

# Public Art as Economic Investment

## A Case-Study for Bronzeville

Micah Smith  
James Wolff  
Farran Arnold  
Timothy Moyer

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## Project Summary

Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood is a community rich in expressions of urban African-American life in the industrial-era United States. Black Metropolis, an organization that promotes awareness of Bronzeville's historic past and future vitality, including sustainable and localized economic policy-making, presented to Destination: Bronzeville Academic Consultants (D:BAC), and engaged our group on a project to document Bronzeville's public art expressions. That community's historic cultural expression of post-Civil War era- to early-20<sup>st</sup> century African-American life in the urban north, including the precipitance of growth brought on by the migration of rural South blacks to Chicago, encapsulates an historical archive of modern, 'city' culture. Included are representative artifacts of music, art and education. Black Metropolis' presentation cited timely opportunities in the contemporary political dynamic of Chicago, as well as opportunities for federal investment. Black Metropolis specifically requested an interactive point-map, scalable and suitable for HTML formatting for the world wide web. The map would indicate "instances" of categorized public art expressions within a spatial representation of Bronzeville's identifiable borders. D:BAC proposed the creation of two additional maps as a framework for analysis of Bronzeville's current economic viability: one analyzing property value and another analyzing household income, composed to also approximate locations of public art instances.

Our group was limited in development of an HTML-form of this mapping deliverable. However, D:BAC was successful in documenting all instances of 'public art' as proscribed by Black Metropolis and presented in this documentation. Instances have been verified by first-person observation. It's our opinion that the data presented in this document is current and accurate.

One limitation we experienced was the geographic referencing of some public art instances to the postal coding system, such as monuments and sculptures. Locational placement couldn't be defined by 'street address'. Another limitation in our analysis was intra-team communication. Conflicting personnel employment schedules and commuting schedules mitigated a group dynamic. Yet another problem was verifying a defining physical geography of Bronzeville. Defining features were variably, depending by source. For the purposes of this project, our group accepted Black Metropolis' spatial description of the neighborhood.

D:BAC process was work-phased as: 1. Literature review, 2. Definition of public art 'instances', 3. Classification, 4. Geocoding, 5. Procurement of US Census Data, 6. Construction of thematic maps, and 7. Summary & Conclusions.

A review of our thematic maps suggest the need for further detailed study of this neighborhood and its dynamic. Our maps describe an urban system in flux: a neighborhood whose past, present and future are dislocated from typical patterns of urban gentrification. Bronzeville's adaptable infrastructure, regardless of proximity to historical 'public art', does not appear to be relational to household income or property value.

Summarily, instances of public art, as defined by this study, are not a constituent aspect of measurable value to Bronzeville's real-estate 'dynamic'. Mitigating factors, such as opportunistic land speculation, have diluted this attribute's potential impact for localized gentrification.

## **Introduction**

D:BCA, a DePaul University group comprised of undergraduate Geography Department students, was formed in response to an in-class presentation by the local, community organization, Black Metropolis. Dedicated to promoting sustainable, "bottom-up" economic policy, Black Metropolis promotes this neighborhood's place in Chicago's venerable history; particularly that of contemporary African-American experience. That community's historic cultural expression of post-Civil War era- and early-21<sup>st</sup> century African-American life in urban America, including the precipitance of urban growth brought on by the migration of rural South blacks to one of American's "promised" Northern cities (Chicago), encapsulates an historical archive of urban 20<sup>th</sup> Century African-American culture. Included are representative artifacts of music, art and education in the development of modern American life.

Black Metropolis' presentation indicated opportunity provided by the potential designation of the 2016 Olympics to Chicago (Currently, the proposed Olympic Village and Olympic Stadium are on Bronzeville's accessible lakeshore). As well, the recent inauguration of President Barack Obama, formerly an Illinois State Senator and south-side community organizer whose early political territory included Bronzeville, brings heightened awareness for actionable policy-making, which respects the past, recognizes present realities, and provides a charter for future economic stability and responsible, community re-development.

An initial D:BCA literature review provides a generous array of topical academic abstracts, periodicals and publications concerning the legacy of Bronzeville. Pertinent abstracts are available at the Steans Center website. Our review of relevant journalistic articles includes *Boyd* (2000) and *Grams* (2006). As a framework for the historical context for our review, we also included readings on 'Jim Crow'- style segregation in the American South and similar public policy in the urban, American north.

## Needs Assessment

### 2.1 Background

Early phases of our project required additional understanding of our project directive, described by Black Metropolis. Internally, questions persisted as to what requirements were needed for our group deliverable. Clarification was communicated through in-person engagements with Mr. Harold Lucas at the Bronzeville Visitor Center. Specifically, Black Metropolis was interested in a spatially accurate representative map that documents current “instances” of publically-accessible art. (D:BAC accrued four separate “in-person” meetings with Mr. Lucas at the Bronzeville Visitor Center facility). Through this meeting and development phase, our goal became aligned with Black Metropolis’ long-term actionable interest in segmenting and defining Bronzeville’s positive attributes, namely, public art.

Black Metropolis is keen to elicit long-term promotional goals for the neighborhood, offering (only) that our group deliverable is ... “part of the process that responsibly promotes ”Bronzeville as a community worth caring about and for investment...”

### 2.2 Problem Statement & Goals

Our group plans on generating 3 thematic map informational products, defined by these Need-to-Know hypothesis’:

**Q:** *NTK: What are the locations of public art?*

**A:** Spatial dot/symbol map indicating instances of public art (all 3 classifications), ie. a spatial choropleth map indicating census property value data overlaying instances of art.

**Q:** *NTK: What is the median property value of each neighborhood census tract?*

**A:** Spatial choropleth map indicating census property value data overlaying instances of public art.

**Q:** *NTK: What is the median household income of each neighborhood census tract?*

**A:** Spatial choropleth map indicating census household income overlaying instances of art.

### 2.3 Project Objectives

Our group objectives can be summarized by these planned informational products:

a. Identify and locate “instances of public art”, and categorize them into 3 distinct types: monument, mural and architecture.

b. Procure 2000 census tract data for Bronzeville, categorizing separately for median household income and median property value.

c. Create informational products (thematic maps) in ArcGIS using the data base of information generated

d. Observe/analyze dynamics of income and property value, to each other and as they relate to “public art”.

This objective concurs with D:BAC’s planned deliverable of information products:

1. Point-map of Bronzeville public-art instances.
2. Map (1) with overly information regarding 2000 census tract “house-hold income” data, and
3. Map (1) with overlay information regarding 2000 census tract “property-value” information.

## System Requirements

### 3.1 Introduction

In summary, D:BAC has decided upon three (3) information products: one thematic point map and two thematic choropleth maps, for analysis. “Need-to-Know” entity charts follow:

Need to know inquiry \ Entity	Public art & landmarks			Census Tract	
	Mural	Architecture	Monument	Property	H.F. Income
Name/Title	X	X	X		
Location/L.D.	X	X	X	X	X
Value				X	X

Function \ Entity	Public art & landmarks			Census Tract	
	Mural	Architecture	Monument	Property	H.F. Income
Query				X	X
Measurement				X	X
Overlay	X	X	X		
Thematic Mapping	X	X	X		

### 3.2 Entity Relationship Modeling

#### Entity

Name: Mural

Definition: Identified public art “instance” with corresponding postal address

Type: point

Temporal: 2000

Name: Architecture

Definition: Identified public art “instance” with corresponding postal address

Type: point

Temporal: 2000

Name: Monument

Definition: Identified public art “instance” with corresponding postal address

Type: point

Temporal: 2000

Name: Census Tract Property.shp

Definition: Identified as US Census 2000 median property value

Type: polygon

Temporal: 2000

Name: Census Tract H.H.income.shp

Definition: Identified as US Census 2000 median “per household” income

Type: polygon

Temporal: 2000

#### Attribute

Name: Name/Title

Description: Commonly referred to nomenclature of public art “instance”.

Name: Location/I.D.

Description: United States Postal address code applied to point-data

Name: Value

Description: Variable data coded to median property value and median household income.

Name: Query

Description: Confirmation that a given US census tract is recognized and registered.

Name: Measurement

Description: Confirmation that a given US census tract is measured.

Name: Overlay

Description: An ArcGIS function which incorporates geographic data into an informational product form, including spatial and point data.

Name: Thematic Mapping:

Description: The process of creating spatial, geographic information based on data inputs.

## **Data Acquisition**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Our strategy for data acquisition extends from the focus identified in our Phase 2 document: Identify and qualify public art instances in the region defined by Black Metropolis (ostensibly, “Bronzeville”): Examine a geographical/spatial dynamic that exists between instances of public art and that of property and household income value, by census tract, in Bronzeville. The strategy includes procurement of information made available by Black Metropolis, DePaul University and publically-accessed data via the world-wide-web.

Our group’s decision for acquisition strategy was contingent on those data sets defined by our relational schema: 1. ‘Public art’, which is inclusive of registered architectural sites and historical monuments; and 2. Census tract values within Bronzeville. Our required data sets compiled two matrices shown under the headings: Public Art & Landmarks, and Census Tract.



## 4.2 Data Dictionary

Data Set Name: Public Art Tour

File Name: Bronzeville Public Art

Description: Data on public art sites in the Bronzeville area containing information of public art identification number, name, address, city, county, state, zip code, type, latitude and longitude.

Source of the data: De Paul University Department of Geography, Ashley Cureton via Professor Hwang

Processing steps:

- 1) Public art location and data collected by Ashley Cureton in (former intern at Black Metropolis).
- 2) Used Ms. Cureton's list to create an Excel file with the site names, addresses, and types.
- 3) Addresses entered into geocoder at <http://www.gpsvisualizer.com/geocoder/> to find latitude and longitude values.
- 4) Imported data into ArcGIS and converted to .dbf format.
- 5) Geocoded entities based on latitude and longitude.
- 6) Used Google Earth to find correct latitude and longitude values for those that were

returned incorrectly

Spatial object type: point

Attributes:

ID ID number

Name Description

AddressStreet number and name

City Location in county

County Location in state

State Location in country

Zip C. Location in city

Type Category of art

Latitude Latitude in decimal degree, WGS84

LongitudeLongitude in decimal degree, WGS84

Data format: Microsoft Excel

Data Set Name: Landmarks

File Name: Greater Black Metropolis National Heritage District Directory

Description: Data gathered by Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Source of the data: Black Metropolis, Harold Lucas

Processing steps:

1) We imported the spreadsheet into ArcGIS.

2) Exported as a dbf file.

Spatial object type: point

Attributes:

ID ID number

Name Description

Address Street number and name

Data format: Microsoft Excel

#### Data Set Name: Census Tract

File Name: Tracts.SDC

Description: Census data obtained from X Drive in the DePaul computer system database for the country but narrowed to Cook County including information of Object ID, state FIPS, county FIPS, tract and FIPS.

Source of the data: X Drive, DePaul computer system

Processing steps: Added census tract data set, limited selection to tracts in Illinois. Future processing will include limiting the tracts based on street boundaries provided by Black Metropolis.

Spatial object type: polygon

Attributes:

Object ID Description

STFIPS State FIPS code

CTFIPS County FIPS code

TRACT Census Tract code

FIPS Place code (U.S. Census Tract)

Data format: SDC

### **4.3 Fitness for Use**

#### Public Art & Landmarks

*Q: Is the scale or resolution appropriate?*

The data is in the form of point data/point map.

This data is not raster.

In terms of cartographic generalization, we chose to only include the sites that are located within the boundaries of Bronzeville, as described by our clients at Black Metropolis. Sites nearby and/or tangent to these boundaries are not included.

The street address is a nominal attribute.

*Q: Is the accuracy what you or your client had hoped for?*

The 'accuracy' of the attribute data is necessarily not exhaustive, but appropriate to the needs of our client (The size of this data set is extensive due to the fact that it is projected as being locational data for tourism/commercial interests). Positional accuracy of the Public Art & Landmark data have limitation: some public monuments, murals, etc.. cannot be designated by postal code, though they can be approximate to postal addresses.

*Q: Is the data complete?*

The data attributes are complete to the extent that we have allowed. 'Completedness' necessarily implies rigorous application to attribute definition (in this case, 'art')

#### Tract

*Q: Is the scale or resolution appropriate?*

The census data is in the form of a shape file that is overlaid on our boundary map

This data is not raster.

We included the census tract information in the area of focus (Bronzeville). It would be unnecessary and confusing to a reader and our client if the map included every single census tract on the south side of Chicago.

*Q: Is the accuracy what you or your client had hoped for?*

The tract data is complete and accurate; taken directly from the US government records  
The positional accuracy of the tract data is confirmed

*Q: Is the data complete?*

The attribute data is complete and accurate to the knowledge of this study group.

*Q: What are the limitations of using the particular data set?*

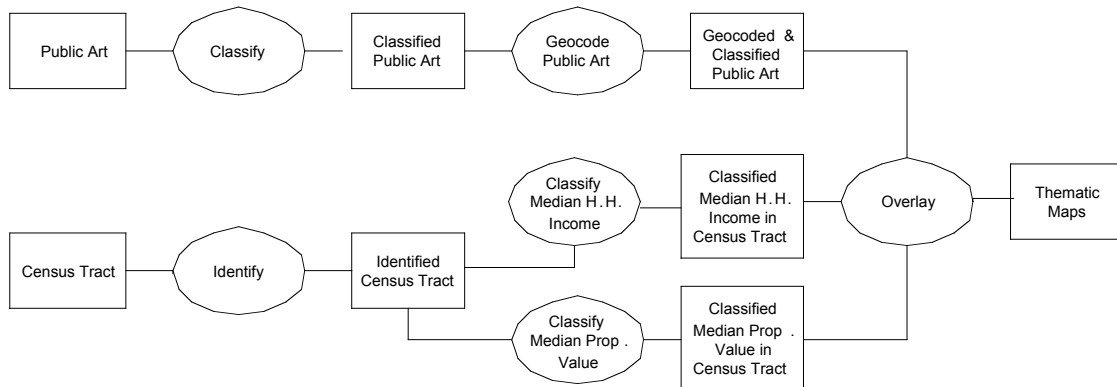
Some census tract data may need to be assessed as portions of their geography reside outside of the proscribed borders of Bronzeville.

### 4.3 Data Acquisition Constraints

Summarily, our project deliverable cannot be necessarily measured by conventional metrics. Black Metropolis' goal is to revitalize its community while simultaneously retaining an identity that is attractive for future investment. After assessing opportunities in analyzing poverty level, education and 'mobility' rates (as an inverse relationship between local economic stability vs. economic stability), we recognized this as spurious information within our project scope. We decided to narrow our information to include the landmarks and public art sites, and also to include the resident median household income and resident median property value within specific census tracts. We expect a relationship between public art and historical landmark instances and property value to emerge.

### Data Analysis

D:BAC's operational process can be described by the following flow-chart:



[Note: the progression of information in this chart creates iterative “point” data, representative in [Fig. 1](#), and spatial data, representative in [Fig. 2](#) and [Fig.3](#).

Results

# Bronzeville Public Art Sites

## Legend

### MoreSites

- <all other values>

### TYPE

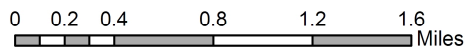
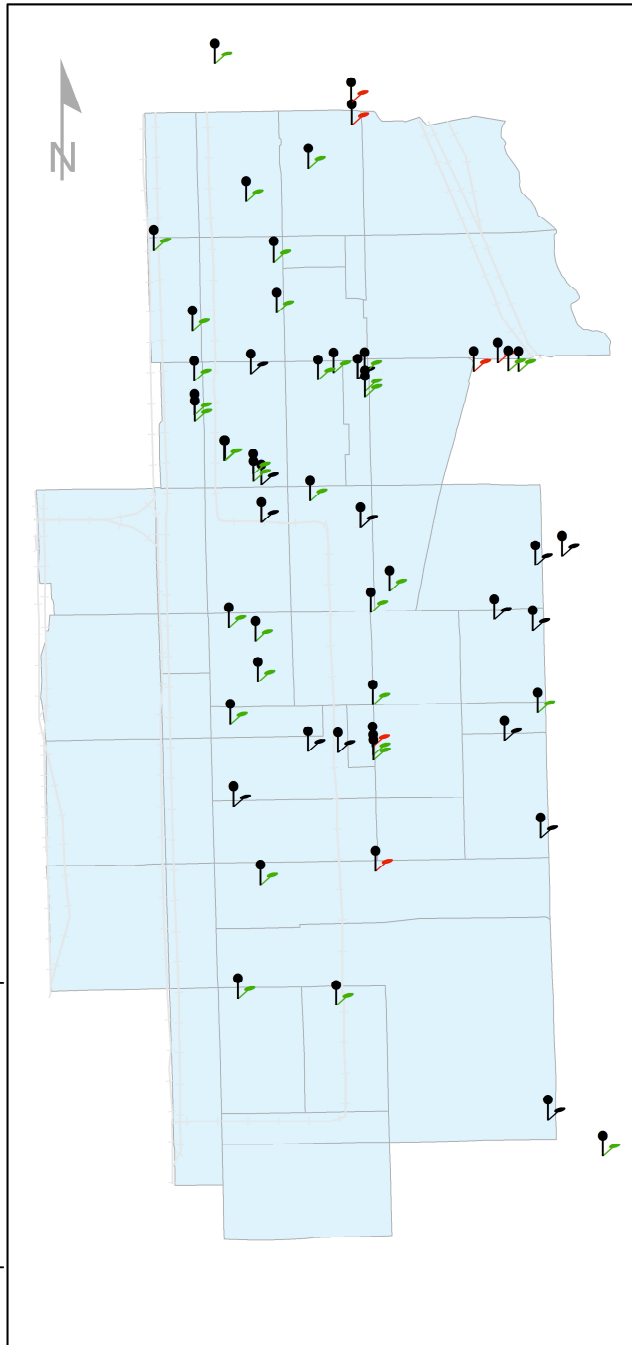
- 📍 ARCHITECTURE
- 📍 HISTORICAL
- 📍 SCULPTURE\_PUB ART

### SitesLatLong Events

- <all other values>

### TYPE

- 📍 ARCHITECTURE
- 📍 HISTORICAL
- 📍 INSTITUTION
- 📍 SCULPTURE\_PUB ART



Destination: Bronzeville Academic Consortium

Figure 1

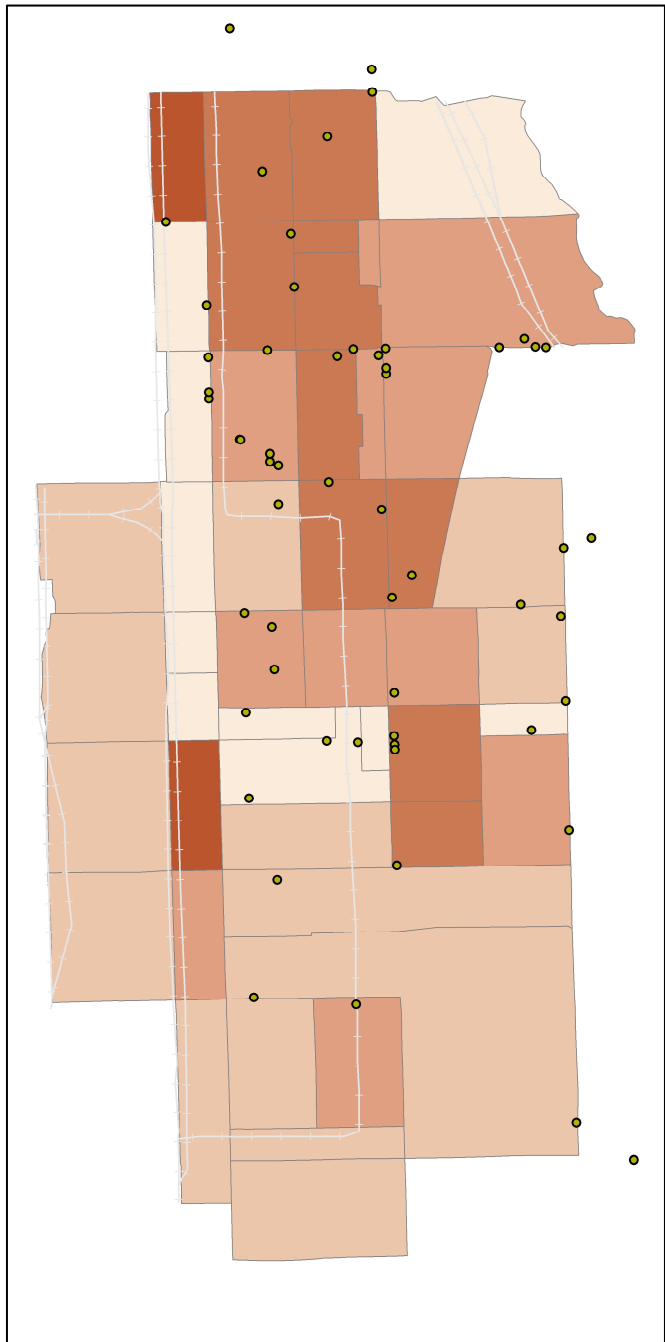
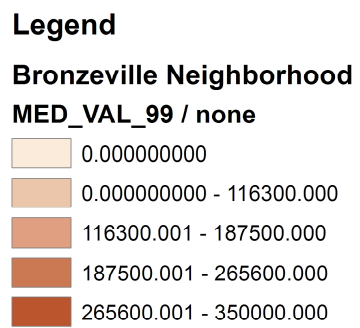


Figure 2



Figure 3

## Conclusion

This group's review of the informational products generated through development of spatially mapped, geocoded point-data in Bronzeville -- overlaid with informational data from the 2000 US Census -- is indeterminate.

It was the expectation of this group that household income and property value would progressively align with public art instances in a north-south corridor defined by State St. to the west, M.L. King Drive to the east, 26<sup>th</sup> St. to the north and Washington Park to the south. In fact, no correlation, as such, was evident. Private investment is ubiquitous and overwhelmingly visible in this area. Rather, there is indication that census tracts most proximate to the traditional 'downtown' region of Chicago experience elevated income and property value, regardless of instances of public art.

### *Summary observations:*

- There is little observable evidence to support a correlation between instances of public art, and elevated income/property value for this geographic area
- An inconsistent value dynamic exists in US Census tracts vacated by the Stateway Gardens and Robert Taylor Homes public housing projects.
- The tract defined as resident to the Lake Meadows apartment complex, largely devoid of public art instances, has an inverse relationship between household income and property value.
- Variable levels of household income and property value exist throughout Bronzeville.

## Literature Review

Grams, Diana. *Territorial Markers: A Case Study of the Public Art in Bronzeville*. Autumn 2006

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