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# **The Michigan Boulevard Apartments: Historic Preservation or Redevelopment**



By

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**Matriculation Requirements for a Master's in the Urban and Regional Planning-Urban Studies Program at:**

**Michigan State University  
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2005



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## **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this paper is to determine whether the Michigan Boulevard Apartments located in Chicago, Illinois would be feasible for historical preservation or redevelopment. By assessing the existing development area the report will help provide the original intent of the development, the past and current treatment of the development located on the south side of Chicago, and finally a recommendation on how this development can continue to house low-income families that are living in this community.

### *Procedure*

A preliminary analysis of the development area was conducted which included collecting pertinent history on families that lived in the building, literature reviews that included famous families that once lived in the building, and conducting a drive-time access evaluation of the communities and neighbors in the community. In addition, assessing the neighborhood conditions provided an excellent foundation concerning how the community can still benefit from historically preserving and/or not limited to redeveloping the building. After interviewing current neighbors and past neighbors, developers, and city planners it was clear that the community could be supported by redeveloping the building for working class, low-income and middle income families.

### *Recommendations*

- The documentation needed required by the National Historic Society suggests that the building currently has weak evidence to support historically preserving the building. However, for the market area to sustain any new housing developments the proposed development could cater to residents within the community. As the population increases in Bronzeville current residents will not be able to sustain housing at affordable rates.
- Several new developments within the community provide a benchmark for housing rates that do not support low income families' purchasing power of single-family homes or condominiums.

Many conversions of grey-stones similar to the brownstones attached to the Michigan Boulevard Apartments have a starting price of \$329,000.00 with a monthly assessment fee of \$350.00 per month, not to mention a hefty tax bill each year. Policy makers within this ward are obviously in support of these outrageous prices by having their names in big bold print on the advertisement in front of the structures. This is not like the early 1920's, when families of the Bronzeville community benefited from strong community leadership. Faith-based institutions supported policy makers and family-owned businesses supported the community. Today, policy-makers in the market area have forgotten about the families in the community struggling to sustain on limited incomes. However, during the late 1980's and early 1990's the abandonment of property, closed businesses, drugs, and other factors pushed families out of the Bronzeville community. Today, the late 1990's and early 2000's fueled by the influx of the renovations projects on older brownstones/grey-stones, new construction at market value prices have professionals with six-figure incomes wishing to live in the communities close to downtown. The new conversions have put a demand on the Bronzeville community that will certainly aid in many families losing their property and homes.

- Using various revitalization funding that Chicago has to offer can help aid the community. Revitalizing the community at affordable and current market rates can recreate the Bronzeville community. The community already has a unique character and could easily become a neighborhood for people of various incomes to live in and enjoy the benefits that come with living in an urban community.



## **Organization of the Paper**

The purpose of this paper is to determine whether the Michigan Boulevard Apartments located in Chicago, Illinois would be feasible for historical preservation or redevelopment. This paper will hopefully serve as a document that will assist policy makers in preserving the intra-structure within the urban community whether for the allocation of historic preservation or whether it is the purpose of redevelopment.

The paper is presented is organized into an executive summary and ten chapters. A description of each is as following.

Executive Summary - An introduction to the research objectives concerning the Michigan Boulevard Apartments and findings.

Chapter 1.0 - Introduction and Michigan Boulevard Apartments' history, site map of location, and zoning plans.

Chapter 2.0 - Methodology explains the method used in gathering data, a description of the structure, location, surrounding renovated structures, interviews conducted and neighborhood assessment conducted.

Chapter 3.0 - Market Analyses of Bronzeville provides a comprehensive analysis of the community by conducting a windshield survey, accessibility to the community, and data collected from the United States Census Bureau to determine the economic status of families living in the community.

Chapter 4.0 - The Bronzeville Heritage provides an overview of the history of the Bronzeville.

Chapter 5.0 - The Master Plan explains the original intent for the Bronzeville community, including past and current zoning ordinance.

Chapter 6.0 - Historic Preservation provides an overview of the policies that determine sites as historical landmarks. Furthermore, the advantages and disadvantages of allocatable structures as historical landmarks.

Chapter 7.0 - Redevelopment outlines some options available through the City of Chicago's redevelopment grants.

Chapter 8.0 - Market Area Assessment provides a detailed description of the current conditions within the community. The chapter describes the current housing stock, streetscape, and general conditions of the community. This chapter also provides an overview of a comparable community assessment of an adjacent community called Washington Park. The chapter explains ways in which the community has been able to attract and retain residents.

Chapter 9.0 - Implementation Strategies describes some housing incentives for developers and residents available through the City of Chicago.

Chapter 10.0 - Recommendations for redevelopment of the Michigan Boulevard Apartments. This chapter will describe some options available through the City of Chicago Department of Housing.



## **1.0 Introduction & History**

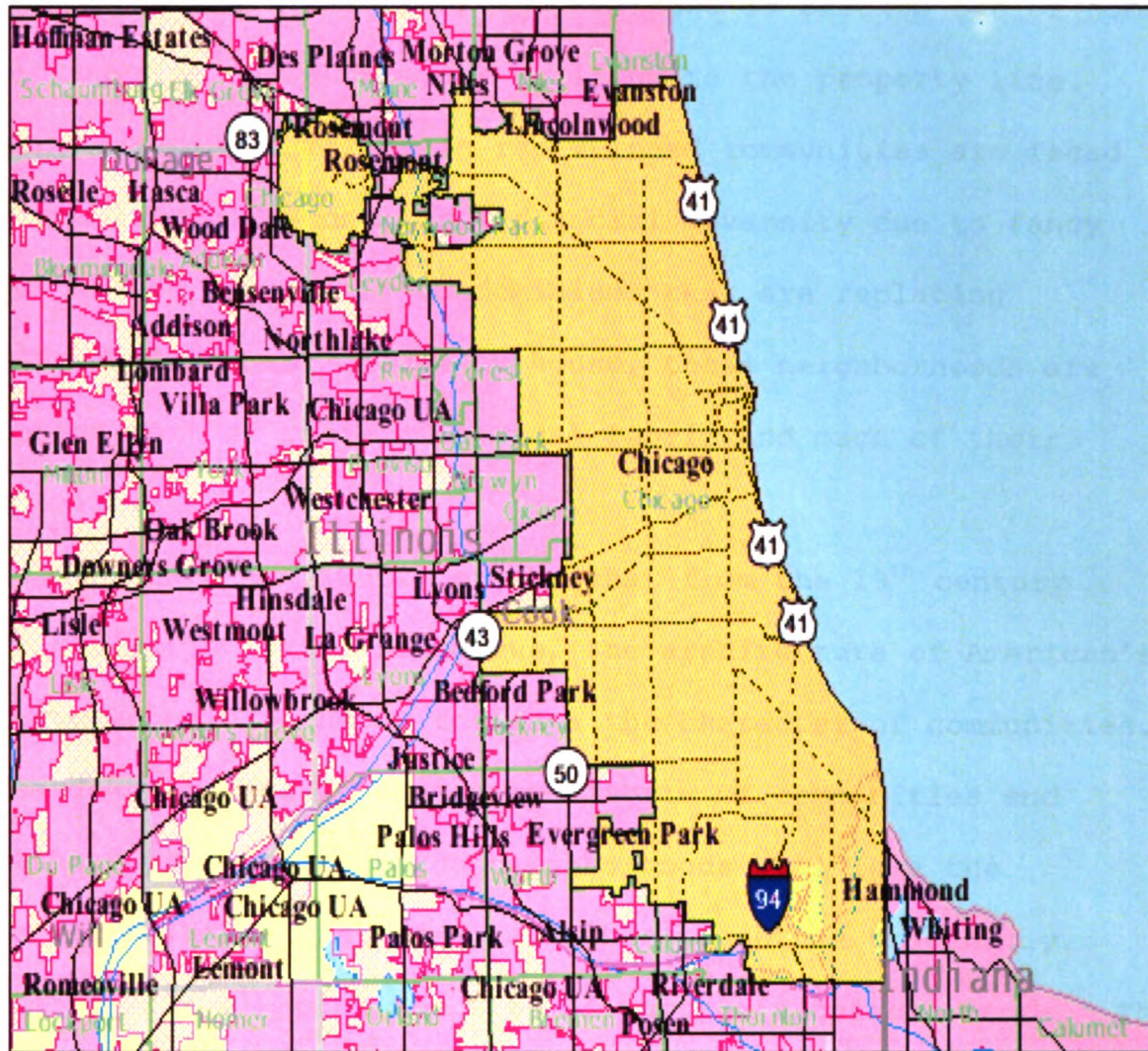
### **Purpose of Paper**

The purpose of this paper is to determine whether the Michigan Boulevard Apartments located in Chicago, Illinois would be feasible for historical preservation or redevelopment.

Currently, no studies have been completed on the feasibility of restoring the Michigan Boulevard Apartments. This paper will suggest that the City of Chicago should utilize the city's resources to preserve this building and re-open its doors to many black families who lost not only their homes, but valuable history as well.

State to state, a national "tear down epidemic" is wiping out historic neighborhoods one house at a time. The closer you get to downtown Chicago, more and more newly constructed condominiums, townhouses, and single-family homes are popping up on vacant parcels of land. At the same time, older homes and apartment complexes are demolished and replaced with dramatically larger, out of scale new structures. The historical character of the existing neighborhood is lost. Shown on the following page is a map of the City of Chicago.

**Figure 1. Map of the City of Chicago**



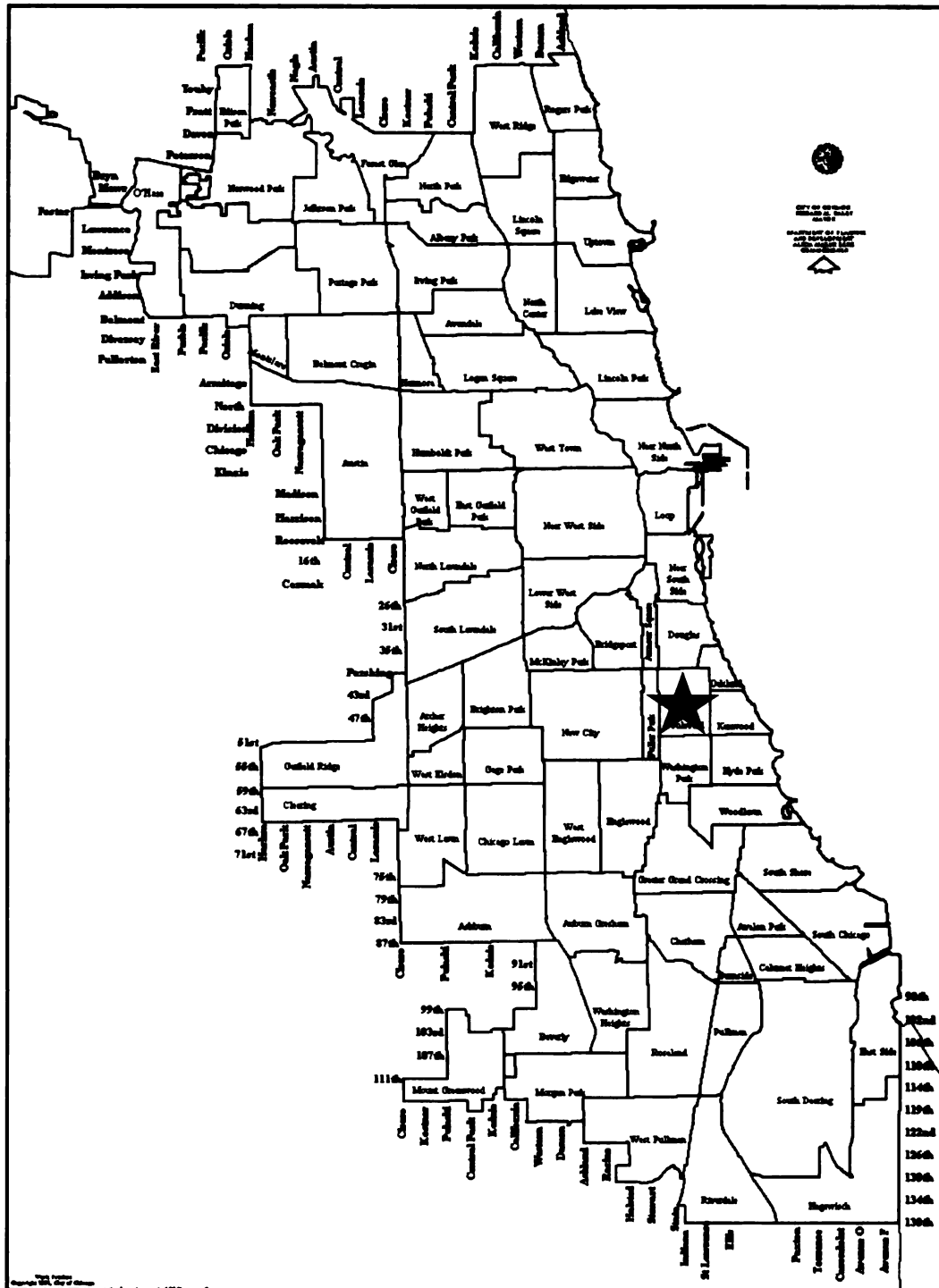
**Source:** The City of Chicago Geographical Information System, 2004

As the city of Chicago population increased some neighborhood livability is diminished as trees are removed, backyards are eliminated, and sunlight is blocked out of homes by towering new structures built up to the property line. Many existing families in redeveloped communities are faced with difficult economics and social diversity due to fancy townhouses and costly condominiums that are replacing affordable homes. House by house, these neighborhoods are losing part of their historical fabric and much of their character.

Richard Moe (2002) states that from the 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian to 1920's bungalows, the architecture of American's historic neighborhoods reflects the character of communities. Teardowns radically change the fabric of communities and without proper safeguards neighborhoods will lose the characteristics that drew residents to settle originally. Figure 2 is a map of the City of Chicago's neighborhoods. The star indicates the Bronzeville community.



**Figure 2. The Bronzeville Community in the City of Chicago**



**Source:** The City of Chicago's Map of Neighborhoods, 2003  
 Star indicate the Bronzeville Community

## **2.0 Methodology**

### **Preliminary Analysis of the Community**

A comprehensive analysis of the development area was conducted which included collecting pertinent history from families that once lived in the building and families that had a relative that lived in the building. The analysis included conducting a windshield survey of the community, gathering literature on the building, data obtained from the United State Census Bureau, The Chicago Housing Authority and attending advocacy events where community residents gathered to discuss strategies in which the building could be saved. The preliminary analysis included:

- a market area assessment that considers the potential availability of the current structure and the accessibility of transportation both public and private.
- a residential data analysis that reviewed the demand of the community's housing stock and characteristics of the current housing stock. Is there a demand for low income housing in the community?
- study of a adjacent neighborhood that has experienced growth over the years including an increase in housing

stock, schools, and other retail/commercial  
developments.

### **3.0 An Introduction to the Market Analyses of the Bronzeville Community**

The Bronzeville community has experienced various transitions since the early 1920's through the late 1990's. These factors were both good and bad! Good factors have implemented long-lasting friendships, business partnerships and educational institutions and family unions through marriage. The Bronzeville community supported a former resident of the community who became Chicago's first African American Mayor, Harold Washington and legacy such as the presence of Chicago Defender Newspaper owners. However, many negative factors have also played a key factor in the displacement of families, such as the demolition of the Robert Taylor homes and other public housing structures that are no longer in existence on Chicago's Southside.

Suchman & Sowell (1997) state that many inner-city neighborhoods are difficult to develop due to the physical conditions of the community, declining schools and inadequate public services which have played key roles in the lack of development. The disinvestment of retail and commercial businesses put their communities in serious jeopardy of losing population.

### **3.1 Market Area Assessment of Communities**

#### **Market Assessments**

A comprehensive analysis of the development area was conducted which included collecting pertinent history from families that once lived in the building and families that had relatives that lived in the building. Assessments included conducting a windshield survey of the community. The community is located in an accessible area on the south side of Chicago allowing entrance from north, south, east and west by either public transportation or private vehicle. There are two major expressways that lead to the downtown area, I94-90 or eastbound leading to Lake Shore Drive which both are convenient thoroughways to and from the community.

#### **Residential Data Analysis**

Data gathered from the United States Census was analyzed to determine the economic status of families currently living in the community. The importance of this data is to confirm the feasibility of redevelopment for current residents. Since this community is currently being redeveloped with a housing stock starting at more than a quarter of a million dollars for single family units/or homes. There are very few redevelopment sites for families living in the community with reasonable



incomes and families cannot afford the increase in rent or to become homeowners. The demand for housing derives from growth in the numbers of households or changes in the makeup of households that already exist in the community. Replacing housing units that are unattractive or unaccommodating will attract families that want to live there (Suchman & Sowell, 1997).

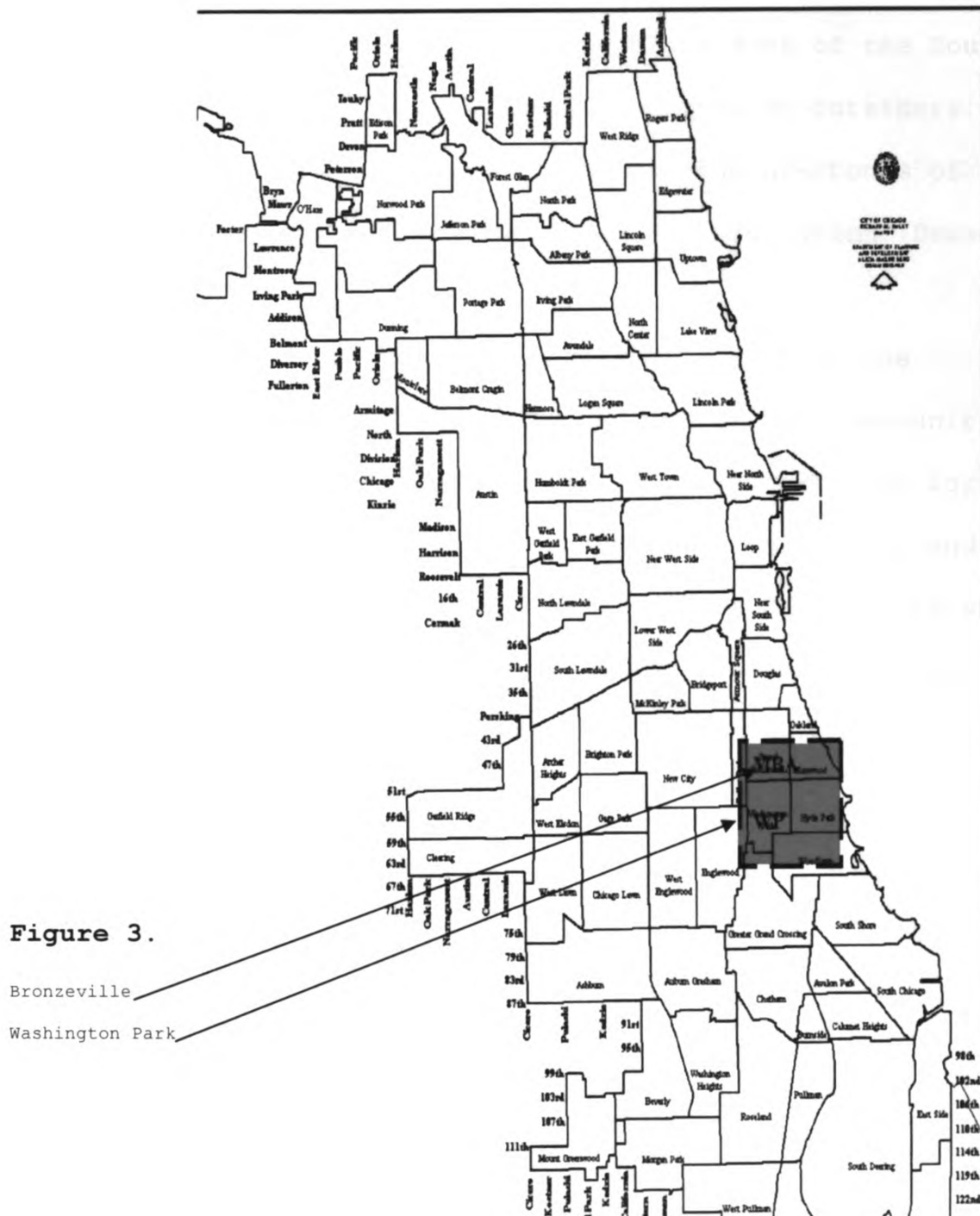
### **Comparable Community**

An assessment was completed to analyze the adjacent community Washington Park located in census tract 4001. Washington Park is a community that has had continuous growth since the early 1940's. Photographs taken of the comparable community indicates the community is continuing to build housing that is improving the living conditions of the residents.

At one time most of the community was purchased from the University of Chicago and was redeveloped for students and faculty persons to live and work in. However, many of the former students are now permanent residents of the community and many faculty members are now retired and still living in the community. Although the university has a reputation of overpowering the residents that once dominated the community, the university has also empowered the community with the development of low-income and market rate housing, schools,

and healthcare services that cater to all families within the community. Figure 2 highlights both communities, Washington Park and Bronzeville.

**Figure 2.** Geographical Location of Comparable Community-  
Washington Park and Bronzeville Communities



Source: Figure 2-3 the City of Chicago Map of Neighborhoods, 2003

#### **4.0 The Bronzeville Heritage**

The naming of the Bronzeville community was described best from a paragraph in the book "*The Black Metropolis*" authored by Drake and Clayton as the black area of the South-Side of Chicago originally called the ghetto by outsiders. However, the ghetto is a harsh term carrying overtones of poverty and suffering of exclusion and subordination (Drake and Clayton, 1945).

The authors continued with explaining most of the commoners in the so-called ghetto thought of this community as the South-Side; others were familiar with another name for the area it was known as Bronzeville. According to Clayton and Drake the name was used by the editor of the Chicago Bee who decided to hold a contest to elect a Mayor of Bronzeville. Since then the community was known as Bronzeville (Encyclopedia of Chicago, 2004).

## **History of the Michigan Boulevard Apartments (MBA)**

The Michigan Boulevard Apartments are located in the center of what was once was called the "Black Belt" of Chicago, now called "Bronzeville". During the late 1920's through 1940's, Bronzeville had a population of over 300,000 and over the years many prominent black families lived in Bronzeville.

Influential African Americans included the infamous writer who changed the face of American literature with *Uncle Tom's Children* and *Native Son*, Richard Wright. Others like Arna Bontemps who authored twenty-five books of poetry, history, fiction and anthologies (Hall and McNulty, 1971).

Others also included a scholar and influential leader in black theatrical dance Katherine Dunham an African-American choreographer and dancer who received her bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in anthropology from the University of Chicago. Dunham was a recipient of the Julius Rosenwald foundation fellowship during her academic career (Sawyer, 1995).

Horace Clayton, an African-American sociologist and writer, came to Chicago in 1929. Clayton came to study sociology at the University of Chicago and later became one of the preeminent black sociologists in America. Clayton's works include *Black Metropolis; a classic study of Chicago's "Bronzeville"*, and *The Black Workers and the New Unions*, a

*study of the roles of African Americans in industrialized life (Sawyer, 1995).*

Residents also included St. Clair Drake, an African-American anthropologist and educator from Suffolk, Virginia. After graduating from Hampton Institute, he worked for the Society of Friends at a number of schools and movements in the South. Drake later attended the University of Chicago and worked with eminent sociologist W. Lloyd Warner and others focusing on Black Chicago until 1945 (Hall and McNulty, 1971).

Drake was one of the first Black faculty members at Roosevelt University, where he taught for twenty-three years, leaving in 1973 to chair the African-American studies program at Stanford. These just to mention a few were all residents of this black melting pot community (Sawyers, 1995).

Bronzeville, surprisingly small, is only seven and one-half square miles. Horace Clayton and Claire Drake described it as a narrow tongue of land. It was seven miles in length and one and one half miles in width, where more than 300,000 black folks were packed solidly, State Street on the west, Cottage Grove bound it on East, 31<sup>st</sup> street on the North, and 51<sup>st</sup> street on the South.

At any rate, this was a place was where many young black professional singles met at places such as the Parkway Community Center and the Abraham Lincoln Center (now



Northeastern Illinois University Center for Inner city Studies) to conduct business and pleasure.

During, the 1930's through the 50's this black community was a thriving marketplace that started from 47<sup>th</sup> and State over to Cottage Grove with businesses from corner to corner. Hall (1984) described it as a community of black families from all occupations and economic backgrounds working together. Residential communication was good among families with the assistance from a variety of black owned newspapers such as the *Chicago Defender*, the *Chicago Bee*, *Chicago's World News Ledger*, and the *Metropolitan Post*. Bronzeville also housed several well-known restaurants, department stores, settlement houses, and social organizations (Ehrenhalts, 1995).



**Figure 5.** Club Members of the Diez Cavalier Club (1954).

In Bronzeville, there were social clubs and social organizations. Social organizations were managed by intellectuals and social clubs were managed by what the black intellectuals considered the “lower classes”. These so-called lower classes survived by organizing social clubs that consisted of bridge and card parties, policy games, and other events (Kilian, Fletcher, and Ciccone, 2000).

Sawyer (1995) described the popularity of the social clubs evident in the numbers during the 1930’s as some 800 social clubs existed with a combined membership of ten thousand or more. Another resource for this community was the arts. The Regal Theater housed on 47<sup>th</sup> and South Parkway (now Martin Luther King Dr.) was in its golden years from 1928 through the late 1950’s; no other theater came close to its glamour.

Sawyer (1995) states that at one time or another nearly every great black entertainer played at the Regal Theater in Chicago. Entertainers like Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughn, Billie Holliday, the Mills Brothers, Billy Eckstine, Ethel Waters, and Lena Horne, just to name a few,

were all frequent celebrities who traveled through the Regal Theatre.

By all means, Bronzeville was a vibrant community with a diverse culture. Black intellectuals worked and lived in the neighborhood. Families had opportunities to attend functions where famous black performers entertained during the late 1920's through the 1940's. Although social issues plagued the black community many people sought to convert some of the disparities into social change.

The Bronzeville neighborhood has been a winding road of history for many African American families under the influences of great leaders since early 1900's. Booker Taliaferro Washington for example, had a major impact on the Bronzeville neighborhood with financial support from Julius Rosenwald. Rosenwald was one of the first to develop a housing complex for black families.

## The Michigan Boulevard Apartments

### Julius Rosenwald

Figure 6. Julius Rosenwald



A young Jewish high school dropout by the name of Julius Rosenwald was quite impressed with Booker T. Washington's speech "*Up from Slavery*". Rosenwald decided to come to the aid of Washington by being an example for his peers by improving education for blacks in the south. Rosenwald and Washington together constructed 5,000 schools in 15 Southern states for African American children to attend (Trust, 2002). **Source:**

National Historical Society, 2004

In 1911, after reading Booker T. Washington's autobiography, Rosenwald was struck by a particular passage that fell heavy on his heart. The passage read: "My experience is that there is something in human nature which always makes an individual recognize and reward merit, no matter under what color of skin merit is found, I have found, too, that it is the visible, the tangible, that goes a long ways in softening prejudices. The actual sight of a first

class house that a Negro has built is ten times more potent than pages of discussion about a house that he ought to build, or perhaps could build" (Werner, 1939).

In 1913, Rosenwald teamed up with Washington to improve the quality of living conditions for many black working class families that were migrating from the rural South to the urban North. The initiation of better living conditions for many black families was already woven into the fabric of the Bronzeville community Washington considered Rosendwald's help was welcomed by many families in the community.

Over the next twenty years, Rosenwald continued to support the National Association for the Advancement of Color People and wanted to convince developers that investing in a housing complex located in the Bronzeville neighborhood could be wise investment. In 1929, Rosenwald introduced his plans to build the Michigan Boulevard Apartments to meet the needs of working-class African American families. The Michigan Boulevard Apartments was the first workforce housing complex built in America for working-class African American families (Trust, 2002).

Rosenwald under the guidance of his nephew architect Ernest A. Gurnsfed created a design for a 420-unit apartment





complex that consisted of efficiencies and one- to- four bedroom apartments (Werner, 1939). In the beginning, the investment was not intended to have a huge financial return but it did provide the community with a huge new standard for living in a housing complex (Bowly, 1978).

The Michigan Boulevard Apartments building was an impressive residence. The complex had five-story walls of red brick that was relieved with red brick banding. Storefronts lined the base along 47<sup>th</sup> and Michigan Street with eight art moderne terra-cotta doorways that led residents and visitors into a spacious inner court of gardens and a playground. The doorways provided an entrance to each building (Bowly, 1978).

**Figure 7.** The Michigan Boulevard Apartments in 1951



**Source:** The Newberry Library. Chicago, Illinois 2004

Figure 7 is a picture of children playing at the flag pole inside the building in 1951.

Rosenwald was a executive with the merchant Sears and Roebuck & Company. Rosenwald made sure that this housing complex was economically supported with storefront businesses that included Sears, Walgreen's, A&P grocery store and a credit union formed by Pullman Porters (Bowly, 1978).

In the early 70's, as a young girl growing in Chicago, my Sunday's visits to Ida Mae Taylor's apartment was special. Ms. Taylor was my great grandmother, and lived in the Michigan Boulevard Apartments from the early 1940's until she died in 1983. The building was a vibrant, beautiful, and it still generates fond memories of my sibling and me playing in the court yard. The courtyard was surrounded with trees, and included a play ground equipped with a filled sand box and watering park for hot summer days.

Several security guards who were Chicago Police Officers and who were on their not so busy shift would come to the building on late Sunday evenings on their horses to provide a special treat for the children, and a treat it was especially for the children that were just visiting the building. Parents always felt children were safe in the playground alone. The

playground was visible from just about every apartment window in the building.

Commitments were honored by forming close family relationships, neighbors were watchful of the younger children, and discipline could be implemented at anytime, by any adult. Relationships among households were strong; residents had an appreciation for family values that enhanced the community.

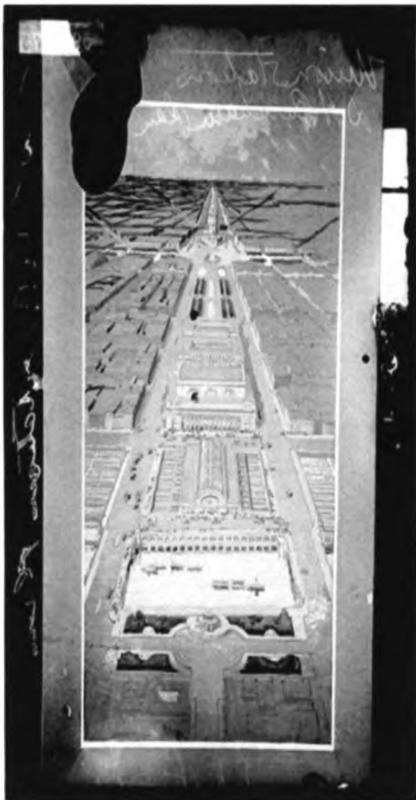
Mrs. Lillian Howard, a senior citizen was a previous resident of the building. She received a lifetime achievement award from Avon Cosmetics as a sales person, and moved into the building in the early 1930's (September 2003). Mrs. Howard stated that the City was spending too much money trying to house black folks who came from down South, so they built this building. Her husband was a Pullman Porter who pooled his money with other men in the building and started the Illinois Service Federal Credit Union that was housed in the building. The credit union is still active today and serves many families in the community (October, 2003).

## 5.0 The Master Plan

The Master plans are important planning documents, and should be the primary document for planning an area of a city. Historically master plans which deal with policies and programs have been overlooked in favor of documents that deal with regulations. For instance, although zoning ordinances are meant to follow the ideas of the master plan, very often zoning regulations preceded the development of the plan. City planning courses teach that zoning regulations represent the means for implementing master plans (Barnett, 1982).

**Figure 8.**

D. H. Burnham & Co. architectural  
drawing of city plans



The first major master plans for Chicago were unique plans that were carried out by Daniel Burnham as seen in figure 8. The Plans for Chicago are considered the Nation's first example of a comprehensive plan ([www.chi.il.Burnham](http://www.chi.il.Burnham)).

**Source:** The Harold Washington Library,  
Chicago, Illinois

No planner in the history of the United States has become as nationally and internationally known for his accomplishment as Daniel H. Burnham. ([www.ci.chi.il.us/Burnham](http://www.ci.chi.il.us/Burnham)) After the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago, inspiration to find ways to create a plan for the city constantly flowed in the minds of the members of the Merchants' Club and the Commercial Club.

Mr. Burnham's accomplishments included a special project, Chicago Burnham Park, along Lake Shore Drive between 14th and 56th streets in Chicago (Bach, 1960). In the midst of Burnham's plan was yet another plan, The Michigan Boulevard Apartments. Burnham's master plan is unclear on the specific use of the area where the Michigan Boulevard Apartments were built and according to earlier zoning ordinance the area was zoned as C1-2, which indicate land use as a restricted commercial district, and B3-3, which indicates the land use as a general retail district. Although this housing development did not make national history such as Burnham's plans it was in fact history to many black families in Chicago.



Today, the Michigan Boulevard Apartments has quite a different appearance. The building occupies the entire block of 47th, Michigan, Wabash and 46<sup>th</sup> streets. It is now abandoned with many broken windows. Cast iron doors that once displayed a beautiful entrance now have the appearance of an abandoned prison as seen on the following page in figure 9. What happen to this building is yet to be determined.

**Figure 9. The Michigan Boulevard Apartments**



**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones. Chicago, Illinois. October 2003.

## **5.1 Zoning Ordinances**

### **Past Zoning**

One of the first zoning ordinances were passed by The City Council in the City of Chicago and comprehensively amended on April 5, 1923 and approved by the Mayor on April 16, 1923. The comprehensive amendment was intended to establish a plan for dividing the City of Chicago into districts for the purpose of regulating the location of trades, industries, buildings, structures designed for dwellings, and apartment houses and other specified uses (Chicago's Office of Planning, 2000).

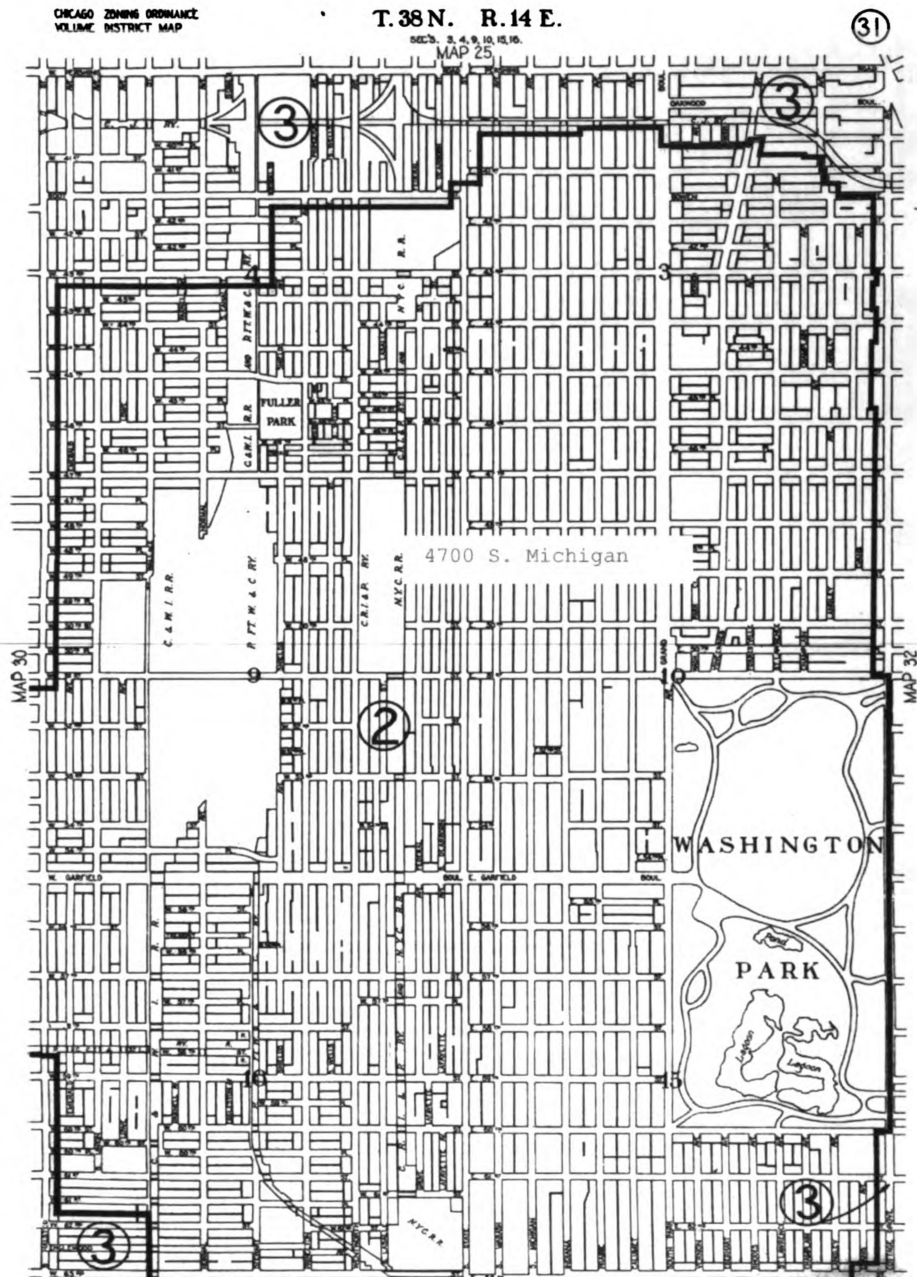
In addition the interpretational purpose was to promote and to protect the public's health, safety, morals, and the general welfare. Shown in figure 10 the zoning map does not clearly indicate zoning allocations for neighborhoods in Chicago.

In 1942, Edward J. Kelly, the Mayor of Chicago, accepted a comprehensive plan for zoning and redevelopment from the members of the City Council of Chicago. The plan was referred to as "Residential Chicago". It presented summaries of city wide data on residential land use and the most complete physical, social and economical character of residential

properties in Chicago. The plans were suggested by the council members upon which to build a new plan for a better city and to move into the future example set by Daniel Burnham, Charles Wacker and their associates (Chicago Plan Commission, 1942).

However as shown in on the following page, figure 11, the map indicates zoning for 47<sup>th</sup> and Michigan in the Bronzeville community as C1-2, which indicate land use as a restricted commercial district, and B3-3, which indicates the land use as an general retail district (Chicago Zoning Ordinance, Index Publishing Corporation, 2003).

Figure 10. Chicago Zoning Ordinances in 1923



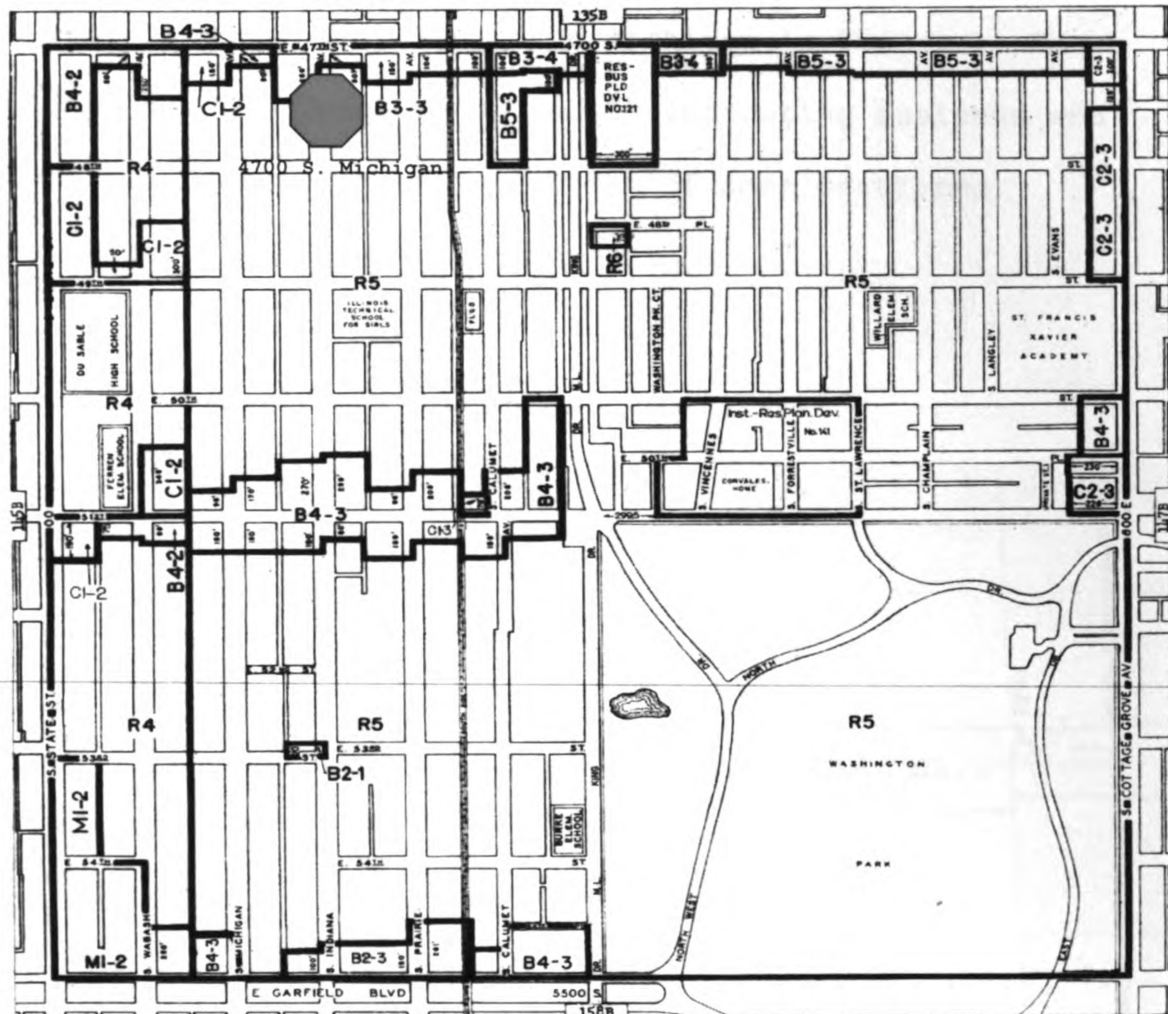
Source: The Harold Washington Library. Chicago Plan Commission, Chicago, Illinois, 1923

Figure 11. Zoning Ordinance of Residential Chicago in 1942

CHICAGO ZONING ORDINANCE

SEC. 10 T. 38 N. R. 14 E.

MAP 12-E



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#### RESIDENCE DISTRICTS

- R1 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT
- R2 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT
- R3 GENERAL RESIDENCE DISTRICT
- R4 GENERAL RESIDENCE DISTRICT
- R5 GENERAL RESIDENCE DISTRICT
- R6 GENERAL RESIDENCE DISTRICT
- R7 GENERAL RESIDENCE DISTRICT
- R8 GENERAL RESIDENCE DISTRICT

#### BUSINESS DISTRICTS

- B1-1 TO B1-5 LOCAL RETAIL DISTRICTS
- B2-1 TO B2-5 RESTRICTED RETAIL DISTRICTS
- B3-1 TO B3-5 GENERAL RETAIL DISTRICTS
- B4-1 TO B4-5 RESTRICTED SERVICE DISTRICTS
- B5-1 TO B5-5 GENERAL SERVICE DISTRICTS
- B6-6 AND B6-7 RESTRICTED CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS
- B7-5 TO B7-7 GENERAL CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS

#### COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

- C1-1 TO C1-5 RESTRICTED COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS
- C2-1 TO C2-5 GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS
- C3-5 TO C3-7 COMMERCIAL-MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS
- C4 MOTOR FREIGHT TERMINAL DISTRICT

#### MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS

- M1-1 TO M1-5 RESTRICTED MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS
- M2-1 TO M2-5 GENERAL MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS
- M3-1 TO M3-5 HEAVY MANUFACTURING DISTRICT

FOR USE AND BULK REGULATIONS, RESIDENCE DISTRICTS, SEE ARTICLE 7  
 FOR USE AND BULK REGULATIONS, BUSINESS DISTRICTS, SEE ARTICLE 8,  
 FOR USE AND BULK REGULATIONS, COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS, SEE ARTICLE 9,  
 FOR USE AND BULK REGULATIONS, MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS, SEE ARTICLE 10



146B

Source: The Harold Washington Library. Chicago Plan Commission, Chicago, Illinois, 1942



## Current Zoning Ordinances

As of the early 2004, figure 13 below indicates the current land use for 4700 South Michigan in Chicago. The neighborhood is zoned as B3 and B5 indicating business and commercial uses with the exception of some scattered residential zoning.

**Figure 13 a** Current Zoning Ordinance



**Source:** [www.CityofChicago](http://www.CityofChicago). Chicago Planning Department, City of Chicago, 2004

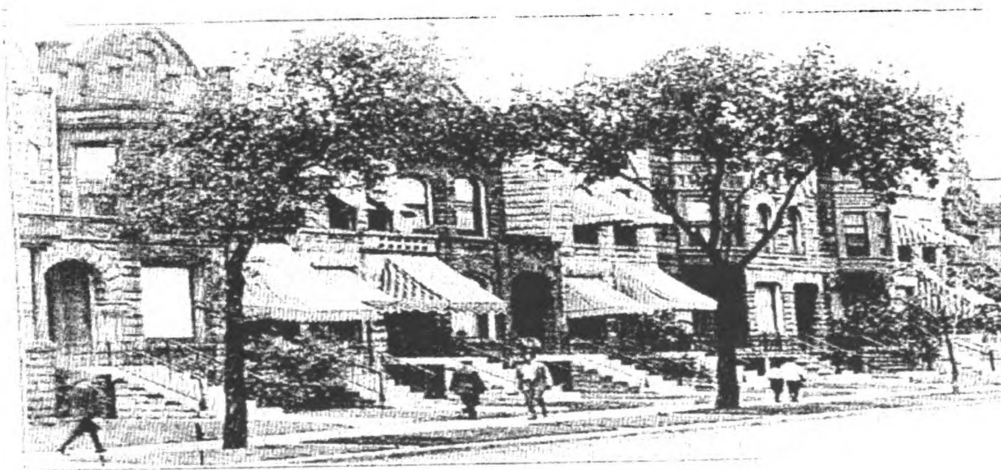


**Figure 13 b** Labels of zoned areas surrounding the Michigan Boulevard Apartments in Chicago, 2004

**Source:** Chicago Planning Department, City of Chicago, 2004

Although the zoning ordinances figure 13a described the Bronzeville zoning ordinance as a business/commercial district with some residential zoning the community was a well kept and vibrant neighborhood. Years ago the Bronzeville community had many businesses, institutions, and civic organizations owned and operated by African Americans. In the 1920's and early 1930 the city within a city became known as "Bronzeville," and it remained intact until after World War II. Figure 14 is a typical description of the community (The Encyclopedia of Chicago, 2004).

**Figure 14.** African American Residential Neighborhood, 49<sup>th</sup> Street in 1925



**Source:** The Newberry Library. Chicago Illinois, 2004



Several storefront businesses were located alongside the Michigan Boulevard Apartment.

These businesses consisted of a grocery store, a drycleaners and a record shop. However, it was not a known commercial district but zoned a commercial area and prohibited the community from participating in grants programs

that could have improved the community over the years.

Regardless of the past or current zoning ordinances, today a combination of factors including multiple public housing sites, urban renewal, and the city's changing economy brought great change to the well-established community. Today as members of the community work to revitalize the area, the Bronzeville community and Michigan Boulevard face an uncertain future.

Many families hope the building will become a new "*Black Metropolis*" with revitalized businesses and residential districts. Many residents suggest it remain largely an impoverished area. Ten years ago Bronzeville resident Lillian Hightower showed her neighborhood to a friend visiting from Germany. God the friend said it looks like Germany after the

**Figure 15. The MBA's in 2004**



**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones 2003

war (May, 2003). After years of aggressive demolition and displacement of residents the Bronzeville community is rebuilding.

The following section will discuss the implementation of historical preservation and how it might aid in rescuing the Michigan Boulevard Apartments.

## **6.0 Historical Preservation**

What is historical preservation? Why is it important to reserve the Michigan Boulevard Apartments?

The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines historical preservation as having the good sense to hang on to something; an older building or neighborhood or a piece of landscape because it's important to us as individuals and/or as a nation ([www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org)).

The historic preservation policy in Atlanta was a failure according to Harvey K. Newman from Georgia State University in Atlanta, because of the inability of some preservation advocates to participate effectively in the government regime (Journal of Urban Affairs, 2001).

Atlanta's past Mayor Andrew Young says city policies should aim to create a history of the golden ages of integration and development rather than preserving the old days of segregation and poverty. The arguments of some preservation advocates usually fail to overcome the political influence of developers. Therefore sites that African American historians rally to save are sometimes lost in the political red tapes (Journal of Urban Affairs, 2001).

Former Mayor Maynard Jackson attempted to support historic preservation by trying to save several of the city's oldest commercial buildings. Unfortunately the buildings stood in the path of the redevelopment of the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA); the attempt failed and the buildings were demolished (Journal of Urban Affairs, 2001).

Reichl (1997) explains that the Federal Legislation 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, the 1976 Tax Reform Act and the 1981 Economic Recovery Tax Act provide the impetus for the development of historic preservation policies in most United States cities. These acts focus the attention of local governments and business interests on preservation issues that had previously been supported by advocates of saving buildings.

A new coalition supporting historic preservation created opportunities for profit in restoring and reusing older buildings. Therefore this replaced the clean sweep destruction and rebuilding that characterized the urban renewal program of the previous decades. Projects such as Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco, Faneuil Hall in Boston, Harbor Place in Baltimore and South Street Seaport in New York are all some examples of preservation based redevelopment (Reichl, 1997).

A Minnesotan Richard Moe who served as Vice President Walter Mondale's chief of staff in the 1970's took over as the President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1993. Moe is known as one of the nation's harshest critics of what he calls the "destructive, soulless, and ugly mess called sprawl. Moe challenges Americans to think about the built environment and ask families to make conscious decisions about what sort of place they want their communities to be. Moe continues by stating where we live and how these places are constructed is important to our quality of life (Governing, 2002).

The National Trust of Historic Preservation has over 250,000 members that have transformed the preservation movement to a new level. Preservationists were once seen as sentimentalists hurling their bodies into streets in front of the machines that torn down older homes and buildings. Today preservationist's are advocating for public policy at state to state levels (Governing, 2002).

## **Advantages of Historic Preservation**

Are the Michigan Boulevard Apartments are worth saving? Yes! The building is an older building that offers character to the community and a structure that could accommodate families from various economic backgrounds in the City of Chicago. Some older buildings are important simply because they're good to look at. As one author put it, they are "a gift to the street" whose style, textures, materials and charm (and maybe even eccentricity) enrich and enliven their surroundings. These buildings are worth saving because our communities would be less interesting, less attractive, and without them, we would have no history to hang onto (Becker, 2000).

Figure 16 is a photo of a school in Notasulga, Alabama, a few miles from Tuskegee, Alabama. The school is one of the earliest Rosenwald schools and is still standing but in dilapidated condition. Some community members are trying to place the school, built in 1914, on the National Register of Historic Places (Encyclopedia of Chicago, 2004).

**Figure 16.** A Julian Rosenwald School in Alabama



Since the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the preservation movement has led several advantages. The movement has increased the depth and breadth of communities throughout the United States. Preserving outstanding examples of architectural design, rescuing decrepit mansions, and restoring buildings to past opulent splendor are all examples of the advantages of historic preservation (Sweeten, 1997).

Historic preservation benefits everyone. It benefits the young and old, urban and rural areas, residential neighborhoods and commercial districts (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2004). Historic preservation can create a more attractive community and offer many amenities. For example, an older abandoned train station located on the near Southside of Chicago now called Printer's Row was transformed into a beautiful residential community that offers a distinctive living and working environment with bicycle routes that lead to downtown and to the lake shore of Chicago.

Another important advantage of historic preservation is it plays a crucial role in educating the public both about past events and about their continuing influence on contemporary society. Historical areas are visitors connection to most cities. Visitors are eager to spend time in places where historical events have occurred (National Forum, 1997).

Retail and commercial investors are willing to invest in communities that sustain a vibrant and profitable neighborhood where people want to be. Historical preservation does involve a somewhat costly outcome. A recent project in Chicago has proven that preservation might have been cheaper. One of the public schools has spent over \$2.5 billion in a new construction project where the City of Chicago is being charged \$155.00 per square foot. However, renovation of the old school would have cost less than \$120.00 per square foot (Chicago Tribune, 2004).

Historical Preservation should not discriminate. Its proponents should care about all aspects of the past, including families of poverty, working class families as well as families from great wealth. Abandoned factories, urban communities, commercial districts, structures, educational facilities, and faith-based institutions are all a part of history from the beginning to present. All have stories behind them and should be shared with families of the future.

The National Association of Home Builders estimates that America will require 18 million additional housing units during the next ten years. The need will be essential for the poor. The Federal Millennial Housing Commission reports that a record 28 million households are struggling to acquire quality housing.



Implementing preservation could offer a solution to the demanding housing stock. Using preservation to increase the availability of housing, says the NTHP, makes financial sense, because rehabilitation is cost competitive with new construction, older building are put back on the tax rolls, and preservation helps it eliminate sprawl, since families usually reside in areas where buildings are already located instead of on land that was at one time green space or just open land. It also helps neighborhood maintain a vibrant appealing look, and it helps families continue to past alongside valuable history.

While historic preservation does focus on saving older building and structures, it also focuses on preserving cities' downtown and neighborhoods. Losing older building also means losing downtown and neighborhoods. Once newer buildings are replaced by older building in the community the fabric of the community is lost (Becker, 2000).

The thought of gated townhouses and single-family homes that are clearly out of the price range of current residents of the Bronzeville would only destroy the strong connective tissues of the neighborhood. Without preservation hopes of restoring this once-thriving community of grand boulevards and gray-stones mansions, where music legends once played and lived, would be destroyed forever.

Throughout the Bronzeville neighborhoods are symbols of rich African American heritage. Parks, museums, and cultural centers are located throughout the community. All of these detail the destination for African Americans journeying from the deep enslavement of the South.

## **Disadvantages of Historical Preservation**

Some disadvantages of historically preserving older buildings can cause major barriers in new construction projects. Beneficial projects to the masses for example are highways and airports. Factors such as the construction of a new building on an historically preserved block could disrupt the character of the neighborhood. Renovation projects such as historically preserving an older building using modern motifs may cause a loss of historical value as well.

Although historic preservation efforts for a building can involve every possible form of intervention from repainting to full scale restoration or reproduction, some older buildings are so outdated that their use would be impractical without some adaptations (Becker, 2000).

The Lorraine Hotel in Memphis Tennessee is a good example of a disadvantage in historically preserving older buildings. The infamous Lorraine hotel where Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated has been allocated as a historical landmark yet it is gated and often off limits to the public, not to mention the lack of cleanliness and maintenance. Even though historic preservation does not work in every city, and there are older neighborhoods that are not historic and have historic buildings that are in such disrepair that they are probably

not worth saving, preservation can be an important tool in implementing plans for older areas (Becker, 2000).

The following chapters will discuss some alternatives that would possibly aid in revitalizing the Michigan Boulevard Apartments. At this point, it would be difficult to provide documentation to support the Michigan Boulevard Apartments for historic preservation.

Several attempt to contact city officials to gather data on the building were unsuccessful. Many residents that participated in this research paper mentioned that the data on this building would be difficult to get due to the City's interest in demolishing the site and rebuilding market-rate houses. A second attempt was made to interview planners in the ward, however appointments were made with planners but they were either cancelled or a no-show, therefore an alternate recommendation would be redevelopment.

## **7.0 Redevelopment**

What is Redevelopment? How can it aid in saving the Michigan Boulevard Apartments?

To begin with, Redevelopment is a process created to assist city and county government in eliminating blight from a designated area, and to achieve desired development, reconstruction and rehabilitation residential, commercial and industrial retail (Moe, 2002). How can the rebirth of a once vibrant community begin? One of the best practices for the rebirth of a community starts with a patient process involving thoughtful planning and tenacious advocacy (Moe, 2002).

Chicago is third largest city within the United States of America and could certainly benefit from breathing a breath of fresh air into the redevelopment of Bronzeville community. A redevelopment plan for the once vibrant community could easily be recommended by the City Council members who serve as the governing board for the City's redevelopment agency.

City Council Members could benefit from this recommendation by eliminating blight in the community and gain greater interest from financial investors and add to the current housing stock by redeveloping the Michigan Boulevard Apartments. Revitalizing the building could also create jobs and gain residential participation that would create a sense of autonomy.

Adopting good policies and finding resources are steps in a long continuing process in any redevelopment project (Goodno, 2002). San Jose with close to one million people is the largest city in Silicon Valley. It has undergone tremendous change in recent years. The epicenter of the most recent economic boom, San Jose has worked to recreate its downtown, improve transportation and address housing shortages at virtually all income levels (Goodno, 2002).

Peter Dreier Co-director of the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College in Los Angeles suggests that financing affordable housing is basically the federal government's responsibility. However, the federal government does not agree. Housing executives accept many recommendations from state legislators, however, they do question some methods proposed by legislators in financing proposals that would aid affordable housing project (Goodno, 2002).

Brentwood apartments are a good example of redevelopment. The Brentwood apartments in New Jersey, located in a late 19<sup>th</sup> century neighborhood developed by brewers, burnt with only its exterior remaining. However, the building was brought to glamour in 1996 with a redevelopment cost of 6.5 million dollars. This project was able to gain low-income historical tax credits as well as historic rehabilitation tax

credits. This redevelopment project was collaborated upon by a neighborhood-based nonprofit corporation, an experienced affordable housing developer, local residential supporters, and active members of the city (National Trust, 2001).

## 7.1 Redeveloping Bronzeville

### The DuSable Museum

The DuSable Museum of African American History (figure 18) located in Bronzeville is the only major museum that retains the experiences and achievement of African Americans in Chicago. Washington Park is the only park in Chicago that served as Dr. Martin Luther Kings Jr. meeting place during the civic rights movement (Chicago Defender, 2005).

Figure 17.

Our  
children  
are our  
future

In order  
to  
succeed,  
they must  
know their  
history

Source:  
W.B.  
Dubois

Figure 18. The DuSable Museum



Source: The Chicago Defender, 2004

Dr. Margaret  
Burroughs, DuSable's  
founder, announced in early  
2004 upcoming redevelopment  
and expansion plans which  
will include a 61,000  
square foot circular  
limestone horse stables,  
and designation as a  
Chicago Park District  
Historic Landmark.

The redevelopment and expansion began with a \$10 million state grant and donations for a building valued between \$5 and \$7 million by the Chicago Park District (Sun Times, 2004).



Revitalized buildings with new faces and newly constructed homes and apartments building are rising along 47<sup>th</sup> and Michigan Boulevard, King Drive and Indiana Avenue along 47<sup>th</sup> street on the eastern edge of the community. The Willard School stood vacant for more than a decade but now houses are rising on the vacant lots. Developers are increasingly identifying as the neighborhood North Washington Park to distance their projects from the area's former blight.

Bronzeville's reconstruction is at the heart of a movement by many residents to restore the historic community built by African Americans in Chicago in the 1920s to 1950s. While Bronzeville's physical boundaries are ambiguous, Michigan Boulevard easily constitutes more than half of its border.

The well-preserved gray-stone, sand-stone and red brick structures along Michigan Boulevard, Indiana Avenue, and King Drive and throughout the Bronzeville neighborhood suggests the former architectural grandeur of this community was once unique.

**Figure 19.** Grey-Stones (MBA)



**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones, 2004

Lillian Hightower has lived in Bronzeville since her early childhood when her parents migrated from Birmingham, Alabama. Although she welcomes change Lillian is concerned that the historical character of the community will be lost to progress. She also worries about displacement of families that called the neighborhood home through its worst years (May, 2003).

Grand Boulevard was the name of Bronzeville's main thoroughfare in the 1920s and 1930s. The street became South Park Boulevard and eventually Martin Luther King Drive. When the Mid-South Planning and Development Commission began assessing how to rebuild and revitalize Bronzeville in the early 1980s, it targeted construction of both subsidized and market-rate housing.

"There is no formula for achieving the economic mix that would balance market and affordable housing in any of the Bronzeville communities," says Pat Dowell-Cerasoli, executive director of the commission. "It has to be a very deliberate, creative process". Last year New Homes for Chicago subsidies helped lower prices on a few newly built homes. However, Dowell-Cerasoli contends the city must encourage more affordable housing to provide a balanced economy (June, 2003).

"Market-rate housing will take care of itself, and getting housing for people with high incomes will be easy throughout Bronzeville," Dowell said. "But we are working on ways to provide housing for those who will lose their homes in

**Figure 20. New Village Apartments in Chicago**



**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones, 2003

the high-rise buildings that are coming down and for those who earn a moderate income and are not eligible" for market rate housing (May, 2004).

On the site of the razed Willard School 100 new apartment units are nearly completed and a gated development of houses is under way. The apartments of New Village at Washington Park are comprised of 18 non-contiguous buildings between 48th and 50th, and between St. Lawrence and Champlain. About half are occupied now, and the development will be completely occupied by Spring of 2005. New Village's apartments are leasing for prices from \$545 for one-bedroom units to \$773 for three bedrooms (Landmark Realty, 2004).



**Figure 21. Market Rate Condo's in Bronzeville**

However, one block from the Village Apartments that are allocated for low-income families are new gutted homes with a starting price of \$249,000 (Century 21 Realty, 2003). There are more Condo's with huge price tags and less affordable housing in Bronzeville.

The absolutely stunning 1800 square foot rehab homes have a perfect blend of 19th century charm & 21st century amenities. Many amenities

in these homes include granite counter tops, and cherry wood cabinets and stainless steel appliance. They have eat-in kitchens with cherry wood floors throughout the main living areas, separate dining rooms, and wall to wall carpeting in the bedrooms with fireplaces. Other amenities include huge walk-in closets, surround sound speakers, and pre-wiring for stereo/security.

Two blocks from the above housing development in the middle of the block on 49th and Champlain another development



**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones, 2003

is taking place. Two model houses will be completed by the end of January, 2005. Another is Champlain Row's townhouses with 10 two-story, 2,000 to 2,400-square-foot townhouses with prices from \$269,500 for a simplex which consists of two bedrooms and two bathrooms and a duplex which consists of three bedrooms and two and one half bathrooms with a starting price of \$499,500 ([www.insideoptions.com](http://www.insideoptions.com), 2004).

Lansing-based builder Raymond Development Corporation says another ten houses will be built two blocks to the west of Champlain Row. The Raymond Development Corporation partnered with Technical Assistance Corporation for Housing to be built around Champlain Row, and TACH developed the New Village rental projects.

Urban Equities has roots in the community as well. Its founder, a Bronzeville resident Lennox Jackson has a reverence for the area's architecture and history that influenced his current development of Bronzeville Pointe, a gated community at 44th and King Drive (April 2004). Bronzeville Point is being built as an 18 attached two- and three-bedroom condominiums, with eight of them duplexes. The project represents a joint venture with Best American Builders, a contractor from the community (Urban Equities, 2004).

Additional projects include 1,700 to 2,500-square-foot town houses sells from \$150,000 to \$256,000. The architect reflects historical Bronzeville style with bricks and stones facades and 16-foot ceilings and solariums. Units are being sold from Urban Equities marketing office at 44th and King Drive (July, 2004).

A year ago Alpha Phi Alpha, a nationally prominent African American fraternity hired Urban Equities to build three 2,266-square-foot houses on the site of its former headquarters at 45th and King Drive.

**Figure 22. East Lake Management Condo's**



Source: Photo taken by Darlene Jones, 2004

The first of these three-story Alpha Village houses was completed and sold last year, the remaining two are scheduled to be completed in January and will

sell for \$425,000 (July 2004).

East Lake Management Development Company will build 10 houses and rehab several existing buildings in neighborhood. Two- and



three-flats at 40th and Wabash will be marketed from \$179,000 to 500,000 per unit and others are planned at 41st and Calumet Street in the Bronzeville Community (The Redline Newspaper, 2004).

The East Lake Management is also planning on rehabbing a vacant building on the northeast corner of 47th and King Drive as part of the African Village project which will include the newly constructed Harold Washington Cultural Center Entertainment Complex (figure 23) across 47th Street where the once popular Regal Theatre stood.

**Figure 23. The Harold Washington Cultural Center and Entertainment Complex in Bronzeville**



**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones, 2004

Final projects include Tobacco Road International. TRI is a non-profit organization founded by Bronzeville's Alderwoman Dorothy Tillman. In 1993 she led the organization guided by a board of directors composed of a diverse group of artists, businesses and community representatives.

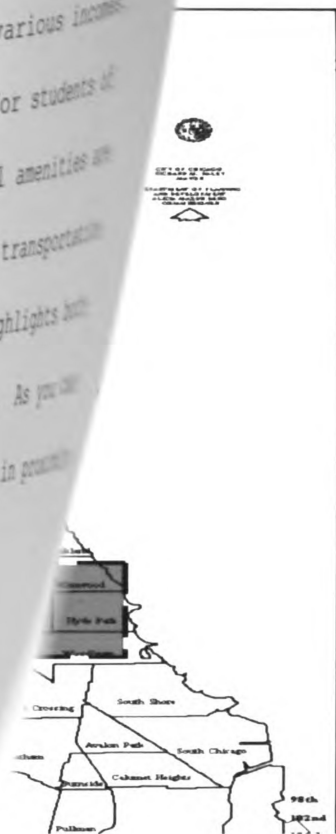
Tobacco Road's mission, through the construction and operation of the Harold Washington Theater Cultural Center, intend to establish viable programs to teach established and emerging artists in all aspects of the music business, and other disciplines of the arts; to provide youth with positive role models to develop alternatives to drugs, crime and other negative behavior; and to create an avenue where young artists can grow and experience hands-on training to develop their talents.

The following sections will highlight the different housing stocks in Washington Park and Bronzeville. The section will also highlight various retail and commercial districts in the comparable communities as well. Hopefully these comparisons will support the recommendations of implementing affordable housing in the surrounding community of tract 3814. Tract 4001 is a good example of a community that has experience many economic and residential hardships.



Although tract 4001 has experienced various hardships in the community it is now a community on the forefront of creating affordable housing for families of various incomes. Quality educational facilities are abundant for students of all ages, employment opportunities and several amenities are included in housing complexes, with parks and transportation accessible for families to enjoy. Figure 25 highlights both neighborhoods; Bronzeville and Washington Park. As you can see from figure 25 both neighborhoods are close in proximity.

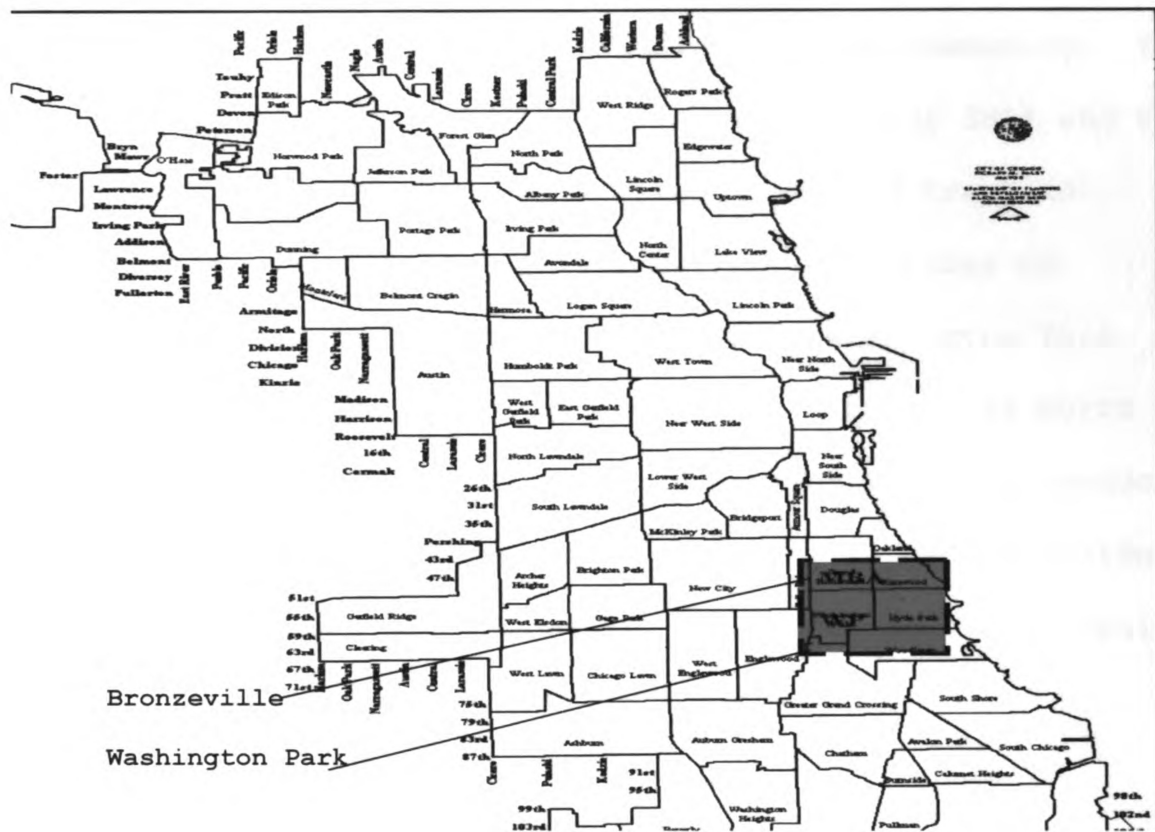
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old Washington Library, 2004

## 8.0 Comparable Neighborhoods Condition Assessment

**Figure 25. Maps of Bronzeville and Washington Park**



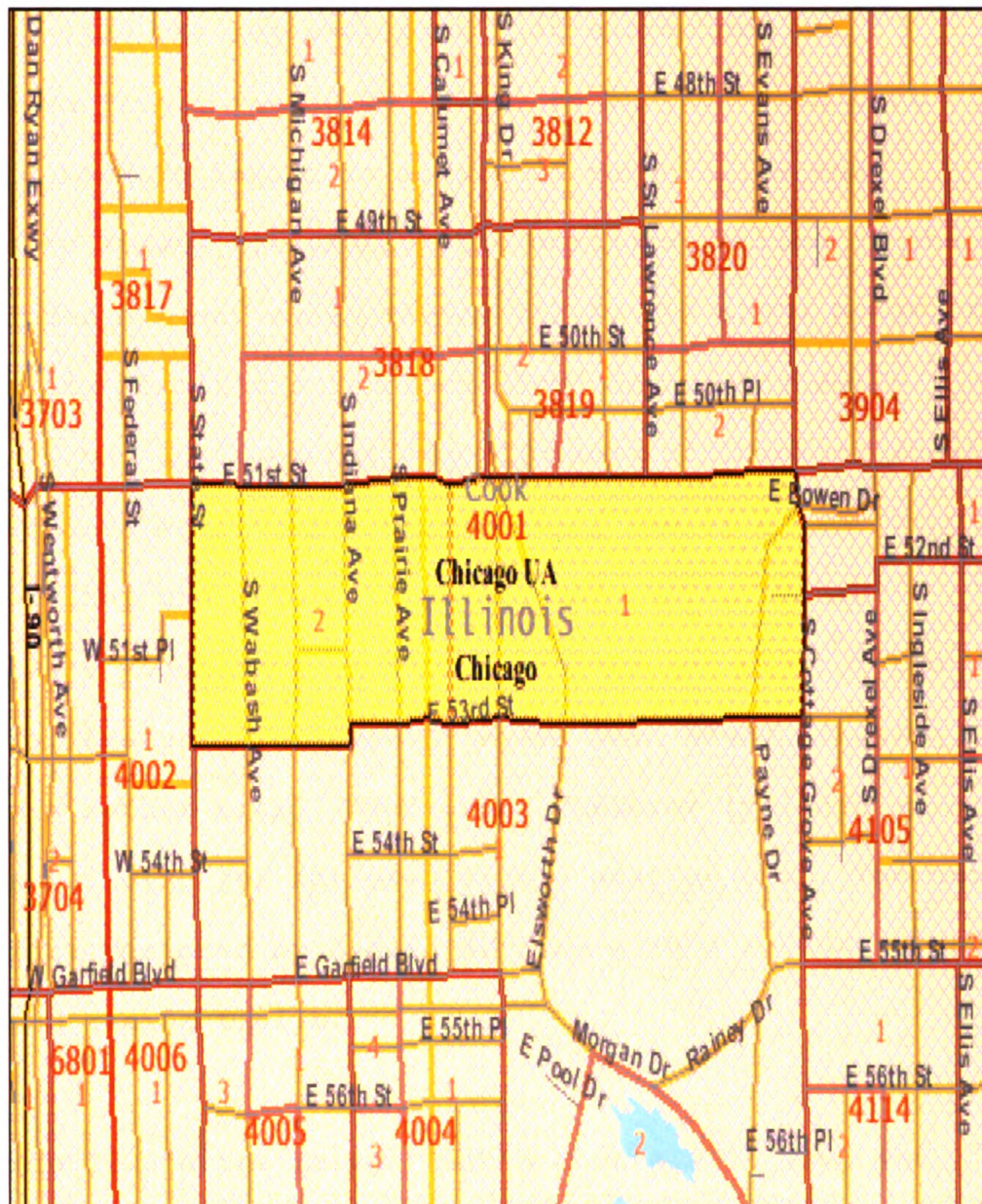
**Source:** Chicago's Maps of Neighborhoods. The Harold Washington Library, 2004

## **Introduction to Comparable Community**

The following section will give a general overview of the Bronzeville community and the Washington Park community. The Bronzeville community is located in census tract 3814 and the Washington Park community is located in census tract 4001. This section will go through the current conditions of Bronzeville and the current conditions of Washington Park. Both communities are bound by interstate highway I94 North and east to Lakeshore Drive. A windshield assessment was conducted to determine the conditions of the housing stock and current conditions of both neighborhoods. The assessment will begin with the Washington Park community tract 4001.

## 8.1 Comparable Neighborhood Conditions Assessment

Figure 25. Washington Park - Tract 4001



Source: Illinois Census Bureau, 2000

## **History of Washington Park**

Washington Park is located in census tract 4001 east of the Bronzeville community as shown in figure 25. In 1869 Paul Cornell created the regional park that surrounded the neighborhood from three sides of the community. The park included a boating lagoon in middle of seven hills and connected to Midway Plaisance. The northern section of the park included a great sheep meadow for sports and a break from the unhealthy conditions families faced during the early 1800's in urban environments (Encyclopedia of Chicago, 2004).

Afterwards Washington Park became a center of activity for the wealthy and middle class and many extraordinary features were added many by Daniel Burnham and other noted architects. Features included a lagoon boat house, fishing pier, and a nature trail. Additional features included an arts and drama building for children with a skating pond. The horse stables were designed by Daniel Burnham with a rotunda with running and riding trails.

In mid 1920's the Laredo Taft's Fountain of Time was created from concrete in the neighborhood; this was one of the first parks in Chicago to welcome built facilities for African Americans (Office of Chicago Neighborhoods, 2003). Figure 26 is a photograph of the statue which was renovated in 2003.

**Figure 26. The Laredo Taft's Fountain of Time in Washington Park**



**Source:** Office of Chicago Neighborhood, 2003

## Conditions in Washington Park

In the early 1970's neglect grew and many facilities became unsafe in the Washington Park community. By the late 1970's a class action suit alleged that the park district discriminatory practices fell upon the Southside parks due mostly to the African Americans usage.

Programs were pared, facilities were torn down or fell into disrepair, the park was generally considered unsafe, and the wall of structures along Cottage Grove seemed to wall the University of Chicago and Hyde Park off from the park and neighborhoods to the west.

However, in 1982 the Washington Park community has turned around the community on a quest to revitalize the park and community. The lagoons were drained and improved and dilapidated parks district shops and sheds were torn down with the exception of some historic buildings.

**Figure 27.** Lagoons in Washington Park



**Source:** Chicago Neighborhoods, 2005



On the previous page figure 27 shows several connecting lagoons located in Washington Park. Below figure 28 is a photograph of the historic Refectory in Washington Park designed by Daniel Burnham, which now hosts special functions throughout the year.

**Figure 28.** The Refectory in Washington Park



**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones, 2005

**Figure 29. Housing Stock**



**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones, 2005

The housing characteristics in Washington Park resemble the early 1800's. Many homes on Kings Drive are being used as single-family homes and are occupied by African American home owners. Figure 29 represents several typical well maintained homes located in the Washington Park community along 47<sup>th</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> and Kings Drive. The community has several schools, historical churches, strip malls, and various gathering places for families and friends to socialize.

**Figure 30. Additional Housing Stock**



**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones, 2005

Although many homes in the Washington Park community consist of single family homes, figure 29 is an example of housing options that are available to residents such as these newly constructed continuums. These units start at affordable prices and market value prices. However, several developers, with the assistance of some neighborhood banks in the Washington Park neighborhood, offer current residents homeownership assistance by providing grants for down payments and closing costs.



**Figure 31. Rental Housing Stock**



**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones, 2005

The Washington Park community consists of medium to highly intense residential areas. However, as shown in figure 31. the apartment complex is an affordable housing unit in the neighborhood. At any rate the neighborhood is well kept with wide streets, generous parking, and bicycle routes, and it is accessible to the community by private vehicle or public transportation.

## Transportation

Figure 32 highlights a centralized train station in the community for supplemental accessibility by public transportation. The station is located west of 51<sup>st</sup> and King Drive. The Chicago Transportation Authority provides bus transportation east and west on 51<sup>st</sup> street allowing residents to either walk, ride their bikes (bike lock-ups are provided at train station) to the train station or travel by bus. The train provides services throughout the Chicago land area.

**Figure 32. Train Station centrally located in Washington Park**



**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones, 2005

**Figure 33. Washington Park located on 51<sup>st</sup> Kings Drive**



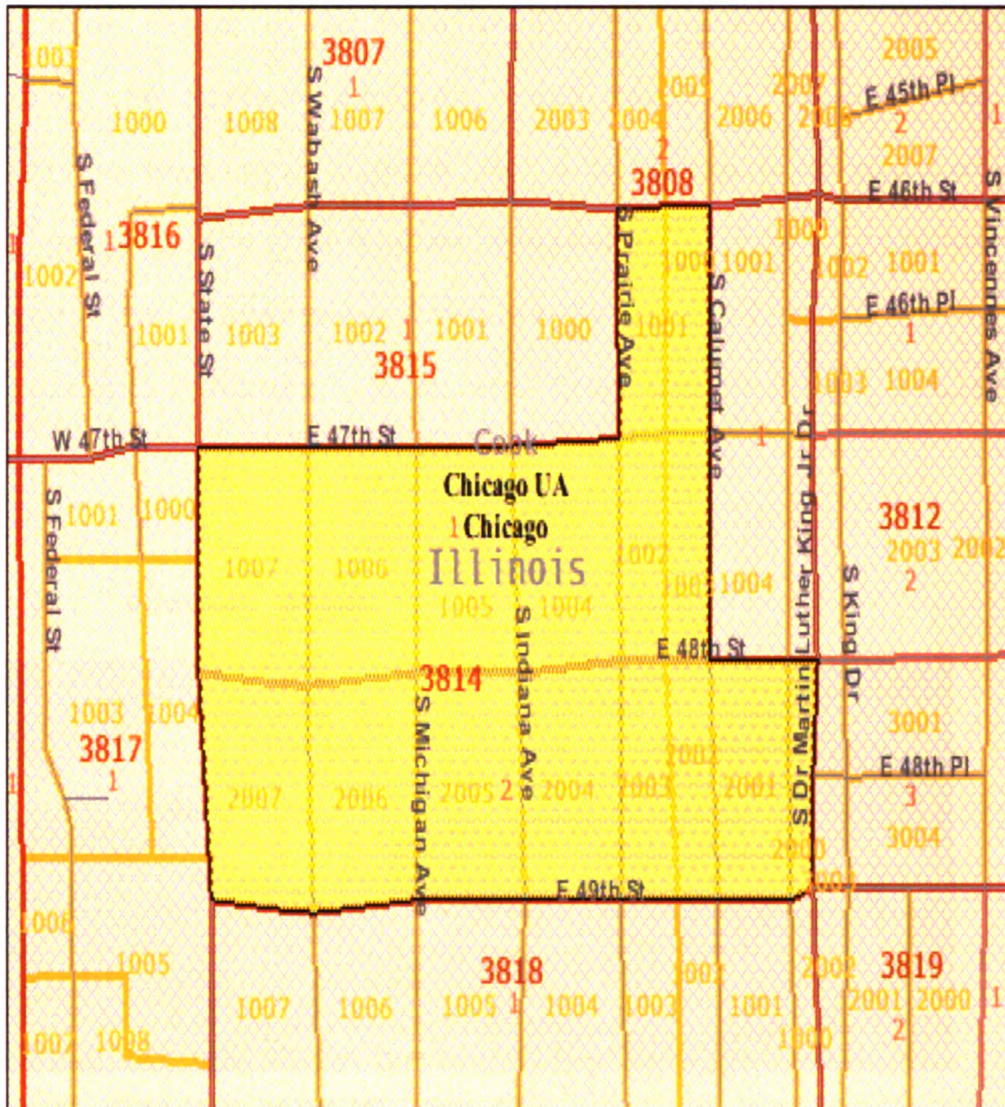
**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones, 2005

Washington Park is a well known park by African Americans throughout the City of Chicago and the United States. The Park hosts the annual Bud Billiken parade in the second week of August each year. It is the largest African-American parade in the United States and began in 1929 (The African American Registry, 2000). The park is a well known gathering place for families sponsoring family reunions and birthday parties. It also accommodates thousands of concert goers during the summer for free entertainment sponsored by the city.



## 8.2 Neighborhood Conditions Assessment

Figure 34. Bronzeville - Census Tract 3814



Source: Illinois Census Bureau, 2000

### **Conditions Surrounding the Michigan Boulevard Apartments**

The assessment of table 1 suggests that families living in the Bronzeville community are not able to afford the new construction rates in or outside of the community. Therefore renovating the current housing stock would allow families to remain the community. Figure 35 is an example of many of the housing options for low-income residents in the surrounding community. This apartment complex is located on 46<sup>th</sup> and Wabash directly across the street from the Michigan Boulevard Apartments.

**Figure 35. Housing Stock**



**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones, 2005



**Figure 36. Additional Housing Stock**



**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones, 2005

Figure 36 located on 47<sup>th</sup> and Wabash represents several frame homes in dilapidated condition surrounding the Michigan Boulevard Apartments.

**Figure 37.        One of Many Vacant Lots**



**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones, 2005

Figure 36 represents almost all of the single family homes in the community that are housed next to vacant lots. Although the lot in figure 37 is in somewhat better condition than most, many lots are filled with trash; and abandoned vehicles, and are gathering places for the homeless as well as drug dealings at night.

**Figure 38.      Mixed Use Housing**



**Source:** Photo taken by Darlene Jones, 2005

Once exiting the Dan Ryan expressway at 47<sup>th</sup> Street going east to 47<sup>th</sup> and Calumet and on 47<sup>th</sup>, the main street, most buildings have mixed uses that include residential, retail, and commercial and business uses. Many buildings house business, retail/commercial use the first floor and residential use occupies the second floor of the building. Figure 38 give a perfect example of the mix uses in the community.

**Table 1.**

**NEIGHBORHOOD COMPARSION MATRIX**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Bronzeville</b>	<b>Washington Park</b>
Quality Affordable Housing	No	Yes
Educational Institution	Yes	Yes
Safe Walkable Neighborhoods	No	Yes
Gathering Places for Families	No	Yes
Quality Commercial/Retail Districts	No	Yes
Access to Transportation	Yes	Yes
Visible Public Safety	No	Yes

**Source:** City of Chicago Neighborhoods, 2004

## **9.0 Implementation Strategies**

### Rentals

The City of Chicago offers several housing incentives for developers and residents to provide better housing alternatives. Chicago Low-Income Housing Trust Fund Rental Subsidy would be a great alternative for families currently living in the community in apartments that are not up to standard.

The Chicago Low-Income Housing Trust Fund (CLIHTF) provides financial assistance to meet the housing needs of Chicago's poorest residents. The Rental Subsidy Program provides annual subsidies to rental property owners. The owners use the subsidies to reduce rents for tenants with annual household incomes that do not exceed 30% of area median income. More than 50% of the beneficiaries of the Trust Fund earn less than 15% of the area median income ([www.cityofchicago](http://www.cityofchicago)).

Additional assistance is available for new construction of buildings that are currently in operation and are suitable to undergo rehabilitation. Eligible applicants must demonstrate the financial viability of the building. Buildings that are currently in operation and will not undergo



rehabilitation must be operating at a better than break-even level before adjusting for any assistance for the CLIHTF.

Buildings that are currently in operation must be well-maintained and contain no conditions that endanger the health and safety of residents and buildings that will undergo rehabilitation or new construction must be financially viable ([www.cityofchicago](http://www.cityofchicago)).

#### New Homes

The City of Chicago provides several programs for families to become first-time homeowners. New Homes for Chicago is a program used by many developers to assist some families in the Bronzeville community. However many families are not eligible to take advantage of the program due to the lack of low household income. Table 3 highlights eligibility to participate in the program.

New Homes for Chicago program has approved over 65 developments and over 1,600 new affordable condominiums, single-family or two-flat homes which are either completed or in the process throughout Chicago. Together with using business incentives to reduce development costs the City encourages developers to provide new construction to be purchased by some moderate-income working individuals and families. Prices under this program are capped at \$155,000 for

single family homes or condos and \$200,000 for two-flats (New Homes for Chicago, 2004).

**Table 2.** Eligible Household Incomes for New Homes of Chicago Program

Household size	Maximum Household Income Area Median	
	120%	80%
1	\$63,350	\$40,250
2	\$72,350	\$46,000
3	\$81,500	\$51,750
4	\$90,500	\$57,500
5	\$97,700	\$62,100
6	\$105,000	\$66,700

**Source:** City of Chicago Neighborhoods, 2004

Although the Bronzeville community is working on redeveloping the community with newer buildings and little renovation on older buildings the community is still in need of housing at affordable rates for families with lower incomes. According to the 2000 United States Census Bureau, tract 3814 consists of 505 families. The largest group (see table 3) consists of 159 families making an income of less than \$10,000. The next largest group consists of families making incomes from \$10,000 to \$14,999. According to Table 3 326 families are making less than \$30,000 per family per year.

**Table 3. Census Tract 3814 Income**

**Household Income in 1999**

	<b>Census Tract 3814, Cook County, Illinois</b>
Total:	505
Less than \$10,000	159
\$10,000 to \$14,999	64
\$15,000 to \$19,999	32
\$20,000 to \$24,999	17
\$25,000 to \$29,999	54
\$30,000 to \$34,999	42
\$35,000 to \$39,999	9
\$40,000 to \$44,999	20
\$45,000 to \$49,999	5
\$50,000 to \$59,999	38
\$60,000 to \$74,999	31
\$75,000 to \$99,999	18

**Source:** United State Census Bureau 2000

Developers in the Bronzeville community have been under attack by some resident accusing them of creating a housing stock that families living in the community cannot afford says Colene Reed (July 2004). Table 3 indicates that only 57 families are living in the community make a yearly income of \$50,000 - \$99,000 per year.



The creation of the new housing stock at the current market rates will force many families to relocate and only families with incomes from \$50,000 - \$99,000 can afford to stay. As you can see in Table 4 over 1200 African American live in the Bronzeville community. However residents fear exclusion from the community is soon to come.

**Table 4. Census Tract 3814 Population**

<b>Population by Race</b>	<b>Census Tract 3814, Cook County, Illinois</b>
Total:	1,279
White alone	11
Black or African American alone	1,204
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0
Asian alone	0
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0
Some other race alone	6
Two or more races	58

**Source:** United State Census Bureau 2000

## **The Youth Bill**

Supporters from Chicago's City Council can make anything possible within Chicago. Dorothy Tillman, councilwoman of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ward for more than thirty years, supported by residents in Bronzeville ward 3 has a great influence on city hall's policies makers. The Michigan Boulevard Apartments is located in Ms. Tillman's ward and has been controversial for some time now. Many residents have complained that politicians in the ward are in agreement with developers to demolish the building and replace it with market rate single-family homes and condominiums.

Others are rallying to save the building that once was home to many African American on the south side of Chicago. Many suggest the building can rise from a dilapidation and become a structure filled with prosperity, economic growth and prospering family.

Nevertheless another hopeful option for this community would be the Youth Build Organization. The next section of this paper will discuss some options and how it might aid in bringing this building back from abandonment to a residential paradise.

One of many options is the Youth Build, a national nonprofit organization that supports unemployed and undereducated young people ages 16-24 to work toward their GED

or high school diploma and learn a construction skill. It is funded by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development as a Youth Build program. These young people help build affordable housing for the homeless and low income families (Youth Build, 2002).

In addition to receiving a high school diploma and learning a worthy skill, that consist of apprenticeships or entry level positions in building maintenance, carpentry, demolition, masonry, painting and other construction related jobs, Youth Build involves young people in projects that range from rehabilitating multifamily housing to construction new single family homes. Once the projects are finished it allows low-income families to rent or purchase affordable housing. The organization's results are young people who develop great leadership skills and give back many under developed community. Many students are said to feel proud of their accomplishments and create a sense implementing autonomy. All of which implements a self commitment to turning undesired living conditions into a livable safe haven for themselves and their families.

## **10.0 Recommendation/Conclusion**

Housing closer to downtown in most cities serves as an extra incentive for most employers. It helps to attract the well-educated and affluent professionals not to mention popular franchises that create economic growth. Chicago is a growing city that is currently completing the last phases of most of the empowerment zones within the city.

The Michigan Boulevard Apartment is still a sound structure and could provide housing to many families from all areas of Chicago. New developments, renovations, newly built schools, and various economic improvements are revitalizing the Bronzeville and attracting professional singles and well established families to the area.

Although it is very appealing to professionals and well established families, the pricing of housing go beyond the affordability of many families in the community. Therefore this paper recommends that the Michigan Boulevard Apartments continues to build on its history and provide housing for a mix market at affordable and market rates. The mixed market can consist of redevelopment for low-income families, senior citizens and market rate occupancy.

In the beginning stages of this paper an attempt was made to historically preserve the Michigan Boulevard Apartments. However after careful review preserving would

involve years of researching its historical value and many leave the building abandoned indefinitely. Therefore,

this paper recommends that the Michigan Boulevard Apartment utilizes the current structure for redevelopment. It is recommended that the building set-aside at least 20% of the units to low-income families, and 20% set-aside for active senior citizens on a sliding fee scale and the remaining 60% of units in the building set-aside at current market rates.

In addition, the nearest hospital is located in the Washington Park community. The attached grey-stones that sit alongside the Michigan Boulevard Apartments could be utilized as a healthcare facility, a neighborhood outreach and a community organization office to keep resident informed on community issues. Additional services could be offered to low-income families such as a daycare center on the premise. The City of Chicago employs active seniors in the Chicago Public Schools to serve as foster grandparents and this could be an extension of the same program. Since the building is currently zoned for retail/commercial use it could easily accommodate new franchises that would economically improve the neighborhood and provide jobs to residents in the community.

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