

THE MISSING LINK: CHICAGO'S UNDERPERFORMING PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVE URBAN STRATEGIES FOR BRONZEVILLE

Abstract

The Chicago South Side neighborhood of Bronzeville, adjacent to Burnham Park, has remained separated from the lakefront public landscape for almost a century. Since then, the Canadian National rail tracks and Lake Shore Drive have been acting as physical barriers, making access and connection between the neighborhood and park a difficult endeavour. Efforts undertaken by city authorities to connect Bronzeville and Burnham Park have not been successful in nurturing the desired conditions of mutual benefit and connectivity between these adjacent spaces. The first in a series of projects built with the intention of connecting these two urban landscapes is the 35th Street bridge.

The objective of this paper is to enlist which decisions taken by city authorities when planning this project were detrimental to the project, and enlighten on the urban design qualities and criterias that have resulted in the 35th Street bridge's undermining performance. Historical review of the policies driving the strategy's inception and a qualitative evaluation of its design are employed to argue over the projects's limited performance. This document aims to suggest future criterias for the city of Chicago authorities to follow when planning and designing access and connective infrastructure between Bronzeville and Burnham Park.

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Keywords

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