

A National Endowment for the Arts Project 'Our Town'
East ST. Louis Art and Cultural District
Proposal and Strategic Planning Framework

Creative Exchange Lab

December 20, 2017

Acknowledgements

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01 Introduction

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

In July 2015, the National Endowment for The Arts' (NEA) awarded Creative Exchange Lab (CEL) Center for Architecture + Design, an 'Our Town' grant to do an Art & Cultural Assessment of East Saint Louis in Illinois. In the 2014/15 application to NEA, CEL had made the case that it was plausible that East St. Louis could utilize its unique rich history, and being home to many culturally significant celebrities, champions and legends such as Katherine Dunham, Miles Davis, Jackie Joyner-Kersey --just to name a few—not only as catalyst for reconciliation but also for an equitable sustainable economic development through the arm of Art & Culture, place-making and creative sector entrepreneurship, if supported by right policies. CEL's primary partners in the project are the City of East Saint Louis City, and HSSU's CNA faculty and students.

The main component of the project was a cultural assessment of East St. Louis. To encourage public involvement CEL created a website where an interactive cultural assets map was developed to serve as a tool in this process. The purpose of this website was to inform about this cultural heritage, to solicit community engagement, and to empower the stakeholder to contribute additional information to this site during the two-year duration of the project and beyond.

In order to utilize this knowledge as a potential stimulus for economic rejuvenation of this extremely distressed city, CEL sought out community and institutional partners, as well as, local artists through two requests for proposals (RFP). In terms of the arts and culture partners and anchor institutions, CEL established initial collaboration with The Jackie Joyner Kersey Center (JJKC), the House of Miles Davis East St. Louis (HOME), the Katherine Dunham Museum (KDM), the New Life Community Church (NLCC), and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE).

THE EAST ST. LOUIS CULTURAL ARTS DISTRICT: A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

VISION

By 2025, East St. Louis, Illinois, will be a cultural arts destination where residents and visitors not only see, hear, learn and celebrate the city's rich, multi-layered history and culture, but that the residents participate, contribute and economically benefit from the cultural assets within the community.

RATIONALE

East St. Louis has a rich cultural legacy—both past and present. It should build on this heritage to continue that legacy into the future. The formation of a Cultural Arts District would not only energize the arts community in East St. Louis, it would be a catalyst for the revitalization of the City. A Cultural Arts District (CAD) in the City has the potential for making East St. Louis both a tourist destination and a magnet for emerging artists, performers, and writers.

PROPOSED MAJOR INITIATIVES

1. Community-Based Nonprofit Organization:

The first step in the creation of the CAD should be the formation of a resident-led non-profit organization to oversee the activities of the District.

2. Detailed Strategic Plan and Market Analysis:

This document is only a framework for a more detailed plan that would contain additional design work, market analysis, and cost projections.

3. Illinois Arts and Culture District Designation:

Once the organizational structure of the District has been stabilized, the District should form a community improvement district that would have the authorization to levy taxes to support the district.

4. Corridor/Walkway between House of Miles and Dunham Center:

As a means of establishing the identity of the CAD and of taken advantage of the abundance of vacant land in the target area, a walkway should be created between these two main institutions.

02 Community Outreach

RFP's

Finalists Map

Artist Bio's

Community Events / Meetings

CEL Katherine Dunham

CEL House of Miles Event

CEL Tinder Box Act 1

CEL Against All the Odds

East St. Louis 1917 Race Riots Pogrom

Pictures of Partner + Artist Community Meeting

Press and Media Coverage



LOOKING FOR AN EAST ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY PARTNER TO USE ART AND CULTURE AS REVITALIZATION CATALYST!!

The *Creative Exchange Lab*, a St. Louis nonprofit organization dedicated to architecture and urban design, is collaborating with the City of East St. Louis to assist a local community to use its art and cultural assets as catalysts for neighborhood rejuvenation.

Supported by an **Our Town** grant from the **National Endowment for the Arts**, the *Creative Exchange Lab (CEL)*—in partnership with Harris–Stowe State University—will assemble a team of urban planners, architects, historians, and artists to envision and develop a neighborhood plan that uses art and culture as the center piece of a revitalization strategy. Working intimately with the chosen community organization, the CEL team will prepare implementation tactics for how community cultural assets can best be used to stimulate revitalization.

If interested in being considered to participate in the program, East St. Louis community organizations should submit a 3–5–page proposal that contains the following:

- Name of the organization (including contact information),
- A description of its mission, organizational structure, target area, and a discussion of perceived existing cultural assets, plus
- A brief statement of how planning assistance can assist the community in using and developing its cultural assets as tools to stimulate community renewal, as well as, how the organization envisions its participation in the project.

Proposals should be sent to Ms. Jasmin Aber, CEL Executive Director, 3307 Washington Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63103 by December 31, 2015. For additional information, you may contact Ms. Aber at (408) 209-9252/ ja@creativeexchangelab.com or Mark Abbott at (314) 779-9606/ abbottm@hssu.edu. Submitting organizations will be notified of the award by February 29nd 2016.



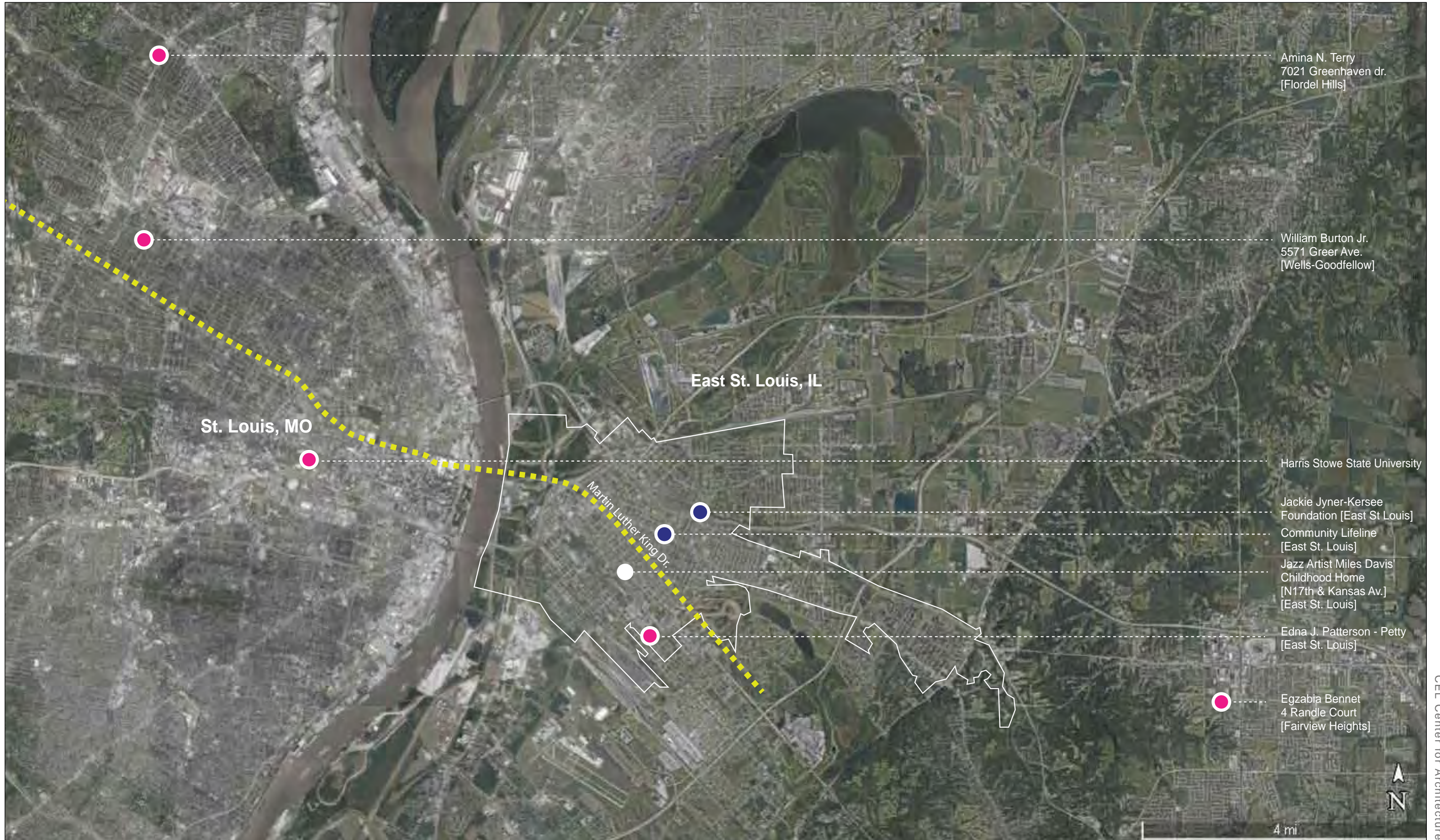
LOOKING FOR A LOCAL ARTIST TO USE ART AND CULTURE AS CATALYST TO REVITALIZE EAST ST. LOUIS!!

The *Creative Exchange Lab*, a St. Louis architecture and urban design nonprofit organization dedicated to community renewal, is collaborating with the City to East St. Louis to assist a local community to use art and culture as a catalyst for neighborhood rejuvenation.

Supported by an **Our Town** grant from the **National Endowment for the Arts**, the *Creative Exchange Lab (CEL)*—in partnership with Harris–Stowe State University—will assemble a team of urban planners, architects, and scholars to develop a neighborhood plan that uses art and culture as essential revitalization tools. Working intimately with the chosen community organization, the CEL team will prepare a community strategy for how community cultural assets can best be used to stimulate revitalization. A local artist will be chosen to be an integral member of the team.

If interested in being considered to participate in the program, East St. Louis artists should submit their resumes accompanied by a cover letter and a sample of their work.

Applications should be sent to Ms. Jasmin Aber, CEL Executive Director, 3307 Washington Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63103 by December 31, 2015. For additional information, you may contact Ms. Aber at (408) 209-9252/ jasminaber@gmail.com or Mark Abbott at (314) 779-9606/ abbottm@hssu.edu. Artists who apply will be notified of the award by January 15, 2016. The community plan is expected to be completed by December 31, 2016 and will entail approximately 200 hours of the artist's time. The team artist will receive a \$10,000 stipend.



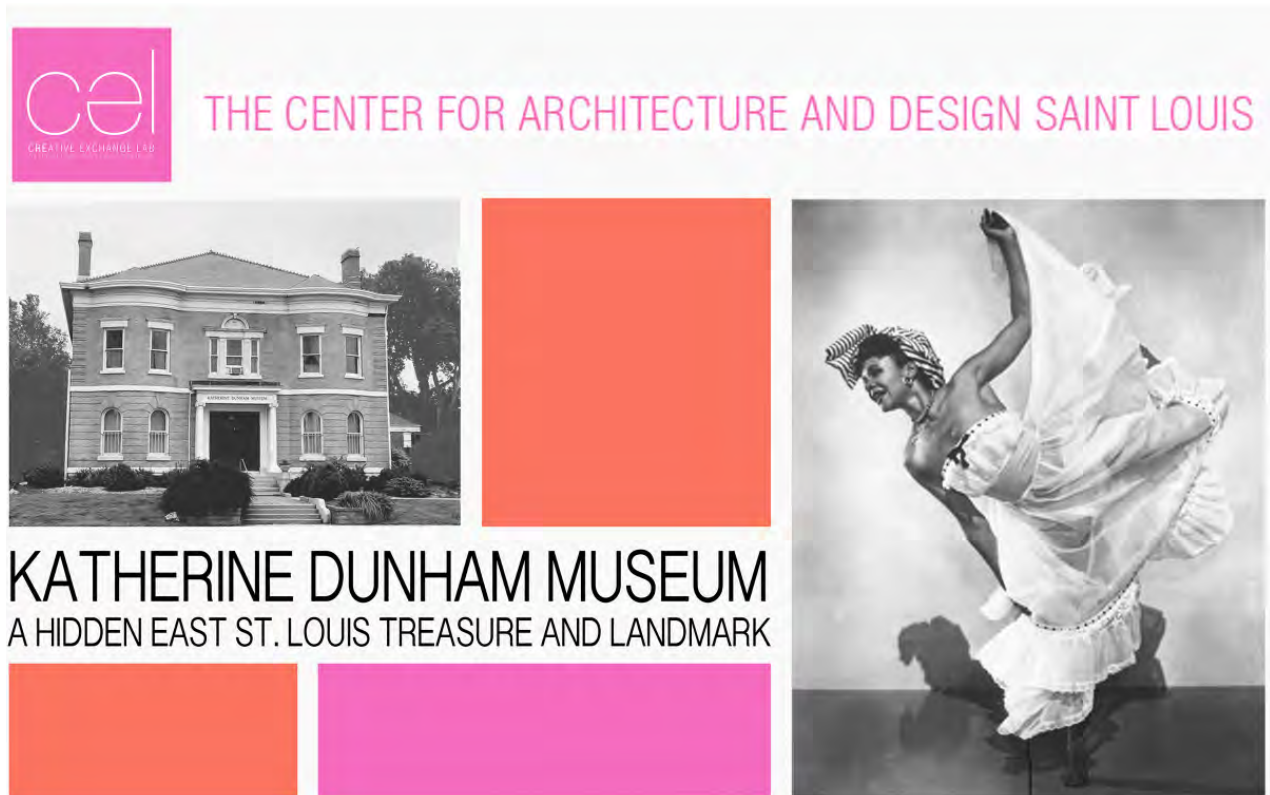
Edna Patterson-Petty

Edna Patterson-Petty is nationally known for her art quilts and the stories they express. She has won several awards including the Grand Center Visionary Award and the 2008 NAACP Arts Award. Her quilts have been exhibited in galleries nationally and internationally. She is a resident of East St. Louis, IL. She graduated from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville with a Bachelor of Fine Arts, a Master of Fine Arts degree in Studio Art, and a Master of Fine Arts in Art Therapy.

"I am a consummate recycler, as a textile/fabric, multi-media artist I enjoy giving items that are basically thrown away after their initial use, a new way of being used, and a new way of being seen".

Gregory S. Carr

Gregory S. Carr, a native of St. Louis, MO., is an instructor of Speech and Theatre at Harris-Stowe State University. Gregory is an accomplished director, playwright, actor and published writer. He has performed with the Pamoja Theatre Workshop, the Historyonics Theatre Company, the St. Louis Black Repertory Company, The Muny Theatre, the First Run Theatre and his own touring company, the Griot Theatre. Several of his plays have been given staged readings and productions at the historic Karamu House in Cleveland which include: Johnnie Taylor Is Gone, A Colored Funeral, and Stormy Monday. In 2000, he was commissioned by the Missouri History Museum to write and act in Core Beliefs: The Story of the St. Louis C.O.R.E. His play Sandtown was published by the Catholic University of America's anthology of religious plays, Sacred Conflicts. His essay "Top Brass: Theatricality, Themes, and Theology in James Weldon Johnson's God's Trombones appears in Theatre Symposium Volume 21: Ritual, Religion and Theatre, which is published by the University of Alabama Press. Gregory newest play titled Tinderbox, which focuses on the events leading up to the devastating East St. Louis Race Riots of 1917 is being considered for several playwriting competitions. Currently, Gregory is working on his first novel, Murmuration, which deals with the cruelty of American slavery and its effect on modern society.



In the months of July & August 2016 CEL Center for Architecture + Design StL. will be hosting two events about bringing forth two EASTL's [hidden] landmarks:

Katherine Dunham Museum (July 22nd 2016)
House of Miles Davis (August 2016, Date TBD.)

Background:

In 2015 CEL (Creative Exchange Lab) with its primary partner; HSSU (Harris-Stowe State University) was awarded an NEA (National Endowment for The Arts) grant titled 'Our Town' to develop, with the East St. Louis City and it's community, a unique cultural-led economic development strategy, that would capitalize on ESTL's unique and underutilized cultural assets for greater community pride, economic development, and to promote a regional visitors attractions.

KATHERINE DUNHAM MUSEUM: AN EAST ST. LOUIS TREASURE AND LANDMARK

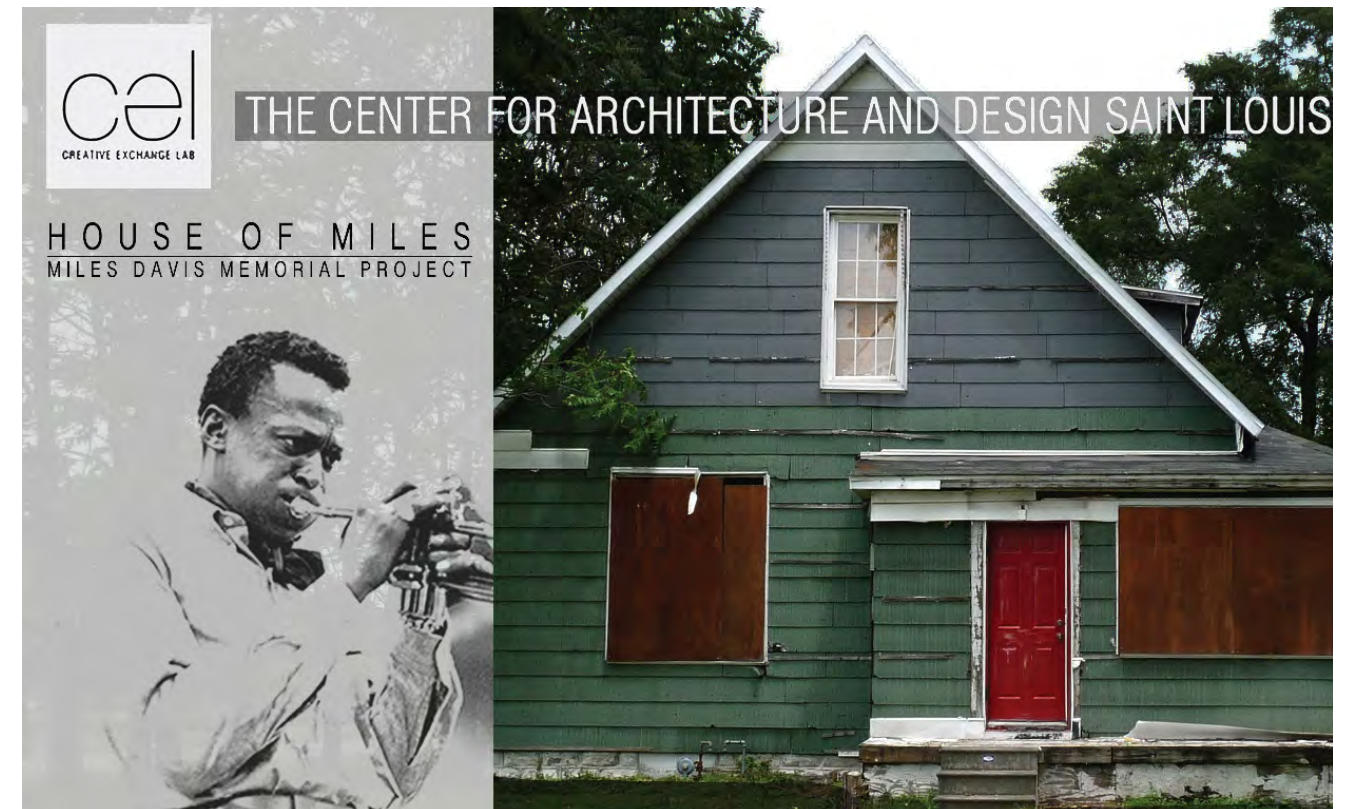
July 22nd, 2016, at 5:30 PM
 Address: 3307 Washington Blvd | St. Louis, MO 63103

From Politics of Diaspora and the Architecture of Innovative Choreography

Three perspectives on the legacy of the renowned dancer Katherine Dunham followed by three short dance vignettes by Katherine Dunham youth dance company under instruction of Ruby Streate, and Q/A.

Presenters:

- **Ms. Laverne E. Backstrom**, the board president of KDKAH
- **Ms. Ruby Streate**, a member of the Dunham legacy since 1969 and the dance director at KDCAH
- **Professor Joanna Dee Das (PhD)**, Performing Arts Department, Washington University in St. Louis. She is in the process of publishing a book on Dunham's life and works entitled Katherine Dunham: Dance and the Politics of Diaspora with Oxford University Press



HOUSE OF MILES: A MILES DAVIS MEMORIAL PROJECT

When: Thursday August 11th, 2016, at 5:30 PM
Where: Cel Center for arxhitecture + Design STL.
 3307 Washington Blvd | St. Louis, MO 63103

In the months of July through October 2016 CEL Center for Architecture + Design StLwill be hosting a series of events highlighting EASTL's underutilized cultural assets and landmarks such as **Katherine Dunham Museum (event date; July 22nd 2016)** and **House of Miles Davis** (August 11th 2016) to mention a few of the highlights.

Background:

Asset Mapping and A Strategic Plan for a Cultural Corridor in East St. Louis



You're Invited to the Reading of a New Play entitled

TINDERBOX

By Gregory Carr

The play explores the events surrounding the 1917 East Saint Louis Race Riots and Massacre

When: Sunday, May 7, 1:00-3:00pm

Where: Creative Exchange Lab (CEL), www.creativeexchangelab.com

3307 Washington Blvd. St Louis 63103

Who: "Cast" includes students from Harris-Stowe State University and Saint Louis University

Directed by Prof. Nancy Bell



This documentary is your chance to learn astounding local history through the lens of East St. Louis community members themselves. Historical photographs, archival footage, and interviews of locals who have lived through the tumultuous, rich history of their community leave a lasting, personal impression. East St. Louis exemplifies the ability of a disadvantaged community that has suffered so much strife, including racial conflict such as the riots of 1917 and economic decline from population and industrial shifts, and yet has maintained a strong community that has produced incredible contributions to American culture through jazz, blues, dance, and more. This story should be learned by all Americans, especially those from the St. Louis region, for the inspiring tales of East St. Louis citizens that paint the crucial histories of racial conflict, economic troubles, and cultural creation from our area that have shaped and encapsulated our national history.



Friday, May 26

3:00 PM

Art Exhibits Open

4:30–5:00

Conference Welcome

East St. Louis 1917 Centennial Commission Chair Rev. Joseph Brown, S.J.

Co-Chair Edmund Brown

East St. Louis Mayor Emeka Jackson-Hicks

5:00–5:30

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Charles Lumpkins

Author of American Pogrom: The East St. Louis Race Riot and Black Politics

5:30–6:30

Students read East St. Louis 1917 winning essays and kwansabas

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society St. Louis Community College

Fire Next Time Rise Above the Flames

NAACP Youth Presentation

Presentation of Certificates of Recognition

Fr. Joseph Brown and Honorable Judge Milton Wharton

Saturday, May 27

9:00 AM

Opening Remarks

Rev. Joseph Brown, S.J., Chair of the East St. Louis 1917 CCCI

9:15–10:30

1917: The Storm, the Blood and the Meaning for Today

Michael R. Allen, Washington University in St. Louis

The East St. Louis Massacre and the Larger Jim Crow Geography of St. Louis

Samanthe Bachelier, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Hidden History: The Whitewashing of the 1917 East St. Louis Race Riot in

the Collective Consciousness of the Greater St. Louis Metro Region

Dr. Andrew Theising, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

After the Riot: The Return of East St. Louis's Greatest Mayor

Dr. Andrea Boyles, Lindenwood University

Why 'Black Lives Matter': The Politization and Racialization of Black

Citizen-Police Encounters in Riots and Protests

10:45–12:00

The Legacy and Gathering of Memories

Local activists discuss the impact of the racial violence on their families and their efforts to memorialize lives lost.

St. Louis Alderman Terry Kennedy and activist Dhati Kennedy

East St. Louis artist Anne Walker

12:15–1:30

Lunch and Learn

Dr. Anthony Cheeseboro, SIUE

Leisure and Entertainment in Greater East St. Louis

Jasmin Aber, Creative Exchange Lab

East Saint Louis Art & Cultural District Corridor: Mapping Memory

Catalina Freixas, WashU, & Dr. Mark Abbott, Harris Stowe

Envisioning Equity in East St. Louis: The Case of Emerson Park

Cindy Reed, Spoken Word Performance Artist

Beauty through the ashes: A love letter to East St. Louis

1:30–2:45

Filmmakers Forum

Sandra Pfeiffer

Against All the Odds

Treasure Shields Redmond & Jesse Vogler, with Katherine Miles, Rodericka

Olden, Lore'al Perkins, Terraine Simmons, Alajah Vales, & Toyreale Williams

Recitation

Denise Ward Brown

Never Been a Time

3:00–4:30

Premiere Reading

An original play written by Gregory Carr

Tinderbox

5:00

1917 Monument Fundraising Reception

Sunday, May 28

2:00–5:00

Arts & Cultural Performances

Eugene B. Redmond Writers Club

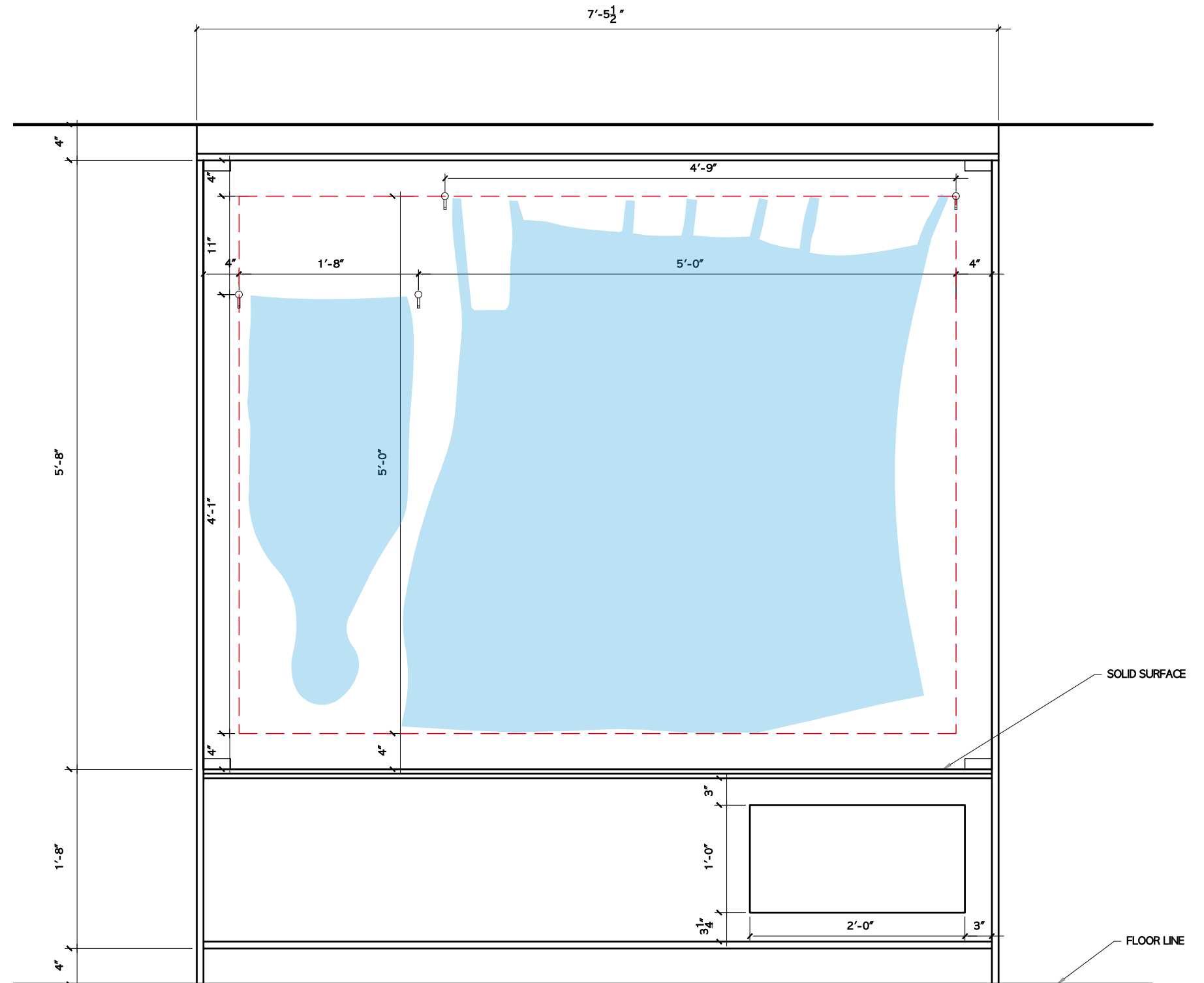
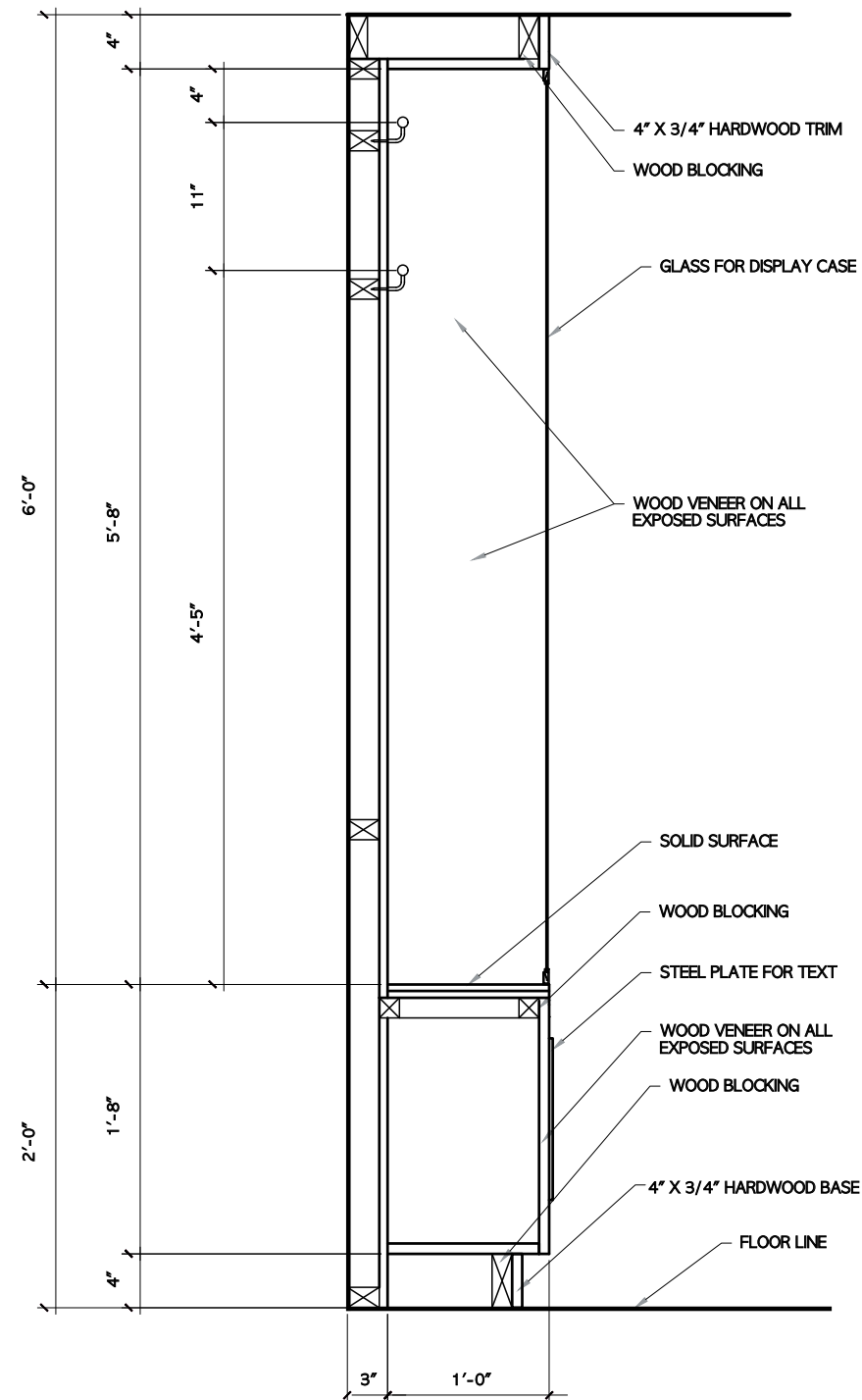
Dhati Kennedy

Kendrick Smith Trio

Zelphia Otis



Creative Exchange Lab presents to the people of East St. Louis this quilt designed by the nationally acclaimed fabric artist Edna Patterson-Petty (one of the project's artist-in-residence). The quilt tells the story of the proposal and the vision behind the project i.e. the creation of an 'Art and Cultural District' for East St. Louis, which is the product of a two-year cultural arts assessment of East St. Louis funded by the National Endowment for the Arts between 2015 and 2017. The picture shows the Mayor of East St. Louis 'Emeka Jackson-Hicks' (in the middle) holding the quilt created by project's artist in residence 'Edna Patterson Petty' (to the left of the mayor).



Creative Exchange Lab also designed and built a display case to house the quilt, which will be given as a gift to the city of East St Louis, to be located in the City hall (to be installed June 2018).

Featured in This Issue

Cover Story

**Damon Davis –
Interdisciplinary
Storyteller**

**Michael Thomas Says:
Tell Your Story!**

A Pathway Between
the Arts and Education with
Dr. Roderick Nunn



L-R: Leverage Backstrom, Feven Girmay, Edward Alexander, Edna Patterson-Petty, Niesha Clark, Jasmin Aber, Gregory Carr, Natavia Sanders, Jas Gary Pearson, Lauren Parks

Creative Urban Design: A Cultural District in East St. Louis

BY **AYA** PHOTO BY **KEVIN HOPKINS**

The East St. Louis “Cultural District” project vision: *By 2025, East St. Louis, Illinois, will be a cultural arts destination where residents and visitors not only see, hear, learn and celebrate the city’s rich, multi-layered history and culture, but that the residents participate, contribute and economically benefit from the cultural assets within the community.*

Imagine vacant spaces filled with agricultural fields, gardens, art, and more – creatively woven together to tell a story – leading visitors and residents from one point of cultural celebration to another, while inviting us to stop and play in between. This is the “Cultural Corridor,” the experience on the journey between sacred cultural landmarks within the East St. Louis “Cultural District,” a legal boundary for governance.

In July 2015, National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) awarded an ‘Our Town’ grant to Creative Exchange Lab (CEL) to do an ‘art & cul-

tural asset mapping’ to develop a revitalization plan within a district of East St. Louis that will use culture and the arts as an economic and community catalyst. The Our Town grant program supports creative place-making projects that help communities create lively, beautiful, and resilient places with the arts at their core.

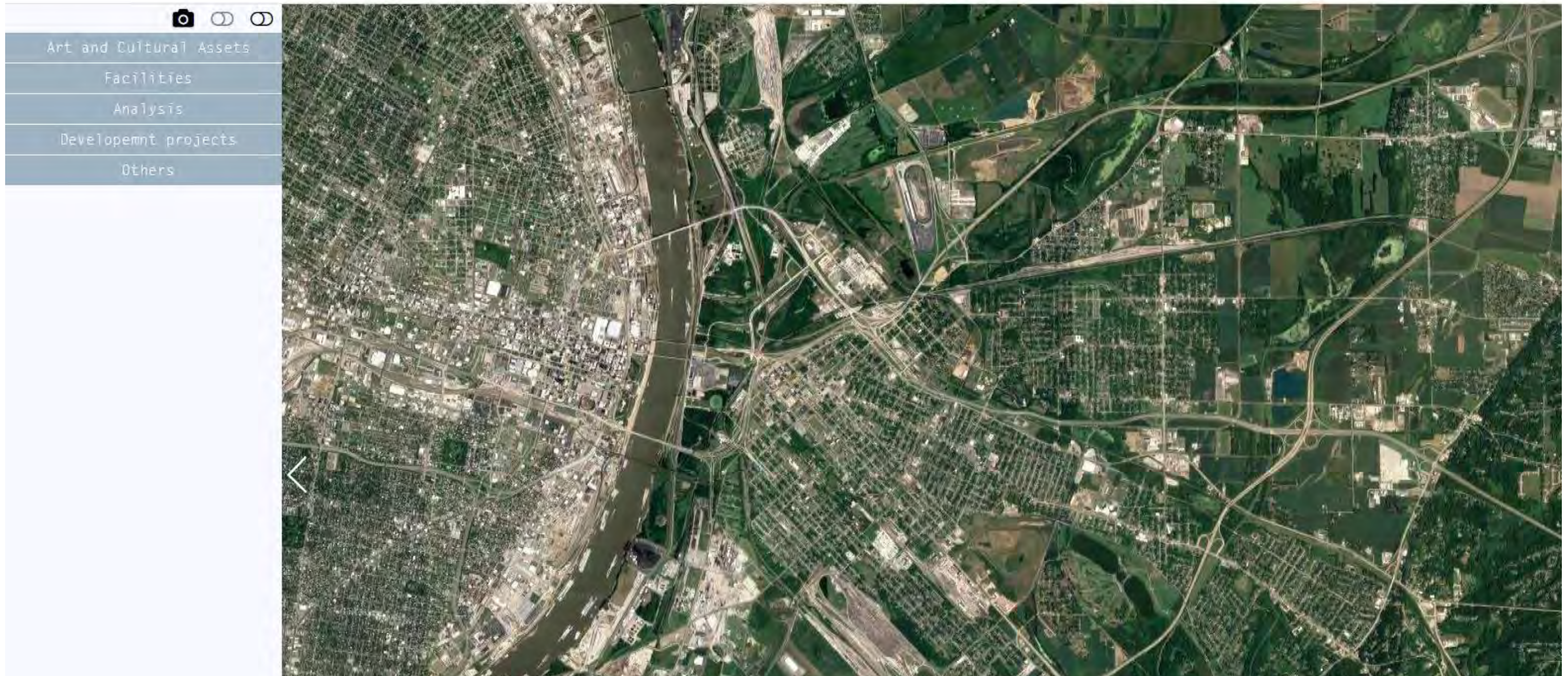
CEL and its primary university partner Harris-Stowe State University’s (HSSU) Center for Neighborhood Affairs (CNA) have partnered with the City of East St. Louis and plans for a highly collaborative effort in our city are underway. CEL is a non-profit center for design, arts, and architecture, with a CityLab that focuses on ‘Public Interest Design’ (PID) neighborhood projects and other forms of collective human ingenuity. HSSU, as the primary partner on this project, provides an extensive network of talented individuals and supportive resources, from faculty to students.

“The Our Town grant is a tremendous opportunity for both CEL and

Community Outreach [Interactive]

www.creativeexchangelab.com/ESTL

ESTL OUR TOWN MAP ABOUT PROJECTS RESOURCES



03 Cultural Assessment

History

Existing Conditions

Cultural Assets

Interactive Website

History

I. PRE-HISTORY

The history of East St. Louis, Illinois is inexplicably tied to the Mississippi River. Too often, historians relegate geography and landscape to the background of human stories when, in fact, human interaction with the environment is a central reason for the stories that followed. Nearly 12,000 years ago, when the earth began to warm at the end of the Ice Age, the Mississippi River valley began to take shape. Specifically, it was the melting of the Laurentide Ice Sheet, which extended as far south as present-day Carbondale, Illinois, that filled the watershed now known as the Mississippi River valley.¹

II. ARRIVAL OF HUMANS

The region is home to an ancient civilization of mound builders who developed an advanced society in present-day Cahokia, Illinois, just a few miles north of the boundaries of East St. Louis. Settled around the year 600 C.E., the ancient city covered about six square miles of territory, which made it the largest and most populous of the cities built by members of the mound building Mississippian culture. Located strategically near the confluence of the two largest rivers on the North American continent (Mississippi and Missouri), this ancient city became the continent's most influential. Historians and archaeologists believe that the society reached a peak population of about 40,000 around the year 1200, with most of those living in agricultural settlements that surrounded the city. The success of this ancient society was partly to blame for its downfall, because the large population both needed to consume a great amount of food to survive and produced a great amount of waste. The combination of an unsteady food supply and improper waste disposal led to a public health disaster.² Furthermore, only recently have researchers in historical geography linked the precipitous decline of the ancient society to a calamitous flood around the year 1200.³ By 1350, the area had been completely abandoned.

Following the fall of the pre-Columbian mound building society, the Cahokia Indians, from which the historic mounds take their name, settled in this area. Perhaps the term 'settled' is inappropriate because the Cahokia, like other Algonquian speaking

¹ B.J. Stiff and A.K. Hansel, "Quaternary Glaciations in Illinois," in J. Ethers and P.L. Gibbard, eds., *Quaternary Glaciations: Extent and Chronology 2: Part II North America* (Elsevier: Amsterdam 2004).

² Dean Snow, *Archaeology of Native North Americas (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall 2010)*, 201-203.

tribes of the Illinois confederacy, had semi-migratory lifestyles based on seasonal hunting and growing. For hundreds of years, the Cahokia lived an unsteady lifestyle of subsistence and perpetual tribal conflict with the Iroquois and Dakota. In 1698, French missionaries settled in the region for the sole purpose of proselytizing to the Cahokia tribe, which had set up a small winter camp near the present-day city of Cahokia, Illinois, almost three miles south of East St. Louis.

The area became a caught between the territorial conquests of empire. It was near the end of the 17th century that the French laid claim to the Mississippi River valley and a small but influential population of French settled around Cahokia. By 1715 it had become the central hub for French missionaries in the region and one of the major trading posts for French traders south of Canada. Relations between the French and Cahokia remained cordial and peaceful for decades, but as the population of white settlers continued to climb the Cahokia Indians became wary and, eventually, hostile to their presence. The French, in response, constructed its first military fort in the region in the 1730s. The French settlement remained stable and the Indian population began to decline. In 1764, the British gained control of the Northwest Territory and Cahokia became a possession of the King of England. Within five years, an English trader named Richard McCarty obtained title to 400 acres of land on both sides of Cahokia Creek, part of present-day East St. Louis.

³ Samuel E. Munoz, Kristine E. Gruley, Ashtin Massie, David A. Fike, Sissel Schroeder, and John W. Williams, "Cahokia's emergence and decline coincided with shifts of flood frequency on the Mississippi River," *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences United States of America* 112, no. 20 (2015): 6319-6324.

III. UNITED STATES

a. 18th Century

As the French and British empires began to retreat and American settlers began to enter the farthest reaches of the Northwest Territory, lawlessness characterized the sociopolitical relations of the area. The French had established courts in the area, but American settlers opposed French rule. Though opposed to French rule, not all settlers were quick to demand the establishment of American courts. When the French courts dissolved, anarchy ruled the Illinois frontier. The French population plummeted at the hands of American marauders, who stole property and land as they established their settlements. Not until the arrival of the Governor of the Northwest Territory, Arthur St. Clair, was a semblance of order restored. Almost three decades before Illinois even became a state, Governor St. Clair founded the county that took his namesake in 1790.

Shortly thereafter, an American settler from the state of Virginia, James Piggott, established the first permanent commercial link between the two sides of the Mississippi River. In 1792, Piggott settled in Cahokia and built a road north to the marshy swampland opposite the City of St. Louis. Piggott's road allowed the movement of goods by ferry onto Cahokia Creek, into the Mississippi River, and across to St. Louis. The ferry operation's primary purpose was to supply agricultural products from areas east of the river to the commercial market in St. Louis. "Piggott's Ferry" offshore point on the east riverfront also accommodated migrants and other settlers to the west, but Piggott's construction of a bridge across Cahokia Creek and a few log cabins spurred further development inland.

b. 19th century

The success of Piggott's Ferry initiated the physical settlement of present-day East St. Louis. Following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the region underwent a development boom. In 1805, a French Canadian named Etienne Pinsoneau made his first purchase of land to the east of the ferry landing and built a two-story brick house, which later served as a hotel for westward traveling migrants.

⁴ Carl R. Baldwin, "East St. Louis," in *St. Louis: Its Neighborhoods and Neighbors, Landmarks and Milestones*, Robert E. Hannon, ed. (St. Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association: 1986), 241.

⁵ Though Illinois was technically a free state, the U.S. Census recorded the existence of 96 slaves in St. Clair County in 1830 and 59 slaves in 1840

A decade later, John McKnight and Thomas Brady, two forward-thinking merchants from St. Louis, took partial ownership of Piggott's Ferry and bought all of Pinsonneau's land. McKnight and Brady platted the land and sold the lots at auction in St. Louis. In 1818, the same year that Illinois became a state, the St. Clair County Recorder of Deeds officially recognized Illinoistown. Within a few years, Illinoistown had as many as thirty structures and about one-hundred inhabitants. A flood inundated the town with water in 1826, and the malarial fevers that followed nearly depopulated the village. Nothing, however, could stem the tide of westward traveling migrants and, therefore, the demand for ferries continued to increase. As westward travelers continued to arrive in Illinoistown, businessmen constructed general stores, boarding houses, blacksmith shops, stables, and a distillery.⁴ Two years after the flood, the Wiggins Ferry Company became the first to operate steamships between the eastern and western riverfront, and Illinoistown's raison d'être returned as the transportation of agricultural products, goods, and people increased in magnitude.

The people that traveled on these ferries were not always free. Illinois was a free state, but slave owners often offered rewards for the capture and return of their slaves.⁵ Moreover, the moral compass of ferry operators tended to point away from justice and towards profit. As early as 1815, a traveler by the name of Edwin Draper wrote that the ferry that he traveled on contained "horses, wagon and saddle, family, slaves, and dogs... stowed in the bottom of the boat between the wagons."⁶ Decades later, a man by the name of William W. Brown escaped from slavery from the northern shores of St. Louis, which had 2,796 slaves according to the 1830 U.S. Census, only to be caught about 150 miles away in Illinois. In Brown's published narrative of his life as a slave, he wrote that his captors transported him across the Mississippi River on the Wiggins Ferry.⁷ While the city of Alton, ten miles to the north, offered places of refuge for runaway slaves at a few "stations" on the Underground Railroad, Illinoistown seemed to be a transit point for people in bondage.

⁶ Edwin Draper quoted in Walter B. Stevens, *St. Louis, the Fourth City, 1764-1909, Volume 1* (St. Louis: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Co. 1911), 257.
⁷ William W. Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown, an American Slave. Written by Himself* (London: Charles Gilpin), 73.

By the mid-19th century, Illinoistown's diverse population exemplified its geographical position at the edge of the western frontier and at that border between the Union and the Confederacy. Though the existence of slaves had been previously recorded in St. Clair County, there were zero slaves by 1850. There were, however, 581 free "colored" residents of this "husky river village" living among "roustabouts from the South, scouts from the Far West, [and] city dwellers from the East."⁸ According to the U.S. Census, 35.5 percent of the St. Clair County (7,170/20,180) identified a foreign birthplace in 1850, whereas only 13.1 percent of the entire population of Illinois was foreign born. Illinoistown was apparently quite a diverse place.

Geography played a primary role in the transformation of the "husky river village" of Illinoistown into the industrial river city of East St. Louis. In 1857, the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad became the first of many eastern railroads to build a terminal on the eastern riverfront. The railroad sought the lucrative market of St. Louis, the Gateway to the West, but engineers were unable to build a structure that could span the Mississippi. Illinoistown formed its first government in 1859 and became the first village across from St. Louis to incorporate.⁹ Soon, enterprising businessmen platted the "Town of St. Clair" and the "Town of East St. Louis" on lands adjacent to Illinoistown, and in 1861 the three towns merged. Though Illinoistown was the oldest and largest of the three, the newly incorporated town became the City of East St. Louis. By 1867, ten more railroads had constructed terminals and warehouses in East St. Louis to have prime access to St. Louis. In 1870, the population of East St. Louis climbed above 5,000 and would continue to climb through the next century.

c. City of Industry

East St. Louis grew in population as a result of the rapid growth of industrial facilities in the region. One of the first large industrial operations to locate near East St. Louis was the National Stockyards, which in 1871 transformed 650 acres of pasture land into the nation's second largest stockyard facility (Chicago's Union Stockyards was the largest). At least ten more

⁸ Arthur Moore, "The Early History of East St. Louis and Cahokia," a Report from the Federal Writers' Project, 1937. Available from the Illinois State Historical Library Manuscripts Collection at www.museum.state.il.us/RiverWeb/landings/Ambot/Archives/fwp/ accessed July 25, 2016.

companies involved in meat processing, packing, canning, or waste repurposing (bones and hooves) quickly established themselves nearby. With the completion of the Eads Bridge in 1874 that carried rail traffic across the Mississippi River an increasing number of industrialists recognized the advantageous mid-continental location and purchased property to establish their own facilities in or near East St. Louis. By 1881, there were seventeen industrial operations in the City of East St. Louis, which included three grain elevators, a corn processing plant, two flouring mill, two soda plants, an ironworks, a gaslight company, a lumber mill, a planing mill, a wood craftsmen's shop, and an ice house.¹⁰ By 1890, the population of East St. Louis had increased by ten thousand since 1870, which made East St. Louis the fastest growing city in the United States.¹¹

⁹ Andrew Theising, *Made in USA, East St. Louis: The Rise and Fall of an Industrial River Town* (Virginia Publishing: St. Louis 2003), 68. In 1862, the town constructed its first sidewalk made of parallel six-inch planks laid on the eastern side of Collinsville Avenue between Broadway and Illinois (now Martin Luther King Jr.).

¹⁰ *History of St. Clair County, Illinois with Illustrations Descriptive of Its Scenery and Biographical Sketches of Some of its Most Prominent Men and Pioneers* (Brink, McDonough & Co.: Philadelphia 1881), 304-305. Archived online by the Cornell University Library <https://archive.org/details/cu31924028805948> Accessed July 27, 2016. Carl R. Baldwin, "East St. Louis," 246.

¹¹ Carl R. Baldwin, "East St. Louis," 246.

IV. EAST ST. LOUIS IN THE 20TH CENTURY : THE CULTURAL ASSETS

a. 1917-1941

The infamous East St. Louis race riot of 1917 has to be understood in the context of industrialization and urbanization. Similar to the rapid growth of other industrial cities in the United States, the East St. Louis population more than quadrupled in the thirty years between 1890 and 1920 from about 15,000 to about 67,000. The industrial jobs available across the U.S. northeast and Midwest attracted both immigrants from Europe and African Americans from the South.¹² The congressional hearings that investigated the 1917 race riot concluded that the racial violence had been stoked by industries luring African Americans to East St. Louis to replace striking white workers. Meatpacking was one industry that experienced a great boon as a result of wartime contracts to supply the U.S. Army. In 1910, African Americans made up 15 percent of the workforce at the local meatpacking plants, but by 1917, African Americans composed 40 percent of meatpacking plant labor. Similarly, by 1917 African Americans made up 40 percent of the unskilled workforce of the Missouri Malleable Iron Company.¹³ But whites did not limit their violent acts to just black workers and, in fact, whites targeted black people in the downtown area of East St. Louis. One scholar estimates that by 1917 the city was at least 15 percent African American, and the growth in the black population threatened to disrupt some homogeneous white neighborhoods. The white mob set fire to African American homes along Third and Fourth Streets south of Broadway and forced African Americans to flee southward, beating, shooting, and burning those that failed to make it in the historic Black enclave in the South End. Famous African American journalist and activist, Ida B. Wells, described the event in this way:

¹²Tim Fox, ed., *Where We Live: A Guide to St. Louis Communities* (Missouri Historical Society Press: St. Louis 1996), 89.

¹³Charles Lumpkins, *American Pogrom: The East St. Louis Race Riot and Black Politics* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2008), 56.

¹⁴Ida B. Wells, "History of the East St. Louis Race Riot," <http://www.siue.edu/iur/projects/illinoistown/wells-ida-b-History-part-2.shtml> accessed August 13, 2016.

¹⁵Malcolm McLaughlin, "Ghetto Formation and Armed Resistance in East St. Louis," *Journal of American Studies*, 41:2 (2007): 446, 460.

Nothing like it in unmitigated cruelty has occurred before on American soil. It can be likened only to the fiendish atrocities of Turks in Armenia or the pogroms against the Jews incited by the Russian Black Hundred, in which helpless Jews were smoked or dragged from their homes to be beaten, outraged or murdered on the streets. The black skin, without regard to age, sex or innocence, was the mark for slaughter.¹⁴

After a gang of whites drove through the majority black-occupied Market Street, shooting, the bell of the Mount Zion church at 13th and Tudor sounded a warning across the neighborhood and many black people came out of their homes took up armed defense of their homes, business, and churches.¹⁵ When the turmoil subsided, at least thirty-nine African Americans and eight whites were dead, and over three-hundred buildings, many of them African American homes, had been destroyed. As a result of their indomitable spirit and courage, many African Americans chose to remain in East St. Louis and laid claim to a permanent space for themselves.

East St. Louis experienced a number of changes in the 1920s. By 1924, the city directory listed thirty "colored" churches, a tenfold increase from the three churches identified as "colored" in 1906.¹⁶ It was in that same year that the family of legendary jazz musician Miles Davis moved from Alton, Illinois to East St. Louis. They took up residence near the heart of Black life in East St. Louis, at the intersection of Fifteenth and Broadway where there existed the Jolly Corner Lounge, the Ringside Pool Room, the Peppermint Lounge and Restaurant, and The Southern Hotel – the only hotel in town where African Americans could find lodging.¹⁷ The Davis family then moved into "a white, thirteen-room house with red awnings, a garage, a large yard, a garden, and hedges" at 1701 Kansas Ave.¹⁸ Here the

¹⁶The three churches listed in 1906 were the Free Will Baptist Church, 1045 Paradise St., Pilgrim Baptist at 1624 Gay Ave., and St. Luke's at 622 St. Louis Ave. Gould's *East St. Louis Directory for 1906* (St. Louis, MO: Gould Directory Co.) Among those listed in the 1924 directory, The Bethel A.M.E. church is significant because it was where East St. Louis African Americans drafted the Citizens' Committee Report after the racist violence of 1917. The committee then delivered the report to Governor Lowden in Springfield, signifying one of the first organized political actions of East St. Louis African Americans.

what one local reporter called "the Havana of the Midwest, re three Davis children would stage talent shows, sing pop songs, and perform routines based on popular dances, and years later Vernon the youngest would dance and Dorothy the eldest would play piano. Miles would play the trumpet, of course. According to Miles Davis, his father the dentist did not make any real money until World War II. Prior to that, his working-class patients paid him with governmental slips or packages of meat that they had taken from the packing plants. Though East St. Louis experienced some of the worst of the Great Depression through the 1930s, it was in those years that the city grew into plete with roaring clubs [and] indiscreet speakeasies."¹⁹ But in September 1944, Miles Davis left East St. Louis only to return occasionally throughout his lifetime.

b. 1942-1964

World War II caused the City of East St. Louis to experience a demographic shift similar to the changes that took place in metropolitan regions throughout the United States and Black culture grew more evident as the number of establishments owned by African Americans increased. In 1940, the city's African American population was just over 15,000 and by 1950 it had reached nearly 30,000. The writer, English professor, and East St. Louis poet laureate, Eugene Redmond, eloquently described the veritable mix of people, the particularities of the place, the noir sights, and the soothing and unsettling sounds that African Americans experienced when they arrived in East St. Louis:

East St. Louis's cacophonous mosaic included heavily trafficked bridges, as well as railroad yards, packing-houses, blues, steel mills, night clubs, glass factories, hustlers, chemical plants, jazz, lumber yards, number racketeers, fundamentalist churches, gospel, a red-light district called the "Valley," the rattle of slot machines, ominous convoys of underworld limousines, and sporadic burst of gunfire at night.²⁰

¹⁷John Szwed, *So What? The Life of Miles Davis* (New York: Simon & Schuster 2001), 8.

¹⁸Szwed, 12.

¹⁹Randall Roberts, "Arch Madness: A Rough Guide to St. Louis," *Riverfront Times*, accessed August 12, 2016, <http://www.riverfronttimes.com/stlouis/arch-madness/Content?oid=2459528>.

²⁰Eugene B. Redmond, "Griots, Bluesicians, Dues-Payers, and Pedagogues: An African-American Autobiographical, 1960s' View of Culture Studies," in *English Studies/Culture Studies: Institutionalizing Dissent*, eds., Isaiah Smithson and Nancy Ruff (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1994), 109.

As Redmond points out, Black cultural forms such as blues, gospel, jazz, speech, and folklore, entered the dominant culture both directly, through African American artists, or indirectly, through white imitators. According to Redmond, who grew up in East St. Louis during this time period, “we were establishing contact points for the cultural and intellectual integration of African-American and European-American thought and expression.”²¹ But integration was a long way off.

The civil rights movement framed African American political life from the late 1940s through the 1970s, and there were a number of places in downtown East St. Louis that marked key points in the local movement. In 1950, the Majestic Theater on Collinsville Avenue, the city’s first movie palace to have talking motion picture, was one of the first places where African Americans tried to force racial integration.²² It would be nearly a decade before civil rights activists took action against restaurants, and the first place they staged a sit-in was at the Liberty Lunch Café.²³ In August of 1963, as African Americans across the nation converged on Washington D.C. for the March for Jobs and Freedom, East St. Louis activists converged on the city’s largest and most prominent financial institution, the First National Bank, to demand that the president institute a fair employment policy.²⁴

Just as the Black cultural arts developed in East St. Louis alongside population growth, the number of black-owned businesses grew rapidly in the 1950s, signaling the expansion of black public space and the growth of the black middle class. In 1959, a number of these businesses bought ad space for the first time in *The Negro Motorist Green Book*. Although the Green Book listed East St. Louis establishments that were considered safe for African Americans as early as 1939, it was twenty years before African American business owners took out paid advertisements.²⁵ The 1959 Green Book was also the first volume to

²¹ Redmond, “Griots, Bluesicians,” 111.

²² Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ 2000). The Majestic Theater, a Spanish Gothic structure built in 1928 at 240-246 Collinsville Avenue, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

²³ NEED TO LOCATE THIS ADDRESS. Believe it was on Collinsville.

²⁴ “Negroes Pray for Jobs in Demonstration at Banks,” *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, August 15, 1963. “East Side Protests Mount!” *St. Louis Argus*, August 16, 1963. “Police Arrest 170 Negroes at Bank in Illinois,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 1963. The First National Bank, a Classical Revival building from 1906/1927 at 325 Missouri Ave., is part of the Downtown East St. Louis Historic District, which was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2014.

list any East St. Louis restaurants, clubs, and taverns that had Black proprietors, of which there were a total fourteen.²⁶ By 1960, the African American population approached 40,000, but most African Americans remained confined to the South End, and so too did most of the black-owned establishments. Be fell by 10,000 as whites sought residence in newly built suburbs that African Americans could not access through a variety of tween 1950 and 1960, the white population of East St. Louis preventative legal and extralegal measures. Of the more than 40,000 whites that remained in East St. Louis in 1960, most lived in the east end neighborhoods where they resolutely defended their neighborhoods from the encroachment of African Americans. In 1960, East St. Louis was the fourth most segregated city outside the South.²⁷

c. 1965-1980

After 1964, the white residents of East St. Louis could not legally prevent African Americans from moving anywhere in the city that they so choose, assuming they could afford it. After the City Council passed the city’s first fair housing ordinance in 1964 as a result of pressure from civil rights activists, African Americans began to move outside their historic confines. By 1966, African Americans had become the majority population in the city.²⁸ The neighborhood known in the 1960s as Central City (portions of which are in present day Olivette Park and Winstanley), went from 45 to 80 percent African American between 1960 and 1967.²⁹

As the African American population of East St. Louis grew and expanded throughout the city, African American culture took root. In 1967, dancer, choreographer, and scholar, Katherine Dunham moved to East St. Louis when she was 62 years-old and took a faculty position with the Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and launched the Performing Arts Training Center. For Dunham, who was academically trained in anthropology

²⁵ Victor H. Green and George I. Smith, *The Negro Motorist Green Book* (Green & Smith: New York, 1937). This edition of the Green Book included only a small number of hotels that welcomed “Negro” travelers in East St. Louis – The Royal Hotel (1900 Missouri), the P.B. Reeves Tourist Home (1803 Bond Ave.), Irene Yancy Tourist Home (1914 Bond Ave.), and the W.E. Officer Tourist Home (2114 Missouri Ave.)

²⁶ Alma D. Green, *The Negro Travelers’ Green Book* (Victor H. Green & Company: New York, 1959). Jackson’s Drive-In-Bar-B-Q (10th and Broadway), Bush’s Rib Station (1836 Missouri), Cornelia’s Lunch Room (214 E. Broadway), Thunderbird Café (301 S. 10th St.), Dobbin’s Delicatessen (2147 Gaty Ave.), and Rock Grill (1433 Brady); Fox Hole Tourist Home and Night Club (4300 Pocket Road), 38 Club (34th St. and St. Clair Ave.), Town Talk Tavern (1527 Trendley), Yellowstone Beer Garden (1238 Baker St.), 601 Tavern (601 Trendley)

that are rich in history and tradition”³¹ Students at the PATC at the University of Chicago, dance was “expressing the meaning of your life, the meaning of the people that you came from, the meaning of your family, and your roots.”³⁰ Through the combination of her knowledge of cultural anthropology with that of dance movements, Dunham pioneered dance techniques that launched Black dance as an art form in the United States. The Performing Arts Training Center (PATC) tried to “raise the cultural consciousness of the community through theater and dance took courses in one of three tracts: performing arts (dance, drama, music); applied skills (hair braiding, wood carving, visual arts, visual design, pattern making, and theater crafts); and, humanities (social sciences, African government and society, conversational Swahili, Yoruba, Yoruba, Haitian Creole, Spanish, and French).³² Beginning in 1971 and going through the late 1980s, the Performing Arts Training Center operated out of the Broadview Hotel (415 E. Broadway), a Classical Revival hotel that SIUE had been renting since 1957.³³

²⁷ Karl E. Taeuber and Alma F. Taeuber, *Negroes in Cities: Residential Segregation and Neighborhood Change* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co. 1965), 39-41. Scholars have discovered that some industrial cities in the North, where large working-class populations existed, had higher rates of racial segregation than the South. Social historians and planning historians have also found that industrial corporations intentionally kept industrial workers segregated by race in effort to quell interracial class solidarity. On that point see Charles Connerly, “The Most Segregated City in America”: City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920-1980 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 13-35.

²⁸ “Fact Sheet East St. Louis, 1966,” File 8, Box 4, Mayor Alvin G. Fields Collection, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville.

²⁹ Robert B. Mendelson and David C. Purdy, *Central City: A Neighborhood Analysis* (Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University 1967), 9.

³⁰ KETC, “Living St. Louis: Katherine Dunham,” aired May 2006. Katherine Dunham Center for the Arts and Humanities, accessed August 14, 2016, <http://kdcah.org/>

³¹ “Center Embodies Many Hopes, Dreams,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 12, 1987, 78.

Upon her arrival in East St. Louis, Katherine Dunham showed her commitment to the preservation and expression of cultural arts and history in a public forum. Before even being firmly established in the new city, Dunham invited futurist planner Buckminster Fuller to East St. Louis and they collaborated on a comprehensive proposal for a cultural arts center in East St. Louis. Fuller's "Old Man River City" proposal took its name from a song about African American labor along the Mississippi River from the musical *Showboat*:

You an' me, we sweat an' strain
Body all achin' and wracked wid pain
Tote dat barge! Lift dat bale!
Git a little drunk and ya lands in jail.

Ah gits weary an' sick o' tryin'
Ah'm tired o' livin' an' skeered o' dyin'
But ol' man river
He jes' keeps rollin' along!³⁴

Fuller's fanciful plan to construct a city within an enclosed dome on the East St. Louis riverfront never came to fruition, but Dunham showed her cultural commitment in other ways. Dunham pushed for a large riverfront "monument to the Illinois-born national hero and statesmen, Abraham Lincoln" that would be close to a replica of the Lincoln Monument in Washington D.C. She proposed an entire built landscape visible from the Gateway Arch that would include a "Hall of Fame" of historical figures and peoples in the history of the region in one wing and a "Negro Hall of Historic Provenance" that highlighted the particular story of the African peoples of the world. Dunham envisioned the entire thing in her mind:

³² Redmond, "Griots, Bluesicians," 118.

³³ The Broadview Hotel was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2013, but currently sits vacant in downtown East St. Louis. "National Register of Historic Places Program: Weekly List," <https://www.nps.gov/nr/listings/20140110.htm> accessed August 15, 2016. Unfortunately, the National Park Service notes that the period of historical significance goes from 1927 when it was built to 1957 when it stopped functioning as a hotel. <https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/13001006.htm>

³⁴ Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II, "Ol' Man River," *Showboat* (1927).

Hall of Fame including important bi-cultural figures contributing to American history including Negroes, Indians, and French. Murals, photographs and display cases showing historic episodes and life of the times... Emphasis on historic truth—not necessarily from a Negro point of view...

Hall of Historic Provenance... History of American Negro in same form as -right wing. Negro leaders, international... in busts done by Barthe or other Negro sculptor. Stressing events as African Kingdoms, slave raids, middle passage, miniature slave ships... Could be intellectual, artistic and dynamic - - historical world center and tourist attraction.³⁵

Wyvetter Younge, who joined Dunham on the city's Cultural Arts Committee, championed Dunham's proposals when she became board president of the East St. Louis City Plan Commission. In 1972, the commission listened to a presentation for a "Black Cultural Center" near the city's central business district that would be "a showcase for art and the performing arts as practiced by blacks, both in Africa and America."³⁶ But like most development proposals for East St. Louis from the 1960s through to the present, Dunham's proposal for a Lincoln monument, the American and African museums, and the downtown cultural center were never built.

One of Dunham's brilliant ideas did come to fruition, however, in the late 1970s. She had the idea for a "Dynamic Museum" with a "Rotating exhibit of archives, memorabilia of famous Negroes... supplied by historical museums and collections from Caribbean and Africa... and other national and private world collections."

³⁵ Katherine Dunham to Wyvetter Younge, December 5, 1967. File 22, Box 6, Fields Collection. In 1968, Dunham joined Mayor Alvin Fields' Cultural Arts Committee and proposed, among other things, a "carnival, pageant, and mobile theater," which became part of the city's Summer Festival Program of 1969. Joined on the committee were lawyer and activist, Wyvetter Younge, poet and activist, Eugene Redmond, East St. Louis Monitor editor and activist, Clyde Jordan, President of First National Bank, Oliver Breidecker, and Editor of the Evening & Sunday Journal, Mel Stonecipher. Katherine Dunham to Cultural Arts Committee members, May 2, 1968. File 22, Box 6, Fields Collection.

In 1975, when the Dunham Foundation purchased a number of beautiful, historic buildings in the neighborhood of Olivette Park, the Katherine Dunham Dynamic Museum was born.³⁷ Today, the museum houses an outstanding collection of symbolic and functional art, including a sizable number of Caribbean and African objects, paintings, sculptures, musical instruments, and ceremonial costumes. The house that now holds the Katherine Dunham museum at 1005 Pennsylvania was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.³⁸

d. 1981-1996

The 1980s were not very kind to East St. Louis, but because of residents' devotion to their families, their religion, and their culture, East St. Louis retained a strength of spirit and community. The city had experienced decades of deindustrialization and white residential flight. Between 1970 and 1980, the population dropped from 70,000 to 55,000 and by 1980, the city was over 95 percent African American. In 1982, Katherine Dunham opened the children's workshop on the site of the museum in order to provide East St. Louis children with "new learning experiences and meaningful artistic opportunities to interact with others in a positive, caring, and safe environment."³⁹

Through the late 1980s and early '90s, the state of Illinois took a renewed interest in East St. Louis. As a result of pressure from Wyvetter Younge, elected state representative in 1975 who in 1987 became chairperson of the Illinois General Assembly's Education Appropriations Committee, the University of Illinois established the East St. Louis Revitalization Project.⁴⁰ Professors and students from the Department of Urban and Regional Planning initiated community-planning efforts in the fall of 1990, and over the course of the rest of the decade, the University produced at least seven neighborhood plans. Each plan derived expressly from the desires and demands of East St. Louis residents in what came to be known as the East St. Louis Action Research Project (ESLARP).

³⁶ Minutes, East St. Louis City Plan Commission, Folder 28, Box 9, Mayor James Williams Sr. Collection, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville.

³⁷ Joyce Aschenbrenner, "Katherine Dunham: Anthropologist, Artist, Humanist," in *African-American Pioneers in Anthropology*, eds., Ira E. Harrison and Faye V. Harrison, 150.

³⁸ Joined in the Pennsylvania Avenue Historic District known as "Quality Hill" are the other three houses that remain standing at 1010 Pennsylvania, 1018 Pennsylvania, and 1023 Pennsylvania. On the one hand, it is unfortunate that these three houses are vacant. On the other hand, it presents an opportunity for the development of a northern hub within a possible cultural development district.

e. 1996-2016

Through the 1990s and into the present day, something of a cultural resurgence has occurred in East St. Louis. As ESLARP wrote in 1995, "Interest in developing all forms of cultural expression in East St. Louis has seen a modest revival."⁴¹ Katherine Dunham recommended to professors from the University of Illinois that East St. Louis needed a Cultural Heritage Plan, a Cultural Heritage Program, and a Community Cultural Resources Plan. ESLARP developed a "Cultural Revitalization Plan" for East St. Louis, there was little to no interest from investors or developers, and federal funds for cultural arts programming and cultural resource management had not bounced back from the cuts experienced in the 1980s.

Under the leadership of director Kenneth Reardon, ESLARP hosted the Planners Network Annual Conference in East St. Louis in 1995, the first major conference to take place in the city since the mid-1970s. For one of the conference's neighborhood tours, participants saw the Katherine Dunham Museum and the boyhood home of Miles Davis. Despite the attention from this national network of progressive planners, the city's past problems and present economic situation prevented investors and developers from even considering East St. Louis as a place for investment.

Efforts are presently underway to attract attention to the cultural assets that exist in East St. Louis. Katherine Dunham's Children's Workshop still offers a number of cultural and educational programs under the committed and passionate leadership of Ruby Streate, a former student of Katherine Dunham's trained in The Dunham Technique. The Katherine Dunham Center for the Arts and Humanities remains open to the public, but a tight budget means that it is open by appointment only. Presently, efforts are underway to restore Miles' Davis childhood home.

The House of Miles East St. Louis (HOME) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the effort to restore the house where Miles grew up, and make Miles' childhood home "the cultural epicenter impelled and dedicated to cultivate, connect, and celebrate the community through music, heritage, and art."⁴² HOME is in the first phases of transforming 1701 Kansas Ave. into a place for musical education for East St. Louis children, making it a destination for music fans, and having it serve as a house museum that offers a window into Miles' upbringing and what life in East St. Louis was like at the time. In January 2016, I Am EStL, The Magazine came out with its first issue. Part of the magazine's vision is "to invoke a sense of pride in current and former residents" in order to

...celebrate the city's status as the birthplace of brilliant scholars; economic and financial experts decorated military leaders; award-winning musicians; world-class athletes; gifted artists, authors and poets; entertainment icons; successful entrepreneurs; and amazing public servants...

The magazine editor, a native of East St. Louis, understands that there is a wealth of cultural heritage in the City of East St. Louis just waiting to be tapped into. "If I look at the history of this area," Katherine Dunham said in one of her final interviews, "we have never really used everything we have."

**Take nothing for granted. Take everything as possible.
Katherine Dunham, 2006**

³⁹ "Children's Workshop," Katherine Dunham Center for the Arts and Humanities, accessed August 15, 2016, <http://kdcah.org/childrens-workshop/>.

⁴⁰ Kenneth Reardon,

⁴¹ Bruce E. Wicks, "The East St. Louis Cultural Revitalization Plan," Office of Recreation and Tourism Development, University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign: 1995), 3. Cornell University

⁴² House of Miles EStL, East St. Louis, Illinois <http://www.houseofmilesestl.org/>, accessed August 15, 2016.

⁴³ "About the Magazine," I Am EStL, The Magazine, accessed August 16, 2016 <http://www.iamestl.com/about.html>.

⁴⁴ KETC, "Living St. Louis: Katherine Dunham," aired May 2006. Katherine Dunham Center for the Arts and Humanities, accessed August 14, 2016, <http://kdcah.org/>.

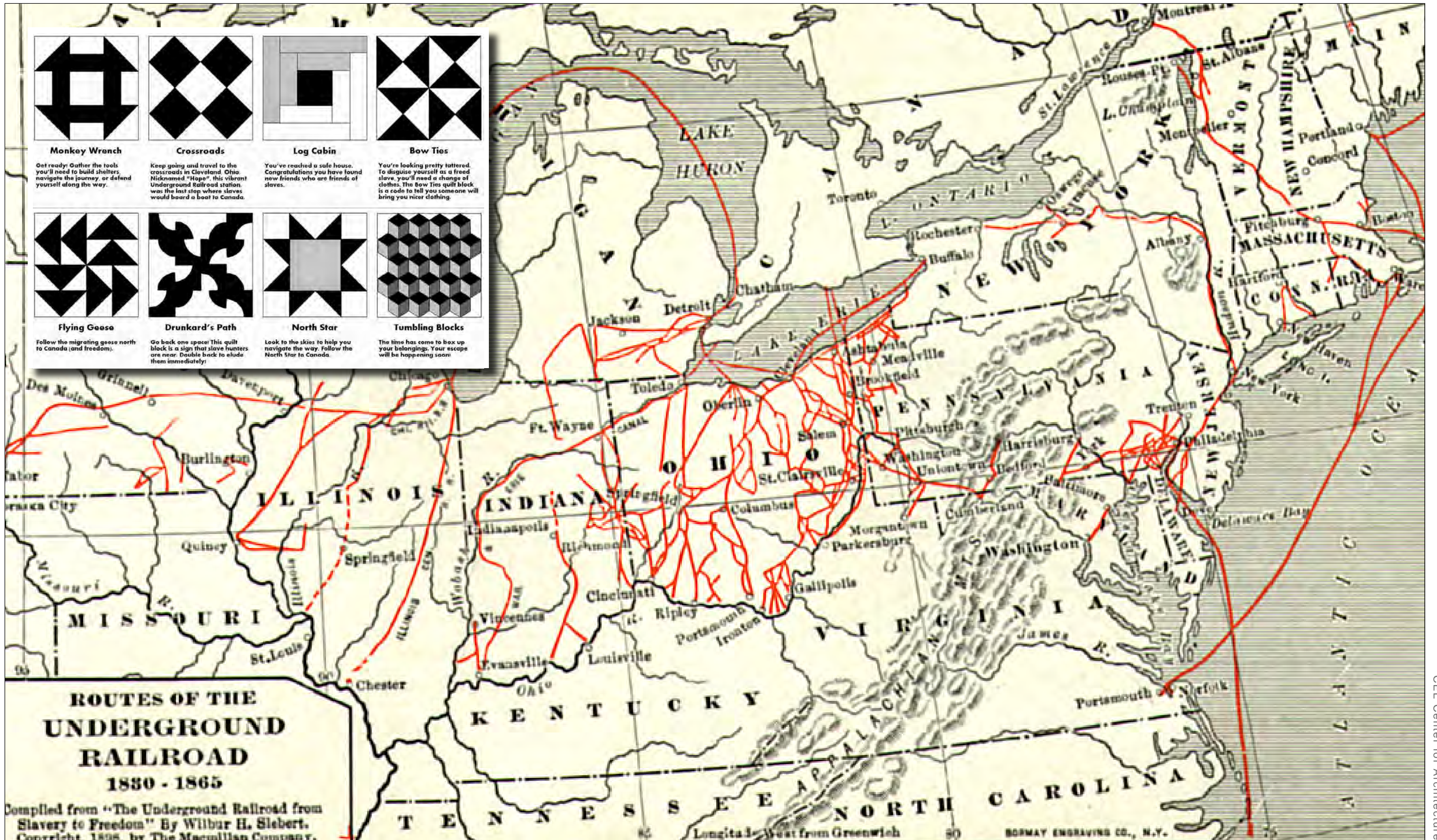


Image1 <http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/CWPics/86139.jpg>. Compiled from "The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom" by Wilbur H. Siebert Wilbur H. Siebert, The Macmillan Company, 1898
Freedom Quilts <http://www.springhillhistorichome.org/2016/07/freedom-quilts-ugrmyth>

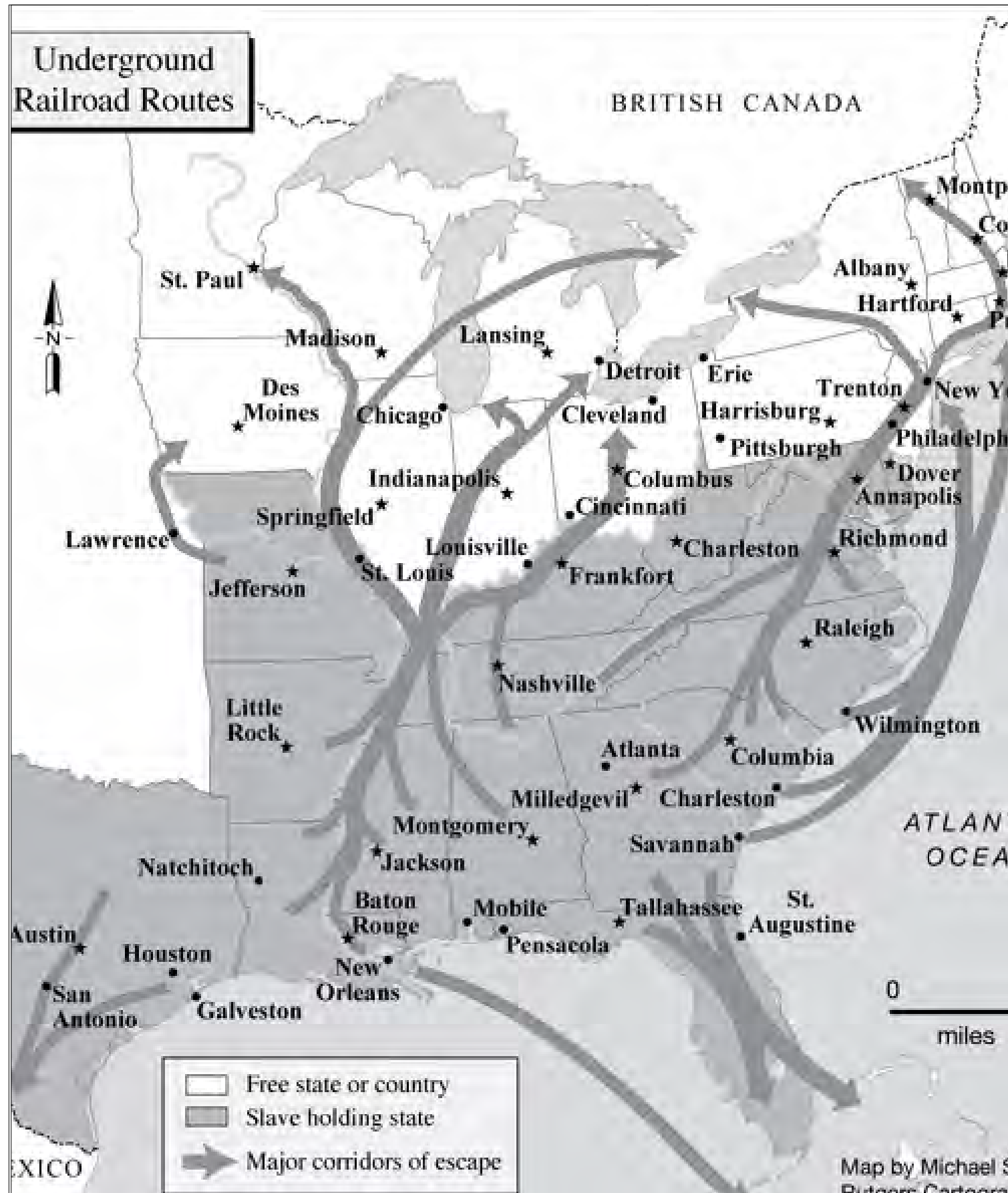


Image2 <http://www.tntwebs.com/ugrr.html>

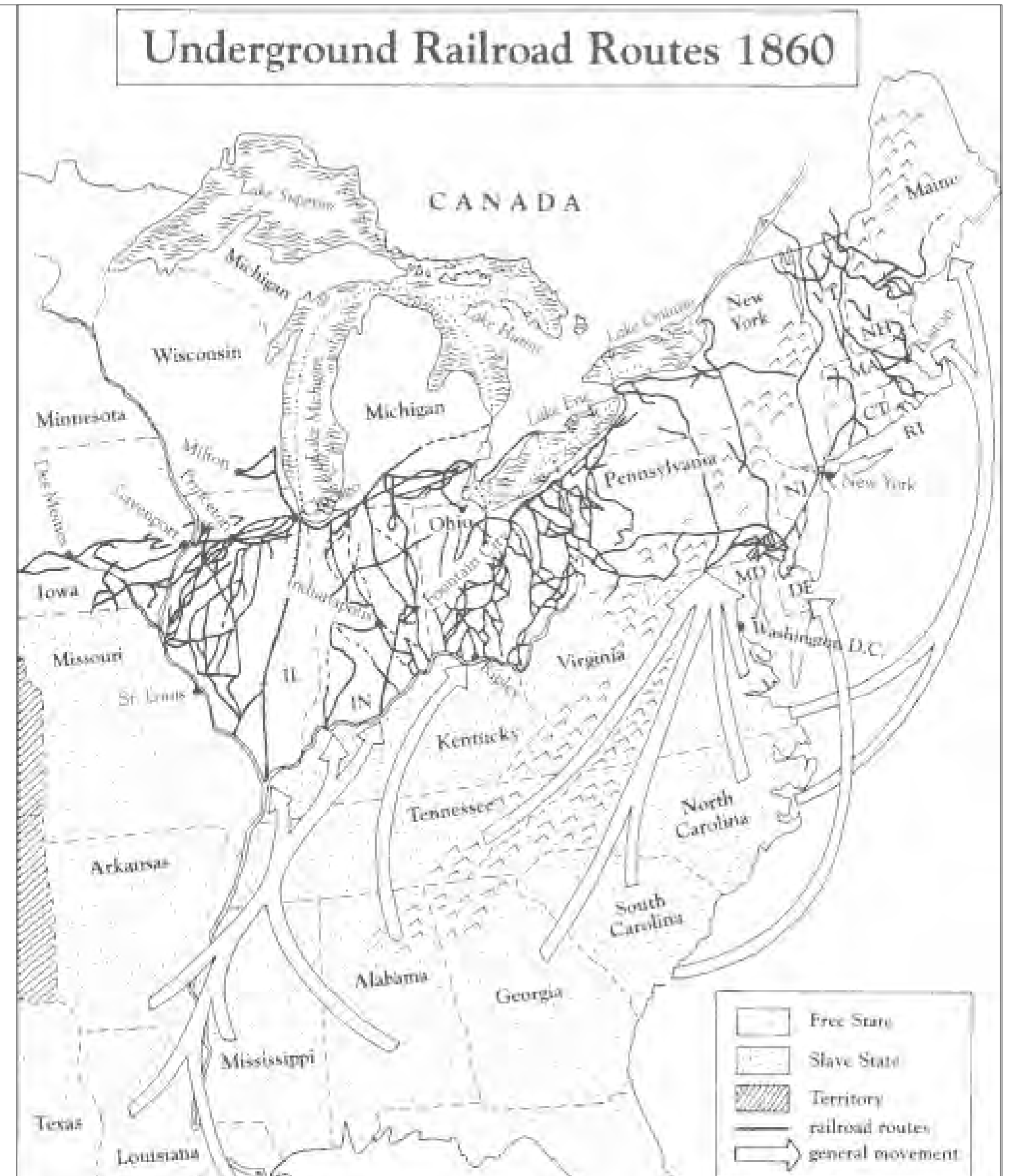


Image3 <http://shelbyhistory.tripod.com/id17.html>

History | Underground Railroad

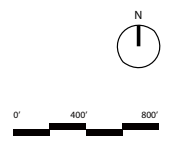
In the 19th century, Illinois towns such as East St. Louis, located across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, Missouri are associated with the Underground Railroad. It is believed that African American quilts contained the underground railroad codes to communicate with runaway slaves escaping slavery in Missouri. The fact or myth of the underground railroad quilt code became the inspiration for the design of a living landscape utilized throughout the cultural district.



HISTORICAL & CULTURAL SITES

- SACRED SITES**
- SOUTH END SITES**
(SOUTH OF BROADWAY, WEST OF AND INCLUDING 10TH)
- 1535 Tudor, True Light Baptist Church
 - 1700 Bond, Leroy Bundy Home Site
 - 11th And Mccasland
 - 10th And Bond Avenue
 - 10th And Trendley Avenue
 - 10th And Piggott Avenue
- FRANKLIN PARK SITES**
(SOUTH OF BROADWAY, EAST OF 10TH)
- 700 East Broadway, Broadway Opera House
 - 8th And East Broadway, Otto Nelson The Only African American Detective Lived Here
 - South 8th And Walnut, Northeast Corner
 - 8th and Brady Avenue, North East Corner
 - South 6th And Railroad Avenue / James R Thompson Blvd, Adjacent To ESL HEC
 - South 5th And Railroad Avenue / James R Thompson Blvd, Adjacent To ESL HEC
 - South 4th And Railroad Avenue / James R Thompson Blvd, Entrance To ESL HEC
 - South 4th Street Spur And East Broadway, To The West of Fountain Of Youth Park
 - South 4th Street And East Broadway, To The East Of Fountain Of Youth Park
 - North 4th And Division Street, Southwest Corner
- DOWNTOWN/OLIVETTE PARK SITES**
(NORTH OF BROADWAY, SOUTH OF I-64)
- North 3rd And Missouri Avenue, Southwest Corner, Old City Hall And Police Bldgs
 - Collinsville Avenue And St. Louis Avenue, Northwest Corner, Approx Site Of Labor Temple Meeting
 - 1010 Pennsylvania, Across From Dunham Museum, M M Stephens Home Site
 - North 9th And St. Clair Avenue, Entrance To Whiskey Chute
 - 621 North 9th Street, Mayor Mollman Home Site
- EMERSON PARK SITES**
(NORTH OF I-64)
- North 9th And Gross Avenue, Northwest Corner
 - North 13th And Nectar Avenue
 - North 18th And Parsons Avenue, Northeast Corner

- Sacred Sites
- Historical Sites
- National Register Sites
- Legendary East St. Louisians





#15 Riot Victim Narcis Gurley



#2 Searching for bodies near apex of violence



#20 Library reflecting flames



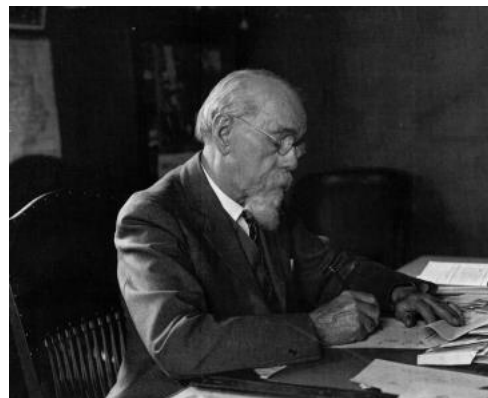
#19 Investigators at City Hall



#16 Dr. Bundy, African American Leader



#24 Broadway Theater destroyed

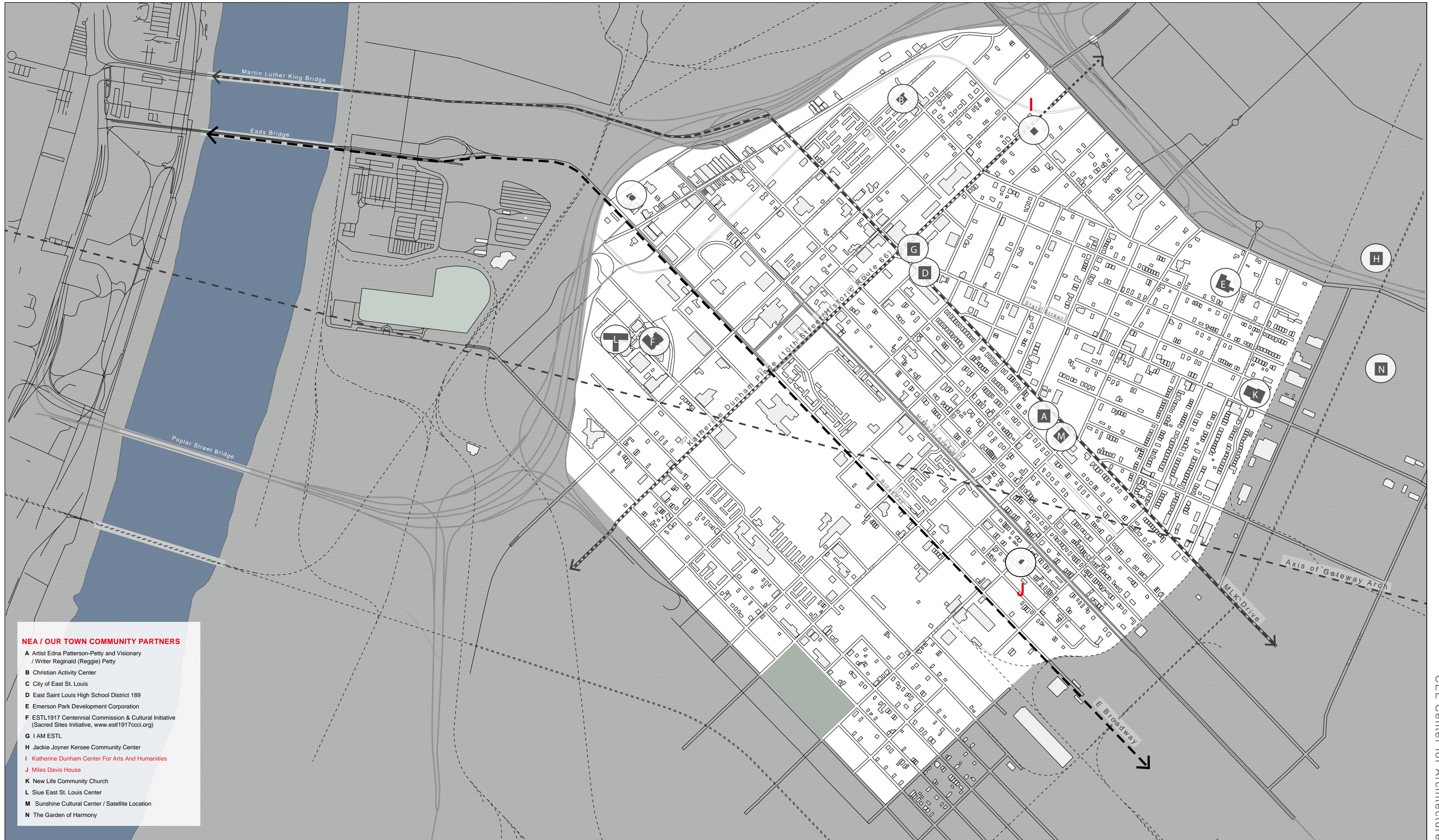


#23 M.M. Stephens, the mayor who brought calm after the riot



#7 What the fire looked like from STL

Existing Conditions [Interactive]
www.creativeexchangelab.com/ESTL

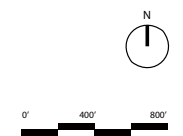


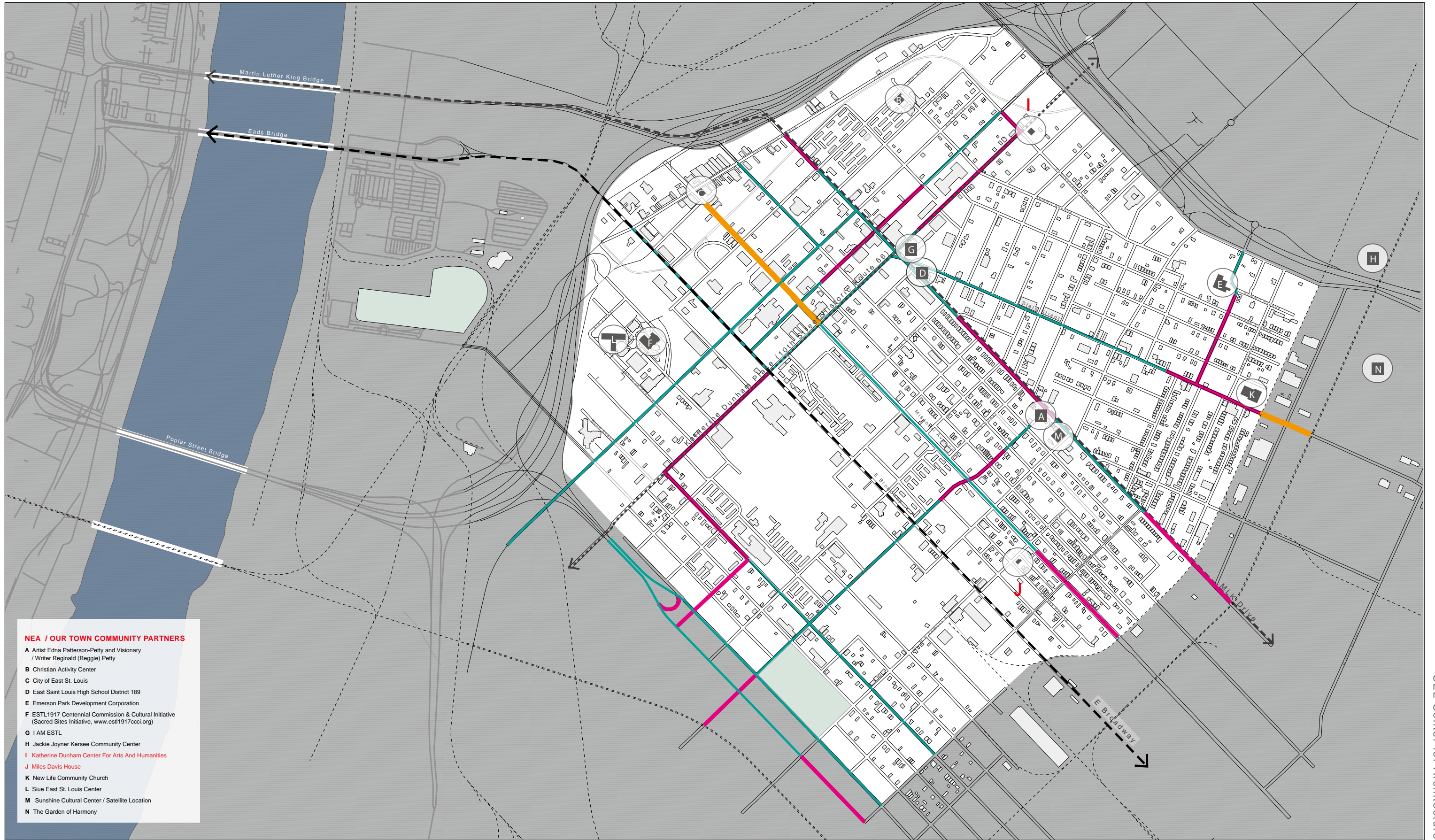
NEA / OUR TOWN COMMUNITY PARTNERS

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Existing Conditions | Base Map





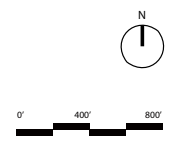
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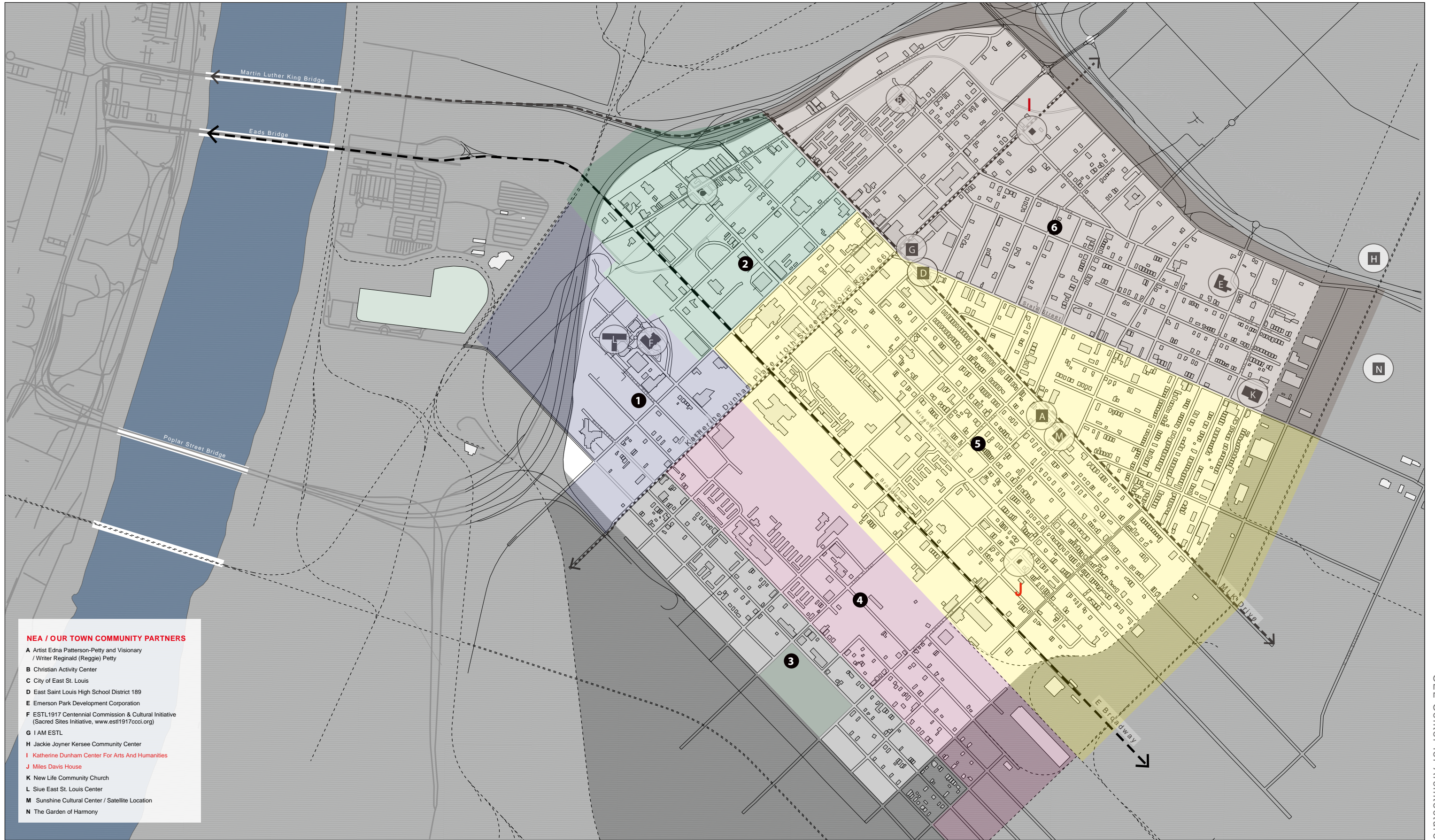
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High Traffic Road Map

- High Traffic Road
- Medium Traffic Road
- Normal Traffic Road





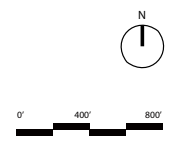
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Neighborhood Map

- 1 Franklin Park
- 4 North End
- 2 CBD
- 5 Winstanly Industry Park
- 3 South End
- 6 Olivette Park



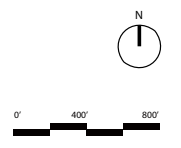
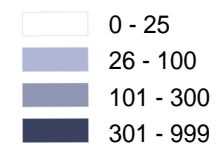


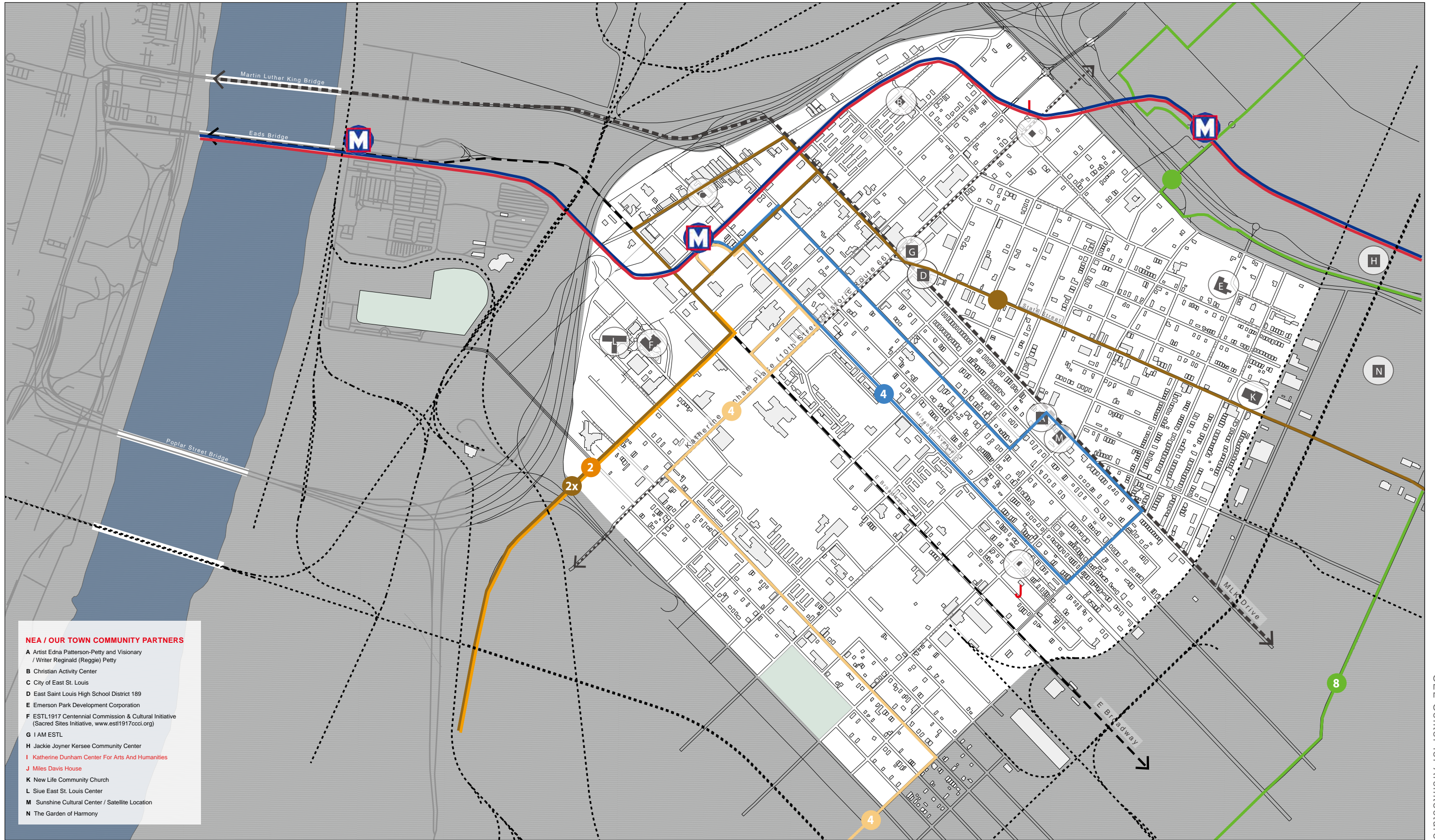
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Population Density Map













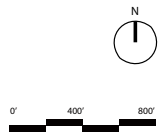
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Transportation Map

 Metro Link	 Main State Street	 Bond Avenue-19th & Central
 Railway	 Cahokia	 Missouri Avenue-M.L. King
	 Waterloo-Columbia	 Alta Sita



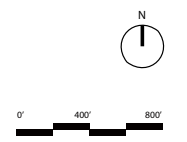


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Trees



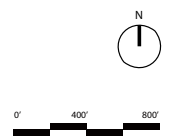


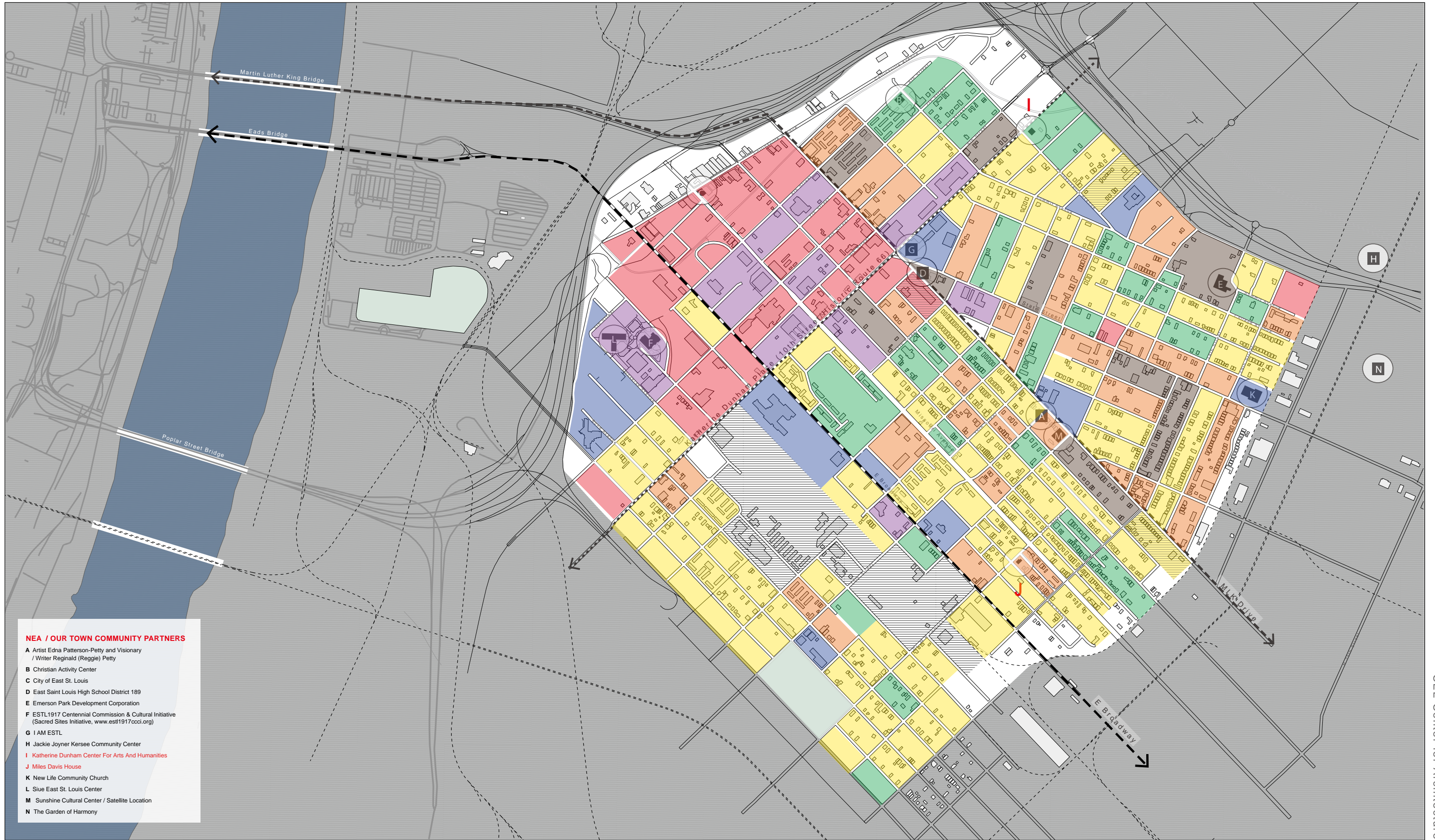
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Trees + Vacant Lands





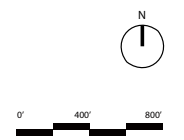
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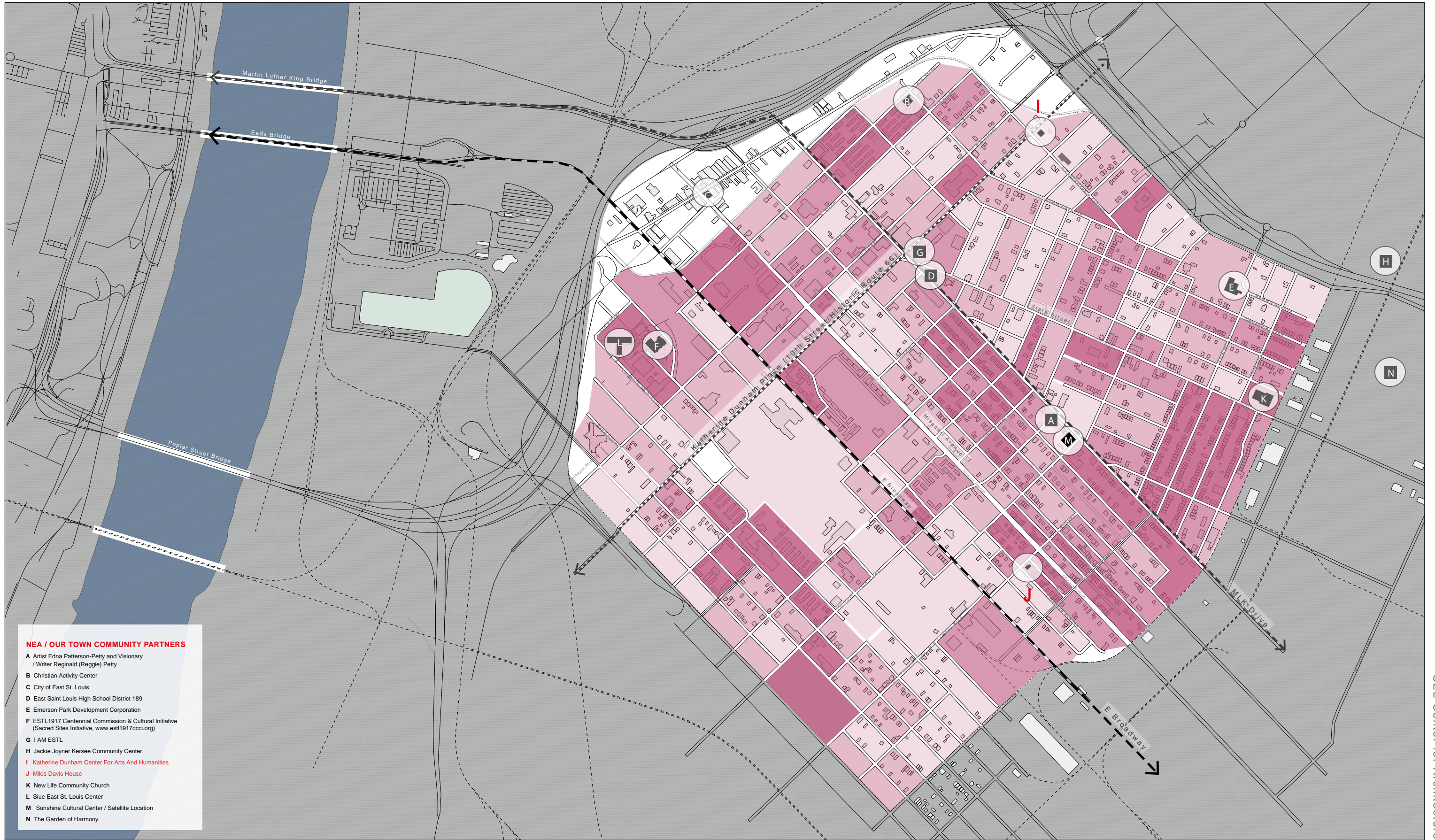
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- Commercial
 - Residential
 - Institutional
 - Industrial
- Commercial + Residential
 - Commercial + Institutional
 - Institutional + Residential
 - Commercial + Institutional + Residential

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Land Usage



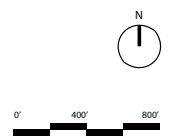


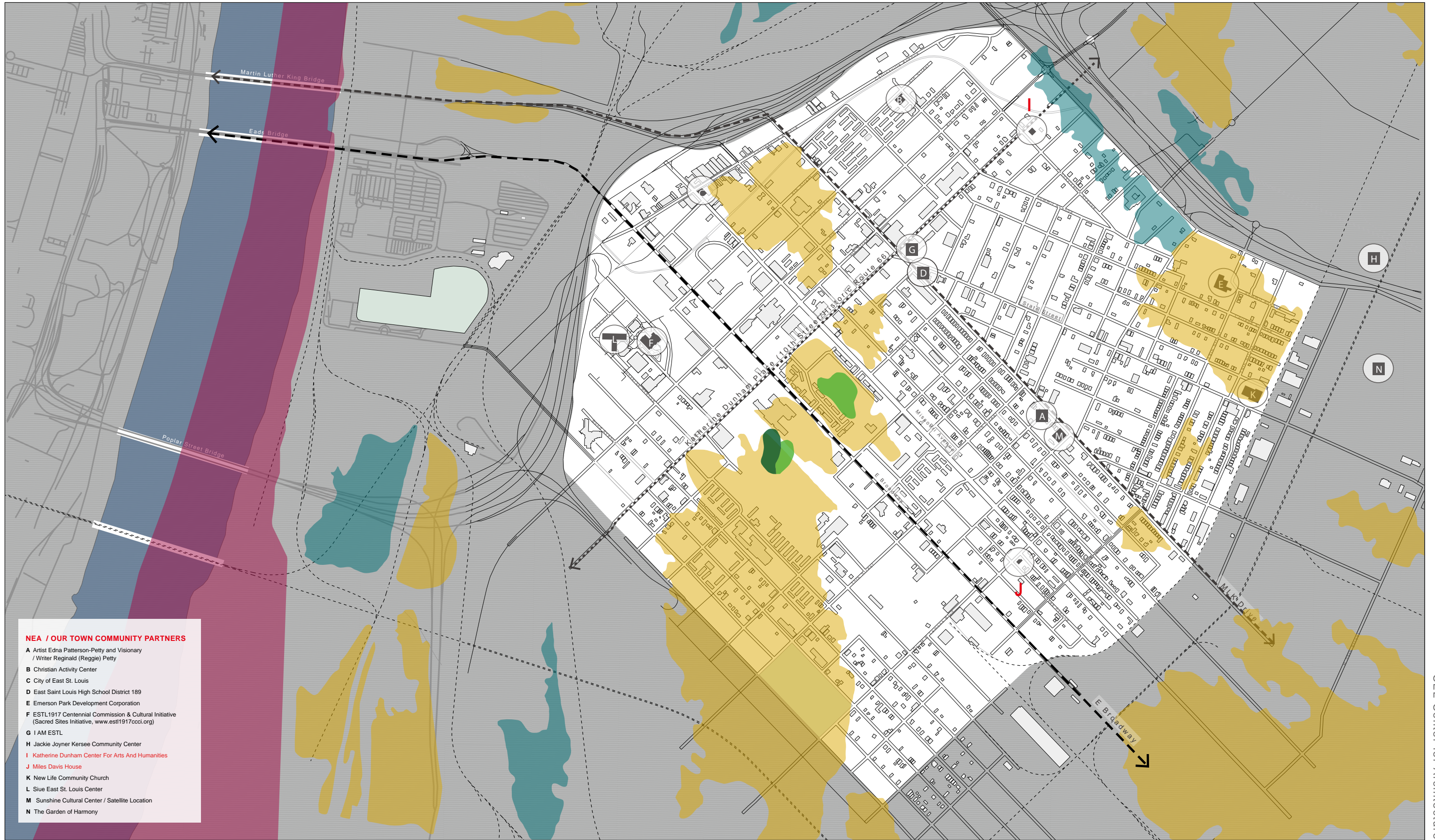
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Building Density Map





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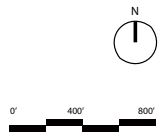
Flood Zone

A20
A1-A30 Area of 100-year flood; base flood elevations and flood hazard factors are determined.

AH
Areas subject to inundation by 1-percent-annual-chance shallow flooding (usually areas of ponding) where average depths are between one and three feet. Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) derived from detailed hydraulic analyses are shown in this zone. Mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements and floodplain management standards apply.

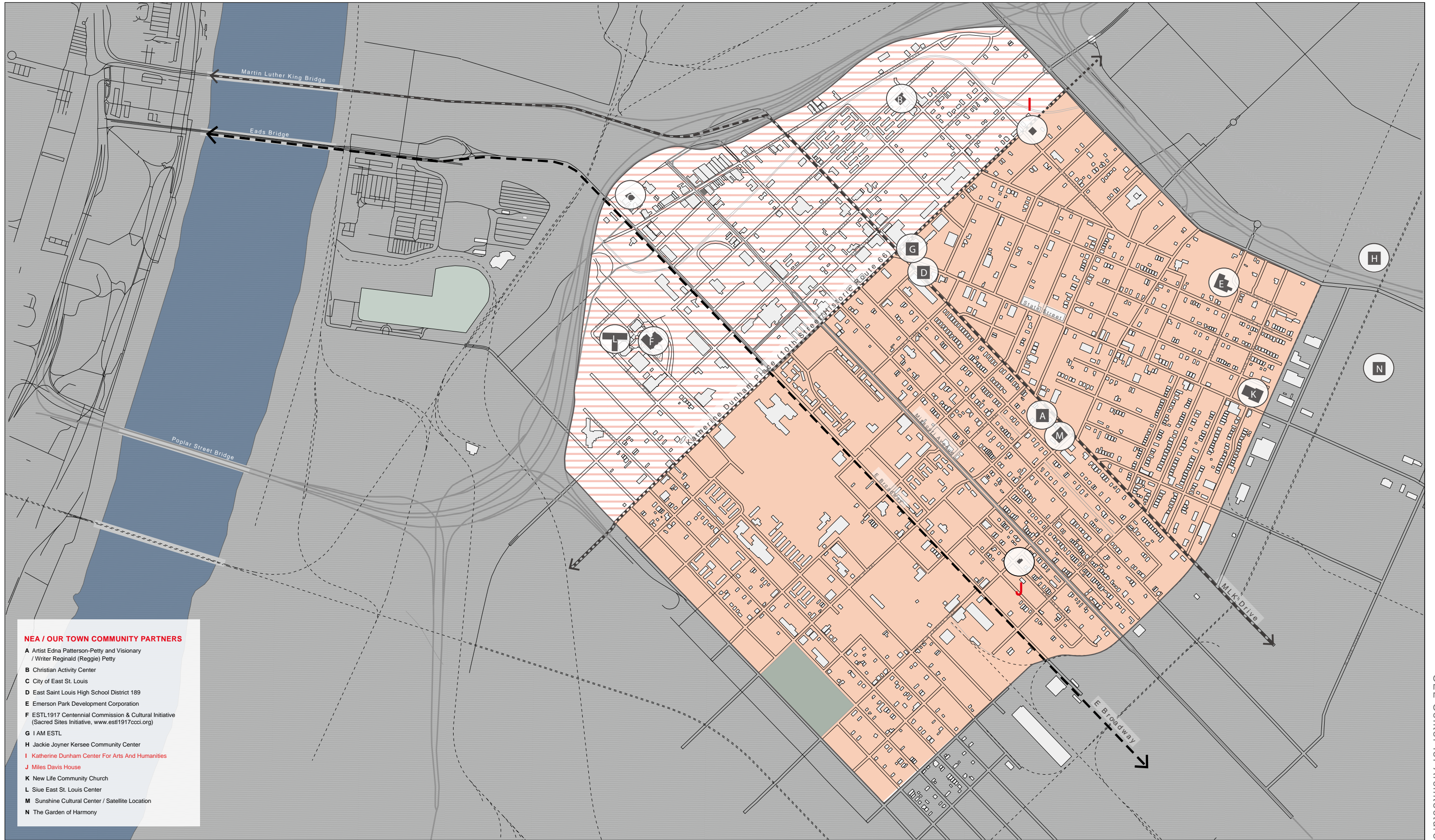
B
Zone B is also shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), and are the areas between the limits of the base flood and the 0.2-percent-annual-chance (or 500-year) flood.

- Zone A20 / High-Risk Areas
- Zone AH / High-Risk Areas
- Zone B / Moderate-to Low-Risk Areas
- Shallow Marsh / Wet Meadow
- Shrub-Scrub Wetlands





Name	Description	Life	Address	Category
Horace A.Adams	Political Leader, Activist	passed		
Diane Bolden-Taylor	Opera Singer, Educator			Music/Education
Benjamin F.Bowles	Educator, Activist	passed		Education/Community
Carrie K.(Johnson) Bowles	Educator, Social Worker,Suffragist, Community Leader	passed		Education/Community
Joseph A.Brown	Priest, Scholar, Poet			Religion, Literature
William Washington Burchanan	Served the Community for 60 years	1915-2013		Community
Dwight Bush Sr.	The United States Ambassador to Morocco	1958-	-	
Leo Cheers	"the man in the red vest", Jazz authority, musician, Radio broadcasting cele	1933-2006	-	Music
Bryon Cox	Famous football player, coach	1968-	-	Sports
Miles Davis	Jazz Legendary, trumpeter, bandleader, and composer	1926-1991	-	Music
Katherin Dunham	Dancer, choreographer, author, educator, and social activist.	1909-2006	-	Art/Civil Right
Harry Edwards	Legend in sports, civil right movements, academia, sociologist	1942-	-	Sports/Civil Right
John Eubanks	Physician, Political Activist	1896-?(passed)	-	Science/Civil Right
Larry Gladney	Research Physicist, Professor, author/coauthor of 600 articles	1957-	-	Science
Archie Dewey Grimmett	Patriot, Politian (civil rights)	1935-	-	
Clifford Harper	Scholar, Educator and Writer	1931-2001	-	Literature
Dawn Harper-Nelson	Athelets, Olympic Champion	1984-	-	Sports
Katie Harper-Wright	Educator (local),300 Adwards	1944-	-	Education
Eugene Haynes	Classical Piano Maestro, composer, music pedagogue	1927-2007	-	Music
John H. Hicks	Influential Reporter, Diplomat	1928-2015	-	
Cecile Hoover-Edwards	Scholar, Researcher (Nutrition)	1926-2005	-	Science
Reginald Hudlin	Writer, film director, producer	1961-	-	Art
Warrington Hudlin	Film director, producer, actor	1952-	-	Art
Sam Jethroe	"The Jet", Baseball player	1918-2001	-	Sports
Judge Billy Jones	Lawyer, civil rights advocate, humanitarian	1917-1987	-	Law/Civil Right
Jackie Joyner-Kersey	Athelets, Olympic Champion	1962-	-	Sport
John Kirkpatrick	Founder of "Crusader", Writer,	?-1972 Passed	-	
Mary Martin	Children, Women, Elder helper		-	Community
Joseph May	Legendary gospel singer	1936-	-	Music
Donald McHenry	Diplomat, Ambassador, United Nation representative	1936-	-	Politician
Claudia Nash-Thomas	Community Leader, Civil Movement leader	1918-? (passed)	-	Community/Civil Right
Fredericka Nash & Frances Nash-Terr	Nash Funeral Home	1921-2003	-	Community
Marion Officer Sr.	Businessman,Office Funeral Home,		-	Community
Lillian Parks	Daught/Mother of Leader, Educator	1932-	-	Community
Edna Patterson-Petty	Quilt Artist		-	Art
Reginald Petty	Curator of ESL legends, Civil Movement leader		-	Community/Civil Right
Lorna Polk	Government Administrator, Education Specialist	1947-2010	-	Politician
Edgene Redmond	Scholar, Activist, Poet Laureate	1937-	-	Literature
John Robinson	Educational Leader	1926-2014	-	Education
Johnny Scott	Entrepreneur, Community Leader, Civil Movement Leader		-	Community/Civil Right
Barbara Ann Teer	Actor, Dancer, Producer, Writer, Director, Culture Ambassador	1937-2008	-	Art/Civil Right
Leon Thomas	Musical Inovator, Creator of "Soularfone"	1937-1999	-	Music
LaRona Walls-Morris	Community Leader	1942-2005	-	Community
Henri Weathers	Doctor		-	Health Care
Milton Wharton	Judge		-	Law
Donald Wilkerson	Lawyer		-	Law
James Williams Jr.	Businessman, Millionaire, McDonald's Man		-	Business
Staci Yandle	Judge, LGBT leader,	1961-		Law/Civil Right

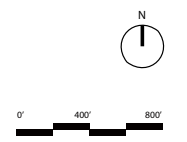


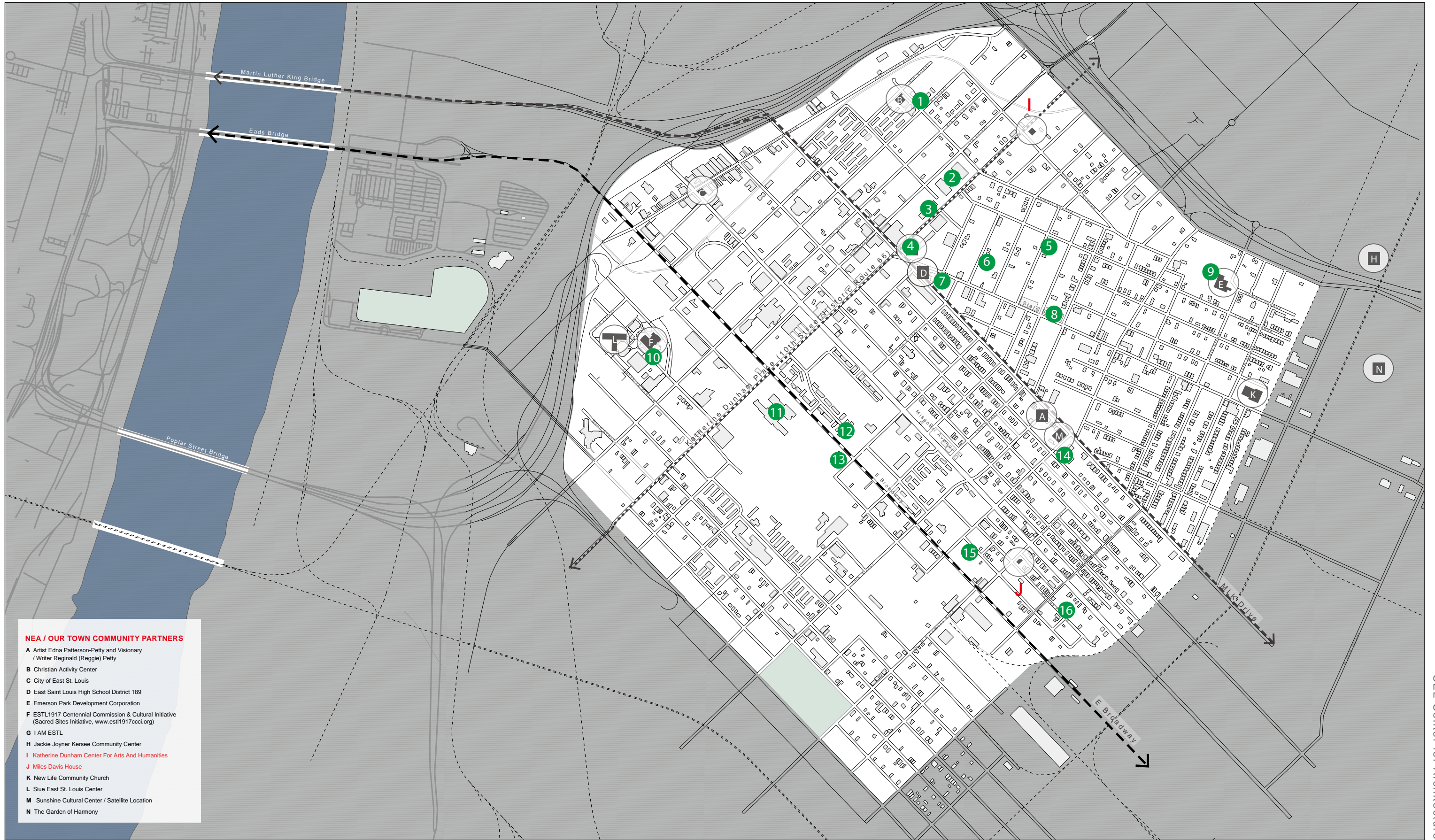
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East St. Louis Project Boundary

- Initial Geographical Boundaries
- kahokia mounds Boundaries





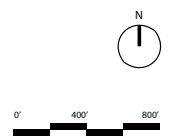
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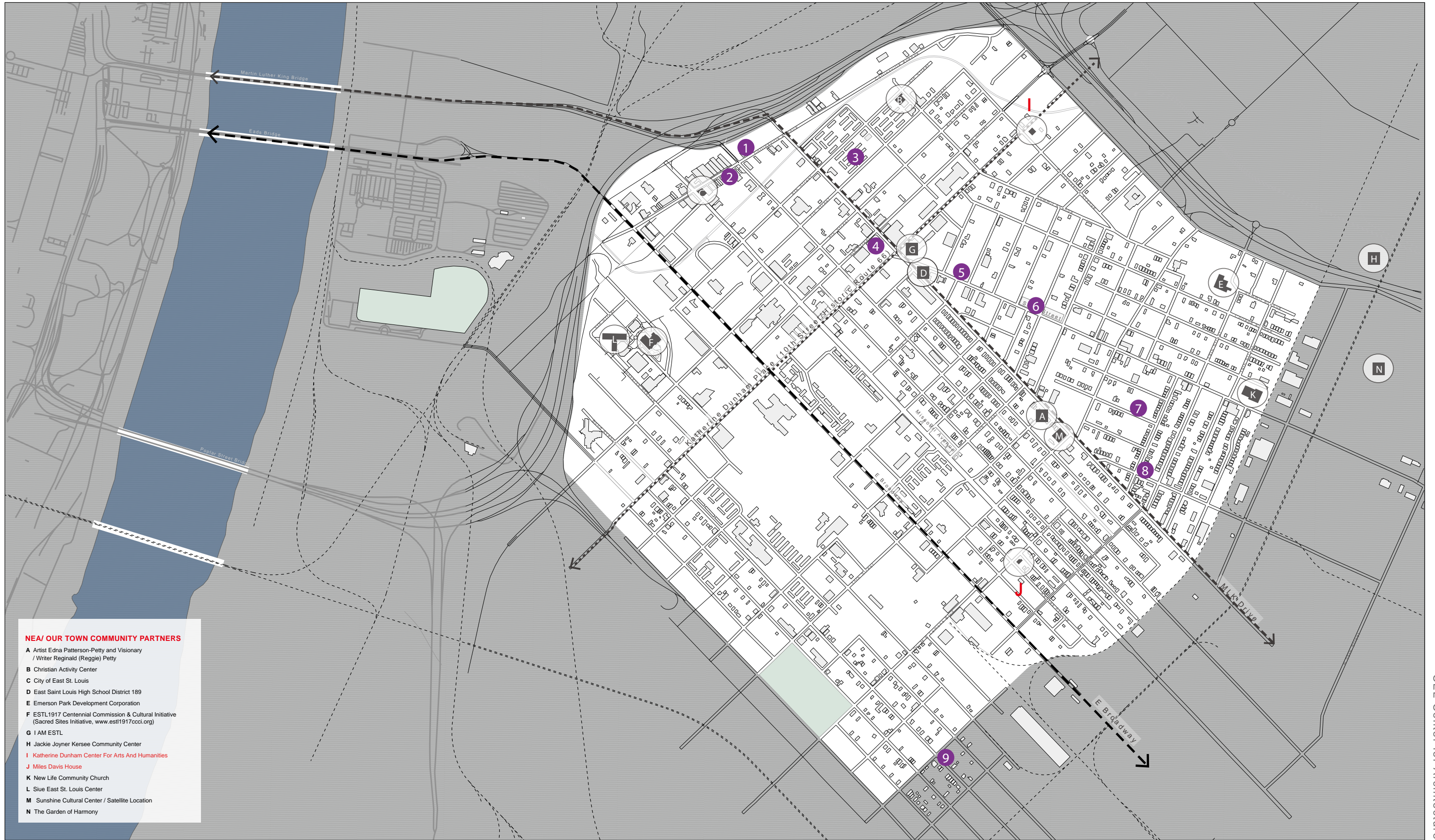
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K12 & Higher Education

- | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1 Catholic Day Care Center & Saint Adalberts School | 4 East St Louis clevlan high school | 7 Crossroads Preparatory Academy | 10 SIUE East St. Louis Charter High School
East St. Louis Community College Center | 13 Lilly-Freeman Elementary School |
| 2 St Joseph School Head Start & Hughes-Quinn/Rock Junior High School | 5 Uni-Pres Kindercottage | 8 Tomorrows Builders Charter School | 11 East St Louis-Lincoln Middle School | 14 Judge Billy Jones Elementary School |
| 3 James E Williams Learning Center | 6 Busy Bees Learning Academy | 9 Jackson Elementary School | 12 St Clari Country Head Start | 15 Busy Babies Daycare |
| | | | | 16 Marah's Childcare |





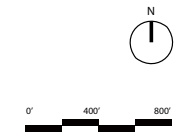
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Barber Shop & Hair Salon

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Paradise Salon (No Longer on Business) | 4 Big Greens Barber Shop | 7 Styles by Tyan |
| 2 Beauty Christine | 5 Bintu African Hair Braiding | 8 Pep's Barber & Beauty |
| 3 Sherie Hair Braiding | 6 Spicy Image Beauty Salon | 9 Willennium Beauty & Barber Sin |





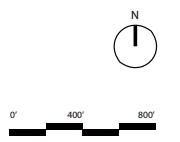
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Historical Buildings

- Historical Building
- 1. SIUE East St. Louis Center
- 6. The Elks Building
- 11. Christian Activity Center
- 16. The Masons Home
- 21. New Life Community Church
- 2. The Bell Telephone Company
- 7. Union Trust Company
- 12. St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- 17. Jackie Joyner Kersee Foundation
- 22. Miles Davis House
- 3. House of Federal Offices
- 8. First National Bank
- 13. The Agudas Achim Jewish Synagogue
- 18. House of Federal Offices
- 23. St. Elizabeth's Church
- 4. The Broadview Hotel
- 9. The Murphy Building
- 14. First Methodist Church
- 19. Emerson Park Development Corporation
- 5. Sacred Heart Catholic Church
- 10. The Majestic Theater
- 15. The First Church of Christ Scientist
- 20. The First Christian Church





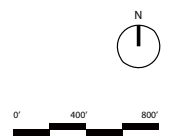
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Church Map

● Church



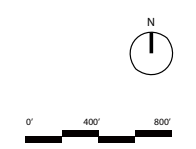


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Grocery Stores

- 1 Bond Avenue Poultry and Fish Co.
- 4 Regal Package Liquor
- 2 BFM Inc.
- 5 East Side Meat
- 3 Champions Liquor
- 6 A & S Market



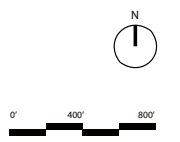


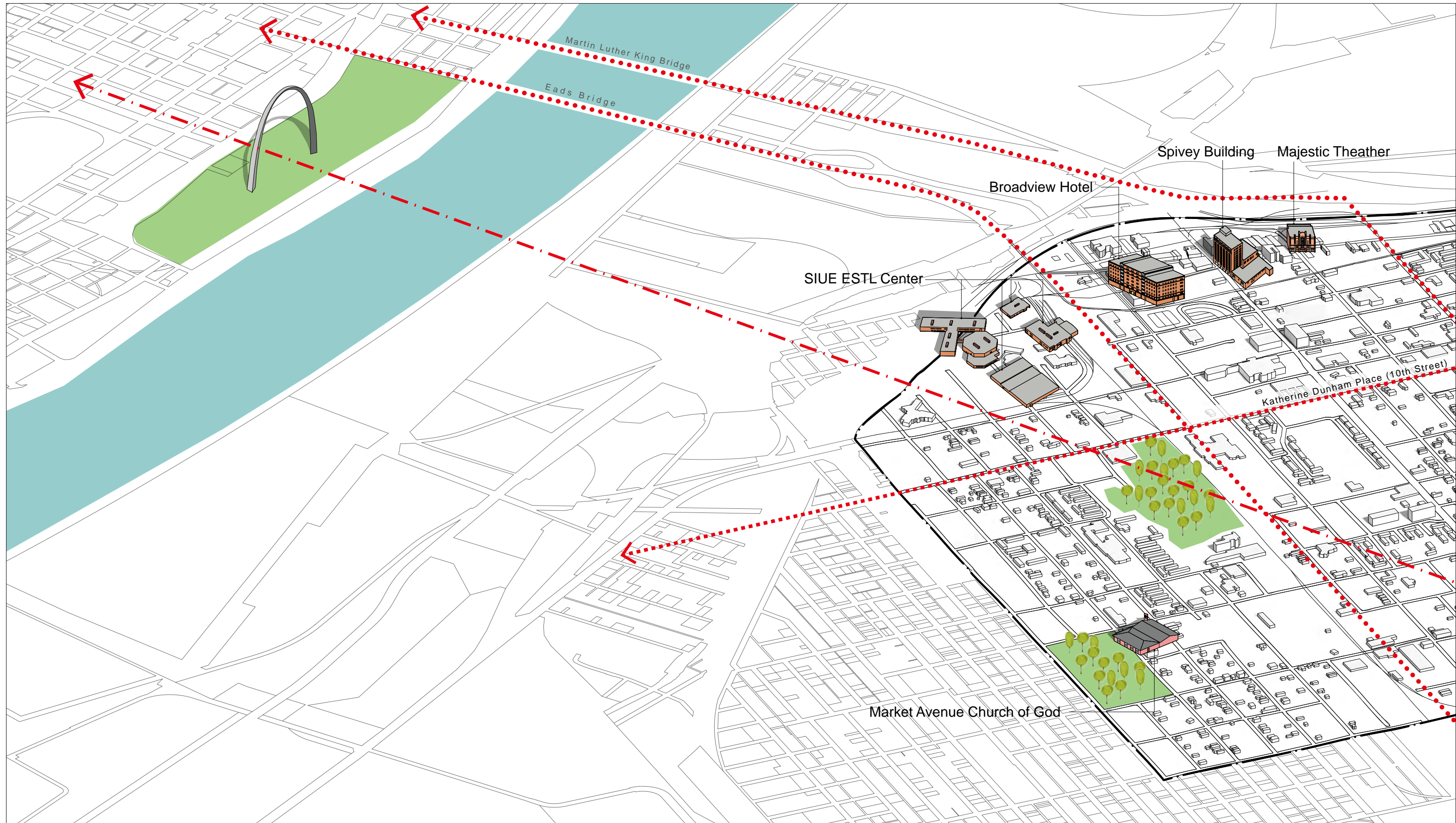
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 - N The Garden of Harmony

*See the Interactive Map www.creativeexchangelab.com/ESTL

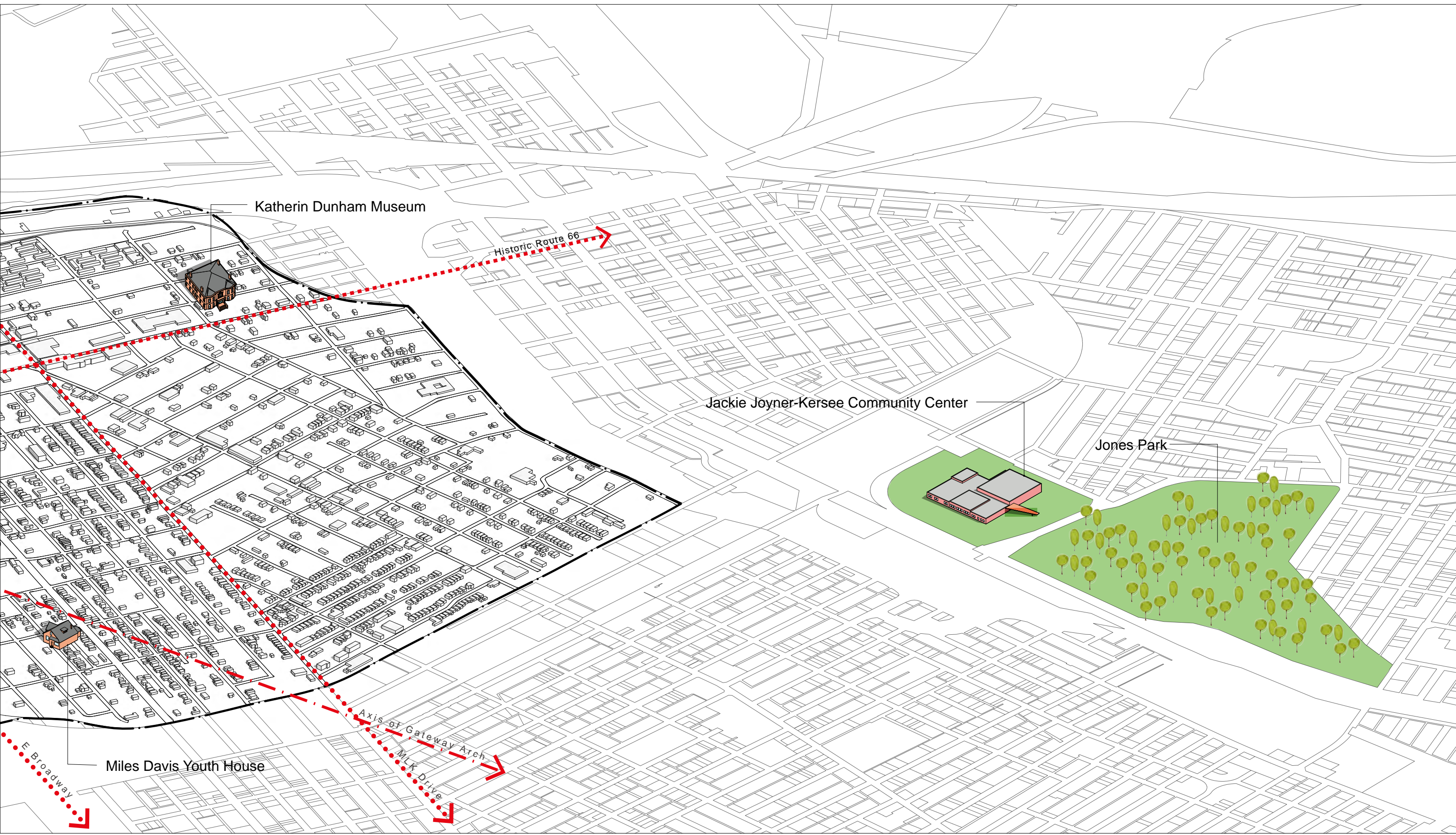
Restaurants

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Mello Freeze Ice Cream | 4 Spoons Cafe | 7 Chop Suey King |
| 2 Sandy's BBQe | 5 La Festa Pizza and Grill | 8 East Side Express |
| 3 G & P Confectionery | 6 Sandy's Barbeque and More | |





Isometric – Visitors [Tourist] Map



Katherin Dunham Museum

Historic Route 66

Jackie Joyner-Kersey Community Center

Jones Park

Miles Davis Youth House

Axis of Gateway Arch

MLK Drive

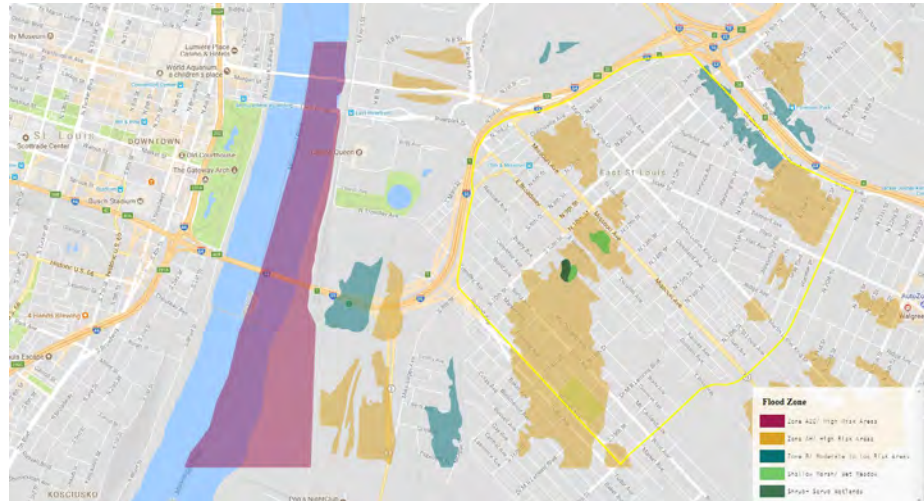
E Broadway

Art and Cultural Assessment Interactive Website

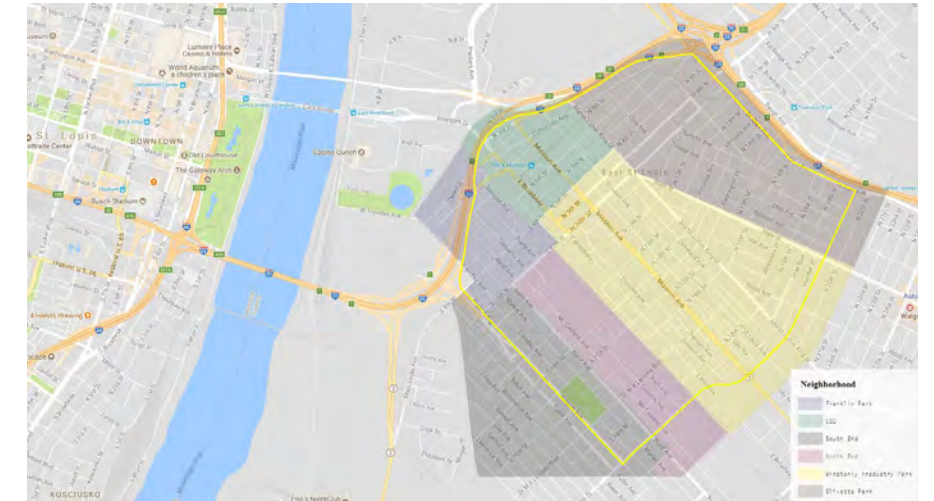
www.creativeexchangelab.com/ESTL



Project Boundaries



Flood Zone



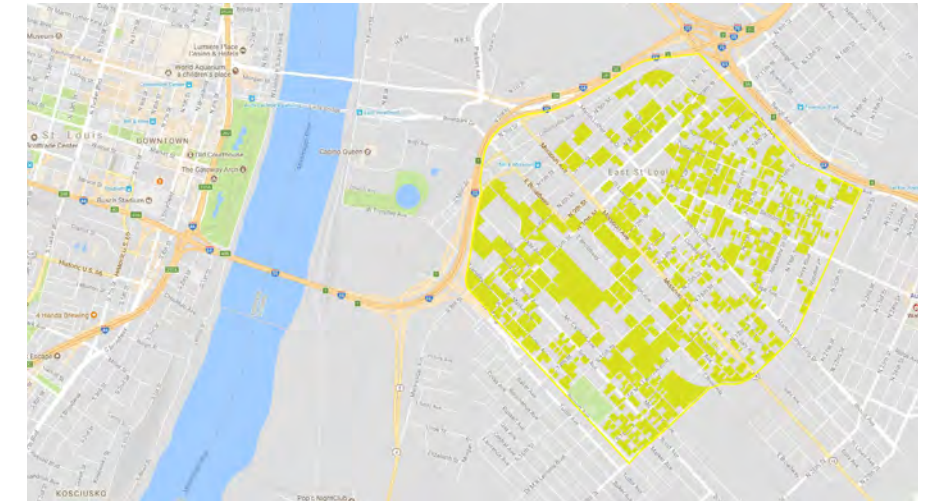
Neighborhoods



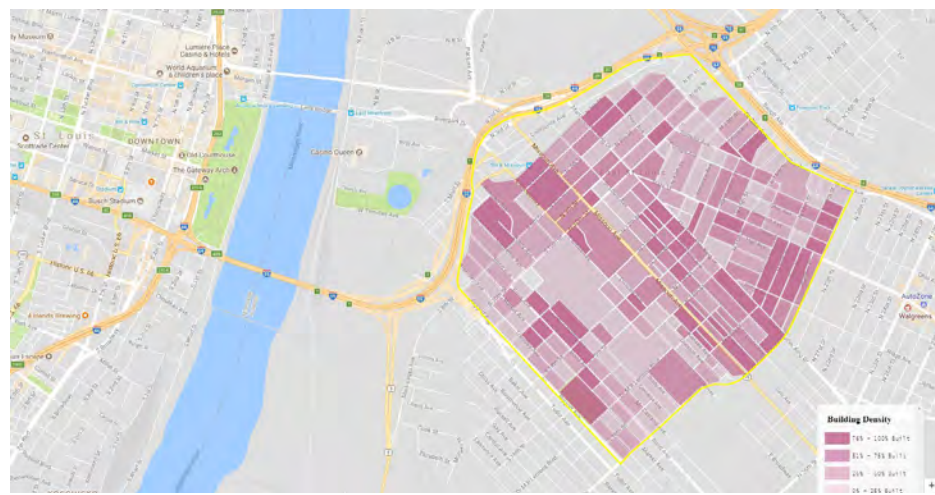
Population Density



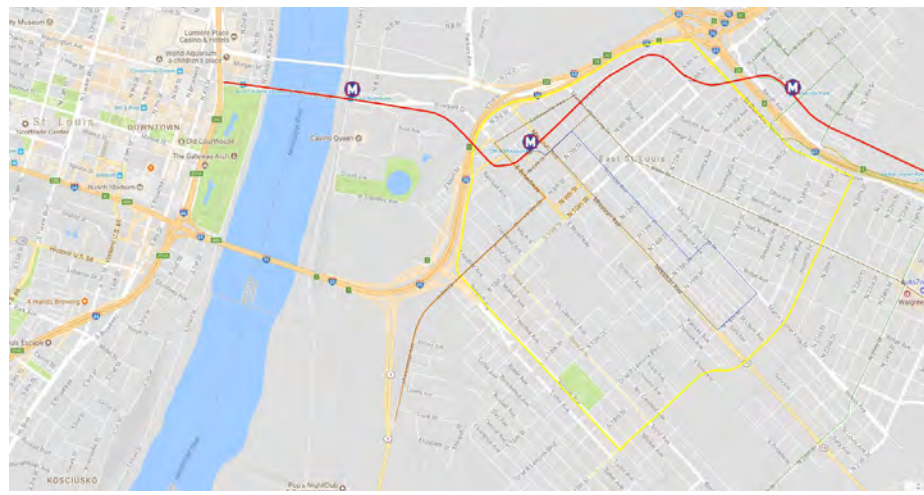
Tree Canopy



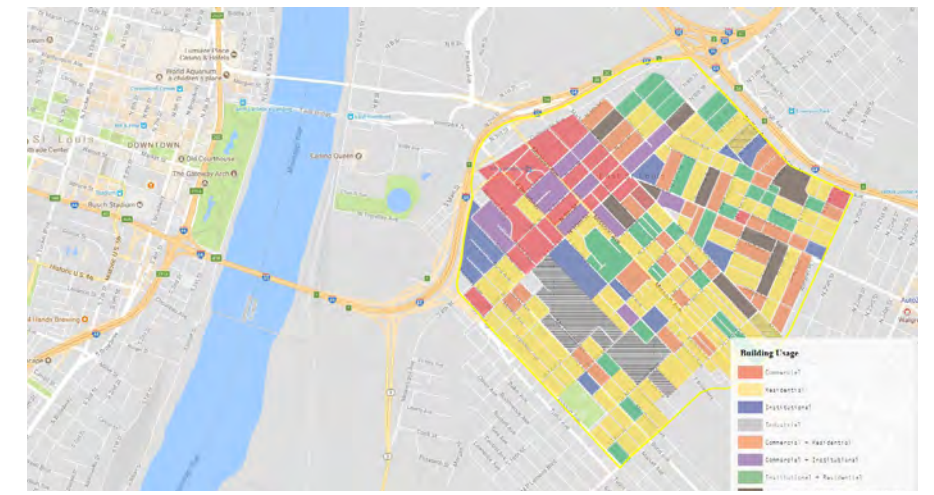
Vacant Land



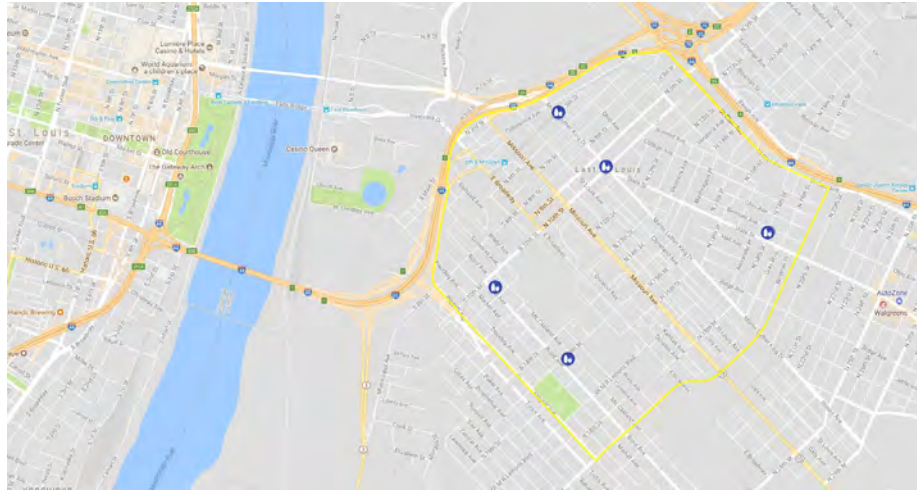
Building Density



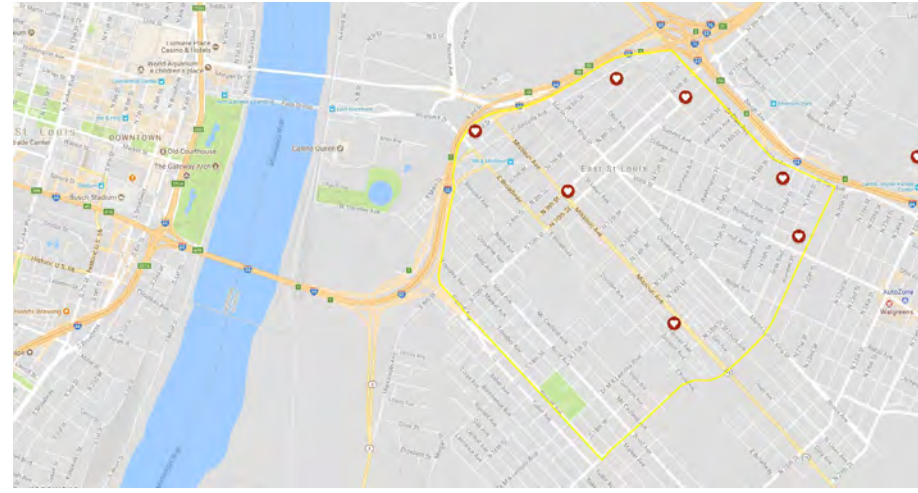
Public Transportations



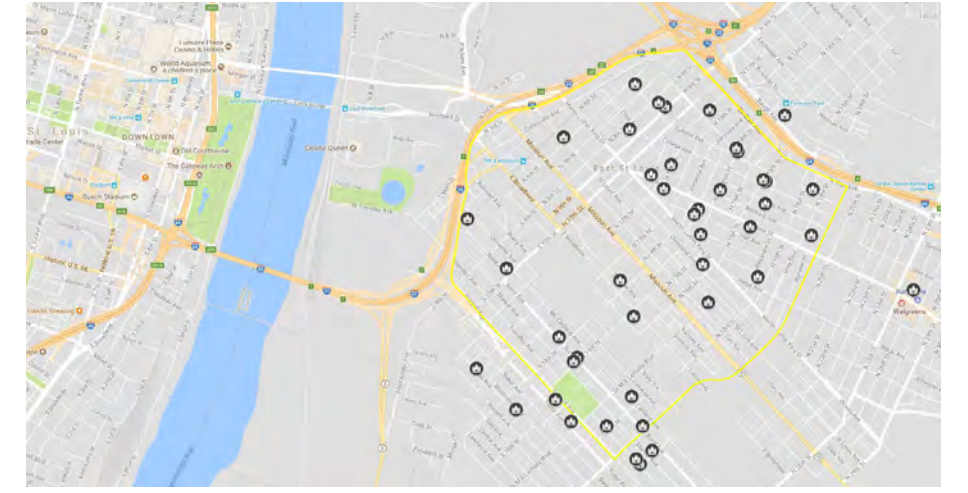
Building Usage



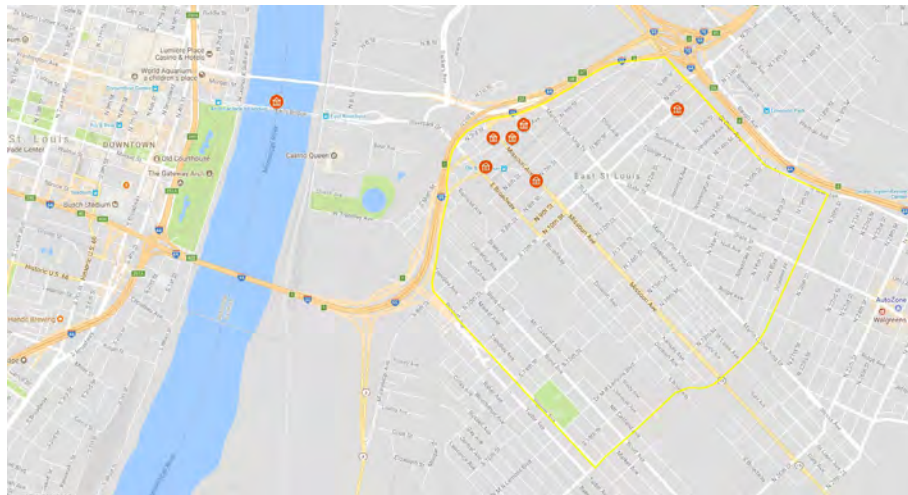
Grocery Stores



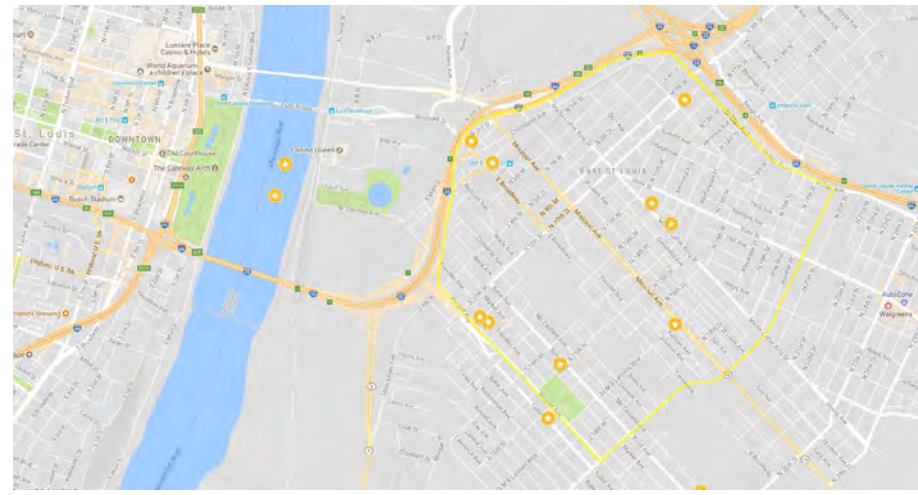
Community Partners



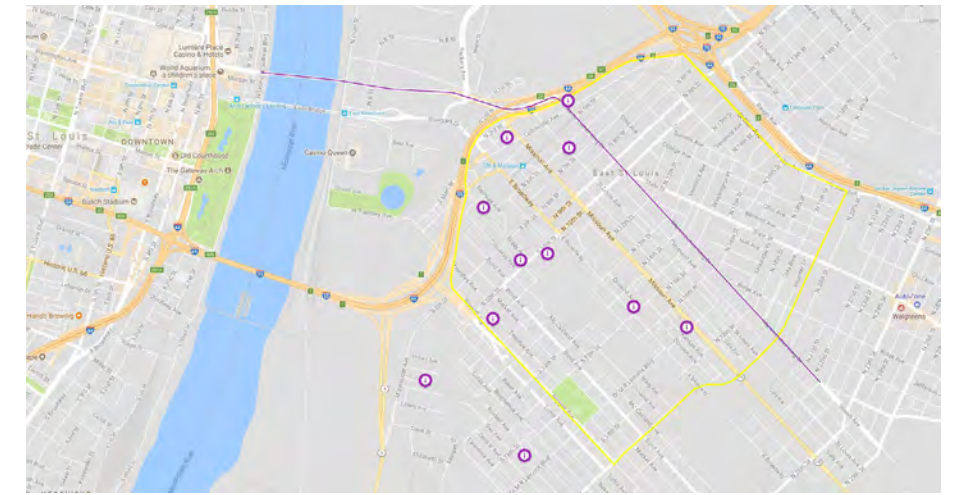
Churches



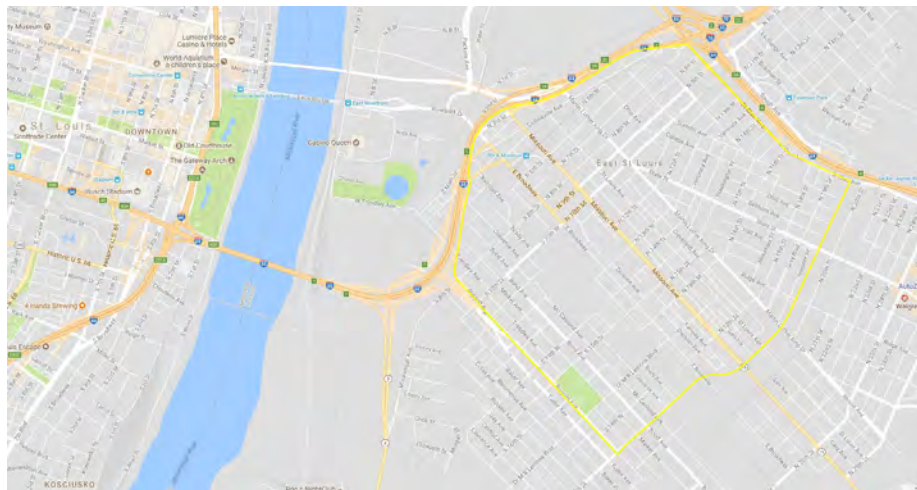
National Register Sites



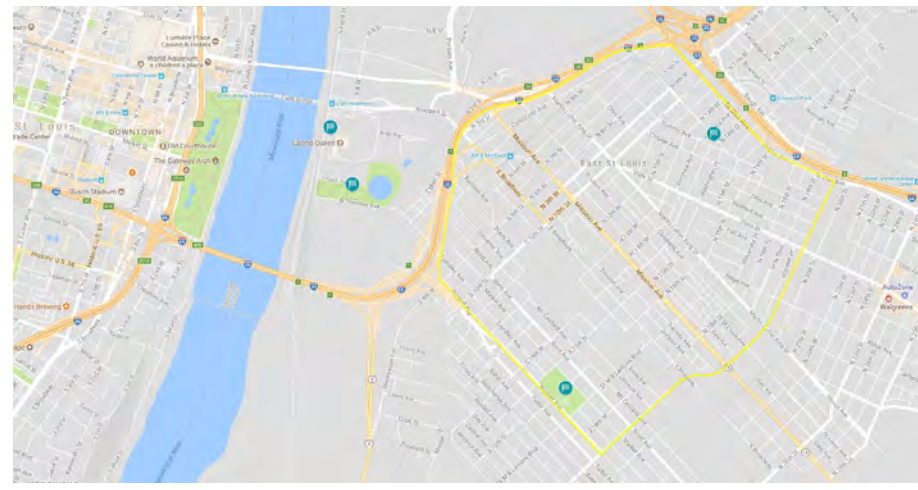
Legends



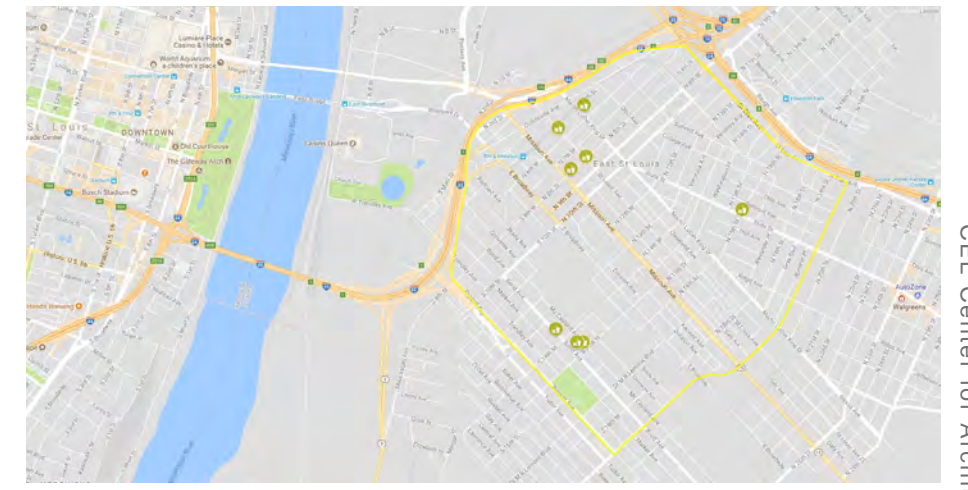
Historical Sites



Project Boundaries



Recreations



Restaurants

04 Vision Statement

ESTL Our Town

“By 2025, East St. Louis, Illinois, will be a cultural arts destination where residents and visitors not only see, hear, learn and celebrate the city’s rich, multilayered history and culture, but that the residents participate, contribute and economically benefit from the cultural assets within the community.”



05 Proposal

East St. Louis Art & Cultural Strategic Framework
Proposed Art & Cultural District Maps / Drawings

East St. Louis Art & Cultural Strategic Framework:
Art and Culture as a Catalyst for Rejuvenation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The goal in forming the East St. Louis Art and Culture Coalition (ESLACC) is to combine the resources of East St. Louis cultural institutions and community-based organizations to create an Arts and Culture District that will build upon the cultural legacy of East St. Louis to stimulate revitalization

II. PURPOSE OF PLAN

The purpose of this document is to serve as a framework for more detailed analysis and study that will lead to the realization of the district

III. METHODOLOGY

The framework was generated through data analysis, windshield surveys, and extensive stakeholder interviews and meetings

IV. CURRENT CONDITIONS

Institutional racism and deindustrialization have led to severe socio-economic and physical decline in East St. Louis. However, the City appears to be stabilizing in terms of a number of indicators.

V. SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

1. Cultural Heritage
2. Contemporary Artists
3. Organizational Entities

Weaknesses

1. Socio-Economic Conditions
2. Institutional/Govt. Capacity
3. Institutional Cooperation

Opportunities

1. 1917 Commission
2. NEA Grant
3. New Political Leadership

Threats

1. Cultural Memory Fading
2. Lack of Funding Mechanism
3. External Doubt of Vision

VI. VISION

“By 2025, East St. Louis, Illinois, will be a cultural arts destination where residents and visitors not only see, hear, learn and celebrate the city’s rich, multi-layered history and culture, but that the residents participate, contribute and economically benefit from the cultural assets within the community.”

VII. CORE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

1. District will be controlled by the residents
2. District will be independent of municipal structure
3. Residents of the district will be its primary economic beneficiaries

VIII. STRATEGIC GOALS: TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

1. District will enhance the community aesthetically and environmentally
2. District will make art and culture an important component of the City’s economic base
3. District will significantly improve socio-economic conditions in the City

IX. POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION TACTICS

1. ESLACC to become a 501c3
2. City to underwrite expanded Strategic Plan and Market Analysis
3. ESLACC to launch district with a series of events and performances
4. Commissioning of additional “Artists in Residence”
5. State designation of district as Community Improvement District (CID)
6. Cultural campus with Corridor/Walkway
7. Urban Agriculture
8. Construction of enhanced performance venues
9. Infrastructure improvements
10. MLK Artist District
11. Incentives to attract tourist businesses
12. Entrepreneurial Support

X. CONCLUSION

East St. Louis is at a critical crossroads. Commission and NEA grant have created a unique opportunity. However, the City and its residents have a limited window of time to seize the momentum.

I. INTRODUCTION

East St. Louis, Illinois (ESL) is a manifestation of the best and worst in American society and culture. Perhaps no other city in America so clearly demonstrates the devastation and destruction that deindustrialization and racism have caused over the last generation. But while ESL has endured the ravages of massive population loss and the disappearance of its economic base, the City is a testament to the will of the residents to survive. Even in light of the challenges it faces, ESL has produced amazing musicians, dancers, poets, scholars, artists, and athletes. Moreover, it continues to maintain an incredible a range of institutions that provide a solid foundation for ESL to build anew.

During the last two years, the Creative Exchange Lab (CEL) has been working with the residents and institutions of ESL with an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to figure out how the amazing cultural base of the City can be used as a catalyst for its revitalization. The result of this process has been the preliminary conceptualization for a “Cultural Arts District” (ACD) in ESL that will involve new venues, spin-off entrepreneurial initiatives, and placemaking. Although there has been a conversation in ESL since the 1960s that art, culture, and history is the avenue for the City’s economic rejuvenation, none of those earlier plans were implemented. However, CEL and the planning team feel that this current effort is different. Not only is the idea for a ACD a viable strategy for creating a stable economic platform for utilizing culture as an economic tool, it shows how the City’s institutions can collectively come together to use their power to make the ACD their own. Previous plans had always

looked to outside foundations, universities, or governments to take the lead in implementing proposals involving culture. This plan, however, seeks to place the responsibility for the plan’s success squarely on the residents and institutions of ESL. CEL has simply used design and technology to flesh out the concept. But whether the ACD actually reaches fruition will be up to the board, staff, and volunteers of the ACD itself.

Another reason, though, that CEL and the planning team are particularly hopeful that the proposed strategy will bring about results is a real belief that now is the right time. Although it was a commemoration of a tragic event, this year’s commemoration of the horrible 1917 race riot brought ESL together in a way that has not been experienced in maybe a generation. Though sadden by the events that took place a hundred years ago, the City seemed empowered by the memory of what African Americans had gone through in ESL to remake the city not as an industrial center, but as a mecca of black heritage in the United States. The time also appears right for creating a ACD in ESL due to the current political climate in the City. ESL has had numerous dedicated political leaders over the last five deACDes, but for whatever reason, they were not able to achieve their goals. However, there now seems to be a level of energy, capacity, and consensus, which is positioning ESL to pursue a new fruitful direction.

II. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This current document is not a plan, but rather a framework for more detailed planning studies that will be generated at a later date. The Our Town grant simply did

not provide the funding or the time for a comprehensive strategic plan that would be necessary to go forward. What this present report aims to do is to contextualize the cultural assessment that was performed by CEL, which was the primary funded activity of the NEA grant, and to suggest ways in which the cultural assessment could be used to launch the ACD. Indeed, the primary goal of this report is that East St. Louisans will use it as a focal point for organizing the ACD.

III. METHODOLOGY

Various methodologies were utilized in the preparation of this report. Census data and other archival online data sources, as well as, windshield surveys were used in assessing present conditions. Surveys, stakeholder interviews, and visioning sessions were the main instruments in shaping ideas concerning the ACD. Analysis for this report was meant to be preliminary. More extensive assessment of current conditions and fleshing out of implementation tactics will need to be performed for the next phase in the planning process.

IV. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A key tenet of the project is that it had to be community-driven. As will become evident in the next section devoted to past planning efforts, plans that do not involve the stakeholders of the community are doomed to failure. Consequently, the planning team was committed to involving the community and the City administration every step of the way. CEL used a RFP process to select

the initial community partners and then actively sought additional partners throughout the life of the grant. Once the community partners were in place, the planning team met monthly with them and they were actively engaged in creating the cultural assessment. They also gave valuable input into the design work that CEL performed. The planning team also met on a regular basis with the mayor and other city officials. On several occasions, they also did site tours of potential buildings to assess their potential use. The team has been an active member of the Commission to Commemorate the 1917 East St. Louis Race Riot (CC). Team members attended monthly meetings and participated in commemoration events. While it did not prove to work out, CEL also attempted to solicit high school students to be part of the team.

Perhaps the most innovative community engagement technique that CEL employed was commissioning two local artists to create works of art relevant to ESL history and culture. The purpose of this initiative to give residents and other stakeholders examples of what a ACD could accomplish. The first artist, Edna Patterson-Petty, a nationally recognized fabric artist, created a quilt depicting key moments in ESL history. The second artist was Gregory Carr, a theater instructor at Harris-Stowe State University, a local Historically Black College or University (HBCU), and a noted playwright, wrote and produced *Tinderbox*, a play about the 1917 race riot that was widely acclaimed.

V. OVERVIEW OF PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

Although ESL has been the site of numerous social programs and urban renewal efforts initiated by the federal,

state, and municipal governments, it has produced relatively few plans. There have only been three comprehensive or city-wide planning initiatives to date: 1) the 1920 Harland Bartholomew and Associates (HBA) plan, 2) the 1960 Candeub and Fleissing Plan, and 3) the East St. Louis Action Research Project plans in the 1990s that were prepared by the University of Illinois.

What is remarkable about the 1920 HBA plan is that even though it was commissioned by the War Department as a response to the 1917 East St. Louis Race Riot, which may have resulted in as many as 400 fatalities—the majority of whom were African American—there is virtually no discussion of race. Bartholomew came to St. Louis in 1916 to be the City's first planning director, a position, which he held until 1953. But Bartholomew's claim to fame was that he started a consulting firm in 1919 that would eventually become the largest planning firm in the world and which would produce over 600 comprehensive plans. The East St. Louis plan was one of the three plans that HBA started in 1919 and would literally become the template for all of the other plans that HBA generated around the world. For Bartholomew, planning was a scientific exercise that was meant to coerce the physical landscape of the city into a coherent, coordinated whole, which would serve the collective interests of the city. In his mind, racial and social divisions in any city were forces to minimize. Consequently, even though, his plan came about due to those tensions, the only mention of race in the entire plan is the identification of two parks as being “colored parks.” Like all of his later comprehensive plans, the emphasis was on land use and circulation and on making the city more “efficient.”

As for most American cities, the Great Depression and

World War II kept East St. Louis from doing another comprehensive plan until 1960. This was the same year that ESL was named an All America City. However, there were already indications that the City was on the verge of facing several serious challenges when it contracted with Candeub and Fleissing (CF) to write a new comprehensive plan. In the previous deACDe, several factories had left town, relocating to less-union friendly locations or overseas, that was a belle weather of the massive deindustrialization that was to come. And while the plan anticipated that ESL's population would grow from 88,000 to 105,000 by 1980, affluent whites were already starting to move to the new suburbs east of the City. And perhaps most ominous, the City was becoming more and more racially divided. The African Americans—who now comprised a third of the population—lived in the western side of the city west of 25th Street, whereas the whites lived on the eastern side of the city east of 25th Street.

But even though race was clearly an issue in the City and even though ESL, like the rest of the country, was in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement, CF did not use the words “race,” “blacks,” “Negroes,” (African Americans was not yet a term commonly used) once in the plan. Indeed, the word they did use, “non-white,” they used only a handful of times in the section of the plan that analyzed the City's neighborhoods. Although race is not addressed directly in the plan, it is clearly the driving force behind it. As with most plans of the 1950s and 1960s, the CF master plan followed the HBA template and was primarily concerned with land use, zoning, and circulation. Yet it was racial considerations that shaped CF's thinking behind these issues. Like Harland Bartholomew, CF wanted to clearly demarcate land uses

from one another and undo the messy co-mingling of uses that characterized the western section of the City. Noting that the majority of dilapidated housing and housing without indoor was located in the non-white sections of the city, they called for these areas to be remade in the name of urban renewal. As CF explained in the section detailing plans for the South End—the oldest African American neighborhood in the City, “for several decades the location of the great majority of the City’s non-white residents, the South End presents the greatest problems, challenges, and at the same time, the greatest opportunities.” The opportunities that they were referring to was the chance to demolish the South End and remake part of it as an industrial park with the rest being transformed from low density single family housing to high density multi-family residential structures (interestingly, they did not say if it was to be public or private housing). Almost all of the urban renewal areas and the paths of the new interstates that CF identified in their plan involved the so-called non-white neighborhoods.

The 1960s, 1970s, and the 1980s were brutal times for ESL. The City lost its entire industrial base and ceased being a major rail center. As a result, instead of growing to 105,000 as predicted by CF, the ESL lost two thirds of its population. Not only did the whites flee to the suburbs, the more affluent African Americans, as well. As a consequence, only the poorest remained, leaving ESL with overwhelming social problems, but without the resources to address them.

Even though this situation created a critical need for a new comprehensive plan, the City has not had the means to complete one since the CF plan in 1960. While there have been innumerable planning studies done by various programs and agencies, the most comprehensive effort was

done through ESLARP in the 1990s. Using architecture and planning students, as well as students from other disciplines, University of Illinois generated neighborhood plans for most areas of the City. However, the most aggressive initiative involved following up on a suggestion made by Katherine Dunham, the famous dancer and choreographer, that the secret to ESL’s revitalization was through its African American cultural heritage and that the City needed a Cultural Heritage Plan, a Cultural Heritage Program, and a Community Cultural Resources Plan. In response to Dunham’s recommendations, ESLARP produced “The East St. Louis Cultural Resources Plan” in 1995. Although the plan failed to garner economic support from either the federal government or outside investors, it remains a promising idea.

VI. CURRENT CONDITIONS

Overview

ESL is a predominantly African American (96%) municipality of 13.99 square miles situated across the Mississippi river from St. Louis, Missouri in St. Clair County in southwest Illinois. Historically, the city was the hub of a cluster of industrial suburbs that were the heart of the region’s economy. It was both an industrial and transportation center for the nation. However, ESL, as well as, its satellite communities has suffered severe economic and demographic decline over the last generation that has accompanied deindustrialization. It has lost virtually of its industries and is longer considered a major rail or water depot. As a result, ESL has suffered a drastic population

decline, as the community has become poorer and poorer. With this subsequent poverty, the city has also experienced a range of social and economic problems. It has an extremely high crime rate, an abundance of vacant land and buildings, and soaring unemployment. Moreover, political corruption and the loss or the underfunding of most of its cultural institutions has accompanied these challenging social issues every step of the way.

However, as devastating as deindustrialization has been for the city, the real underlying cause of ESL’s demise is the structural racism endemic in America. As the municipality’s industries began to leave in the 1960s, its white residents left as well moving to suburbs to the east. Blocked from following them to the newer suburbs by racist real estate practices and federal housing policies, ESL African Americans were left behind in a declining city. ESL’s demise only accelerated after the 1968 Fair Housing Act when the city’s more affluent African Americans could escape a city that was helpless in the face of disinvestment by the banks, as well as, state and federal government.

Although the ESL has experienced a generation of major hurdles, maybe there are now signs of hope. The population decline as seemingly plateaued. Socio-economic conditions also appear to have stabilized. Consequently, ESL is seemingly poised for a rebirth. Perhaps, the Our Town grant and the ACD will be the catalyst for change that will enable ESL to once again become the vital community it once was.

Demographics

While a city is a physical place, it’s most important

characteristic is its people. Perhaps, nothing reflects the tragic decline of this once proud city than what has happened to its residents. A municipality of over 80,000 when it was named an All-America city in 1959, it now has a population of 26,697 which is a drop of 15% from as late as 2000.

Although this plummet in its population is telling, what is more indicative of ESL's plight is the state of its well being in terms of household income and wealth. At present, the median household income of ESL is \$19,856 compared to the national median of \$53,480. What this means is that the average household in the city is at or below what the federal government defines as the poverty line for a family of four. This figure also places the average household in ESL inside the bottom quintile of household incomes in the United States.

Percent Living in Poverty

	Population	Family
ESL	45%	44%
Illinois	14%	11%
United States	16%	12%

Income is an important measure of household economic health, but what is more informative in describing the long term financial stability of a family or household is its wealth or the aggregate value of all its assets. For East St. Louisans, as for most Americans, the most valuable asset that it has is its home. As residents have fled the city, --for a complexity of reasons-- the value of residential property has fallen, as well. While the median value of single-family houses in Illinois is in excess of \$175,000, the median house value in ESL is \$57,000—literally less

than half the value of homes throughout the rest of the state.. As a result, the wealth of East St. Louisans is not only not keeping pace with the rest of the region it is actually shrinking. Homes in ESL have experienced a 36% reduction since 2000 making it harder and harder for East St. Louisans to have a satisfactory quality of life.

While the demographic profile of ESL is bleak, again there may be some hope for optimism. Although the population is continuing to decline, the rate appears to be slowing. The Parsons Place project in the Emerson Park neighborhood has demonstrated that mixed income residential development can thrive in ESL if done properly. Moreover, there are plans for new housing in the Lansdowne neighborhood, as well.

Socio-economic Conditions

Poverty is the overarching reality for most East St. Louisans. But poverty is more than just a financial number. It has the power to limit one's life chances at happiness not to mention its ability to deny upward mobility. It can even shorten how long a person will live.

Although house values have plummeted in ESL, 55% of ESL households rent their homes. And while the median gross rent in the city is only \$574/month, this is a burden for most ESL renters. At this rate, ESL renters are spending 35% of the median ESL household monthly income on rent, which is in excess of the HUD recommended cap of 30% that a household should spend on housing expenses. Yet, this figure is probably skewed downward by the fact that the median income includes that of homeowners. What this means is that most ESL families who rent are living

paycheck to paycheck.

The underlying cause of the poverty of ESL is the lack of decent paying jobs and the high rate of unemployment. Most jobs held by City residents are service occupations with few benefits and little security. The largest employer in the city is the Casino Queen, a gambling boat on the Mississippi river. But what puts East St. Louisans even more at financial risk is the high rate of unemployment. Over one in five ESL males is unemployed (22%) as compared to 10% of African American males in the state and 9.5% nationally. And like the percentage of East St. Louisans who are paying too much for housing, this male unemployment figure is artificially low. Unemployment data only tracks those who are claiming unemployment and looking for work. It does not count those workers who have given up looking for work. Undoubtedly, there are many African American males in East Louis who have despaired of ever finding meaningful employment.

It is not surprising that the pervasiveness of poverty has an impact on family composition and stability. While many single parent families are very stable and thrive, the lack of two incomes and two caregivers make raising children difficult and often puts them at risk in terms of many debilitating conditions. Only 15% of ESL households consist of a married couple family as compared to 48% nationally. But maybe even more striking is the fact that 42% of households are nonfamily households, which means that almost half of all households do not have a married couple or a single parent with children present. Another consequence of poverty in ESL is the lack of educational attainment. In an age when a four-year degree is almost a requisite for a decent paying, stable job 92% of

East St. Louisans 25 or older lack a college degree.

Educational Attainment by Percent

Level of Attainment	ESL	Illinois	USA
Less than High School	21%	12%	14%
High School Diploma	33%	27%	28%
Some College	38%	29%	29%
College Degree	5%	20%	18%
Advanced Degree	3%	12%	11%

Not only do East St. Louisans lag behind the rest of the state and the nation in terms of educational attainment, they are also receiving a poor education. Fewer than 10% of ESL third graders met the state standard for mathematics and less than 20% met the state standard for reading. High school scores are similar. Less than 7% of ESL eleventh graders scored satisfactory in mathematics, 8% in science, and 15% in reading.

Again, while socio-economic conditions in ESL are bleak, there are indicators for hope. The new administration's economic development team has identified several potential projects on the riverfront that might be job producers. In addition, they are looking at ways to stimulate rehabilitation of a number of architecturally significant structures in the downtown. Perhaps though, the most hopeful sign of a socio-economic turnaround is with the schools in District 189—the public school district in ESL. Test scores are still unsatisfactory. Yet the district has for the first time in many years a well-respected superintendent and staff. Not only does there appear to be a stronger emphasis on aACDemics, the new superintendent has also introduced

several innovative social programs to improve family and household conditions of the students.

Physical Conditions

The economic state of the City is reflected in the physical conditions of the city. Both the housing stock and the city's infrastructure are in bad state of disrepair. Moreover, most of the city's commercial and industrial property is either abandoned or in severe need of rehabilitation. There is an abundance of vacant property. Some streets are impassable due to the number of potholes and missing manhole covers. Many broken traffic lights have simply been replaced with stop signs. Most parts of the city new sewer and water service upgrades.

But here too there are reasons for optimism. The city has found the means to replace some sewers and waterlines on the north side of the city. The city still has a remarkable park system. While Jones Park in the Lansdowne neighborhood is somewhat "long in the tooth," it remains one of the jewels of the region. Moreover, the presence of Metrolink in the city provides the foundation for new construction in many parts of the city and would be essential for creating performance venues that might emerge from the planned cultural arts district.

Crime Statistics

ESL has a horrible crime rate. As the following chart makes clear, the crime rate for both personal and property crime is many times higher for ESL than for Illinois or the United States. A person is twenty times more likely to be

murdered in ESL than elsewhere in the country and ten times more likely to be assaulted.

East Saint Louis, IL Crime by Year

Year	Location	Description	Murders	Assaults	Thefts	
2014	ESL	Count	27	692	564	--
	ESL	Per 100K	101.8	2609.1	2126.5	7893
	IL	Per 100K	5.3	213.7	1552.2	1241
	USA	Per 100K	4.5	232.5	1837.3	1423
2012	ESL	Count	17	1075	569	--
	ESL	Per 100K	62.9	3975.6	2104.3	9986
	IL	Per 100K	5.8	230.0	1826.9	1515
	USA	Per 100K	4.7	242.3	1959.3	1557
2010	ESL	Count	21	1271	781	--
	ESL	Per 100K	262.5	4509.0	2770.7	
	IL	Per 100K	23.6	249.7	1868.9	1558
	USA	Per 100K	27.5	252.3	2003.5	1610

The crime index is a relative indicator of the level of crime developed by USA.com. The higher the score is, the higher the relative level of crime is in a given location.

The reason for this deplorable condition can be traced back to poor economic conditions of the city and the rate of poverty in the city. But another reason for the high crime rate is the degree that the city is under-policed. ESL has 27% less police coverage than the country as a whole even though ESL has a crime index 5 ½ times than for the United States..

Even though ESL is one of the most dangerous cities in the country, the situation is seemingly getting somewhat better. Comparing USA.org crime index as an indicator, there was an 18% decrease in crime for ESL between 2014 (the last year when data was available) and

2010. Also, the current stability in the city's administration is a source of optimism with respect to crime in the city. After a wave of police scandals with several police chiefs being forced out, ESL's police department seems relatively stable at present.

Political Structure and Trends

Historically, ESL has lacked governmental capacity and resources. Dominated by corporate interests, the city has always struggled to generate enough property tax revenue to adequately fund necessary services. As a result, it has had to turn to other revenue generators, such as liquor taxes, which in turn has often led to corruption. This reputation for the lack of capacity and corruption has further led to a lack of economic development that has exasperated the city's financial and economic woes.

Another problem in municipal government for the city has been overlapping positions of mayor and city manager. This duplication of chief executive functions has made it difficult to efficiently use the few resources that the city has possessed. The lack of clear accountability and transparency has often resulted in the city not being able to account for county, state, and federal monies that the city has been allocated over the last generation. Consequently, these superior governmental bodies have assumed on several occasions functions and programs that belong to municipal government.

Although the city still suffers from a severe underfunding and an awkward governmental structure, ESL seems to be enjoying a period of relative political tranquility and stability. The last 3 or 4 city managers have had the necessary

qualifications and experience to adequately perform their functions and the current administration seems to have a clear sense of direction. Moreover, the fact that HUD has taken the local housing authority out of receivership is also a positive sign.

Community Organizations and Institutions

Maybe ESL's primary asset at present is the quality and number of their community and cultural institutions. In addition to the cultural community partners that CEL has had the privilege of working with, ESL has a vibrant faith-based community, strong neighborhood organizations like Jackie Joyner Kersee Center, committed non-profit organizations such as the Leslie Bates Davis Neighborhood House, and effective community development organizations like the Emerson Park Development Corporation. ESL also has a number of robust intermediary organizations like the St. Louis Metropolitan United Way and the East St. Louis Collaborative—a group of fourteen universities that are active in ESL—that provide invaluable services to these groups. Again, while the historical event was both tragic and appalling, the commemoration of the 1917 East St. Louis race riot and the commission that was created to carry out its observance has created a sense of unity and cohesion among these groups making it a force for revitalization.

VII. SWOT ANALYSIS

A crucial component of any strategic planning process is an analysis of current strengths and weaknesses,

as well as, potential opportunities and threats. This assessment is commonly called a SWOT Analysis. It is also important to note that there is a spatial dimension to this analysis in addition to a temporal one. Although not always, strengths and weaknesses are generally as viewed as internal to whatever entity is being analyzed—in this case the City of East St. Louis. On the other hand, opportunities and threats are normally seen as being external to the entity in question.

Strengths

1. African American Cultural Heritage:

Although Miles Davis and Catherine Dunham come quickest to mind as African American cultural icons of East St. Louis, the black ESL community has a deep and rich heritage that goes far beyond these two artistic giants. While most are gone now, ESL had a thriving club scene that supported and nourished local jazz and blues talent. But besides bars and clubs, ESL has always had a strong presence by the black church, which not only provided a spiritual and social anchor for the African American community; it produced legends of gospel musicians. And for much of the twentieth century, Lincoln High School's Jazz Band was seen as the one of the strongest music programs in the country. This artistic heritage is recognized and appreciated around the world. If properly marketed and branded, this heritage could make ESL a world destination.

2. Contemporary Artists:

Art and culture carries on in East St. Louis despite the many challenges. Nationally recognized poet, Eugene Redmond, and African drummer, Sylvester "Sunshine" Lee continue to make ESL

home, as well as, fabric artist Edna Patterson Petty. These artists not only continue to produce. They are important educators who are making sure that ESL's cultural heritage is passed down to the next generation.

3. Organizational Entities: One of the main reasons why the arts continue to thrive in ESL is because of a strong institutional framework. Institutions like the Katherine Dunham Museum and Performing Arts Center and the Sunshine Cultural Arts Center provide both performance venues, as well as, classes that offer opportunities for the next generation of performers.

Weaknesses

1. Social and Economic Conditions: As made abundantly clear in the previous section, ESL is one of the most distressed communities. In terms of virtually every socio-economic indicator, ESL faces major challenges. Unless these conditions are somehow addressed, ESL will not be able to realize its full cultural potential.

2. Lack of Institutional and Governmental Resources: Another related obstacle that the City faces is the lack of resources. Institutional entities like the Katherine Dunham Museum and the Sunshine Cultural Arts Center are constantly searching for dollars—not to expand programs, but in order to survive. With ever shrinking tax revenues, the municipal government, too, is in a never-ending battle to remain financially solvent.

3. Institutional Cooperation: Because of the lack of resources, the major institutions in the City which includes not only the major cultural organizations,

but entities like the Jackie Joyner Kersee Center and the churches are pitted against one another fighting for every dollar.

Opportunities

1. 1917 Race Riot Commemoration
Commission: As noted earlier, while it was one of the most shameful events in American history, the 1917 Race Riot and the commemoration of its one-hundredth anniversary this year has created a palpable resurgence of community pride. East St. Louisans appear to be proud of their past and their current ability to survive, but their faith in the future and their ability to bring about a resurgence in the East St. Louis. This moment cannot be squandered.

2. NEA Our Town Grant: Although it is a coincidence, the NEA grant to CEL comes at a perfect time for the City. While the idea for using culture as an economic catalyst has been percolating in the ESL for at least twenty five years and the ESARPH plan, the Our Town grant comes at the perfect time to take advantage of the momentum created by the Commemoration. The interactive cultural assessment website and the design work associated with the idea for a cultural arts district has given the community a tangible concept to sink their imaginations into. Moreover, the CEL concept has broaden the ESLARPH Cultural Revitalization Plan to encompass additional concepts such as a cultural campus, urban agricultural, and the use of Martin Luther King Avenue as a tie to the larger African American culture of the St. Louis region.

3. New Political Leadership: Strategies are worthless unless there is the leadership to bring them to fruition. Although the current municipal administration has strong East St. Louis roots, both the new mayor and the new city manager represent a new generation of political leadership with a clear vision of how things could be different and a sense of urgency to bring it about. This too should not be squandered. Political moments come and go all too quickly.

Threats

1. Fading of Memories: Although ESL continues to be a fertile ground for producing local artists, writers, and musicians, its shrinking population means that it will have fewer people to draw people to draw from. Moreover, because the younger residents tend to also be poorer, they will have less financial support to enable them to pursue their dreams. But perhaps most threatening is the fact that over time because the great masters like Davis and Dunham have not been adequately memorialized, they start to fade in importance for the younger generation. Time, therefore, is of the essence. If ESL's cultural heritage is to be used as a catalyst for revitalization, it must be done quickly.

2. Lack of External Funding Sources: A ACD in ESL will cost a great deal of money. Existing cultural institutions will need more capacity. New venues will have to be built. Additional programs will have to be funded. Expecting to receive governmental support is unrealistic in the current political climate and attracting foundation dollars in the St. Louis region is becoming more daunting

as St. Louis loses more and more Fortune 100/500/1000 headquarters. Without local boosters, the ACD will be forced to compete for scarce national foundation grants.

3. External Doubt of Vision: What makes the task of attracting resources even more challenging is that even many people—locally and nationally—partially know of ESL’s cultural heritage they cannot imagine the City being a destination. In their minds, ESL is nothing but a crime infested urban wasteland—a perception shaped in no small part by white racism. Before the project can go substantially forward, the City will need to undertake a serious campaign to rebrand its image.

SWOT Analysis Summary

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cultural Heritage •Contemporary Artists •Organizational Entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Socio-economic Conditions •Institutional/Governmental Capacity •Institutional Cooperation
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1917 Commemoration •NEA Grant •New Political Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cultural Memory Disappearing •Lack of Identifiable Source of Funding •External Doubting of Vision

VIII. VISION

From the outset of the proposal writing process in 2014, CEL’s objective was to collaborate with the City of ESL and Harris-Stowe State University’s Center for Neighborhood Affairs to solicit community partners from ESL to use art, culture, and design as a tool for revitalization. CEL received its Our Town award in fall 2014

and immediately began working to identify community-based organizations, which might be interested in joining forces to achieve this goal. While many more partners were later identified, the initial community partners included: the House of Miles, the Katherine Dunham Museum and Performing Arts Center, the New Life Community Church, and the Jackie Joyner Kersee Center that came together to form the East St. Louis Art and Coalition Art and Culture Coalition (ESLACC)

Throughout the spring and summer of 2015, CEL and ESLACC met on several occasions and derived the following vision statement:

“By 2025, East St. Louis, Illinois, will be a cultural arts destination where residents and visitors not only see, hear, learn and celebrate the city’s rich, multi-layered history and culture, but that the residents participate, contribute and economically benefit from the cultural assets within the community”

Realizing that this vision would be an empty slogan without a coherent, corresponding vision of how it could be achieved, ESLACC also derived the three following principles or pillars that would be the foundation of the Vision.

- **Placemaking:** The area that is the most significant in terms of cultural heritage for ESL, particularly the African American community is the western portion of the city, which is also the most physically distressed. ESLACC knows that this is an impediment in making ESL an arts and culture destination. Consequently, “placemaking” is an important component of the Vision. It is not only necessary to make the area feel less desolate

and threatening. It is essentially that the community needs to be designed in such a way that the physical character of the place identifies it as culturally significant.

- **Creative Sector:** What makes New Orleans such a successful music destination is that it is both a site of historical significance in terms of jazz and blues music and a venue where jazz and blues is still performed. Consequently, ESLACC is committed to the goal making ESL a place the visual and performing arts are still vital and engaging. As a result, a crucial piece of the Vision is that ESL requires appropriate venues where art and music can thrive.

- **Entrepreneurship:** For too long, ESL has sought and relied on outside aid to help address its problems. It has looked to state and federal government, as well as, private donors to rescue it. That is not going to happen. Governments at all levels are challenged financially and private foundations have only so much money to give. ESLACC is cognizant of this fact and realizes that the City has to draw upon its own assets to become self-sufficient. Therefore, an indispensable part of the Vision is economic sustainability. If ESL is going to be a viable cultural destination it has to facilitate the development of a range of small businesses that will provide the services that tourists want and need such as restaurants, retail shops, services, and lodging.

IX. CORE VALUES AND ASSUMPTIONS

The Vision developed by ESLACC and CEL was also shaped by three key values or assumptions. These included:

- **ACD to be controlled by the residents:** While the Our Town grant from NEA has made it possible to engage in a robust visioning process that has been enhanced by CEL's cultural assessment and preliminary design work, the inspiration for the ACD is the generation-old dream of East St. Louisans to use their cultural heritage as the avenue for the City's revitalization. As a result, this initial strategic framework is the brainchild of the ESLACC—CEL has merely been the mouthpiece. In going forward, it is imperative that the stakeholders of ESL take ownership of the ACD and its inception. They should be the ones who start the process of creating the nonprofit organization that will be the embodiment of the district and they should be the ones who control the organization once it has been created.

- **Implementation independent of political trends:** From the outset, the administration of ESL has been very supportive of the process. The City of East St. Louis was a signatory of the proposal to NEA; they facilitated the solicitation of community partners; they have provided meeting space; and made a commitment in assisting next steps. However, it is important that the ACD not be perceived as a function of city hall. Political winds are variable. Changes in political leadership are inevitable. Consequently, if the ACD is going to be sustainable and thrive long term, its resources and organizational structure must be controlled by the ACD itself and the citizens of ESL.

- **Equitable economic development strategy:** Since the ACD is to be the product of East St. Louisans, it is crucial that the benefits of the ACD be realized by East St. Louisans. Although it will be necessary to attract outside

investment into the ACD, East St. Louisans should be the primary beneficiaries of the dividends that are accrued. In short, East St. Louisans must be the stockholders of the ACD—and not some out-of-town corporation. The Vision assumes that the ACD will be a cooperative venture and that most of the desired spinoff economic activity will be in the form of small businesses.

X. STRATEGIC GOALS: TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

The ultimate goal of the ACD is to remake ESL a thriving community that will be able to sustain itself over the long term. The overarching objective of the Vision is to make ESL an attractive, healthy place that has a viable economic base, which is shared by all. In contemporary language, the twenty -year target is for ESL to achieve “triple bottom line sustainability” where it has been transformed environmentally, economically, and socially.

A. Environmental Sustainability: At present, ESL is an unattractive, unhealthy place. Not only are many of its buildings dilapidated; they are contaminated with lead paint and asbestos. In addition, the City has hundreds of vacant lots that are both eyesores and often depositories of hazardous materials. Moreover, the City's water and sewage systems are in bad state of disrepair, which makes them inefficient and unhealthy. The desired, long -term outcome is for ESL to have attractive and energy-efficient homes, well-manicured open spaces, and state-of-art infrastructure.

B. Art & Culture as part of Economic Base: Historically, the basis of ESL's economy was industry and

being a rail hub. However, virtually all factories have the left the City and containerization has minimized ESL's role as a rail center. Currently, the Casino Queen is the City's largest employer and most of its jobs are of the low skill, service type—scarcely, a suitable foundation for the City's economic renaissance. Although there are preliminary plans to try to remake ESL as a major inland port, river transportation does not have the potential as being an economic catalyst for the City. While much more analysis needs to be done, a second major goal of the Vision is that within twenty years, ESL will become a worldwide tourist destination that would be oriented around the arts and the creative sector. ESLACC envisions not only an expansion of existing institutions, it sees a wide range of spin-off economic activities. ESL needs a more robust economic engine to support cultural tourism in the initial stages. However, if ESL collaborated more with St. Louis to provide the infrastructure of restaurants, hotels, etc. then the coalition may be able to build its audience without much investment in infrastructure to begin with. Most of the enterprises created, including the agricultural businesses could be structured as cooperatives to ensure local community benefit.

C. Social Equity: ESL has one of the highest poverty rates in the country. A major objective of ESLACC is to use culture as a tool to significantly decrease poverty in the City, as well as, being a stimulant for economic development. However, the partnership is committed to ensuring that the profits of this development remain in the community and primarily benefit the residents. The goal is that the ACD not only highlights the accomplishments of East St. Louisans but counters the disparities that exist

between East St. Louis and the rest of the region due to racism.

XI. POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION TACTICS

Goals are not achieved merely by uttering them. Meaningful outcomes are only realized through careful planning, deployment of initiatives where there is a reasonable expectation for success, and continuous assessment. The following is a list of potential implementation tactics. As noted previously, this document is not meant to be used as a completed strategic plan. Consequently, the following list is intended as being merely suggestive of tactics that should be studied further. The sequence of recommendations is also intended a rough progression of how the tactics might be implemented. Some initiatives should be undertaken simultaneously while the timing of others depends on financial considerations.

- **Creation of 501c3 Community-Based Organization:** While the order of the rest of the planning team's recommendations are somewhat arbitrary, the first initiative that should be undertaken is to formalize the organization of the ESLACC. ESLACC should begin the process of obtaining recognition from the state as being a nonprofit organization. This involves writing by-laws, forming a board of directors, naming officers, and applying for state recognition. Once this has been accomplished, the newly formed organization should begin the somewhat more onerous and time consuming task of being designated a 501c3 organization by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This is especially important because in order to be successful, the organization will have to handle

large sums of money.

- **Detailed Strategic Plan and Market Analysis:** A more detailed strategic plan and market analysis should be performed once the organization structure of ESLACC is firmly established. This plan should contain a more thorough SWOT analysis, cost/income projections, market feasibility studies, milestones, and an assessment plan.

- **ACD Sponsored Events and Performances:** Although numerous organizations and institutions in ESL host exhibitions and performances, they do so as single entities. These organizations and institutions should continue to exist as independent entities, but they should publicize and promote these events as members of the partnership to familiarize the community with the concept of the ACD.

- **Commissioning of Additional Artists in Residence:** In like manner, the ESLACC should seek additional funds to commission additional artists in residence to reinforce the branding of the identity of the ACD. As with the ownership of cultural events of the ACD, commissioning of artists in residence can establish the identity of the ACD both inside and outside ESL.

- **Designation as an Art and Culture District by the State of Illinois:** The State of Illinois, like many states, allows the creation of Community Improvement Districts (CID) for express purpose of self-taxation above locally authorized taxes. This self-taxation allows the CID to raise money for specific purposes. This taxation can take the form of property taxes or sales taxes. Illinois permits communities to designate geographical areas as "Art and Culture Districts" (ACD) or CIDs created for the

express purpose of supporting the visual and performing arts. ESLACC should apply for ACD status as soon as feasible or encourage community partners who are physically outside the boundaries of the ACD to have branch sites inside the district in order to take advantage of its benefits.

- **Corridor/Walkway:** A potential first urban design initiative for the ACD could be the proposed walkway/corridor between the Katherine Dunham Museum and the House of Miles (see rendering). This walkway could be constructed by linking vacant properties that exist between the two institutions. This proposal would have several benefits. It would:

1. Visually brand the District.
2. Beautify a physically distressed area of the city.
3. Encourage visitors to see both institutions.
4. Create an opportunity to introduce ecological sustainability features into the area such as rain gardens, lead mitigation vegetation, shade trees etc.

- **Urban Agriculture:** Cities across the country have initiated urban agricultural programs as a way of beautifying large tracts of vacant land, of making healthy food more affordable of low -income residents and stimulating entrepreneurship. As a result, the planning team recommends further analysis of the following possible projects.

1. **Part of quilt mosaic:** Various crops could be used to reinforce one aspect of the cultural heritage of East St. Louis—that it was an important site of the Underground Railroad. Different crops and landscaping strategies could be used to play off how different patterns were used to

convey information to those traveling the railroad. In effect, urban agriculture could be incorporated into the design of the corridor/walkway.

2. Farming: East St. Louis has thousands of vacant parcels. Urban farms could be created on this vacant land, making it an economic asset. East St. Louis residents could individually or jointly operate these new farms.

3. Products: The crops produced on these new farms could be both consumed as produce, but transformed into various agricultural products such as cereal, pasta, or baked goods.

4. Retail: East St. Louis is essentially a food desert. Most St. Louisans are forced to travel outside of the city to buy their food. Transforming the vacant land inside the district as well as throughout the City as agricultural space could generate new retail opportunities. This new economic activity could spawn small grocery stores and farmers markets.

5. Youth: Urban agriculture could also be an excellent way of teaching East St. Louis the principles of sustainability, good nutrition, and entrepreneurship.

6. Hydroponics: One challenge that many cities have found with urban agriculture is the need to remediate the soil from the effects of environmental pollution. If East St. Louis discovers that large scale urban farming is not possible to ground pollution, another possibility is the use of hydroponics where crops are grown in enclosed buildings that co-mingle the growing of crops in an aquatic environment that is nourished by fish waste generated by fish living in the aquatic environments. Many vacant buildings in the City may be suitable for experiments in

hydroponics.

- **Enhanced Venues:** If the District is to truly become a tourist destination, it will need to have both larger venues and more venues. Currently, the only real performance in the District is a small outdoor auditorium adjacent to the Katherine Dunham Museum. Although the Dunham Performing Arts Training (PATC) Center has a small dance studio, it can only be used for instruction. PATC, the Sunshine Cultural Arts Center, and the House of Miles all need performance venues. While one venue could accommodate all three institutions, three separate venues would be preferable because of the different needs that each medium has.

- **Improved Municipal Infrastructure:** The District needs to independent of city government. However, the support of the City is essential if the ACD is going to be successful. The role that the City needs to play is providing adequate infrastructure for both the District's campus and the surrounding area. If the ACD is going to attract hotels, coffee shops, night clubs, restaurants, and retailers, the City has to be able to improve City streets, sidewalks, and sewage/water systems, which are all in deplorable condition at present. Moreover, the City needs to strengthen and enlarge its police department to ensure that the District is perceived as a safe environment. To tackle these needs in the most efficient fashion, the City should consider writing a new comprehensive plan that would coordinate urban design projects, needed zoning modifications, and design standards.

- **Regional MLK Artist District:** Even though the ACD is an ESL project, it has regional ramifications. Not only has the cultural heritage of African Americans in

East St. Louis been underappreciated and underutilized, but of the entire black community throughout the St. Louis region. The City of St. Louis has produced such notable African American artists, writers, and performers such as Ike and Tina Turner, Dick Gregory, Maya Angelou, Josephine Baker, and Grace Melzia Bumbry. Although the two boulevards are not directly connected to one, if one can imagine the Martin Luther King bridge as being a virtual connector, Dr. Martin Luther King Drive in the City of St. Louis and Dr. Martin Luther King Drive in the City of East St. Louis is the main thoroughfare that runs through the heart of black St. Louis from Wellston on the West to Belleville on East, a span of over ten miles. Once it has taxing power, the District should consider as one of its initial projects of making Dr. Martin Luther King Drive in East St. Louis an artist enclave inside the boundaries of the ACD. If the initiative gains traction, the District should work with the City of St. Louis and other interested groups to transform the length of MLK Drive using African American art and culture.

- **Economic Incentives to Attract Tourism-related Businesses:** The long-range goal of the district is to transform East St. Louis into a cultural destination. While it is important to make sure that the residents of East St. Louis are the primary beneficiaries of the district, East St. Louis does not have the financial resources necessary to construct the hotels, restaurants, and shops that are essential in attracting visitors to East St. Louis. The City should work with the state to incentivize development.

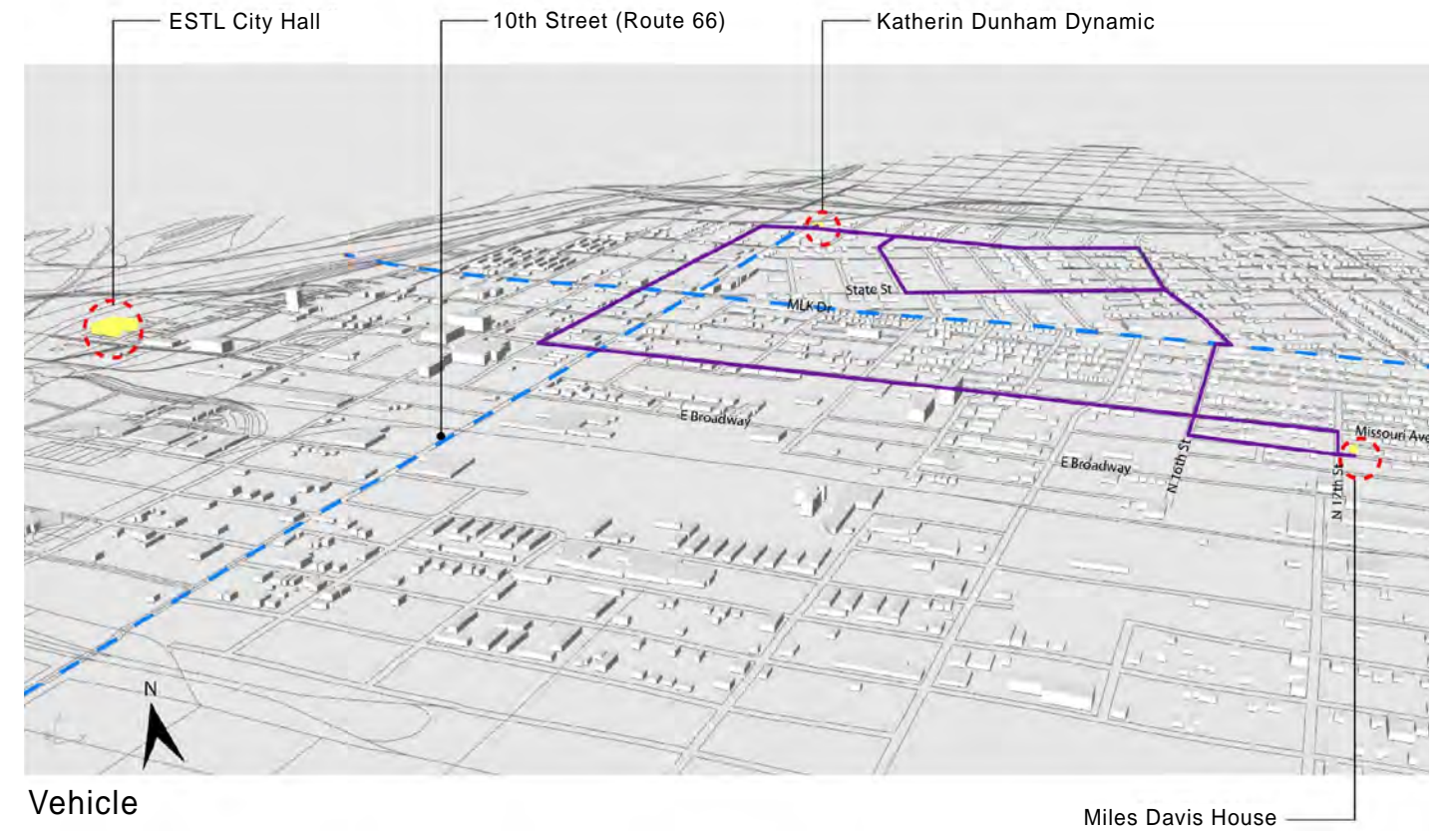
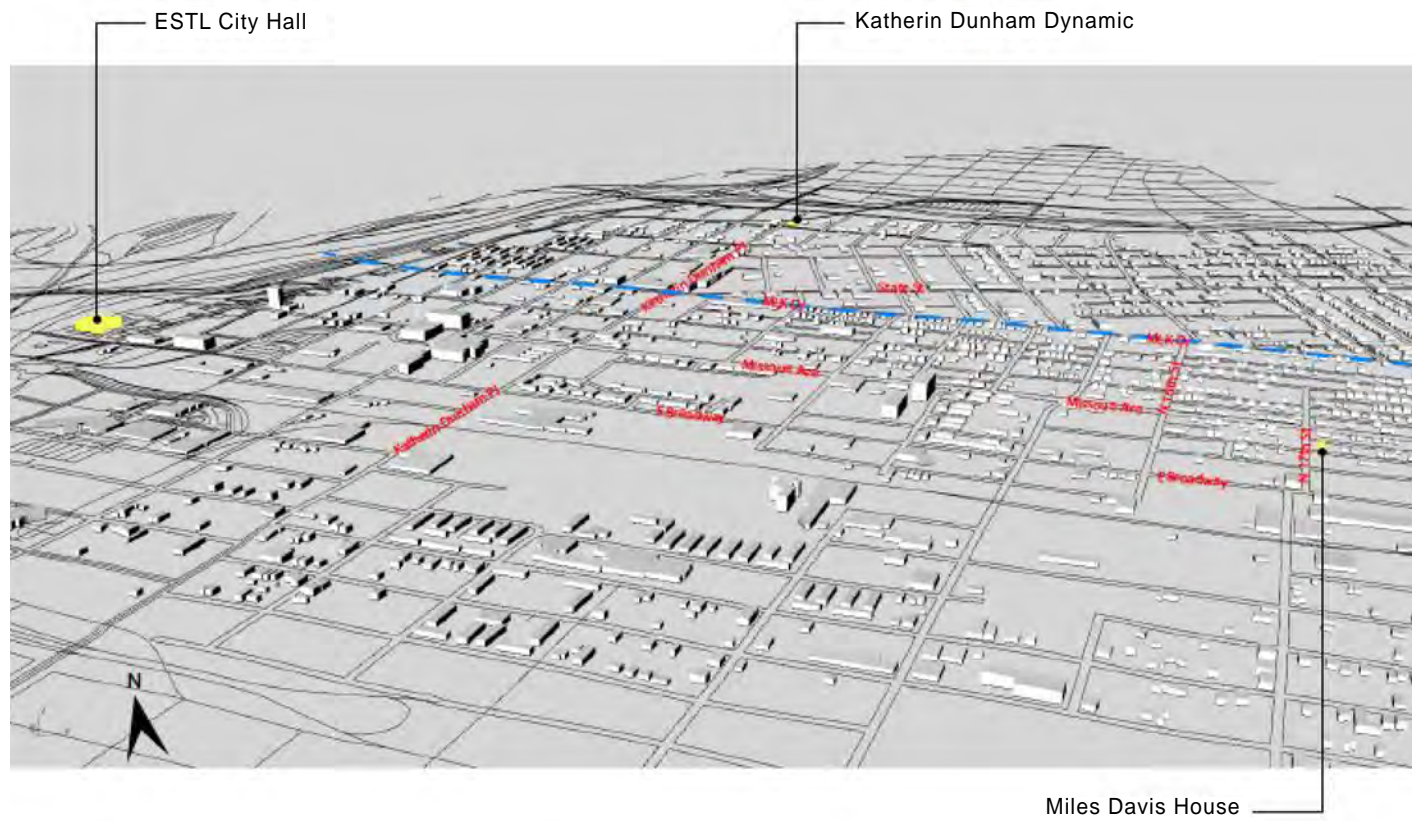
- **Entrepreneur Technical Assistance and Forgivable Loans:** A key objective of the District is to use the District as a tool to stimulate local African American

small businesses. However, most East St. Louisans don't have the business background or financial resources to successfully run a business. The ACD should address this deficiency by creating an incubator for fledgling entrepreneurs. The incubator would provide start-up space, technical assistance in preparing business plans, and forgivable loans.

XII. CONCLUSION

East St. Louis is at a crossroads. While it faces daunting challenges, it now has a rare opportunity to recreate itself. Although it has one of the highest rates of poverty in the country, East St. Louis possesses incredible artistic and cultural assets. Due to the 1917 Commission and the Our Town grant, the community has been reawakened to the possibilities that these assets represent and how they can be the key to revitalization. East St. Louis has the potential to be the "New Orleans of the Midwest." It must seize the moment.

Proposed Art & Cultural District Maps / Drawings

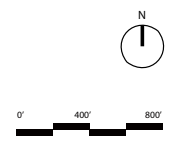




NEA / OUR TOWN COMMUNITY PARTNERS

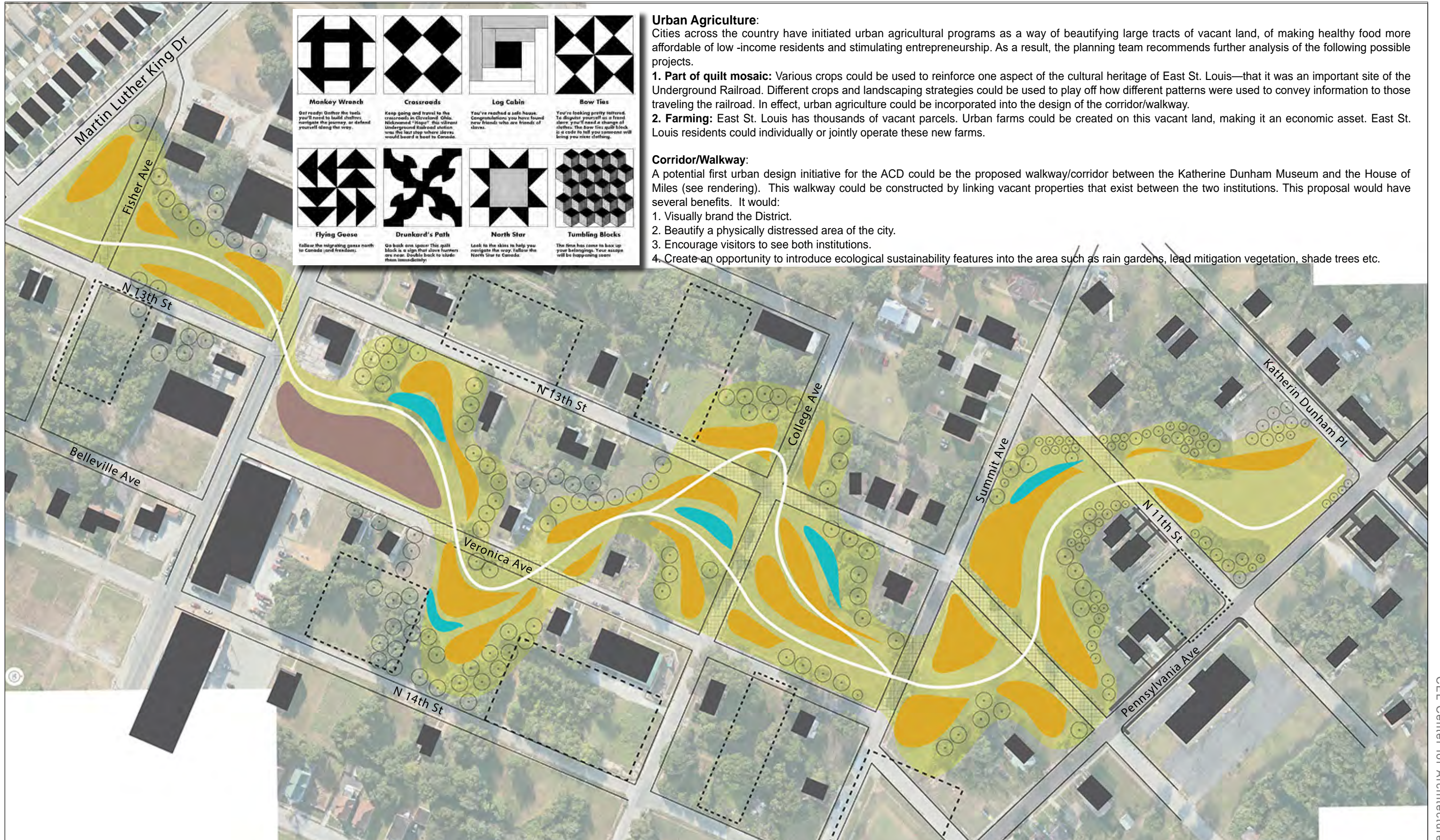
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- N The Garden of Harmony

- Green Corridor
- Residential
- High Potential Development Area
- Creative & Entrepreneurial Hubs / Retail
- Art & New Media Galleries / Visitor Center / Community Center
- MLK Drive, Route 66 & Axis of Gateway Arch



Proposed ESTL Art & Cultural Corridor - Phase 1





Monkey Wrench Get ready! Gather the tools you'll need to build shelters, navigate the journey, or defend yourself along the way.	Crossroads Keep going and travel to the crossroads in Cleveland, Ohio. Nicknamed "Stage", this vibrant Underground Railroad station was the last stop where slaves would board a boat to Canada.	Log Cabin You've reached a safe house. Congratulations you have found new friends who are friends of slaves.	Bow Ties You're looking pretty tattered. To disguise yourself as a freed slave, you'll need a change of clothes. The Bow Ties quilt block is a code to tell you someone will bring you new clothing.
Flying Geese Follow the migrating geese north to Canada (and freedom).	Drunkard's Path Go back one space! This quilt block is a sign that slave burners are near. Double back to hide from immediately.	North Star Look to the skies to help you navigate the way. Follow the North Star to Canada.	Tumbling Blocks The time has come to box up your belongings. Your escape will be happening soon.

Urban Agriculture:

Cities across the country have initiated urban agricultural programs as a way of beautifying large tracts of vacant land, of making healthy food more affordable of low -income residents and stimulating entrepreneurship. As a result, the planning team recommends further analysis of the following possible projects.

- 1. Part of quilt mosaic:** Various crops could be used to reinforce one aspect of the cultural heritage of East St. Louis—that it was an important site of the Underground Railroad. Different crops and landscaping strategies could be used to play off how different patterns were used to convey information to those traveling the railroad. In effect, urban agriculture could be incorporated into the design of the corridor/walkway.
- 2. Farming:** East St. Louis has thousands of vacant parcels. Urban farms could be created on this vacant land, making it an economic asset. East St. Louis residents could individually or jointly operate these new farms.

Corridor/Walkway:

A potential first urban design initiative for the ACD could be the proposed walkway/corridor between the Katherine Dunham Museum and the House of Miles (see rendering). This walkway could be constructed by linking vacant properties that exist between the two institutions. This proposal would have several benefits. It would:

1. Visually brand the District.
2. Beautify a physically distressed area of the city.
3. Encourage visitors to see both institutions.
4. Create an opportunity to introduce ecological sustainability features into the area such as rain gardens, lead mitigation vegetation, shade trees etc.

Schematic Section: Current Vacant Land Parcels as Proposed Future Green Corridor / Walkway/ Urban Agriculture

	Flora		Trail for Pedestrian
	Cash Crop		Potential Area
	Rain Garden		





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Green Corridor via Route 66 | Option 1 Community Stories



Green Corridor via Route 66 | Option 1 Community Stories



Green Corridor via Route 66 | Option 1 Community Stories



Green Corridor via Route 66 | Option 1 Community Stories



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Green Corridor via Route 66 | Option 2 Landscape Quilt



Green Corridor via Route 66 | Option 2 Landscape Quilt



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Appendix

Student Survey Questionnaire

Project Survey

Display Cabinet



Protocol for East St. Louis “Our Town” Oral Histories

Read before starting interview

Hello. My name is _____ I am a student in the _____ program at Harris-Stowe State University. I am doing research for a project that is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. The project is part of a program called “Our Town.” The purpose of the Our Town program is to use art and culture as a catalyst for economic rejuvenation.

Last year, the Creative Exchange Lab (CEL) an urban design and architecture nonprofit organization was awarded an Our Town grant to generate a community plan for East St. Louis. Harris-Stowe State University and the City of East St. Louis are CEL’s university and municipal partners. The House of Miles, the Katherine Dunham Museum, New Life Community Church, and the Jackie Joyner Kersee Center are community partners.

The ultimate goal of the East St. Louis Our Town project is to create a cultural arts district in the city. But a preliminary step is to do a cultural assessment for the city. We would like to interview you to get your impressions of East St. Louis’s past and the history of your neighborhood.

We are interviewing a number of people for our study and intend to post the recordings of the interviews on a website that we have created for the project. Do you mind if we record the interview? Do you mind if we take a photograph of you that will accompany the interview on the website?

If yes, take the photograph and then start recording. If no, ask the interviewee, if they mind you taking notes. Tell them that the notes will be kept confidential and will only be used for the cultural assessment.

QUESTIONS

1. For the record, can you state your name?
2. What is your relationship to East St. Louis? (Resident, work there, etc.)
3. (If resident) Have you always lived in East St. Louis? Which neighborhood (s)? Where did you go to school?
4. (Non-resident who used to live in ESL) Which neighborhood did you used to live in? When did you leave? Why? What keeps you involved?
5. (Non-resident) Why are you involved in East St. Louis? Do you think you will always have a relationship to the city?
6. What are the three most important landmarks in East St. Louis to you? What makes them significant?
7. What are your three most favorite places to visit in East St. Louis? (Can be a park, church, bar/night club, restaurant, etc.) Please list. What makes them your favorite places?
8. Do you associate any particular type of music with East St. Louis? (jazz, blues, rap, gospel etc.) Have you ever listened to live music in East St. Louis? Where? What type?
9. Do you think there is anything, which makes East St. Louis religious customs distinctive?
10. Do you have a favorite building in East St. Louis? What about the building makes it your favorite?

11. When you think of food in East St. Louis, what comes to mind?
12. Do you have a favorite East St. Louis restaurant past or present?
If so, what is/was your favorite dish there?
13. What recreational or entertainment events do you like to go to in East St. Louis? Did there used to be events that you enjoyed going to, but are no longer around?
14. What clubs or organizations do you belong to? Why these? Are there clubs or organizations that you used to belong to that are no longer around or ceased being functional? Which ones? Do you miss them? Why?
15. In your mind, is there one thing that differentiates living in East St. Louis from living anywhere else?
16. (For long time residents/stakeholders) How do you think, the culture of East St. Louis has changed over time? Has this change been good or bad? (For youth) What is your favorite thing to do in East St. Louis? Do you enjoy living in East St. Louis? Why or why not? Do you think you will spend most of your life here?
17. Are there East St. Louisans that we should learn more about?
18. Are there legacy East St. Louis businesses or institutions that we should learn more about?
19. Could you share with me your vision for East St. Louis in the future?
20. What else do you think I should ask you about or is there anything else that you would like to share about East St. Louis?
21. Who else should we interview?
22. If we were to publish an article or book on the **Our Town** project, may we quote you from this interview? (If yes, would you mind

signing below?) (If no, simply say: I understand. That is not a problem. If we use your comments, we will only use them in the aggregate and will not quote you directly.)

Thank you for your time. We greatly appreciate your participation in the project.

Permission to quote

I, _____, hereby authorize the Creative Exchange Lab (Jasmin Aber et. al.) to quote me for the purposes of publication. I reserve the right to review and edit my comments before the article or book is submitted to a publisher.

Date _____



'OUR TOWN' PROJECT SURVEY

In 2015 CEL (Creative Exchange Lab). in partnership with the City of ESTL and HSSU (Harris-Stowe State University) was awarded an NEA (National Endowment for The Arts) grant titled 'Our Town'; to create with the community a unique cultural-led economic development strategy with the goal of greater community pride, economic development, and regional visitor attractions.

VISION STATEMENT

"By 2025, East St. Louis, Illinois, will be a cultural arts and performance destination where residents and visitors not only see, hear, learn and celebrate the city's rich, multi-layered history and culture, but that the residents participate, contribute and economically benefit from the cultural assets within the community."

1. If you are a current resident of East Saint Louis what has kept you here?
2. If you are not a current resident of East Saint Louis what would bring you back?
3. What is your greatest memory of East Saint Louis?
4. What is your greatest memory of a place in East Saint Louis?
5. What do you think needs to be done to make others want to visit East Saint Louis?
6. Do you see any opportunities for East Saint Louis in the next 10 years?
7. Do you feel safe living or visiting East Saint Louis?
Yes _____ No, Why? _____



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