

LEARNING TABLE #2: HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY SESSION NOTES

Minneapolis Public Works plans to reconstruct the intersection of 38th & Chicago (George Floyd Square) and will begin this effort by engaging with the community. Engagement throughout the project is intended to help redesign the area in a way that reflects community needs.

Learning Table #2: History Of The Community



Learning Table: History of the Community
September 26, 2022



Upcoming Learning Table: Speedway Gas Station
October 24th, 2022 ; 6pm; Sabathani Community Center

NEOO Partners and Public Policy Project hosted the 2nd of a series of monthly Learning Tables for the 38th & Chicago, Re-Envisioned project. Created by Public Policy Project, The Learning Table provides the “learning water”; a place to ask critical questions and develop the “learning glue”; a place to develop relationships, create partnership, share ideas, and make commitments, to explore for incorporation in the 38th & Chicago Re-Envisioned Project. At the Learning Table, we Learn Together; Create a Shared Approach; Coordinate Efforts; and Ensure Community Benefit.

The second learning table topic of the history of 38th and Chicago, was chosen to explore the collective community history and experience. Tracey Williams-Dillard, Publisher/CEO Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder, gave a presentation on the local history. Her presentation was followed by a data and architectural rendering presentation by Nathan Johnson of 4RM +ULA. Attendees were then presented with maps on 12 tables; there were 3 rows and each had a different prompt. The participants rotated each row and answered the prompt within the allotted 15 minutes. In this activity facilitators at each prompt guided participants to identify what the community is now, historical assets, and historical forces. Following the activity, there was time for small group and large group discussions. The notes below provide the raw transcription of the public response to the prompts.

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What We Heard

The 45 attendees of the second Learning Table were presented with questions to discuss and answer in small groups.

QUESTION 1: WHERE DO YOU FEEL THE EVIDENCE OF THE EXTERNAL FORCES THAT SHAPED THIS COMMUNITY?

- The disappearance of public space, disinvestment.
- The “de facto” redlining - not laws but behavior, unspoken rules, consequences to the community. The forces behind the laws. Unspoken rules because the forces that enforced things that were supposedly illegal. Redlining was part of the design yet an unspoken action.
- The narrative about black community members were extremely negative and untruthful. These stories were legalized. Black people were criminalized, stereotypes became actualized.
- The forces are powerful and strong, you may not see them but you feel them today in every aspect of life.
- Class divides - not feeling welcome past 38th or 42nd as a lower income child
- Gentrification forces all up and down 38th including Sabathani (so quiet now!) the whole Sabathani area used to have so many businesses.
- We need an agreed upon historical context - tap into and honor elders in the here and now.
- Destruction/disinvestment especially with community spaces like Urban League, The Spruce, Nacirema
- As a kid growing up here I did not know about our [black folks] amazing history - erasure
- Cars killed cities - the pattern of highway redevelopment was racist. 35W goes right next to the redlined area.
- Closed the local high school and junior high in the area, dynamics of redlining and the school district
- Bring back the street cars! Lots of thriving business corridors
- Closing of schools - attempted confiscation of education
- The memorial grows over time (and will not stop in the near future) because people are continuing to die at the hands of systemic racism and ongoing colonialism and displacement.
- People come from all over to find the names of their loved ones
- Twin Cities = transgender migration hot spot due to better healthcare and job opportunities for trans people
- The redlining certainly created a vacuum to allow 35W to split up the community where people moved to suburbs in the early 70s and homes became section 8 properties.

REPORT BACK QUESTION ONE

- Disappearance of public spaces and schools (Boynton Elementary closed in the 1960s because of integration)
- Racial covenants clustered in the green space
- Redlining set up 35W urban renewal - cut community; 37th was cut off
- Hard to talk about forces: gentrification, defacto
- redlining, complicity from the city, real estate, insurance



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QUESTION 2: WHAT MEMORIES OF THE COMMUNITY DO YOU CHERISH? WHERE ARE THEY?

- Worldwide outreach for christ had had 4 locations (a member's home, across the street, 36th & Chicago & current location) before the church was an appliance store. The current laundromat used to be a furniture store.
- Central high school was wonderfully diverse and a very positive influence on me. Losing the school and the football field was not good for the community.
- Lots of small community-owned local businesses, social clubs, and gathering spaces.
- Ice cream shop
- Drug store at 48th + Chicago with a soda fountain.
- Local business districts - grocery, pharmacy, bakery along original streetcar lines
- Grocery store at 38th & 4th that burned down (Mr. Ruben's)
- I cherish the community riding public transit along all of 38th Street. The closure of 38th + Chicago has made it difficult for many along 38th Street and there is no transit to 38th and Chicago. Bus routes have been reconfigured.
- Sports + festivals @ Phelps
- Area is center of queer community
- GFS Gates/barricades on Chicago
- Say their names: Mourning passages + names were added over time and now relatives come and look for their loved one's names.
- Feeding people
- Wilharm's Drug Store (where Cup is now)
- Tom's Furniture (where Dragon Wok is)
- House of Pancakes (where Just Turkey is)
- LGBTQ history in the area
- Sabathani - growing up at Sabathani
- Pillsbury nurturing artists of all ages
- Nokomis Theater/Fine Arts
- Community mutual aid all along 38th Street
- Community Care Kids in GFS
- Ice skating @ GFS on Chicago
- Urban Arts Academy
- Streetcars would be dope!

PRE IDENTIFIED HISTORIC COMMUNITY PLACES

- Central High School 1913-1982
- Bryant Junior High School 1923-1978
- Sabathani Community Center - 1979
- Spokesman (Later Spokesman-Recorder) - 1934
- Dreamland Cafe - 1939
- Minneapolis Urban League - 1928
- Sabathani Baptist Church - 1962
- Leno O. Smith House - 1885-1966
- Nacirema Club - 1955-1987
- St. Peter's Ame Church - 1880
- Tilsenbilt Homes - 1954-1956
- St. Thomas Episcopal Church - 1903
- Arthur and Edith Lee House - 1934
- Spruce Club (3800 Block)

COMMUNITY ADDITIONS TO KEY HISTORIC PLACES

- Jet's Record Store (38th & 4th Ave)
- Grocery Store (Mr. Ruben Grocery)
- St. Peter's Ame Church - 1800 (Original not on 4th Ave. now a store?)
- St. Paul Cogie
- Tolfson Funeral Home
- Howard's Catering Service 33rd and 4th
- Central High School 1913-1982 > Green Elementary
- Bryant Junior High School 1923-1978 > Sabathani Warrington Elementary School
- Sabathani Baptist Church 1962 > Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church (Friendship Coop)
- Nacirema Club - 1955-1987 > El Bethel Baptist Church
- From Me to You Clothing Ministry
- St. Thomas Episcopal Church - 1903 > New Kingdom Hall
- Madame of the Arts - DIY Queer Space (the 2010s)
- Dyke Heights 1980s
- Rocky Rococo
- Mr. Reuben's - Corner Store - Produce - Apartments on top
- 38th and 4th
- 37th and Chicago High Lights

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REPORT BACK QUESTION 2

- Did not recognize these divisions
- Did not venture past 38th, maybe 42nd and 4th Ave had a reputation of “dodgy”
- Used to hang out at paris (Powderhorn)
- Boys and Girls Club Chicago + 38th
- Hungout at laundromat (38th)
- 38th on bus
- Wilmar’s Pharmacy (now Cup)
- 3200 + Columbus - V. queer friendly
- “Dyke Heights”
- 34th corridor over last 40 to 50 years
- Roberts Shoestore
- Hour’s Gym
- GMT Entertainment
- Artsongs
- Central School
- Growing up felt safe going to these places



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QUESTION 3: WHERE ARE THERE OPPORTUNITIES? WHAT TYPES OF CHANGES ARE NECESSARY AND WHY?

- Dealing with culture clash between community and law enforcement
- Lathonia - Black Wall Street (x2)
- Substation
- Shops
- Black History Museum
- Theater
- Entertainers
- Black Owned businesses
- Lack of community presence + police
- No real community
- Well lit, community will cut down on crime organization
- Police are assigned to the area to protect and serve
- Mayor's office should be kept from controlling the outcomes of the building
- Pedestrian only public space
- Truly public space that people aren't harassed for hanging out at or assembling
- Unesco World Heritage Site (the un administered and protects)
- Invest in community healing
- Youth programs
- The MPD stops escalating dangerous scenarios
- The MPD stop paying young people to shoot guns in the air
- Imagine a world where children are not exploited for city profit, imagine a world without good guys or bad guys, a world where everyone is afforded the opportunity to thrive
- Imagine youth are exploited for city profits
- Can the city grow without exploiting and profiteering off the community
- Can the city give?
- School/drop-in center for young adults and elders
- Career partners
- Outreach program for young adults and seniors
- Sabathani - open opportunities
- A craft/artists expo
- Community events gathering
- Renting out meeting spaces
- Community resources - social services, health, youth, seniors, early childhood
- Implement 38th St Thrive
- Speedway or Cup > Buy GF empowerment center
- Black businesses and housing co-op
- Employment services
- Training
- Not a tourist trap
- Respectful space for families and victims of racist violence
- Increase traffic calming
- Paint roundabout
- Signs
- Transit and pedestrian only space
- Organic place for new offerings
- Ongoing community presence and participation
- Living growing memorial to many people as it is now, including remembrance of George Floyd.
- Continued community gatherings
- Welcoming to international and national visitors
- More green spaces, solemn space/reminder of unfinished work.
- I'm community and business focused
- Businesses can create a better community
- Businesses that give back to the community instead of extracting from it
- Resources should be connected to the community.
- There was disinvestment + disparities in the community
- Need investment in
 - Healthy families
 - Healthy businesses
 - Nonprofits
 - Boys and Girls Club

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QUESTION 3: CONTINUED

- Possible opportunity for speedway: community center
- Antiracism + reconciliation center
- Museum
- Southside Greenway on 10th Ave and 11th
- More business opportunities
- Affordable grocery store
- Community garden
- Roller rink/bowl and roll
- Traffic calming like Penn Ave N of 55 for Chicago + 38th
- Gas station
- More trees
- Opportunities for children - afterschool programs, build on MPLS Kids
- Safety first
- Return library on wheels
- Return bus routes through 38th and Chicago
- Youth employment center or create summer jobs
- Pedestrian zone - Chicago Ave. between 37th and 38th or maybe 37th and 39th.
- It would allow preservation and continued creative space for the memorial and maybe make for a safer area for pedestrians.

REPORT BACK QUESTION THREE

FUTURE

- Commerce space (Black Wall Street)
- Opportunities in Sabathine
- Empty spaces used to be lively buildings
- Businesses can create community - giving back not entertaining
- People's Way as reconciliation center
- Trees
- Community gardens
- Businesses
- Library

NOW

- Crime element (gang membership)
- Do not have community unity
- Need gatherings to talk through and organize
- Lighting is poor
- Poor police presence



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INITIATIVES AT 38TH & CHICAGO

Mpls 2040 Plan

Metro D Line Construction

THRIVE! PLAN

VISION

"To continue the legacy and heritage of a deeply rooted African-American community by preserving our economic vibrancy, creative identity, and affordability that strengthens the vitality, resilience and partnership of the people who live and work in the district."

STRATEGIES

- Preserve legacy
- Generate advocacy
- Deepen community support
- Strengthen accessibility
- Attain financial investment

"A PLACE TO REFLECT, LEARN, HEAL AND GROW"

THIRTY-EIGHTH & CHICAGO

1. **Mixed desire for the streets to be reopened versus closing the street indefinitely.** Users have been pedestrian-only plazas, restricting private vehicles, preserve the public gathering space within the intersection and promote bicycle and pedestrian access.
2. **Justice before implementation.** City of Minneapolis leadership needs to reach a consensus with the authors of the Justice Resolution Letter.
3. **Sustain community resilience and resource networks.** Ideas to create a permanent network to maintain the services that has grown at 38th and Chicago including the memorial curbside, the greenhouses, #12 MASH, community pools, clothing and book donations.
4. **Preserving space for mourning and public reflection of the intersection of 38th and Chicago.** People expressed the value of preserving the existing public art that was organically created at the intersection. The desire for this space to be a place of hope, peace, healing, unity, justice, restoration and trust. A space which centers the black voice and the black experience. A space for the community to convene and build intergenerational connections. A space that recognizes black excellence, nurtured for and owned by the community.
5. **Vehicle access impacts to businesses and residents near the intersection of 38th and Chicago.** Adjacent residential streets such as Bluff Ave have experienced a significant amount of idling traffic, vehicle queuing and other public safety concerns.
6. **Desire for a permanent memorial to honor the life of George Floyd.** Ideas have been including adjacent properties and creating a museum or community center, other ideas included plaques or other memorials within the street.
7. **Public safety impacts within the intersection of 38th and Chicago.** Many reported concerns regarding gun shots, theft and a general feeling of anxiety, especially in the evening hours. This summer and fall has been an unprecedented uptick in violence.
8. **Small impacts regarding the lack of transit service to the intersection of 38th and Chicago.** Most transit related responses expressed concern with the inability to access transit directly at the intersection of 38th and Chicago indicated that the current transit detour routing was inadequate.
9. **Concerns with emergency vehicle responsiveness to calls from residents within the immediate area of 38th and Chicago.** People highlighted experiences in which emergency response was not fully addressed.
10. **Connect Nicollet to Bloomington.** Ideas to seek more development opportunities near Bloomington and having gateways - archways or public art - to mark the entrances to 38th.

CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS 38TH & CHICAGO STUDY

PHASED REOPENING – PRINCIPLES

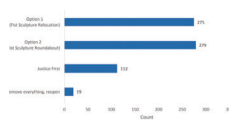
- Provide space for mourning/reflection
- Preserve public art
- Improve access for business, residences, transit, and emergency responders, and reconnect neighborhoods
- Support continued placemaking
- Reduce the impacts to the surrounding neighborhood
- Interim design, not a return to normalcy
- Consider the challenges of winter



City of Minneapolis
Intersection of 38th and Chicago Ave
POD Committee Presentation
April 20, 2022

- The report also introduce Long-term Commitment plan and opportunities for Community Input
- Team attended 80+ community, neighborhood and block meetings

SURVEY RESULT



MAILING AREA



685 responses out of 4,000 mailed surveys were received.

- 40% (275) of the responses supported option 1 (Fist Sculpture Relocation).
- 41% (279) of the responses supported option 2 (Fist Sculpture Roundabout).
- 16% (112) of the responses did not support either option, instead indicating a desire for justice before any design changes be implemented to the intersection.
- 3% (19) of the responses requested that all existing barricades, art and other community installations be removed and that the intersection be reopened to vehicle traffic and in a manner similar to how the area was before the death of George Floyd

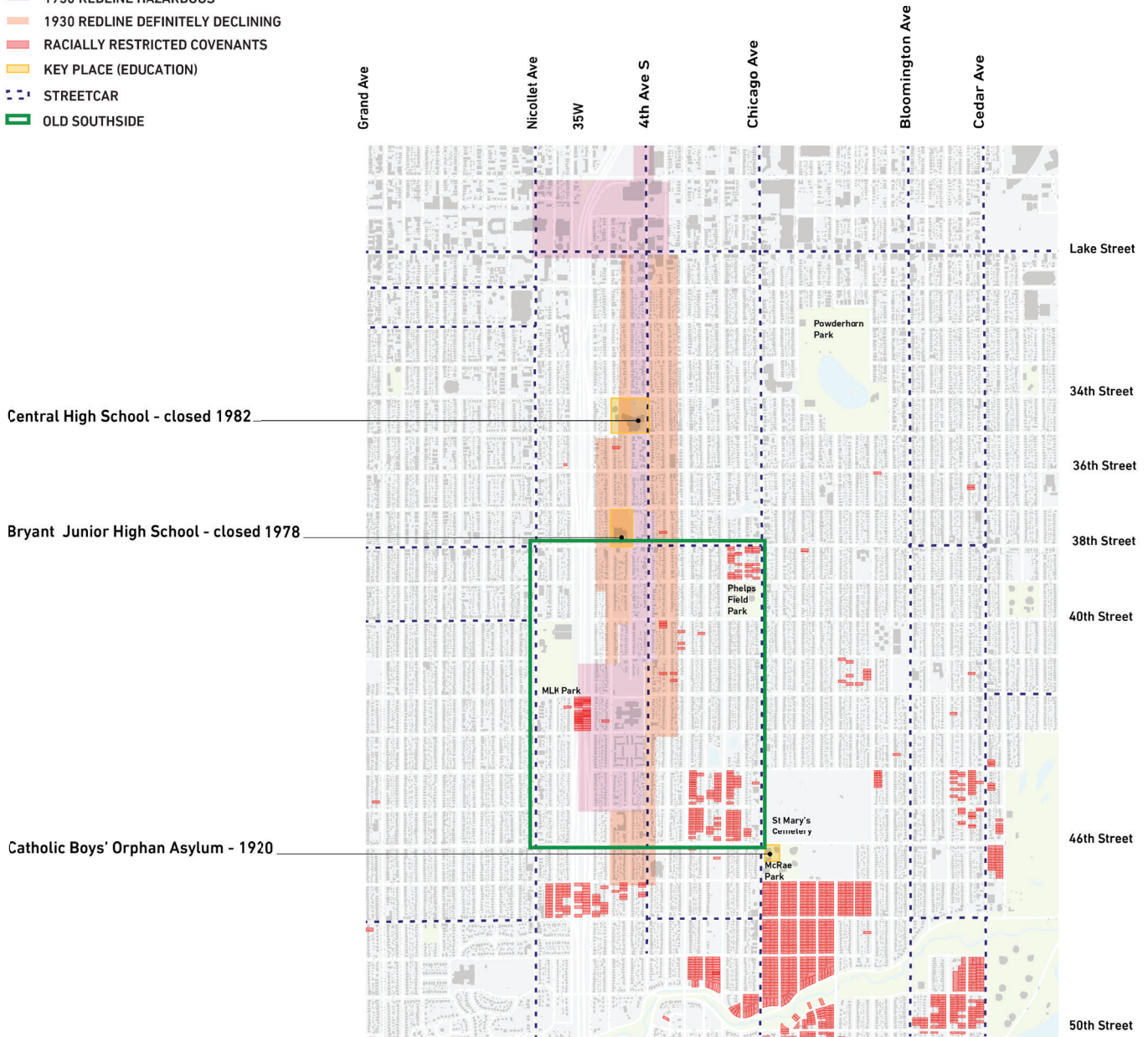
Fist Sculpture Relocation

Fist Sculpture Roundabout

SITE BACKGROUND

HISTORIC FORCES

- 1930 REDLINE HAZARDOUS
- 1930 REDLINE DEFINITELY DECLINING
- RACIALLY RESTRICTED COVENANTS
- KEY PLACE (EDUCATION)
- STREETCAR
- OLD SOUTHSIDE

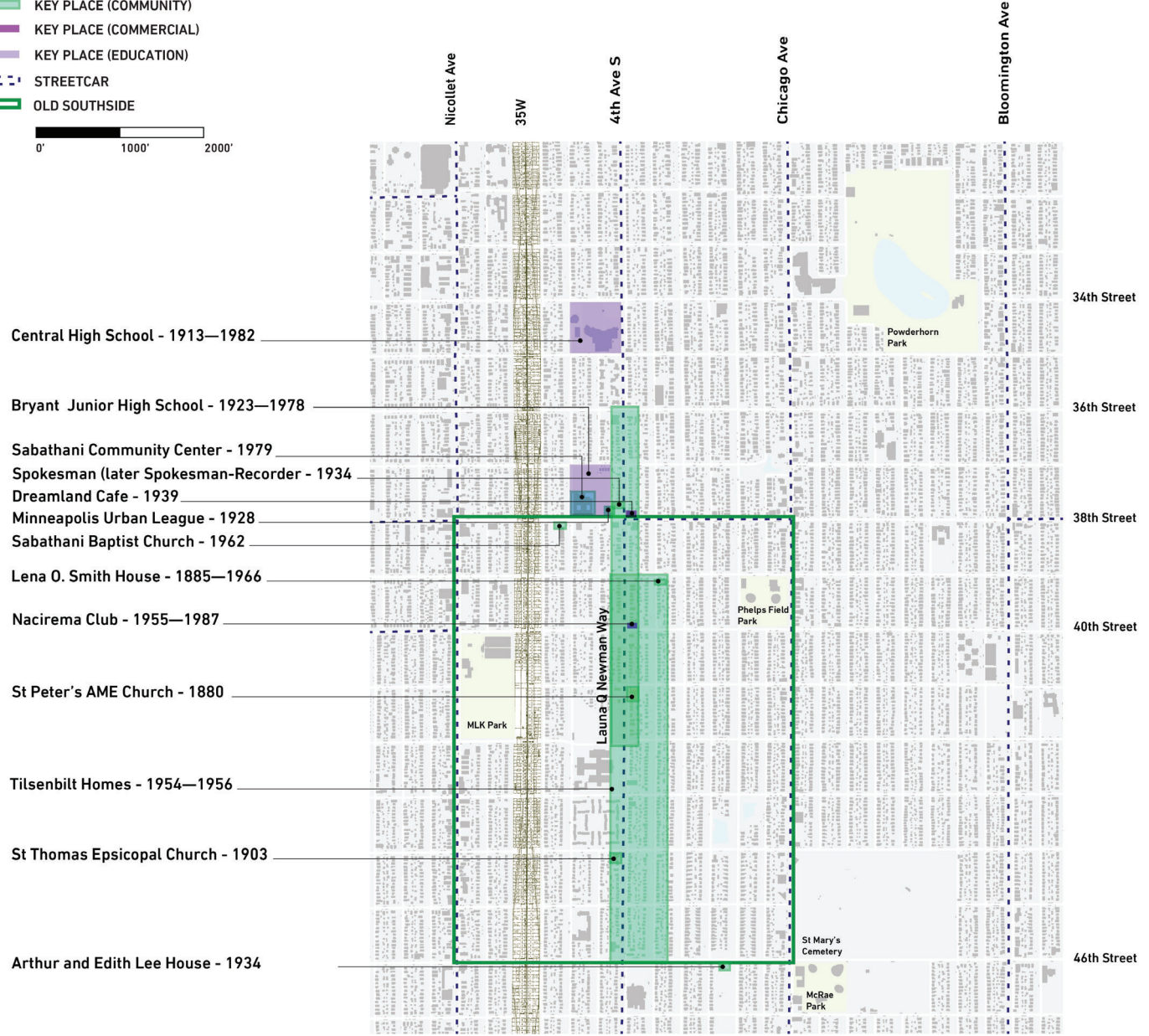


SITE BACKGROUND

HISTORIC COMMUNITY

- KEY PLACE (COMMUNITY)
- KEY PLACE (COMMERCIAL)
- KEY PLACE (EDUCATION)
- STREETCAR
- OLD SOUTHSIDE

0' 1000' 2000'



1870's Black Family at Minnehaha Falls
 1880: AME (African Methodist Episcopal) Church was founded
 1903: St. Thomas Episcopal Church was founded.

1910's 1918 Sixteenth Battalion of the Minnesota Home Guard

1920's 1920 NAACP Mpls Branch
 1928 MPLS Urban League

1930's 1931 Arthur and Edith Lee purchase a house in all White Neighborhood
 Lena Olive Smith was a NAACP Prosecuting Attorney. She lived on 3905 5th Ave. S
 Associated Negro Credit Union opens on 3744 4th Ave. S

1940's Dreamland Cafe opened 1939

1950's Tilsenbilt Homes were offered. The first housing in the country to offer FHA-insured mortgage buyers of all races. 59 of 62 houses were purchased by black family
 Spokesman Recorder building was built in the current location. Spokesman was established in 1934

1960's NAACP HEARS MRS. F.D.R. MINNEAPOLIS SPOKESMAN

SITE BACKGROUND

NOW

- TRANSIT
 - TRANSIT STOPS
 - TRANSIT SHELTERS
 - BIKEWAYS
 - NON-RESIDENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES (THRIVE)
 - DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES (THRIVE)
 - CORRIDOR (MINNEAPOLIS 2040)
 - GEORGE FLOYD SQUARE
 - GEORGE FLOYD SQUARE ZONE
 - 38TH ST CULTURAL DISTRICT (THRIVE)
 - KEY PLACE (COMMUNITY)
 - OLD SOUTHSIDE
- 0' 1000' 2000'

- Say Their Names Cemetery - 2020
- Sabathani Community Center - 1979
- Spokesman-Recorder - 1934
- Kente Circle - 2004

