are some of the highlights related to the history of the embankment.

### 02. WHERE ARE WE NOW?

#### ENGAGE:

01 What are things that are happening within your community today that you celebrate? (Write on a sticky note and paste below)

### 03. WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Below is a timeline of current efforts and potential next steps to implementing a future trail on the abandoned Kenwood Line. Building a trail is a large and complex undertaking that requires a lot of funding and time. Below are potential next steps leading toward implementation.

## ARTS, CULTURE, & HISTORY

### WHAT'S YOUR LOVE LETTER TO BRONZEVILLE?

Past, Present or Future

#### PICK UP A POSTCARD...

and tell us what you love about Bronzeville! Send your community a love letter and tell us about your memory with Bronzeville or the Kenwood Line, why it matters to you and what you would like to see in the future. Scan the QR code to send it through your phone or simply fill out this postcard and bring it back to us!

#### TO ENGAGE ONLINE...

You can also write your love letter online (now or later!). just scan the QR code and fill out the prompts.

#### USE YOUR PHONE CAMERA TO SCAN ME!

### SHARE THE LOVE BRONZEVILLE

What do you love about Bronzeville? Send it a love letter! We want to know what you LOVE about Bronzeville - past, present, or future.

To: \_\_\_\_\_  
(to phone/handwrite/landscape that can be mailed)

My Memory / Message:

Title  
What's unique about this memory?  
How would you title your love letter?  
(To a word or phrase)

### BRONZEVILLE WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

#### Love Letter

What do you love about Bronzeville? Send a love letter to your neighborhood or the Kenwood Line and tell us about your favorite memory, meaningful story, an important place or tradition, or just what you love about your community - past, present, or future. Scan the QR code to send it through your phone or simply fill out this postcard and bring it back to us!

#### CONTACT US

For more information, please visit [www.bronzevilletrail.org](http://www.bronzevilletrail.org) or email us at [bronzevilletrail@gmail.com](mailto:bronzevilletrail@gmail.com)



# ARTS, CULTURE, & HISTORY



## WHAT WE HEARD

Q8 WHAT DO YOU CELEBRATE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

### COMMON THEMES

THE GREAT MIGRATION

THE STOCKYARDS

NIKE SPONSORED RUN CLUBS

LOCAL ART

#### BRONZEVILLE TRAIL TALK

*"It's gonna bring a lot of change to the neighborhood, to the community, perhaps more jobs for people."*

**KEVIN MORROW**  
BRONZEVILLE BUSINESS OWNER

#### BRONZEVILLE TRAIL TALK

*"...It's a whole lot of work though that has to be done but if we could pull it off I think it's going to be phenomenal."*

**TURINA RUSSELL**  
BRONZEVILLE RESIDENT

## BRONZEVILLE TRAIL TALK

Fourteen community members were interviewed; we asked them what's happening within the community today that they celebrate. Here's what matters most about the Bronzeville neighborhood and greater Kenwood community.

*"What excites me about the Kenwood line is the opportunity for people to have a number of ways to engage in the historic Brownsville community. It gives people an opportunity to walk through a history that is incomparable in any other area of the city."*



**Pemon Rami**  
Bronzeville resident/historian



# LOVE LETTERS TO BRONZEVILLE

We asked residents to write love letters to their neighborhood, sharing memories and messages about what Bronzeville means to them. This postcard was available at the public meeting and digitally for those who were unable to attend. We hope to receive more love letters as planning continues for the Bronzeville Trail.



BRONZEVILLE

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Love Letter

What do you love about Bronzeville? Send a love letter to your neighborhood or the Kenwood Line and tell us about your favorite memory, meaningful story, an important place or tradition, or just what you love about your community - past, present, or future. Scan the QR code to send it through your phone or simply fill out this postcard and bring it back to us!

CONTACT US

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SHARE THE LOVE

BRONZEVILLE

What is your favorite thing about Bronzeville? Send it a love letter! We want to know what you LOVE about Bronzeville - past, present, or future.

To: 43 RD AND LANGLEY  
(a place/landmark/landscape that can be mapped)

My Memory / Message:  
TO THE BLOCK AND NEIGHBORHOOD THAT HOLD MY FAMILY FOR OVER SEVENTY YEARS. ALTHOUGH I DIDNT LIVE THERE, I AM GREATFUL FOR THE PEOPLE AND MEMORIES THAT SHAPE MY FAMILY THERE.

Title  
What's unique about this memory?  
How would you title your love letter?  
BEGINNINGS  
(in a word or phrase)

SHARE THE LOVE

BRONZEVILLE

What is your favorite thing about Bronzeville? Send it a love letter! We want to know what you LOVE about Bronzeville - past, present, or future.

To:   
(a place/landmark/landscape that can be mapped)

My Memory / Message:  
Growing up in Bronzeville, I remember watching the Bud Billiken Parade on 46th & King Drive.

Title  
What's unique about this memory?  
How would you title your love letter?  
  
(in a word or phrase)