

Black and White Green Spaces: Segregation, the Specter of Interracial Violence, and the  
Chicago Park District, 1957-1970

Daniel Green

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Preceptor: Daniel Sonnenstuhl

Second Reader: Rashauna Johnson

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### Abstract

This thesis evaluates the segregationist actions and tendencies of the Chicago Park District in the 1960s, particularly as a reaction to interracial violence that occurred in the late 1950s. It builds on the work done by historians such as Victoria Wolcott and Arnold Hirsch, as well as scholars from other fields, to examine the previously undiscussed role of the Park District in the larger segregationist project. Combining qualitative archival research with quantitative analysis, the paper examines the publicly presented positions of the District and the messages sent by its publications and analyzes how these actions manifested on a citywide level. It finds that District made choices that assumed interracial conflict was an inevitability, which resulted in reinvigorated *de facto* segregation and caused a decrease in park space on the edges of Chicago's Black neighborhoods. It concludes that Black Chicagoans, as a result, had less access to important public spaces, particularly the parks and beaches along the city's lakefront.

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**Section 1: Introduction**

“It is at the boundaries of the Negro community that the pressure of Negroes to expand runs up against the stone wall of white opposition,” Joseph D. Lohman wrote in 1947 in *The Police and Minority Groups: A Manual Prepared for Use in the Chicago Park District Police Training School*. He declared that “these are the regions of greatest aggravation and tension.”<sup>1</sup> Lohman, then a graduate student in sociology at the University of Chicago, had produced one of the first sociological texts to combine sociology’s evolving view of race and ethnicity with the day-to-day responsibilities of law enforcement, one that would help launch his career as one of the nation’s foremost criminologists.<sup>2</sup> The fact that it was produced for the police force of the Chicago Park District, rather than a larger citywide police force, may seem surprising on its face but is consistent with the history of Chicago and its parks. The city’s infamous 1919 race riot, as well as many conflicts that followed it before and after the document’s creation, began for exactly in the way described above: a rapidly growing Black population caused the boundaries of the Black neighborhood to expand, leading to White aggression and violence when Black residents used recreational space in boundary zones.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph D. Lohman, *The Police and Minority Groups: A Manual Prepared for Use in the Chicago Park District Police Training School* (Chicago: Chicago Park District, 1947).

<sup>2</sup> Norman S. Hayner, Review of *The Police and Minority Groups: A Manual Prepared for Use in the Chicago Park District Police Training School* by Joseph D. Lohman, *American Journal of Sociology* 54, no. 1 (July 1, 1948): 89–90, <https://doi.org/10.1086/220276>; Herbert Blumer, “Observations on the Career of Joseph D. Lohman,” *Issues in Criminology* 3, no. 2 (1968): 125.

<sup>3</sup> I expand on this below; for discussion of the 1919 riot see: Chicago Commission on Race Relations., *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923). I choose to capitalize both White and Black in this paper in the context of race. For discussion of this question, see: Appiah, Kwame Anthony. “The Case for Capitalizing the B in Black.” *The Atlantic*, June 18, 2020. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/06/time-to-capitalize-blackand-white/613159/>.

This paper examines the specter of interracial conflict, particularly between Black and White residents, in Chicago's parks as both a determinant of Chicago Park District actions and justification for the District's segregationist policies in the years 1960 through 1970. In examining parks as a potential site for conflict, I use traditional archival research coupled with quantitative data analysis to track the extent to which the District shied away from expanding park space in "boundary" areas of the city. These boundary parks are central, as they likely would have been utilized or at least contested by both Black and White residents.

Since its founding in 1837, rooted in its long-held pride in the natural beauty present within city limits, Chicago's motto has been "*Urbs in Horto*," Latin for "City in a Garden."<sup>4</sup> In 1934, as a result of financial stress caused by the Great Depression, Chicago's twenty-two independent parks agencies became the Chicago Park District, a semi-independent agency with a Board of Commissioners appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. Since then, the Park District has had jurisdiction over nearly all the park space in Chicago, taking control of several hundred small "playlots" from the city in 1959. Today, in addition to the traditional parks it manages, the District runs pools and beaches across the city, owns the 61,500-seat Soldier Field, and houses eleven museums across the city.<sup>5</sup>

In the early- to mid-20th century, as the Chicago Park District gained dramatically more responsibility and acreage, the Great Migration of Black Southerners to the North and West drastically changed the landscape of American cities, perhaps none more so than Chicago. By 1980, the Chicago metropolitan area had 532,861 Southern-born Black residents, a whopping 7.4% of its population, and 13% of all Southern-born Black Americans living outside the South.

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<sup>4</sup> Julie Sniderman Bachrach, "Park Districts," in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1032.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Sniderman Bachrach, "Park Districts."

This figure was second highest outside the South, approximately equal to the Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Cleveland metro areas (numbers five through seven) combined.<sup>6</sup> As the population of Black Chicagoans boomed, conflict between Black and White Chicagoans became a major and recurring issue. Conflict manifested particularly in the neighborhoods where the rapidly growing Black population pushed up against established White neighborhoods, as Lohman described in 1947.

Prior to and during the first decades of the Great Migration, the Black population lived almost exclusively in the Black Belt, the narrow sliver of the South Side along State Street where Black residents lived in densely-packed and largely squalid apartment buildings.<sup>7</sup> As the Black population grew, a “second ghetto,” in the words of Arnold Hirsch, formed on the West Side, creating a smaller, diagonal mirror image of the South Side ghetto.<sup>8</sup> By 1980, the year of the first Census following the end of the Great Migration, the Black population of Chicago was at its peak. 29 of Chicago’s 77 community areas—a set of static geographical boundaries that each encompasses between one and eight neighborhoods—were majority Black, with sizable Black populations in a handful more.<sup>9</sup> As early as the 1960s, as sociologist Janet Abu-Lughod described it, “the border wars on the South Side had essentially been ‘won’” by the new Black

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<sup>6</sup> James N. Gregory, “The Second Great Migration: A Historical Overview,” in *African American Urban History since World War II*, ed. Kenneth L. Kusmer and Joe W. Trotter, Historical Studies of Urban America (University of Chicago Press, 2009), 22, <https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226465128-004>.

<sup>7</sup> Wallace Best, “Black Belt,” in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/140.html>; Christopher Manning, “African Americans,” in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/27.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*, Historical Studies of Urban America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226342467.001.0001>.

<sup>9</sup> Alex Linares and Matthew D. Wilson, “Fact Sheet: Black Population Loss in Chicago,” Great Cities Institute (Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago, July 2019), <https://greatcities.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Black-Population-Loss-in-Chicago.pdf>.

population, and the remaining White West Siders would leave not long after the West Side riots of the late 1960s.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout the period examined in this piece and in the decades before and after, the ongoing process of American racialization was undergoing exceedingly relevant changes. As Black Southerners moved in massive numbers to Northern and Western cities, particularly from rural areas, and as middle-class Whites moved from urban centers to the suburbs, the Black identity was construed as synonymous with “urban.” By the 1960s, “urban problems” and the “urban crisis” had become euphemistic for the problems of impoverished Black Americans, although the term “urban” did seem to include “other minority-group Americans,” at least in some cases.<sup>11</sup> The conflicts described in this paper may not have occurred or been as severe had this process of urban and identity transformation not occurred. Conflicts over urban space were likely exacerbated by the conflation of identities ongoing at the time and it is even possible that urban White Chicagoans saw the transformation of the “urban” identity as a threat or affront, an aggravating factor in these conflicts.

As sociologist Kevin Loughran wrote, “parks developing in Western cities during rapid nineteenth-century urbanization” were wrapped in the “sacred guise of ‘nature,’” a respite from the crowded and often unhealthful conditions of the industrialized urban center.<sup>12</sup> This framework continued into the twentieth century, with significant demand for parks in places such as Chicago, as industrialization and migration dramatically changed the layout of the city.

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<sup>10</sup> Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 72, 112.

<sup>11</sup> Irving Kristol, “Common Sense about the ‘Urban Crisis.’” *Fortune* 76, no. 5 (October 1967): 234; Allen D. Manvel, “Housing Conditions in Urban Poverty Areas,” Research Report (Washington, DC: The National Commission on Urban Problems, January 1968), <https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo118511>.

<sup>12</sup> Kevin Loughran, “Imbricated Spaces: The High Line, Urban Parks, and the Cultural Meaning of City and Nature,” *Sociological Theory* 34, no. 4 (2016): 314.



Additionally, the characteristics of the segregated neighborhoods where Black migrants lived - dense, narrow strips of the city - exacerbated interracial conflict and increased the amount of boundary space, as discussed below.

## **Section 2: Historiography and Literature Review**

Interracial conflict in urban public parks that functioned as a racial no-man's land, is a broadly documented phenomenon in twentieth-century American history. By expanding this lens to similar spaces for public recreation including beaches, pools, and amusement parks (often operated by parks departments, including in Chicago), we can see just how crucial the sphere of public recreation spaces has been to the ongoing process of racialized and segregationist urban planning. By combining scholarship in urban planning, sociology, and public policy, the real-world effects of the specter of interracial violence on the distribution of park space in Chicago can come into view.

In Chicago, specifically, the history of interracial conflicts in public recreation spaces has been well-documented by historians and sociologists. Historian Victoria Wolcott's work on Black resistance to segregated facilities discussed the history of conflict in these spaces, including in Chicago, and argued that the segregation of parks was motivated and explained by a rhetoric of safety and preventing conflict.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Wolcott argued, the "erasure" from memory of historical white violence in the parks "has led many to blame the decline of urban recreation on 'deviant' behavior of African Americans in newly desegregated amusements."<sup>14</sup> Erin Chapman put Wolcott and Andrew W. Kahrl into conversation with one another, showing

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<sup>13</sup> Victoria W. Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters: The Struggle over Segregated Recreation in America*, Politics and Culture in Modern America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 4-5.

<sup>14</sup> Wolcott, 4.

that both in the Southern municipalities Kahrl discusses and in the Northern and Midwestern cities which are Wolcott's focus, this segregation resulted in demonstrable harm to Black residents in general and children in particular.<sup>15</sup>

The focus among sociologists and policy makers on interracial conflicts in parks began in earnest after the 1919 race riot, ignited by the drowning death of a Black teenager who had crossed the informal line of segregation at the 29th Street Beach. These spaces have been locations of conflict in many incidents since.<sup>16</sup> While twentieth-century historians focused largely on housing (particularly public housing) as the main dimension of racial conflict in the changing Northern city, more recent historians like Wolcott and Andrew Diamond have studied conflict in the parks and beaches with new vigor.<sup>17</sup> Diamond's work on the topic of street conflicts between youths of different races discussed the way that parks were one of the "principal arenas of racial conflict" alongside beaches and schools.<sup>18</sup> Outside Chicago, this topic has been the focus of research in recent years on other cities such as Washington, DC, New Orleans, and Lancaster, PA; these works agree that public recreation spaces were significant locations for interracial conflict as well as the assertion of civil rights by Black Americans.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Erin D. Chapman, "The Racial Economies of Fun in the Bottom," Review of *The Land Was Ours: African American Beaches from Jim Crow to the Sunbelt South* by Andrew W. Kahrl and *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters: The Struggle over Segregated Recreation in America* by Victoria W. Wolcott, *Reviews in American History* 41, No. 4 (December 2013): 712, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43661612>.

<sup>16</sup> Chicago Commission on Race Relations., *The Negro in Chicago*; Steven Essig, "Race Riots," in *Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1032.html>; Arnold R. Hirsch, "Massive Resistance in the Urban North: Trumbull Park, Chicago, 1953-1966," *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 2 (1995): 533, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2082185>; Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters*, 174, 212.

<sup>17</sup> Hirsch, "Massive Resistance in the Urban North"; Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*; Roger Biles, "Race and Housing in Chicago," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (1998-) 94, no. 1 (2001): 31–38.

<sup>18</sup> Andrew J. Diamond, *Mean Streets: Chicago Youths and the Everyday Struggle for Empowerment in the Multiracial City, 1908-1969* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 223.

<sup>19</sup> Kevin G. McQueeney, "More than Recreation: Black Parks and Playgrounds in Jim Crow New Orleans," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 60, no. 4 (2019): 437–78; M. Alison Kibler and Shanni Davidowitz, "'Our Color Won't Wash Off': The Desegregation of Swimming in Lancaster, Pennsylvania," *Journal of Civil and Human Rights* 2, no. 1 (2016): 3–32, <https://doi.org/10.5406/jcivihumarigh.2.1.3>; Martha H. Verbrugge, "Exercising Civil Rights: Public Recreation and

With a history of extremely rapid demographic changes due to twentieth-century Black and Latino migration and White flight, and now as one of the most segregated cities in the United States, race was always a consideration in public and private decisions that influenced how the city was shaped. Arnold Hirsch's study of the formation of the West Side "ghetto" is the most recognized work on this topic, and countless other authors have studied the confluence of forces that created Chicago's deeply segregated layout, including the knowledge creation and market power employed by the University of Chicago.<sup>20</sup> One government agency with a particularly well-documented history of participation in the segregationist project is the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). As Hirsch has noted, the CHA used the placement of their projects, as well as the federal "Neighborhood Composition Rule," to maintain and reinforce existing racial dividing lines.<sup>21</sup>

Economists David M. Cutler, Edward L. Glaeser, and Jacob L. Vigdor showed in a 1997 paper that "ghettoization" in the years 1940-1970 was driven primarily by the "collective actions taken by whites to exclude blacks from their neighborhoods."<sup>22</sup> Exacerbated by the White flight documented by historians Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas Sugrue, among many others, it becomes clear that the segregation and divestment that became extremely prevalent in America's cities

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Racial Segregation in Washington, DC, 1900–49," in *DC Sports: The Nation's Capital at Play*, ed. Chris Elzey and David Kenneth Wiggins (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 2015), 108–16. <https://doi.org/10.5406/jcivihumarigh.2.1.3>.

<sup>20</sup> Walter Nugent, "Demography," in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/962.html>; Hirsch, "Massive Resistance in the Urban North"; Hirsch; Davarian L. Baldwin, "The '800-Pound Gargoyle': The Long History of Higher Education and Urban Development on Chicago's South Side," *American Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (2015): 81–103, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2015.0001>; Biles, "Race and Housing in Chicago"; Daniel Kay Hertz, *Battle of Lincoln Park: Urban Renewal and Gentrification in Chicago*, First edition (Cleveland: Belt Publishing, 2018); Amanda I. Seligman, *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side*, Historical Studies of Urban America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*; Hirsch, "Massive Resistance in the Urban North"; Harvey M. Choldin, "Chicago Housing Authority," in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/253.html>.

<sup>22</sup> David M. Cutler, Edward L. Glaeser, and Jacob L. Vigdor, "The Rise and Decline of the American Ghetto," *Journal of Political Economy* 107, no. 3 (1999): 455, <https://doi.org/10.1086/250069>.

can be largely attributed to the collective actions and individual actions of White Americans and government institutions.<sup>23</sup> This is a confirmation of the conclusions reached by Hirsch and others in earlier years, backed up by the quantitative methods of economic analysis.

In the field of urban planning, the broad topic of parks and race has been well studied, but experts remain divided on the question of how parks affect interracial contact. William Solecki and Joan Welch wrote in 1995 that large parks in Boston serve as “green walls,” separating neighborhoods of different races, in the same way that other large single-use spaces such as railyards and highways do.<sup>24</sup> Three years later, Paul Gobster, an official with the United States Forest Service, responded to Solecki and Welch’s paper in the same journal. He argued that some boundary parks, such as Chicago’s Warren Park, serve as “green magnets” that facilitate, rather than prohibit, interracial and inter-neighborhood interactions.<sup>25</sup> Gobster’s research, when put into conversation with historians like Diamond and Wolcott, creates the framework to better examine whether boundary parks served as spaces that facilitated interracial conflict in the 1960s.

Theoretical approaches to segregation in other services, particularly education and housing, help inform discussions of segregation in parks. In the field of education, Andrew Highsmith and Ansley Erickson analyzed “segregation as joining,” a quasi-progressive way of thinking that used “community building” as justification for segregated schools in Flint,

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<sup>23</sup> Kevin Michael Kruse, *White Flight : Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, STU-Student edition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7rhfq>.

<sup>24</sup> William D. Solecki and Joan M. Welch, “Urban Parks: Green Spaces or Green Walls?,” *Landscape and Urban Planning* 32, no. 2 (June 1, 1995): 93–106, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0169-2046\(94\)00193-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0169-2046(94)00193-7).

<sup>25</sup> Paul H. Gobster, “Urban Parks as Green Walls or Green Magnets? Interracial Relations in Neighborhood Boundary Parks,” *Landscape and Urban Planning* 41, no. 1 (May 15, 1998): 43–55, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0169-2046\(98\)00045-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0169-2046(98)00045-0).

Michigan.<sup>26</sup> Chicago sociologist Eve L. Ewing, in turn, discussed school closings in Bronzeville, resulting in overcrowded and more segregated schools, as well the importance of community access to the physical space provided by the schools, a concept crucial in discussion of parks as well.<sup>27</sup> The conceptualization of “segregation as joining” adds an important framework when analyzing policymakers’ language. We can now see calls for “community parks” in certain circumstances as part of the segregationist project, and Ewing’s study of schools is translatable to the park closures and the effects they had on residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Finally, political scientists and scholars of public affairs spent significant time in the late 1970s and the 1980s discussing the political and racialized motivations (or lack thereof) of the distribution of urban services, particularly parks. Kenneth Mladenka, in a series of reports and papers on the distribution of these services in Houston and Chicago, found that parks were distributed equally on a socioeconomic, racial, and political basis.<sup>28</sup> In response to Mladenka, David Koehler and Margaret Wrightson argued that, while racial and socioeconomic equity were not explanatory factors in the distribution of Chicago parks, political considerations seemed to be a sizable factor in this process.<sup>29</sup> Finally, two years later, Mladenka reexamined the Chicago

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<sup>26</sup> Andrew R. Highsmith and Ansley T. Erickson, “Segregation as Splitting, Segregation as Joining: Schools, Housing, and the Many Modes of Jim Crow,” *American Journal of Education* 121, no. 4 (2015): 563–95, <https://doi.org/10.1086/681942>. This concept of “segregation as joining” envisions policymakers’ and local leaders’ motivations behind school segregation as community building and saw “‘racial and social homogeneity’ as a necessary condition for community joining” (Highsmith and Erickson, 569).

<sup>27</sup> Eve L. Ewing, *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago’s South Side* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226526331.001.0001>.

<sup>28</sup> Kenneth R. Mladenka and Kim Quaile Hill, “The Distribution of Benefits in an Urban Environment: Parks and Libraries in Houston,” *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (September 1, 1977): 73–94, <https://doi.org/10.1177/107808747701300104>; Kenneth R. Mladenka, “The Political Machine, the Urban Bureaucracy, and the Distribution of Public Services,” *The Chicago Politics Papers* (Evanston, Ill.: Center for Urban Affairs - Northwestern University, and the Institute for Government and Public Affairs - University of Illinois, 1979); Kenneth R. Mladenka, “The Urban Bureaucracy and the Chicago Political Machine: Who Gets What and the Limits to Political Control,” *American Political Science Review* 74, no. 4 (December 1980): 991–98, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1954318>.

<sup>29</sup> David H. Koehler and Margaret T. Wrightson, “Inequality in the Delivery of Urban Services: A Reconsideration of the Chicago Parks,” *The Journal of Politics* 49, no. 1 (1987): 80–99, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2131135>.

parks, finding that in 1962 White wards received significantly more parks resources than Black wards, a disparity that dissolved by 1983.<sup>30</sup> He explains this as being the result of several factors, including increased Black political participation, public pressure after the 1960s race riots, and White flight.<sup>31</sup> This study, despite contradicting Mladenka's own earlier work on the question of whether 1960s-era public resources were distributed fairly by showing that they were, does not contradict the conclusion that park space in particular (the actual acreage of parks in each ward) was distributed equally.

This analysis is crucial. If park space was distributed according to race (as Mladenka, Koehler, and Wrightson showed *not* to be the case, in favor of or against any particular racial group), my research would be confounded by discriminatory practices. Now, knowing that space was distributed equally across the city, we can look at the specific placement of individual parks as a phenomenon unexplained by broad-based anti-Black bias or discrimination against other groups.

### **Section 3: Data and Methods**

By combining official Chicago Park District publications between 1960 and 1970 with census data, it becomes clear that Chicago Park District officials were demonstrably considering the history and continued possibility of interracial violence in their parks when making policy determinations. This analysis is backed up by reports on park-based interracial violence in the preceding years, and the lessons that policymakers took from them. Finally, the records of

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<sup>30</sup> Kenneth R. Mladenka, "The Distribution of an Urban Public Service: The Changing Role of Race and Politics," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (June 1, 1989): 556–83, <https://doi.org/10.1177/004208168902400405>. This, in fact, suggests that in the 1960s and onwards, Black areas of the city received more new park space, a finding that Section 7 of this paper confirms.

<sup>31</sup> Mladenka (1989), 579–81.

external entities show how District policies manifested on a city level and how stakeholders interpreted those policies. This combined qualitative and quantitative approach, which builds on Wolcott and Diamond’s work on this topic and Hirsch’s examination of municipal agencies as major drivers of segregation, coupled with Gobster’s “green magnets” conceptualization of parks, allows me to examine the specter of interracial violence as a key determinant of park placement and Chicago Park District policies in the years 1960 to 1970.

Regarding the quantitative methods I employ, some definitions are by necessity created somewhat arbitrarily. First, I define all Chicago census tracts as White, Black, or mixed/other using 1960 Census data accessed from IPUMS.<sup>32</sup> Tracts are classified as White if their population is greater than 60% White and as Black if their population is greater than 60% Black. The remaining tracts are classified as Mixed/Other. This definition, while imperfect, strikes a balance between the pitfall of classifying, for instance, a 51% White/49% Black tract as White, and the noise presented by the small size of some census tracts.

**Table 1: Number and Sum Population of Census Tracts by Race Classification, 1960**

Tract Classification, 1960	Count (% of	Population (% of total)
<b>White</b>	655 (76.8%)	2,676,480 (75.4%)
<b>Black</b>	175 (20.5%)	793,411 (22.3%)
<b>Mixed/Other</b>	23 (2.7%)	80,249 (2.2%)
<b>Total</b>	853.00	3,550,140

Source: 1960 Census

(Note: this figure reports the total population of the tracts of a given classification rather than the White, Black, and mixed/other populations of Chicago)

<sup>32</sup> Steven Ruggles et al., “IPUMS USA: Version 11.0 [Dataset]” (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V11.0>.

One of the weaknesses of Census data—particularly the 1960 Census—is that its question regarding race is extremely insufficient to paint an entire picture, especially with contemporaneously evolving views of race and ethnicity. The Census simply asked, with regards to race, “White,” “Black,” or “Other Race,” and denoted whether a respondent was “of Puerto Rican Parentage” or had a “Puerto Rican or Spanish Surname.”<sup>33</sup> This would complicate any analysis of race, but particularly in 1960-1970 in Chicago, where the Mexican-born population doubled over the course of the decade, the Chicago Commission of Human Relations estimated the Puerto Rican population to be 55,000 in 1966, and the total Latin American population in 1970 was estimated at nearly 215,000.<sup>34</sup> According to the 1970 Census, however, 94% of Chicago’s Spanish-speaking population was identified as “White.”<sup>35</sup>

This raises the question: how should this paper treat the question of Latinidad?<sup>36</sup> By the early 1960s, I could find no record of conflict in the *Sun-Times*, *Tribune*, or *Defender*

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<sup>33</sup> *Total Population: Puerto Rican Birth or Parentage, 1960* (Social Explorer, based on data from U.S. Census Bureau, 1960).

<sup>34</sup> René Luís Alvarez, “‘A Community That Would Not Take ‘No’ For an Answer’: Mexican Americans, the Chicago Public Schools, and the Founding of Benito Juárez High School,” *Journal of Illinois History* 17, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 84; Floreal H. Forni, “The Situation of the Puerto Rican Population in Chicago and Its Viewpoints about Racial Relations,” Reports of the Interuniversity Social Research Committee (Chicago: Community and Family Study Center, University of Chicago, October 15, 1971), 2; “Chicago’s Spanish-Speaking Population, Selected Statistics.” (Chicago: City of Chicago Department of Development and Planning, September 1973), 8.

<sup>35</sup> “Chicago’s Spanish-Speaking Population, Selected Statistics.” 8.

<sup>36</sup> Some modern scholars and activists such as José F. Buscaglia-Salgado “believe that the term should not be used as a catch-all in modern academia, as “it erases away race” and “excludes and silences the presence and contributions of Afro- and Asian descendants” (José F. Buscaglia-Salgado, “Race and the Constitutive Inequality of the Modern/Colonial Condition,” in *Critical Terms in Caribbean and Latin American Thought: Historical and Institutional Trajectories*, ed. Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, Ben Sifuentes-Jáuregui, and Marisa Belausteguigoitia (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 114, quoted in Tatiana Flores, “‘Latinidad Is Cancelled’: Confronting an Anti-Black Construct,” *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture* 3, no. 3 (July 1, 2021): 60, <https://doi.org/10.1525/lavc.2021.3.3.58>). Argentinian sociologist Floreal Forni’s 1973 study of Puerto Ricans in Chicago, however, discussed the intricate ways in which Puerto Rican’s fit into Chicago’s contemporary racial hierarchy; His study determined, based on race relations, material conditions, and communal priorities, that the situation of the Puerto Rican community was significantly different from that of European-descended Whites but did not conform to the perspective of either “previous waves of immigrants” or “a diluted version of (that) being faced by Negroes” (Donald J. Bogue, “Foreword,” in *The Situation of the Puerto Rican Population in Chicago and Its Viewpoints about Racial Relations*, Reports of the Interuniversity Social Research Committee 8 (Chicago: Community and Family Study Center, University of Chicago, 1971), 1.). For examples of later conflict over park space between Latinos and other ethnic groups, see William J. Wilson and Richard P. Taub, *There Goes the*



specifically over parks between non-Latino and Latino Chicagoans, despite numerous small clashes, informally but rigidly enforced racial boundaries, and incidents over parks in other major cities such as New York.<sup>37</sup> Further research into this topic could be fruitful, but preliminary keyword searches returned no results. The earliest record of such conflict over recreation space in Chicago for which I could find evidence was likely sometime in the 1960s, after the 1959 founding of the Young Lords, but may well have been later.<sup>38</sup>

I believe it is better to classify tracts as solely White/Black/mixed, rather than trying to take into account a nebulous estimate of Latino population, for this reason; this paper attempts to examine the effect of past conflicts and memory thereof on policymaking, and I was unable to find any evidence of relevant past conflict that hinged on Latino identity. A fascinating subject for future research would be the extent to which the budding Latino identity in this era (and earlier) affected policymakers; did they predict events like those that occurred in later decades and, if so, how did it affect distribution of resources? Did conflicts between Latinos and non-Latinos in other arenas such as housing have spillover effects on parks distribution?

Second, having discussed the questions presented by race and ethnicity, census tracts are classified as boundary or non-boundary. Black tracts are classified as boundary tracts if they physically border a White tract, White tracts are classified as boundary tracts if they physically border a Black tract, and Mixed/Other tracts are classified as boundary tracts if they physically border both a White and a Black tract. This analysis was done using a combination of ArcGIS

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*Neighborhood: Racial, Ethnic, and Class Tensions in Four Chicago Neighborhoods and Their Meaning for America*, 1st ed (New York: Knopf, 2006), 116–19; and Johanna Fernández, *The Young Lords: A Radical History* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 23, 27.

<sup>37</sup> Lilia Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 79–80, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uchicago/detail.action?docID=1039038>; “Police Seize 12 in Slaying of 2 Youths: Victims Were Knifed in N. Y. Playground,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 31, 1959, sec. Part 3.

<sup>38</sup> Johanna Fernández, *The Young Lords: A Radical History* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 23, 27.

and Microsoft Excel, using ArcGIS's Generate Near Table tool with a search radius of zero to find all neighbors.<sup>39</sup>

**Table 2: Number and Sum Population of Census Tracts by Boundary Classification, 1960**

Tract Classification, 1960	Count (% of Total)	Population (% of total)
<b>Boundary</b>	238 (27.9%)	930,253 (26.2%)
<b>Non-Boundary</b>	615 (72.1%)	2,619,887 (73.8%)
<b>Total</b>	853.00	3,550,140

Source: 1960 Census

**Table 3: Number of Census Tracts by Race and Boundary Classification, 1960**

	White	Black	Mixed/Other
<b>Boundary</b>	128	92	18
<b>Non-Boundary</b>	527	89	5

Source: 1960 Census

**Table 4: Percentage of Total White and Black Population by Race Classification, 1960**

Tract Classification, 1960	Percent of White Population	Percent of Black Population
<b>White Non-Boundary</b>	81.4%	0.8%
<b>White Boundary</b>	15.0%	4.3%
<b>Black Non-Boundary</b>	0.3%	45.1%
<b>Black Boundary</b>	1.9%	44.9%
<b>Mixed/Other Non-Boundary</b>	0.2%	0.9%
<b>Mixed/Other Boundary</b>	1.2%	4.0%

Source: 1960 Census

<sup>39</sup> Steven Manson, Jonathan Schroeder, David Van Riper, Tracy Kugler, and Steven Ruggles. IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 16.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS. 2021. <http://doi.org/10.18128/D050.V16.0>.

These tables are included in the data and methods section to ensure that the methods as described above pass logical muster. Especially given Chicago's extreme segregation, these figures certainly seem to be accurate portrayals of the city's racial landscape. As discussed below, the fact that Black Chicagoans were much more likely to live in boundary areas than White Chicagoans makes this a question of equity as well; a decrease in park resources in boundary areas would have an outsized negative impact on Black Chicagoans. This is because of the elongated shape of the city's Black Belt and "Second Ghetto;" as shown in Figure 1, the "borders" of the Black neighborhoods were very long proportionately to their area.

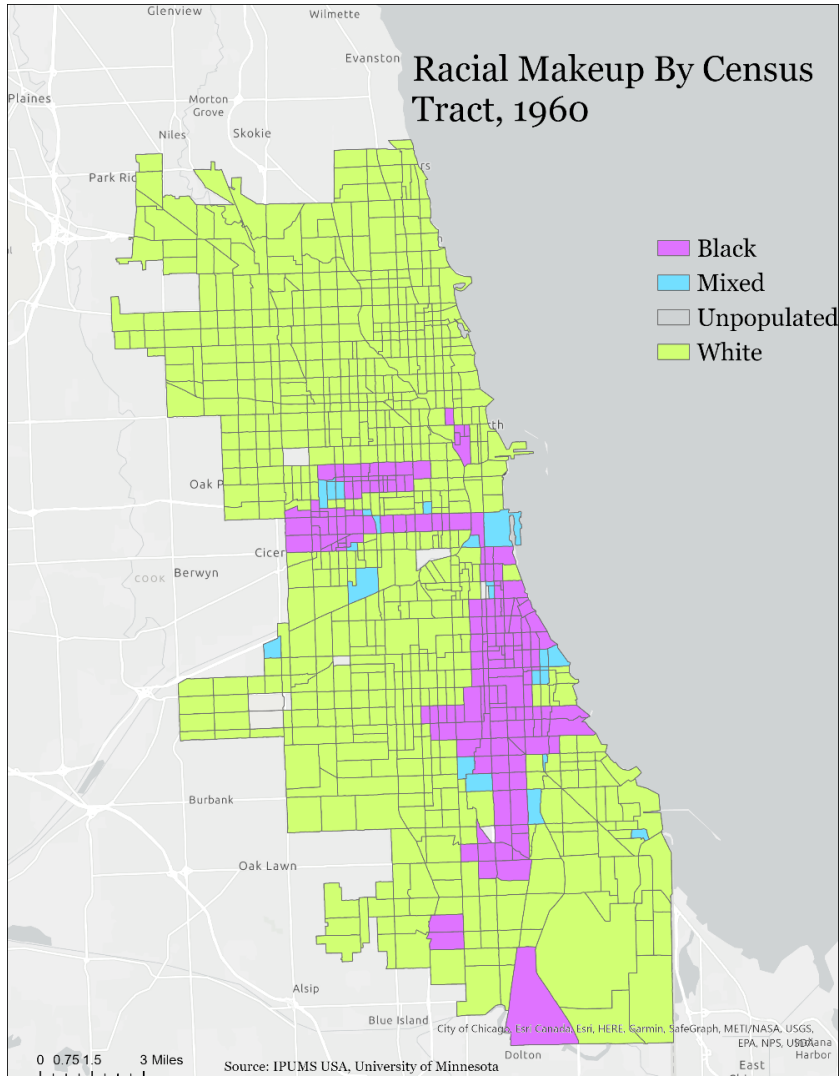


Figure 1: Racial Makeup by Census Tract, 1960

Finally, by digitizing and comparing volumes of the Chicago Park District's *Table of Parks and Park Facilities and Programs*, I was able to isolate all changes in park acreage and locate each changed or new park in a census tract. These changes can be separated into two categories: expansion/contraction and opening/closure. I classified these differently because, generally, the expansion/contraction changes are relatively small changes in the acreage of already large parks. Openings and closures are much more relevant to my framework. Nevertheless, I track both classifications to best compare. Finally, using addresses provided by the publication (and some manipulation in the cases of streets that no longer exist), I assigned parks to census tracts.

This data allows me to track changes in park acreage on the most granular possible level, to an extent that has not been done before, at least not in Chicago. Combined with my qualitative and archival work, I am able to track the ways in which the District's segregationist policies manifested during the 1960s.

#### **Section 4: "This is an All-White Park:" Racial Conflicts in the Parks, 1957-1960**

Throughout the 1950s, interracial conflicts ranging from skirmishes between a handful of young men to all-out riots plagued Chicago's parks and other public recreation areas. These conflicts, ultimately, weighed heavily in the minds of Park District officials in the following decade, shaping their decisions whether consciously or not. The most important of these incidents, at least from the perspective of public memory and worry, were the 1957 riots which began on Sunday, July 21, 1957, in Calumet Park and spread through the city. The Ta-Wa-Si Mothers' Club, a group of 70 Black Chicagoans who had held picnics in the park for the last two years, were surrounded by 150 or more young White men who threw projectiles such as bricks

and bottles at the picnickers. Despite the presence of a Park District police officer and another arriving in backup once the attack had begun, the White attackers continued to bombard the group and assaulted two uninvolved Black men, who had to be taken to the hospital.<sup>40</sup>

One week later, on Sunday the 28th, a group of roughly 100 White men attacked a different Black group, the Bodine Social Club, also at Calumet Park. That day, the violence escalated dramatically, with one Park District Police sergeant reporting a “mob of 6,000 to 7,000 caucasians” a mere 30 minutes after the beginning of the violence.<sup>41</sup> By 8:00 that evening, the violence had spread over a mile away, to the Trumbull Park Homes, a CHA development in South Deering. Over the next eight days, the violence continued across the South and West Sides, including the stoning of Black fishermen at Wolf Lake Park, the harassment and assault of Black swimmers at Tuley Park pool, and the assembly of a White mob in Grand Crossing Park. In one incident at Tuley Park pool, the White mob specifically threatened Black swimmers by alluding to the Calumet Park riot two days prior.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> “A Preliminary Report on Racial Disturbances in Chicago for the Period July 21 to August 4, 1957” (Chicago: Chicago Commission on Human Relations, 1957), 1–4, American Civil Liberties Union. Illinois Division. Records, [Box 499, Folder 1], Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

<sup>41</sup> “A Preliminary Report on Racial Disturbances in Chicago,” 5–7.

<sup>42</sup> “A Preliminary Report on Racial Disturbances in Chicago,” 8–26.



Figure 2: Chicago Defender Page 3, July 29, 1957

The area surrounding Calumet Park seems to have been ripe for racial violence. In 1940, about a thousand Black Chicagoans lived within four miles of the park; by 1960, the Black neighborhood of South Chicago had taken hold just across the Calumet River from the park, with over 2,000 Black residents by then living within a mile and a half.<sup>43</sup> The speed with which the mob violence spread from what appeared to be a one-off event in the far Southeast corner of the

<sup>43</sup> *White and Black Population, 1940* and *White and Black Population, 1960* (Social Explorer, based on data from U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.), accessed November 30, 2021. It should be noted that the 1940 Census did not

city to nearly every racial boundary zone in Chicago shows just how central park-based violence was to questions of violence prevention and urban planning.

In April 1958, with the events of the previous summer fresh in the minds of Park District and police officials and the coming summer fast approaching, Chief of the Chicago Park District Police George A. Otlewis issued an order regarding “Arrests” and “Racial Incidents.” The order acknowledged that “racial incidents” were all but guaranteed to occur in Chicago’s parks. While the first paragraph focused on police officers’ duty to “give their best attention and activity to suppressing and preventing racial and social tension situations and disturbances,” the chief went on to describe the actions to be taken “as soon as any disturbance is indicated as a racial conflict.”<sup>44</sup> This document reveals two crucial details. First, racial conflict was a subject of great concern to park officials, even as a proactive concern with no conflict yet that year. Second, racial conflict in the parks was seen as something approaching an inevitability, meaning that steps to address it would be aimed at reducing its frequency and severity, not preventing it altogether.

The summer of 1958 seems to have passed without significant racial conflict in the parks, although several school-based and housing-based incidents marred the summer.<sup>45</sup> As summer 1959 came to a close, in early September, the clearest example of conflict over boundary zone parks of the 1950s came to pass.

Sherman Park, a major park in the South Side’s Back of the Yards neighborhood, was in 1960 surrounded by White census tracts but within four blocks of the 95+ percent Black parts of West Englewood south of 59th Street. Some White residents of the Back of the Yards thus

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<sup>44</sup> George A. Otlewis, “Circular Order No. 575 Re: Arrests, Racial Incidents” (Chicago Park District Division of Police, April 28, 1958), American Civil Liberties Union. Illinois Division. Records, [Box 499, Folder 5], Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

<sup>45</sup> “Warm Days Bring Rise In Race Clashes,” *The Chicago Defender (1921-1967)*, July 26, 1958, National edition.

believed—accurately, it turned out—that the booming Black population of the South Side made Sherman Park a battleground, a place that soon would be surrounded by Black residents but for now they fought to keep White. When a Black family, at least some of whom lived in the faraway neighborhood of Chatham, stopped for lunch in the 60-acre park, they were confronted by a group of White youths, and the confrontation escalated to the point where police got involved. Once the family had eaten under police guard, as they prepared to leave, a White man who claimed to be a plainclothes officer said to them, “this is an liite park.”<sup>46</sup>

This comment, though it seems to not have led to any further violence or further escalated the incident, vocalized the undertone inherent in many of these 1950s incidents. Although these incidents often seemed to spawn from generic racial animus, their locations and context on the edges of the ever-expanding Black neighborhoods shows the true motivation behind the White perpetrators.

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<sup>46</sup> “White Youths Almost Trigger Riot Over Park,” *Chicago Defender*, September 5, 1959, Weekend edition, American Civil Liberties Union. Illinois Division. Records, [Box 499, Folder 5], Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.



**White Youths Almost Trigger Riot Over Park**

DEFENDER 5  
Sat., Sept. 5, 1959

Hold Final Services For Phillip Johnson

WILLARD, Ohio — Funerals were held for Phillip Johnson, 76, at First Baptist Church here, Thursday, who died recently following a lengthy illness.

Johnson, a resident of Willard for 35 years, died at Old Soldiers Home in Sandusky, Ohio.

The Rev. William Sherman officiated during the rites. Burial was at Greenwood cemetery.

About 50 white youngsters have unequivocally declared a Chicago Southside public park to belong exclusively to the white race; a declaration which almost precipitated a race riot and possible injury to two prominent Southside school teachers, their children and a friend.

Verbal confabulation of Sherman Park, at 55th Street and Racine ave., by the group, took place on Thursday, Aug. 25, when Mrs. Bobbie Benford, of 226 E. 89th of her two children, Robert, 14 and Janice, 10; her sister, Mrs. Ernestine Curry and Mrs. Curry's child, Neal, 10; and a sister-in-law, Mrs. Julia Dixon, stopped in the park to eat lunch.

**TROUBLE BEGINS**

Mrs. Benford said they noticed a group of white youngsters looking at them when they entered the park, but that the trouble didn't begin until she sent her son Robert, back to the car to get

The youths offered to their reply, said Mrs. Benford fight her son, however, she said was, "what do you want us to do if they were successful in avoiding to arrest all of them?"

The teacher replied that all of them were causing the trouble and had used most abusive language, "why not arrest all of them?"

When they prepared to eat their picnic lunch, the group which had grown from about 10 to 50 told them to "go to the nigger park."

Mrs. Benford said when she tried to explain that they had only stopped to eat their picnic lunch in the park, the group declared, "oh no, you're not going to eat here."

**'ARREST THEM ALL'**

When they were about to enter their car to leave, they noticed a police officer arrived, followed shortly by a lieutenant from the Englewood district. More reinforcements arrived and the lieutenant who the women said was very courteous asked them where they wanted to eat.

**POLICE GUARD**

Under a corps of guarding and patrolling squad car. When the white officers came over from and then, as they prepared to leave, a man dressed in civilian

clothes who identified himself as a policeman told them, "this is an all-white park." However, Mrs. Benford stated she did not believe the man was really a police officer.

As they were leaving, a district police officer had to chase about five youths away with his night stick because they kept throwing a ball near where they were.

Mrs. Benford is the sister of Asst. States Atty. John Dixon who is assigned to grand jury preparation in the Criminal Court building. She teaches at Brown elementary school. Her sister, Mrs. Curry, is also a teacher at James A. Sexton elementary school.

**RENAULTS**  
\$1468<sup>00</sup>  
Low Down Payment  
\$1.00 PER DAY  
Master, Dealer, Turn Signals  
KIRBY-CHAPPELL

**REFRIGERATORS**  
39 '69  
CITY RADIO

**STEELWORKERS! YOUR CREDIT IS STILL GOOD**  
**HURRY, HURRY! LAST CHANCE!**

Figure 3: *Chicago Defender* Weekend Edition Page 5, September 5, 1959

On Independence Day 1959, a relatively minor incident made more significant by its location occurred at 57th Street Beach—also known as Jackson Park Beach. The beach is and was part of the then-lily-White East Hyde Park neighborhood but is within very close proximity of majority-Black Woodlawn, Kenwood, and West Hyde Park. It seems from the scant historical record that a “race strife,” as described by the *Tribune*, broke out when “an unidentified person threw a bottle into a group of picnickers,” although the *Tribune* described the instigating incident as “a carelessly discarded soft drink bottle.”<sup>47</sup>

The “unidentified person” as the instigator, the contradicting assignments of intent, and the fact that none of the *Tribune*, *Defender*, and *New York Times* described the racial dynamics of the “race strife” make this a difficult incident to analyze. From their addresses listed in the

<sup>47</sup> “Two Youths Injured in Beach Race Strife,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 5, 1959, sec. Part 1; “2 Hurt In Southside Beach Riot,” *Daily Defender*, July 6, 1959; “Disturbance in Chicago: Police Clear a Beach and Park After Fighting Bears (Sic) Out,” *New York Times*, 1959.

*Tribune* and 1960 Census data, we know that of the two injured people—both 18 years old and both named Tom, strangely enough—one was certainly White (the census tract in which he lived was 100% White) and the other was almost certainly Black (his was 86.6% Black).<sup>48</sup> An additional complicator was that 57th Street Beach seems to have been a Black beach at this point; the *Times* and *Defender* reported that the majority of beachgoers that day were Black, and a 1960s photograph of the beach discussed in Section 8 below shows a large Black majority among beachgoers.<sup>49</sup> Regardless of who the instigator was and even regardless of the broader dynamics at play, it is clear that the boundary zone beach at 57th Street was a site of ongoing racial conflict; the *Defender* reported that “similar disturbances have occurred in the past” at the beach.<sup>50</sup>

In several other incidents throughout the summer of 1959, Black visitors were harassed at 75th Street Beach.<sup>51</sup> Two incidents are especially telling. On May 31, Black visitors to the city were said to have been told by the lifeguard, an employee of the Park District, that they should leave and go to 55th Street Beach.<sup>52</sup> In July, five Black women and children were attacked at the beach by three White boys throwing stones. Despite flagging down two policemen, the family received no protection and escaped in the car of passing strangers, leading the anonymous writer to conclude “if you can’t rely on your own city protection, who can you rely on.”<sup>53</sup> These incidents both highlight the extent to which street-level municipal employees helped perpetuate segregation of the parks.

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<sup>48</sup> “Two Youths Injured in Beach Race Strife”; “White and Black Population, 1960.”

<sup>49</sup> “Disturbance in Chicago”; “2 Hurt In Southside Beach Riot”; “Chicago Parks: General Information Brochure” (Public Information Service, Chicago Park District, [1965]), 25, Department of Urban Renewal Records, [Box 5, Folder 30], Special Collections, Chicago Public Library.

<sup>50</sup> “2 Hurt In Southside Beach Riot.”

<sup>51</sup> Anonymous, “The People Speak: Indifferent Policemen,” *Daily Defender*, August 3, 1959; Inez Turner, “The People Speak: Negroes Not Welcome,” *Daily Defender*, June 10, 1959.

<sup>52</sup> Turner, “The People Speak.”

<sup>53</sup> Anonymous, “The People Speak.”

As originally described by Michael Lipsky, the delivery of public services should be examined through “public service workers who interact directly with citizens through the course of their jobs and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work.”<sup>54</sup> While this paper primarily examines the distribution of park space rather than services, examples such as the Calumet Park riot and the incidents at 75th Street Beach demonstrate the important role that municipal employees (especially employees of the park and city police) played in carrying them out.

In this era, the employees of the Chicago Park District published a monthly newsletter entitled *Park Ways*. This document helps, on this topic and others, explore not only the identities and priorities of the District’s employees, but other more loosely related topics such as the (publicized) political leanings of employees.

In the February 1961 issue of *Park Ways*, the Chicago Park District Employees Association announced its newly elected 37-member board of directors. Though perhaps unsurprising, the uniform whiteness of those elected is a mildly arresting sight on first glance. Of the twenty-nine directors pictured, all but one appear to be visibly White.<sup>55</sup> The only racially ambiguous exception visible in the photograph is Albert McEvilla, an employee of the conservatory, but census records suggest that McEvilla was also White.<sup>56</sup> The universally White board was likely linked to the ongoing influence of Mayor Daley’s patronage-based machine, but it is still a striking image; the elected representatives of the employees shaping Chicagoans’ park

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<sup>54</sup> Michael Lipsky, *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service*, 30th Anniversary Expanded (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2010), 3.

<sup>55</sup> “Park Ways: Published by and for Employees of the Chicago Park District.” (Chicago Park District Employees Association, February 1961), 1, Chicago History Museum.

<sup>56</sup> “1940 U.S. Census, Cook County, Illinois, Population Schedule, Enumeration District 103-2898, Sheet 13A, Line 39,” April 11, 1940, Ancestry.com, National Archives and Records Administration, <https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2442/images/M-T0627-01012-00618?src=&backlabel=Return&pId=147366838>.

experiences did not come close to reflecting the diversity of the District's users or even employees.

Through the *Street Level Bureaucracy* lens, it becomes clear that the actions of individual District employees translated into the *de facto* policies of the District. This means that, without significant pushback, the discrimination by a lifeguard and police officers at 75<sup>th</sup> Street Beach, as well as the apathy exhibited by Park District Police officers to racial violence at Calumet Park, essentially constituted segregation by the Park District, rather than by individuals. In the same 1961 issue of *Park Ways*, a section “brags” about the many former members of the Park District Police to have achieved high ranks in the Chicago Police Department after the departments merged.<sup>57</sup> The Park District's role in policing the city's racial boundaries would be an excellent topic for future research, especially in the immediate post-war years and around this time, when merged with the citywide department, but is unfortunately too extensive for the scope of this project.

A unanimous resolution by the Chicago Urban League—a high-profile organization of primarily elite and well-connected Black Chicagoans—in August 1959 serves as a thematic conclusion to the violence of the 1950s, leading into the violence-informed decision-making of the early 1960s.<sup>58</sup> After a Black family purchased a home in a previously all-White area of West Garfield Park, 4,000 furious White residents arrived to protest their would-be move-in day, and over a dozen were arrested for failing to obey police orders.<sup>59</sup> In their response, the Urban League specify two particularly commonplace axes of racial violence in Chicago: “when a non-

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<sup>57</sup> “Park Ways: Published by and for Employees of the Chicago Park District,” 3.

<sup>58</sup> Preston H. Smith, “Urban League,” in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1294.html>.

<sup>59</sup> “Police Rout Chicago Mob of 3,000 in Housing Riot,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 15, 1959; “\$2,500 Bonds Set for 14 in Race Disorder,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 8, 1959.

white person seeks or purchases shelter in an area where non-whites have not lived before and in public parks, beaches and public recreation spots which certain white persons have come to think of as their own private property.”<sup>60</sup> This coheres with what Hirsch wrote of postwar Chicago, that “the worst violence occurred when the use of public parks and beaches was contested.”<sup>61</sup>

In July of the next year, perhaps in an effort to address the issue condemned in the organization’s resolution, Chicago Urban League Executive Director Edwin C. Berry sent a letter to police superintendent O. W. Wilson requesting a series of policies to reduce or prevent racial conflicts. Included in that letter, the *Defender* reported, were Berry’s observations that “public parks and beaches are danger areas,” and that “peripheral areas of the ‘so called Negro community’ are sore spots when Negroes attempt to move beyond the boundaries of the ghetto.”<sup>62</sup> This letter, paired with the clashes of the previous few years, shows the interconnectedness of the Great Migration, the expansion of Black neighborhoods, and White violent resistance, all of which came together to engender the conflict that occurred.

By the beginning of the 1960s, repeated conflicts, in the 1950s and previous decades, had clearly shaped the perception of public parks. At least to activists and police officials, conflicts over access to these locations had the potential to spiral into disaster. The question remained whether Park District policy makers held these views and whether this translated into decisions related to park allocation.

One other question for consideration is whether new parks and park spaces in boundary areas evoked the same racial conflict as those that had previously lain in all-White areas and

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<sup>60</sup> “Chicago Urban League Resolution Re: Racial Disturbances and Law Enforcement” (Chicago Urban League, August 19, 1959), American Civil Liberties Union. Illinois Division. Records, [Box 499, Folder 4], Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

<sup>61</sup> Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 66.

<sup>62</sup> “Cops Set To Nip Any Race Violence,” *Daily Defender*, July 20, 1960.

were beginning to diversify. The incident at Sherman Park and the resolution by the Urban League make clear that a potential cause for this violence was that White Chicagoans saw specific parks as their property and encroaching Black people as invaders. This begs the question whether a new park in between White and Black neighborhoods would be equally, less, or more contentious than existing parks. The question of whether the staff members and board members of the Chicago Park District who made decisions regarding park placements specifically viewed parks as potential sites of violence and whether that affected their decision-making is a more difficult one to answer.

One potential clue lies in the 1959 revision of the Chicago Park District's 1952 *Suggested Goals in Park and Recreation Planning*. The document outlines, as stated in its subtitle, the "basic principles of planning of the Chicago Park District."<sup>63</sup> In the appendix of this document, which reports the results of the "Park and Playground Registration Study," the authors write "racial, ethnic, and economic differences... are to be analyzed as physical 'barriers'" when analyzing park usage radii.<sup>64</sup> This is a highly significant sentiment, even though it hides in the appendix of this document. Not only are racial boundaries grouped with physical barriers such as busy streets, the report makes the concrete policy recommendation of considering "racial of ethnic differences" when planning parks.<sup>65</sup> This recommendation seems to have been included in the original 1952 version of the document, meaning that the incidents of the 1950s listed above would have only driven this message home in the years following its release - perhaps one reason it was included in the 1959 edition.

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<sup>63</sup> "Suggested Goals in Park and Recreation Planning" (Chicago Park District, 1959), Chicago Park District collection, [Box 3, Folder 23], Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois.

<sup>64</sup> "Suggested Goals in Park and Recreation Planning," 29.

<sup>65</sup> "Suggested Goals in Park and Recreation Planning," 29.

Two points must be made here regarding the Park District's consideration of racial boundary lines. First, the report only includes racial differences as a factor in "park" attendance, not in "playground" attendance. They seem to include in "playground" parks under four acres, while "parks" are larger than this. This suggests that they do not believe racial boundaries affect usage of smaller parks. Second, although the effects of race on park attendance was addressed three times in this section, the authors in fact do not make any significant claims beyond the fact that racial differences must be considered. It is unclear why this would have been, but could be explained by a number of factors including an unwillingness to stake out politically risky positions, a lack of foresight regarding the extent to which parks would become a major axis of racial conflict, or a number of others. In any case, this very brief allusion to race by the policymakers in question both is enlightening and raises further questions.

#### **Section 5: Quantitative Results, 1960-1965**

To test the immediate effects of the late-1950s racial conflicts on park allocation, I chose to preliminarily separate the decade into two halves. If the recency of the violence of the 1950s is a major factor, that should appear through this analysis. Unfortunately, I was unable to locate the 1960 volume of the document on which this analysis is based, so this section analyzes January 1, 1961 to January 1, 1965. Below are two regression analyses done on these years.

**Table 5: Change in Park Acreage by Census Tract, 1961-1965**

Dependent Variable: Park Acreage Change

	OLS Estimates
<b>Intercept</b>	0.127 (0.120)
<b>Black %</b>	0.175 (0.167)
<b>Change in Density (per mile<sup>2</sup>), 1950-1960</b>	-7.50E-06 (7.12E-06)
<b>1960 Population</b>	-2.48E-06 (2.27E-05)
<b>Boundary</b>	-0.216 (0.138)
Observations	862
R <sup>2</sup>	0.004915

Sources: 1950 and 1960 Census, Chicago Park District, HWLC MRC

\*: P&lt;0.1, \*\*: P&lt;0.05, \*\*\*:P&lt;0.01

The two most significant figures reported in these tables are the coefficients and P-values for the independent variables. The coefficient of each variable estimates the effect that the variable had on the dependent variable (change in park acreage) and the coefficient of the intercept estimates the value of the independent variable if each of the dependent variables were zero (obviously an unlikely scenario, but such is statistics). For our purposes, we primarily care about the signs (positive or negative) of the variables and their P-values, not their magnitudes. The P-value, essentially, estimates the likelihood that the *actual* coefficient is not zero or on the other side of zero from the estimate. As a clarifying example, take the above regression table and the variable about which we care the most, “Boundary.”

The “Boundary” variable is binary, meaning I assigned it the value 1 for boundary tracts and 0 for non-boundary. By using this regression and controlling for Black population, change in density from 1950-1960, and 1960 total population, “Boundary” census tracts could be estimated to receive -.216 fewer park acres (through less additions and/or more losses) than non-boundary



tracts, all else being equal. The P-value for this variable is 0.119, which, simplified, means that there is an 11.9% chance that the “actual” value for this variable is 0 or positive. In other words, we estimate with 88.1% certainty that boundary tracts, all else equal, received less park acreage in 1961-1965 than non-boundary tracts.

This analysis appears to be remarkably consistent with an intuition that racial boundary zones would be less likely to receive new park space in the first half of the 1960s due to the influence of the specter of interracial violence on officials’ decision-making. This analysis controls for the Black share of the population, the increase in density from 1950-1960, and the 1960 population. The increase in density is a proportional approximation of the increase in population, necessary due to changes in census tract boundaries between the 1950 and 1960 censuses. As discussed above, the estimated coefficient for Boundary is negative with a P-value of 0.119. This does not meet the traditional statistical significance criteria of  $P < .10$  or  $P < .05$ , but does indicate that there is a *likely* negative effect.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Traditional statistical analysis uses P-value cutoffs of  $P < .10$  and  $P < .05$  for statistical significance. Here I choose to report results which barely miss the  $P < .10$  cutoff because I couple it with both other regressions and qualitative analysis in an attempt to paint a broader picture outside the limitations of quantitative analysis.

**Table 6: Change in Park Acreage by Census Tract, 1961-1965**

Dependent Variable: Park Acreage Change

	OLS Estimates
<b>Intercept</b>	0.338** (0.140)
<b>Race (Black=1, White=-1, Mixed=0)</b>	0.120 (0.082)
<b>1960 Density</b>	-3.89E-06 (3.56-06)
<b>Boundary</b>	-0.236* (0.137)
Observations	862
R <sup>2</sup>	0.004915

Sources: 1950 and 1960 Census, Chicago Park District, HWLC MRC

\*: P&lt;0.1, \*\*: P&lt;0.05, \*\*\*:P&lt;0.01

This second analysis attempts to simplify the variables used. Instead of using the Black share, the same 60% threshold racial classification described above is used. This may be a better approximation of the motivating factors at play, because policymakers likely would not differentiate between 80% and 95% Black tracts, for example. Additionally, instead of using change in density and total population, 1960 density is used to avoid excessive correlation between independent variables. In this regression, the boundary variable has a negative correlation with change in park acreage with a P-value of 0.087, meeting the P<.10 threshold. This means that, if these are the correct control variables to be employed, we can say with a 90% degree of confidence that being a boundary tract had a negative effect on change in park acreage in these years.

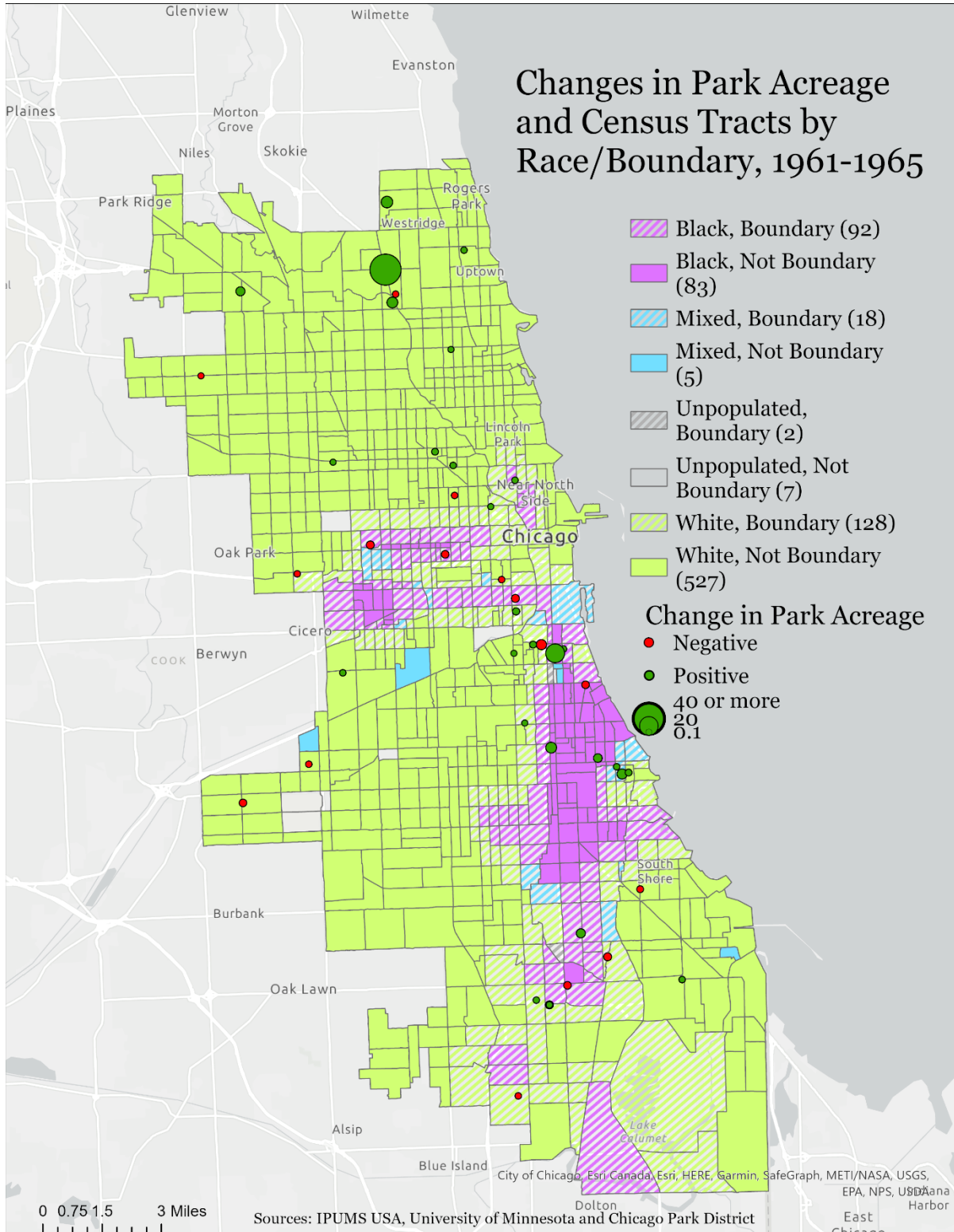


Figure 5: Changes in Park Acreage and Census Tracts by Race and Boundary, 1961-1965

## **Section 6: “Local parks serving local and neighborhood populations:” Parks and Segregation, 1960-1965**

The above analysis suggests that, regardless of any public statements or privately expressed viewpoints, boundary zones did receive fewer park acres in the years 1961-1965. Beyond this, however, we can try to glean meaning from the documents and records available from this time in an attempt to examine to what extent this was a stated policy, or whether it was a subconscious or semiconscious reaction on the part of policymakers. Throughout the early 1960s, I argue, the District viewed even its largest parks as segregated and the locations of individual parks were significantly influenced by the District’s fear of interracial conflicts.

A handful of documents from this era of the Chicago Park District make clear that, explicitly or otherwise, staff viewed certain parks as White parks and others, to a lesser extent, as Black parks. This view extended to the largest citywide parks such as Lincoln and Jackson Parks, even though they were supposedly intended for citywide use. An especially striking example of this is that of the Lincoln Park Zoo, a free zoo intended for citywide use located in Lincoln Park, the city’s largest. In 1963, the District published, in conjunction with the nascent Lincoln Park Zoological Society, a sixty-four-paged guidebook to the Zoo, one of the crown jewels of the District’s citywide system. Similarly to some other publications of this era, as discussed below, the guidebook’s six pictures of visitors portrayed zero visible dark-skinned visitors out of approximately thirty-seven visibly photographed visitors.<sup>67</sup>

Perhaps more crucially to the outcomes that actually affected people’s lives, however, was the page in the back of the book which provided information on “How to get to the Zoo.”

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<sup>67</sup> “How to Enjoy Lincoln Park Zoo: Official Guidebook of the Lincoln Park Zoo” (Chicago Park District, 1963), Chicago History Museum.

The information on how to get to the zoo by train is fairly straightforward, but the bus route information is fascinating. The three buses included as suggestions, which all stop directly in front of the zoo entrance, the number 76, 156, and 153 buses, were all routes that serviced the overwhelmingly White North Side. The 76 Diversey serviced the Northwest Side along Diversey Parkway, and the 156 and 153 both ran from Ravenswood and Wilson Avenues along Wilson and Stockton to the zoo.<sup>68</sup> Less than two blocks from the zoo's entrance, however, were stops on four more lines: the 37 Taylor-Sedgwick-Sheffield, the 22 Clark, the 36 Broadway, and the 58A Ogden Extension. The 37 ran along Taylor Street on the Near West Side, which lay in a boundary zone within blocks of majority Black census tracts on either side. The 22 and 36 served similar routes to the 156 and 153, running all the way North to the suburb of Evanston and to Devon Avenue respectively, but the 58A ran Southwest from the zoo to Ogden and Ashland Avenues, a stop that both lay in a majority Black (and boundary) census tract and connected to other buses such as the 58, which served the heart of the still-growing Black West Side.<sup>69</sup>

In the below image, the three buses included (the 76, 156, and 153) are shown in green and the two buses excluded that served Black neighborhoods (the 37 and 58A) are shown in red.<sup>70</sup> As discussed above, census tracts are colored yellow for White, purple for Black, and Blue for mixed/other, and are striped if they are boundary tracts.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Rand McNally & Co., *Chicago Transit Map* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Transit Authority, 1965), <https://www.chicago-l.org/maps/route/maps/1965map.jpg>.

<sup>69</sup> McNally & Co.; Ruggles et al., "IPUMS USA: Version 11.0 [Dataset]."

<sup>70</sup> Note that the green spur that seems to serve the Black part of the Near North Side is the branch of the 156 that connects to the Loop (the central business district of Chicago). Otherwise, it would seem unlikely from the analysis above that it would serve that neighborhood.

<sup>71</sup> I am going to make this prettier (read: a legend and better cropping) soon, hopefully this weekend.

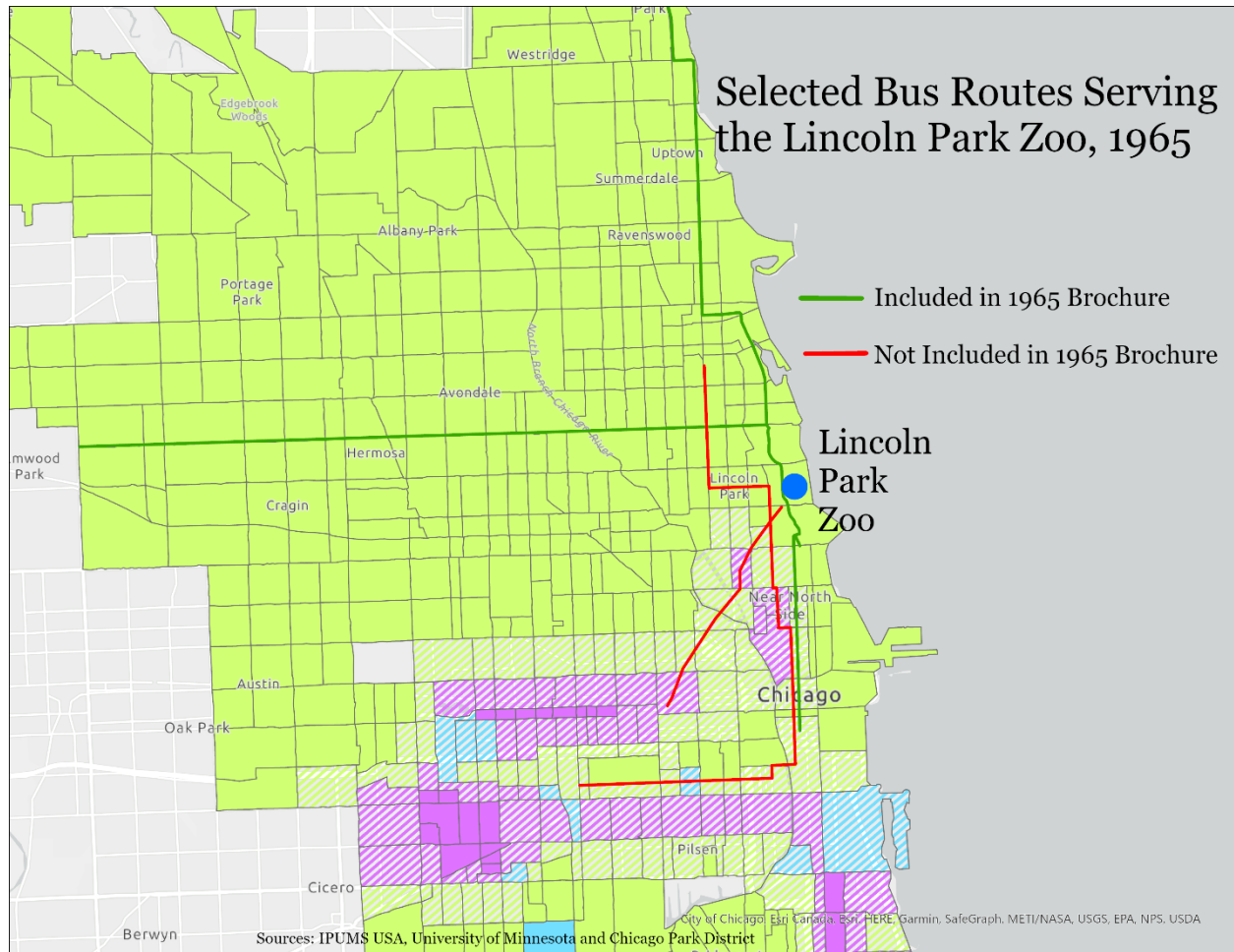


Figure 5: Selected Bus Routes serving the Lincoln Park Zoo, 1963

It's certainly possible that the omission of these routes was due to their distance from the zoo entrance, but that alone seems like it would not have been reason enough. The directions to visit by train, in fact, include a transfer to a bus with a final stop two blocks away—the same terminus as the 58A. All in all, it seems to suggest that the bus directions only included the absolutely most proximate routes, at least partially because of the populations they and the possible additional routes served. This supports the suggestion that the Chicago Park District shied away from promoting or facilitating interracial interactions in even the largest and most

universal of its parks. Today, for example, the Lincoln Park Zoo's website suggests "the 22, 36, 151, and 156 buses," only two of which today stop directly at the entrance.<sup>72</sup>

In 1970, a consulting firm working for the Park District did, in fact, find that "visiting the zoo" was one of the five park-related activities with the highest discrepancy in popularity between non-Black and Black Chicagoans.<sup>73</sup> The report issued by the firm went so far as to call visiting the zoo a "non-black oriented activit(y)," along with "visiting the lakefront" and "hanging around," solely based on one survey.<sup>74</sup> The flaws with this methodology seem clear: the fact that the city's only zoo was located in Lincoln Park, far and largely inaccessible from the Black neighborhoods of Chicago (and that the suburban Brookfield Zoo was located in the village of Brookfield which had only ten Black residents in 1970), means visiting the zoo might have been far from the minds of Black Chicagoans.<sup>75</sup> The guidebook's exclusion of routes that would have been more used by Black patrons was one small part of the segregationist forces that kept parks such as the Lincoln Park Zoo all-White in practice.

For the ways in which contemporary actors viewed the city's parks, we can look to the ways they described them in surviving written documents. In the face of the urban renewal processes of the early 1960s, particularly in the Loop and in Hyde Park, a group of architects and architectural hobbyists organized themselves into the "Chicago Heritage Committee." In the first

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<sup>72</sup> "Hours & Location," Lincoln Park Zoo, accessed February 6, 2022, <https://www.lpzoo.org/visit/hours-location/>; "Bus Tracker," Chicago Transit Authority, accessed February 6, 2022, <http://www.ctabustracker.com/bustime/map/displaymap.jsp>.

<sup>73</sup> Barton-Aschman Associates, "Background Section IIA: Population and Leisure Time Analysis," in *Report on Policies for the Chicago Park District: Draft* (Chicago: Barton-Aschman Associates, 1970), 6.

<sup>74</sup> Barton-Aschman Associates, 6.

<sup>75</sup> *Black Population, 1970* (Social Explorer, based on data from U.S. Census Bureau, 1970). One analogous modern example of the interplay between residential segregation and zoo usage can be seen in the Easter Monday tradition of Black Washingtonians visiting the Smithsonian National Zoo (see: Shapira, Ian. "For African American Families, a Day of Tradition at the National Zoo." *Washington Post*, April 1, 2013, sec. Local). The zoo's location more than two miles from the nearest majority Black census tract, in the midst of the wealthier and whiter part of Northwest DC, means that the zoo's clientele is often much more White than the surrounding metropolitan area. However, there clearly is Black interest in visiting the zoo, seen in the large attendance on Easter Monday.

years of the decade, the group fought to preserve historic buildings in Chicago such as Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House and Burnham and Root's Rookery Building.<sup>76</sup> Soon after, however, they began to branch out into other issues, particularly organizing around issues affecting the lakeshore. In 1962, they began activism to ensure that money held by the Art Institute for lakefront statuary artwork was used properly and began activism around preservation of the lakefront itself.<sup>77</sup> This work led to the Committee's 1964 publication of "The Issue of the Lakefront: An Historical Critical Survey," authored by architect Douglas Schroeder.<sup>78</sup>

"The Issue of the Lakefront" does provide excellent historical context to the evolution of Chicago's lakefront, but fully avoids any issues of race, a clear decision on the part of the author. Since the city's founding, Chicago's most valuable natural resource and most important recreational attraction has been mired in the city's racial conflicts. The text does recognize "Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, a negro," as "the first settler on the site of Chicago," but from that point on does not discuss race a single time.<sup>79</sup> The text, importantly, fully skips over the 1919 Race Riot which began at a lakefront beach and led to decades of de facto segregation of the lakefront, up to and including the time of the report's publication.

"The Issue of the Lakefront" does, however, articulate a crucial point that seems to have been quietly followed but never written by actual Park District officials in this era; "the inland parks with some exceptions," Schroeder writes, "are local parks serving local and neighborhood populations. The lakefront parks serve two functions as both local parks for nearby residents and

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<sup>76</sup> Elinor Richey, "What Chicago Could Be Proud Of," *Harper's Magazine*, December 1, 1961.

<sup>77</sup> "Ferguson Fund Profits to Buy More Statuary," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 1, 1962, sec. Part 3; "Display Ad 55 -- Dateline Chicago: 'The Disappearing Lakefront,'" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 8, 1962, sec. Part 3.

<sup>78</sup> Douglas. Schroeder, "The Issue of the Lakefront: An Historical Critical Survey," CHC Newsletter (Chicago Heritage Committee, 1964), Newberry Library.

<sup>79</sup> Schroeder, 2.



regional parks for the entire metropolitan area.”<sup>80</sup> In this analysis, he broke from the terminology used by parks officials.

From at least the 1950s to the modern era, Park District officials used the term “citywide parks” to describe major parks theoretically intended for use by residents from across the city and “magnet parks” for parks expected to draw visitors “from the entire metropolitan area and beyond.”<sup>81</sup> Schroeder, however, disputes that characterization, by writing that inland parks primarily serve “local and neighborhood populations” and that lakefront parks at least partially do the same, without making a distinction between large citywide and magnet parks and smaller playgrounds and district parks. He acknowledges that the segregation of the city also segregates Chicago’s parks, including its biggest “citywide parks,” as seen in the example above of the Lincoln Park Zoo.

A study of Chicagoland’s recreation resources conducted in the 1970s reached a similar conclusion regarding the accessibility of lakefront citywide resources. The study stated, “there is a need to explore convenient and reliable means of access to and within city and regional parks... For example, direct bus service could be provided from Lawndale, Garfield Park, Austin, and other West Side areas to lakefront recreational areas.”<sup>82</sup> Clearly, the segregation of the city and less-than-perfect public transit meant that “citywide” resources were not available to all.

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<sup>80</sup> Schroeder, 28–29.

<sup>81</sup> “Suggested Goals in Park and Recreation Planning,” 2; “The Power of Parks: An Assessment of Chicago Parks’ Economic Impact” (Chicago: Chicago Park District, in Partnership with Civic Consulting Alliance, Global Economics Group, and Roland Berger Strategy Consultants, 2014), 4, <https://www.ccachicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/The-Power-of-Park-Brochure-150713-2-.compressed.pdf>.

<sup>82</sup> “National Urban Recreation Study, Chicago/Gary” (Denver: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1977), 22–23.

A unique episode in the history of the Chicago Park District—one that upon further inspection is revealed to be rooted in segregation—is that of the attempt to build an “adult beach” in Hyde Park. The beginning of this project is well-documented. In August 1963, the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference (HPKCC), a group founded by “middle-class Negroes, as well as whites” “to develop an interracial community of high standards,” submitted a request to the Chicago Park District to construct a new beach at 53rd Street and the lake.<sup>83</sup> By January 1964, the District had acceded to the request of the powerful group, approving, among other sites, in Hyde Park “an adult swimming area in the cove just north of the Promontory Point.”<sup>84</sup> The location was picked as a place that “would permit diving for older teen-agers and adults,” which a HPKCC member said was necessary because “there was no place (on the South Side) for adults to swim” and that diving was illegal at the other beaches.<sup>85</sup>

An additional benefit, HPKCC members said, was that the “new beach might also relieve crowding at the 57th street beach.”<sup>86</sup> That this wasn’t a more pressing reason for requesting the new beach seems shocking, given the crowding of 57th Street Beach; photographs from as early as the 1920s and throughout the era show extremely crowded conditions at the beach.<sup>87</sup> However, a major demographic shift had occurred, which presents a possible explanation for “crowding” being a secondary reason for requesting a new beach in the public communiqués of the elite and racially diverse HPKCC.

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<sup>83</sup> “Committee Proposes Beach at 53d Street,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 29, 1963, sec. South; Sol Tax, “Residential Integration: The Case of Hyde Park in Chicago,” *Human Organization* 18, no. 1 (1959): 24.

<sup>84</sup> “New Adult Beach Approved by Park District,” *Hyde Park Herald*, January 15, 1964; “District Plans Six New Parks: Hyde Park, Kenwood Get Five Sites,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 19, 1964, sec. South.

<sup>85</sup> “Committee Proposes Beach at 53d Street.”

<sup>86</sup> “Committee Proposes Beach at 53d Street.”

<sup>87</sup> Charles R. Childs, *Jackson Park Beach, Chicago, Illinois*, 1928 or 1929, Photographic Print, 1928-1929, Chicago History Museum (ICHi-095515); Lil & Al Bloom, *Jackson Park Beach, at 57th Street, Chicago, Illinois*, 1949, Photographic Print, 1949, Chicago Historical Society (ICHi-37328).

A 1949 image of Jackson Park Beach, produced by photographers Lil and Al Bloom, seems to show an all-White crowd, consistent with the 98% White surrounding area reported by the 1950 Census, while an image of the beach from 1964 shows that a majority of visitors by the early 1960s were Black.<sup>88</sup> That the 1964 image shows White and Black bathers next to one another is significant, as I discuss in Section 8, but more relevant for this discussion is the change in the bathers' races from 1949 to 1964.



Figure 6: 57th Street Beach, 1949 (Left) and 1964 (Right)

Sources: Chicago History Museum, ICHi-037328; Lil & Al Bloom, photographers; Chicago Public Library, Special Collections, Chicago Park District Archives, Photograph 047-001-008, photographer unknown

<sup>88</sup> Bloom, *Jackson Park Beach*; “Chicago Parks: General Information Brochure,” 25.

The HPKCC to request the new beach may have been, rather than the stated need for diving facilities and the often-euphemistic “crowding,” the newly Black and likely working class user base of 57th Street Beach. The more well-off Black residents and White residents, many of whom were associated with the university, may have wanted a separate swimming option from the influx of Black residents, particularly youth.<sup>89</sup> In many instances, “Black youths” are singled out in racist screeds both overt and disguised. Sociologist John Solomos describes this international phenomenon, writing of “the supposed role of unemployed black youths in the ‘growing problem’ of crime and lawlessness,” the same “growing problem” HPKCC was founded to address; anthropologist Sol Tax writes of crime as a pressing concern in the very first paragraph of his study of Hyde Park organizing in the 1950s.<sup>90</sup>

Placing the new beach north of the 57th Street Beach and south of Hyde Park Boulevard (51st Street) would locate the site in the only majority-White section of the lakeshore between 31st and 67th Streets, a clear sign that the beach was intended to be less Black, if not even majority-White. Especially by 1970, when the entire lakefront between 47th and 60th was at least 75% White, a beach at 53rd would have been directly in the middle of the biggest White population cluster between the Loop and 79th Street. While there may be validity to HPKCC’s site selection based on water depth and diving safety, it seems it was not coincidental that the proposed site would be in the heart of the only possible White area to be selected.

An interesting coda to this episode is that, despite having its budget authorized by the Park District Board of Commissioners, the project never seems to have been undertaken. In July 1964, the *Hyde Park Herald* reported that the proposed site had been delayed and subsequently

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<sup>89</sup> Tax, “Residential Integration,” 22–23.

<sup>90</sup> John Solomos, *Black Youth, Racism and the State: The Politics of Ideology and Policy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 131; Tax, “Residential Integration,” 22.

moved from 53rd Street to Hyde Park Boulevard, two blocks north, and a photograph seemed to show that work had begun; a letter to the editor of the same newspaper from March of that year shows that the proposed site had already been moved the two blocks North by that spring.<sup>91</sup> It is possible that the site was opened with little fanfare that summer or the next, but the *Herald* includes no further mention of the site by any of its names, and there certainly is no diving board-equipped swimming sport there today. The only clue I could locate was a *Defender* article from four years later, which implores city planners to “avoid a recurrence of the poor planning surrounding the park and beach areas from 47 st. to 53d st.”<sup>92</sup> It seems that, despite authorizing funds to construct the additional swimming site, the District never did.

The fact that the adult beach was never constructed was likely due to safety issues related to submerged rocks as described by the *Herald*, but the incident does shed light on the granular dynamics at play when deciding the locations of new parks, particularly in racially segregated areas such as Hyde Park and the South Side more broadly. From the above examples, we can conclude that the Park District viewed parks largely from a segregationist viewpoint, that even the city’s largest parks were often segregated based on who had access to them, and that small parks and beaches had their locations determined by racialized but idiosyncratic forces.

## **Section 7: Quantitative Results, 1965-1970**

Quantitative analysis of the second half of the decade presents several issues related to era-specific policies and trends, the main confounder being the Model Cities program created by

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<sup>91</sup> “New Beach Delayed,” *Hyde Park Herald*, July 1, 1964; “The Fish Won’t Bite, but Fishermen May,” *Hyde Park Herald*, July 22, 1964; Elizabeth Harris and E. Newton Elizabeth, “Letter to the Editor: Proposal,” *Hyde Park Herald*, March 4, 1964.

<sup>92</sup> “Hyde Park-Kenwood Body Wants Park Unit’s Plans,” *Daily Defender*, January 2, 1968.

the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Act of 1966.<sup>93</sup> As a relatively small and understudied part of this program, as will be discussed below, numerous small parks were established in the four target areas selected for Chicago’s Model Cities implementation: Uptown, Grand Boulevard, Woodlawn, and Lawndale.<sup>94</sup> This means that the previously used method of analyzing changes in parks—by examining change in acreage—returns extremely strange results, as shown below. The only statistically significant variables were population (although it did not reach the more precise  $P < .05$  significance threshold) and Black population, which was extremely significant, more than any other variable from any of the regressions run for this thesis, with a P-value below 0.001.

**Table 7: Park Acreage Change by Census Tract, 1965-1970**

Dependent Variable: Park Acreage Change

	OLS Estimates
<b>Intercept</b>	-0.026 (0.051)
<b>Black %</b>	0.241*** (0.070)
<b>Change in Density, 1950-1960</b>	6.74E-06** (3.00E-06)
<b>1960 Population</b>	1.66E-05* (9.55E-06)
<b>Boundary</b>	0.0331 (0.058)
Observations	862
R <sup>2</sup>	0.0283

Sources: 1950 and 1960 Census, Chicago Park District, HWLC MRC

\*:  $P < 0.1$ , \*\*:  $P < 0.05$ , \*\*\*:  $P < 0.01$

<sup>93</sup> Ralph H. Metcalf, “Chicago Model Cities and Neocolonization,” *The Black Scholar* 1, no. 6 (1970): 24.

<sup>94</sup> Marcella Kirk, “An Examination and Analysis of the Chicago Model Cities Educational Project, from 1967 Through 1971” (Ed.D., Chicago, Loyola University Chicago, 1973), 12, [https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc\\_diss/1414](https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/1414).

This suggests that it would be worthwhile to explore additional variables, as there may be important decision-shaping forces not captured by the variables currently in use. The obvious variable to try would be whether a given census tract was within one of the four Model Cities target neighborhoods. As a binary variable, we add it to the regression from Table 6, which prioritizes simplicity and categorical variables. The results of this regression are below.

**Table 8: Park Acreage Change by Census Tract, 1965-1970 with Model Cities Variable**

Dependent Variable: Park Acreage Change

	OLS Estimates
<b>Intercept</b>	0.202*** (0.059)
<b>Race (Black=1, White=-1, Mixed=0)</b>	0.122*** (0.035)
<b>1960 Density</b>	-1.94E-06 (1.56E-06)
<b>Model Cities</b>	(-0.075) (0.116)
<b>Boundary</b>	0.0315 (0.058)
Observations	862
R <sup>2</sup>	0.0283

Sources: 1950 and 1960 Census, Chicago Park District, HWLC MRC

\*: P<0.1, \*\*: P<0.05, \*\*\*:P<0.01

These results are telling. When examining the change in acreage, we see that the main determinant was the majority race of the census tracts. This seems to have been primarily driven by the relatively lower change in acreage during this half of the decade (77.96 acres as opposed to 93.83 in the first half) and the addition of the 13.3-acre Park Number 320 in 1969, now known as Robichaux Park, in a Black Boundary tract in Washington Heights. It should be noted, however, that in the 1970 census it was no longer a boundary zone; the Black Belt had expanded significantly South and West. This suggests that we should examine, in this half of the decade, primarily whether a census tract added or lost acreage, rather than the amount it added. The

regression below adds Model Cities as a binary variable and uses the sign of park acreage as the independent variable: 1 for positive change, -1 for negative change, and 0 for no change. The results of this regression are shown below.

**Table 9: Sign of Park Acreage Change by Census Tract, 1965-1970**

Dependent Variable: Sign of Park Acreage Change

	OLS Estimates
<b>Intercept</b>	0.0528*** (0.017)
<b>Boundary</b>	-0.0638*** (0.022)
<b>Black %</b>	-0.1225*** (0.029)
<b>1960 Density</b>	1.916-06*** (5.90E-07)
<b>Model Cities</b>	0.0918** (0.043)
Observations	862
R <sup>2</sup>	0.0507

Sources: 1960 Census, Chicago Park District, HWLC MRC

\*: P<0.1, \*\*: P<0.05, \*\*\*:P<0.01

This regression returns fascinating results. With high significance, the estimated coefficients for the density and Model Cities variables are positive, both of which we would have expected due to the relevant policy considerations of the time. However, the variables boundary and Black percentage, both of which had negative estimated coefficients in the prior regression with total acre change as the dependent variable, are now estimated to be negative, with confidence levels above 99%.

This is an important result. In a time when the vast majority of Park District investments were new small parks (usually under 0.3 acres), this is the metric best suited to measure how the District made decisions. This regression shows that, with the proper controls, Black and boundary census tracts received fewer new parks than would have been expected.



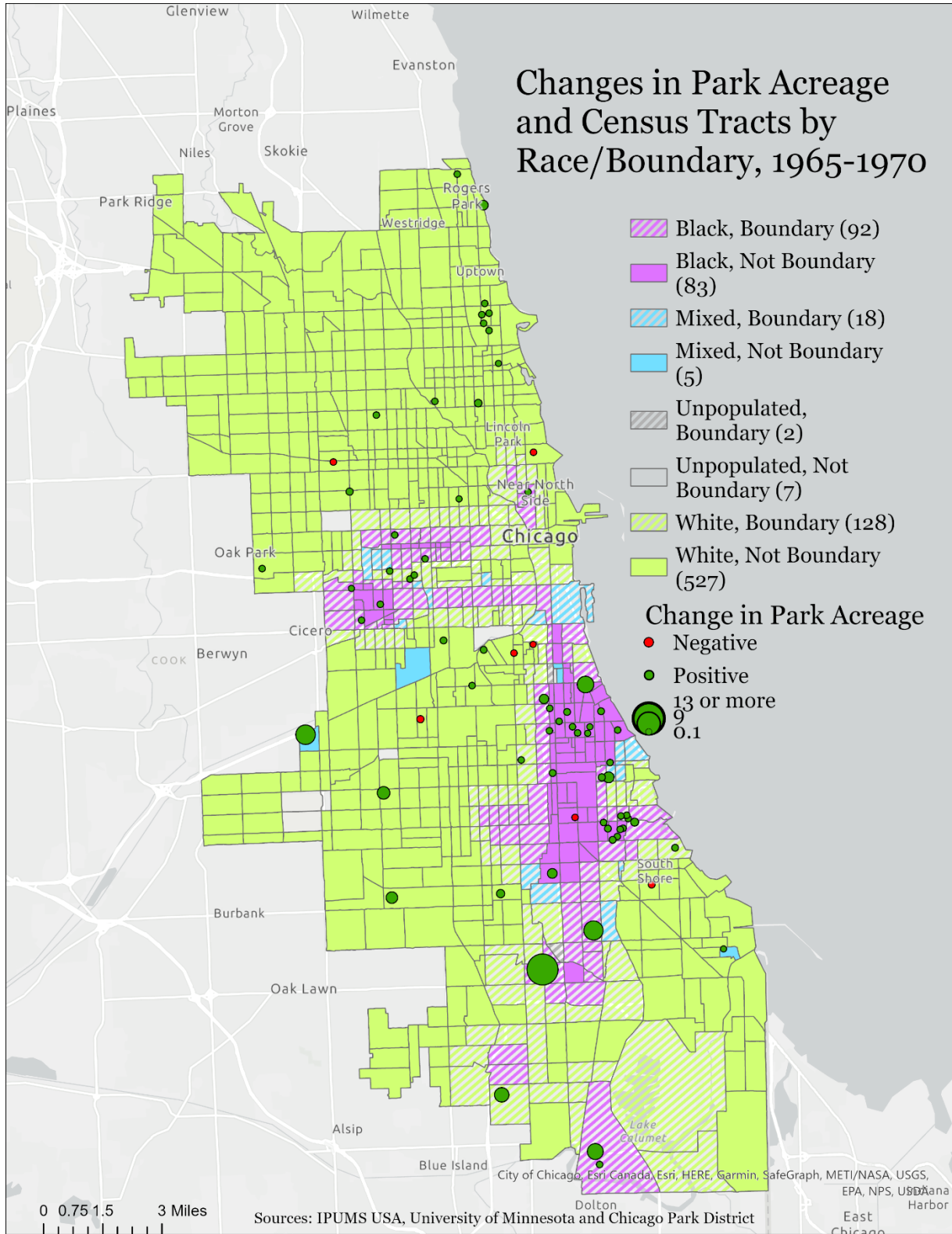


Figure 7: Changes in Park Acreage and Census Tracts by Race and Boundary, 1961-1965

## **Section 8: Crisis and Investment: Parks and Segregation, 1965-1970**

The years 1965 to 1970 included several watershed moments for the American Civil Rights Movement, especially related to equality and investment in urban services, and even more so in Chicago specifically. For the purposes of this study, that means that the issues of de facto segregation and distribution of parks to boundary areas were to a large extent confounded by issues more at the forefront of the minds of decision makers in this era. These include the political pressure of the Civil Rights Movement, the ongoing process of urban renewal, including the Model Cities program as mentioned above, and the 1968 Chicago riots following the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Notably, I was unable to find significant primary sources other than a handful of brochures from the years 1965 to 1967 relevant to the issues of parks and segregation in the archives searched.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, we can build on the analysis of Lincoln Park Zoo's de facto segregation from above by using two undated brochures estimated to be from 1965 or 1966, according to the Chicago Public Library's Special Collections and Preservation Division.

The two brochures, for the Lincoln Park Zoo and the Lincoln Park Conservatory, are a fascinating and enlightening contrast. The brochure for the zoo, like the guidebook from two or three years previously, listed the same three bus routes serving the zoo.<sup>96</sup> The brochure for the conservatory, though, strangely included nine routes, despite the entrances of the zoo and the conservatory sitting only two standard Chicago blocks apart.<sup>97</sup> The brochure first listed the same

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<sup>95</sup> This included the Chicago Park District Collection at DePaul University, the ACLU Illinois Division records at the University of Chicago, the Chicago History Museum Abakanowicz Research Center, the E. Winston and Ina D. Williams NAACP Papers at the Newberry Library, and the Harold Washington Library Center's Municipal Reference Collection, Chicago Park District Records, Chicago Department of Urban Renewal Records, and assorted other documents from these libraries.

<sup>96</sup> "Lincoln Park Zoo Brochure" (Chicago Park District, 1965 or 1966), Department of Urban Renewal Records, [Box 5, Folder 30], Special Collections, Chicago Public Library.

<sup>97</sup> "Lincoln Park Conservatory Brochure" (Chicago Park District, 1965 or 1966), Department of Urban Renewal Records, [Box 5, Folder 30], Special Collections, Chicago Public Library.

three routes but also included the four excluded routes that pass within two blocks of the park, as well as route 11 Lincoln-Wabash and route 73 Armitage, both of which ran a few blocks (but not far) from the park.<sup>98</sup> Because by 1970, the 73 bus served a small 40% Black area of Lincoln Park bounded by Armitage on the North, when the brochure was published in the mid-1960s, Armitage Avenue may have been thought of as one edge of the city's expanding Black neighborhoods.<sup>99</sup>

Although I would need to see other Park District publications regarding the conservatory to confirm this, this suggests that the conservatory was for whatever reason not construed as a segregated all-White park in the minds of District officials in the way that the zoo was. One hypothesis I would offer is that "conservatories" as a concept were conceived as a more integrated space than zoos. This would be related to the fact that the Garfield Park Conservatory, which was much larger and more renowned than the Lincoln Park Conservatory, had been located in a majority-Black census tract since 1960, while the Chicagoland zoos in Lincoln Park and suburban Brookfield were still in very White areas.<sup>100</sup>

Finally, by looking at how the District portrayed its own history and park usership, we can further examine their segregationist tendencies in the late 1960s. The third insightful document from this era is another brochure entitled "Chicago Parks: General Information," which I estimate to have been published in 1965 based on the contained list of the District's parks cross-referenced with the annual *Table of Parks*.<sup>101</sup> Subtitled "What to See and Do in Chicago's Parks," the 50-page document seems to have been the District's attempt to provide a

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<sup>98</sup> McNally & Co., "Chicago Transit Map."

<sup>99</sup> "White and Black Population, 1960"; "Black Population, 1970."

<sup>100</sup> "White and Black Population, 1960."

<sup>101</sup> "Chicago Parks: General Information Brochure"; *Table of Parks and Park Facilities and Programs* (Chicago: Chicago Park District, 1965).

comprehensive introduction to the parks system, with primary sections on the history of the department, the District's most prominent parks, and the programming the District provided.

One quote from the section on the history of the District stands out; at the end of the section, the document stated, "legislation and subsequent court rulings have often supported the principle that parks belong to all the people."<sup>102</sup> This was given as the reasoning for why the Park District levies taxes, issues bonds, and uses eminent domain, so it is perhaps predictable that the phrasing would construe the fact "that parks belong to all the people" as generated by an outside force, but it's still a striking turn of phrase. Rather than grounding universal access to parks as a foundational belief of the District, this phrasing attributed the principle's validity at least partially to outside forces and more or less used it as an excuse for taxation.

Another informative aspect of this brochure is the pictures enclosed. Like the many other Park District publications from this era that I have examined, the pictures of people enjoying parks and park programs are almost exclusively all-White. Images of locations including an art class, day camp, golf school, swim meet, and, predictably, the Lincoln Park Zoo include only White faces.<sup>103</sup> What was unique among all available Park District publications from this era, as far as I can tell, is that the brochure features prominently a visibly integrated scene of recreation, at the 57th Street Beach.

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<sup>102</sup> "Chicago Parks: General Information Brochure," 8.

<sup>103</sup> "Chicago Parks: General Information Brochure," 21, 23, 30–31.



Figure 8: "Chicago Parks: General Information Brochure," Page 25

The inclusion of this image was a significant deviation from what otherwise was a strong tendency to not show any integrated scenes in District publications. The significance of this image cannot be overstated. Since the 1919 race riot, and for years even beyond this brochure's publication, beaches were a major front of racial boundary conflicts. The significance of beaches' integration—what makes it more notable than integration in other recreation spaces—is best described in a short article for *The Conversation* by Victoria Wolcott, author of *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters*:

White stereotypes of blacks as diseased and sexually threatening served as the foundation for this segregation (of beaches and pools)... These spaces provoked the most intense fears of racial mixing among young men and women. Scantly clad bathers flirting and playing raised the specter of interracial sex and some feared for young white women's safety.<sup>104</sup>

The inclusion of this image is clearly important, but what it says about the Park District at this time is unclear. I propose three possible interpretations. First, it is possible that whoever was assembling the brochure included it without looking closely enough to notice the White bathers; they are not necessarily the first thing you notice, and it's possible they wanted to simply include a popular beach which looks protected by Promontory in the image's background. Second, its inclusion could be a subtle nod to the uniqueness of Hyde Park and the political power held by the integrated HPKCC, as discussed above. As comedian Mike Nichols put it in the late 1950s, the new slogan of the neighborhood seemed to be "here we stand, black and white, shoulder to shoulder against the lower classes."<sup>105</sup> Third, it's a possibility that this was a conscious inclusion, an admittedly very small message affirming "the principle that parks belong to all the people" from page eight of the General Information Brochure.

These three theories could be better parsed using other sources from this era related to 57th Street Beach, but I have been unable to find others. My best theory is that the reality is somewhere between the first and second possibilities I listed. I expect that, by the middle of the 1960s, Hyde Park was known city-wide as rather unique in its racial makeup and stratification. Especially because the name of the beach signifies exactly where in the city it was located (57th Street Beach is more locationally specific than Rainbow Beach, for instance), whoever compiled

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<sup>104</sup> Victoria W. Wolcott, "The Forgotten History of Segregated Swimming Pools and Amusement Parks," *The Conversation* (blog), July 9, 2019, <http://theconversation.com/the-forgotten-history-of-segregated-swimming-pools-and-amusement-parks-119586>.

<sup>105</sup> Bruce Sagan, "The Last Word," *Hyde Park Herald*, September 17, 1958.

the document may have simply associated it with Hyde Park and not looked closely at the racial makeup of the photographed crowd. I suspect that an included picture of a rigidly Black beach like 31st Street Beach or a White one such as Montrose Beach in Lincoln Park would not have been shown to be integrated, even if such a photo existed, due to the risk of causing controversy.

Throughout the 1960s and even before in the 1950s, the ongoing process of “urban renewal” was a major force in shaping the city of Chicago, particularly around issues of race and space. Especially in Hyde Park, as discussed in this section and Section 6, urban renewal’s focus on retaining and attracting White residents in the urban core meant that certain areas received investment while others did not. This effort came to a head in 1966 with the creation of the Model Cities program. The Model Cities program provided federal funding as part of President Johnson’s War on Poverty for geographically specific areas of cities across the country, including Chicago, to provide comprehensive public services from beautification to health services to citizen engagement in government.<sup>106</sup> One of the services financed by the federal government was the creation and renovation of public parks. This meant that the target areas selected, Uptown, Grand Boulevard, Woodlawn, and Lawndale, received a large amount of park investments in a very short period of time. Despite representing just 5.7% of the total census tracts in the city, those four areas contained nearly 30% of the census tracts that gained park acreage between 1965 and 1970 and received 39.7% of the new parks and park expansions from the time the program was created to the end of the decade.

The four target areas selected for the Model Cities program, clearly, were those where the mayor and the Department of Development and Planning wanted to direct investment. While

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<sup>106</sup> D. Bradford Hunt, “Model Cities,” in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/832.html>.

there were absolutely political and machine-based considerations when selecting the four areas, historian D. Bradford Hunt described the selections as “deserving” based on the qualifying criteria, although the following process of community input was where the mayor attempted to exert control.<sup>107</sup> The details of the Model Cities program itself is a massive topic that cannot be comprehensively examined here, but it did affect park segregation and the placement of parks in racial boundary zones.<sup>108</sup>

On its face, it seems that even solely among the selected neighborhoods, fewer parks were placed in racial boundary zones. Although it is a small sample size, almost exactly half (49%) of census tracts in the Model Cities target areas were boundary tracts, while only 28% of new parks and park expansions in the selected neighborhoods were placed in boundary tracts from 1967-1970. The small sample size (the set of new parks and park expansions in boundary tracts in Model Cities target areas was only 7 in these years) and the fact that within specific neighborhoods decisions were likely made primarily based on available land and other idiosyncratic features means that limited conclusions can be drawn, but it does support the other findings of this paper.

Beyond the statistical descriptors of the areas in which parks were built, which can admittedly be a bit imprecise, we have contemporary descriptions of the areas selected. Particularly interesting is the case of Uptown. The only North Side area selected, Uptown was uniquely diverse, not just among the areas selected but perhaps among all of Chicago. A report

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<sup>107</sup> Hunt.

<sup>108</sup> For further study of the Model Cities program in Chicago, especially regarding civic participation, see: David L. Protes, “Community Power and Social Policy: Citizen Participation in the Chicago Model Cities Program.” (Ph.D., Chicago, The University of Chicago, 1974), <http://www.proquest.com/docview/302731484/citation/74AFDE2CD2784A45PQ/1>; Kirk, “An Examination and Analysis of the Chicago Model Cities Educational Project, from 1967 Through 1971”; Sarah Rachel Siegel, “‘By the People Most Affected’: Model Cities, Citizen Control, and the Broken Promises of Urban Renewal” (PhD, St. Louis, MO, Washington University in St. Louis, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.7936/0x01-ks37>.



by the Jewish Vocational Service of Chicago described the neighborhood as “‘a port of entry’ into Chicago for Southern whites and blacks, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and other Spanish-speaking groups and recently for an increasing number of Europeans... The major center for day labor operations in greater Chicago.”<sup>109</sup> In his Ph.D. dissertation, David Protess wrote that the neighborhood

is the kaleidoscopic image of life in Chicago. It is as if the community were planned to place every opposite known to the city dweller in a small geographic area. The rich and poor, elderly and young, high rises and half-way houses, industry and small shops, and whites (Appalachian and otherwise), blacks, Latins, Japanese-Americans, and American Indians all within a territory of under three square miles.<sup>110</sup>

Uptown stood in stark contrast to the other target areas; Protess described Grand Boulevard as “a modern American slum... unlike Uptown, Grand Boulevard is a racially and economically homogeneous community,” and wrote, “on all indices, Woodlawn ranks among the most disadvantaged of the seventy-six community areas of Chicago.”<sup>111</sup> Protess excludes Lawndale from the study for various reasons, including “its similarity to Grand Boulevard,” signaling that Lawndale had the same characteristics at the time: “racially and economically homogeneous,” with little political power.<sup>112</sup>

While the Grand Boulevard target area did include a small section of the racially diverse North Kenwood, generally speaking the three target areas other than Uptown were close to 100% Black, meaning that any park space added there would be Black park space. Even in the Grand Boulevard target area, of the six new parks added from 1966 to 1970, not a single one was in a

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<sup>109</sup> William Gellman, “Changing Career Patterns for the Vocationally Disadvantaged in a Polyethnic, Multicultural Model Cities Area: Final Report, June 15, 1970-May 31, 1973” (Chicago: Jewish Vocational Service of Chicago, Illinois, 1974), 2, Municipal Reference Collection, Harold Washington Library Center, Chicago Public Library.

<sup>110</sup> Protess, “Community Power and Social Policy.”

<sup>111</sup> Protess, 115, 154.

<sup>112</sup> Protess, 28, 115.

White, mixed, or boundary census tract; all were in the 99 percent or more Black neighborhoods in the target area.

The urban renewal process, more generally, was a significant force in creating new parks, particularly through the Model Cities program and in, specifically, Hyde Park. Of the eight parks whose “History” section on the Park District website today includes urban renewal as the process by which they were created or the source of their funding that were created between 1957 and 1970, all but one are in Hyde Park.<sup>113</sup> This is likely for the simple reason that University funds were available for beautification purposes such as park construction in Hyde Park, while urban renewal efforts were more focused on buildings elsewhere. It is also worth noting that Hyde Park was the biggest urban renewal project (at least when measured by families displaced) in the city; about 17% of all families displaced by urban renewal in Chicago from 1950 to 1966 were displaced from Hyde Park-Kenwood.<sup>114</sup>

The only other parks whose websites mention this period of Urban Renewal are Boswell Park (then Number 340 Playlot)—a tiny park opened in Woodlawn as a direct investment from the Department of Housing and Urban Development during the Model Cities program—and Memorial Park, which grew by two acres in 1966 using land from the Department of Urban Renewal.<sup>115</sup> Several parks in the Lincoln Park neighborhood and elsewhere also mention urban

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<sup>113</sup> “Parks & Facilities,” Chicago Park District, accessed March 1, 2022, [https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities?title=&field\\_location\\_type\\_target\\_id%5B0%5D=381](https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities?title=&field_location_type_target_id%5B0%5D=381).

<sup>114</sup> Digital Scholarship Lab, “Renewing Inequality,” ed. Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers, *American Panorama*, accessed March 1, 2022, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/renewal/#view=0/0/1&viz=cartogram&city=chicagoIL&loc=11/41.8640/-87.6340>.

<sup>115</sup> “Boswell (Arnita Young) Park,” Chicago Park District, accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/boswell-arnita-young-park>; “Memorial Park,” Chicago Park District, accessed March 2, 2022, <https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/memorial-park>.

renewal as a source of funding in the 1970s, but that is outside the scope of this project.<sup>116</sup> An interesting topic for future research would be the role that urban renewal, as a policy and as a concept, plays in public memory, public history, and official publications.

The final story of the 1960s, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, resulting riots, and the District's response, can be illustrated through the study of one publication. In this time period, the Weekly Administrative Bulletin of the Park District's Department of Recreation and Building & Facilities Operating Division served as a weekly update to street-level parks officials of what policies and information higher-ups deemed important. By examining this publication, we can learn the response the Park District took to the crisis of the late 1960s and how it related to the segregation and discriminatory planning it employed.

On April 1, 1968, just days before the assassination of Dr. King, we see the last example of how the Bulletin discussed safety and race-related issues before the dynamic in the city shifted. Under the headline "Park Participation," the memo advised,

It is noted that in some dense areas park patrons are subject to intimidation and physical abuse, in some cases by undesirable gang elements outside the park area that bar many patrons from attending park programs. This should be brought to the attention of the proper authorities and some plans made to rectify this situation.<sup>117</sup>

Andrew Diamond writes that, up to the 1950s, Chicago's gangs were largely White and perpetrated violence against Black and Latino Chicagoans. By this point, however, "gang violence occurred both within and across racial and ethnic lines," meaning that the "intimidation and physical abuse" mentioned in the Bulletin could be referring either to intraracial or

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<sup>116</sup> "Oz Park," Chicago Park District, accessed March 2, 2022, <https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/oz-park>; "Hoard (Edison) Park," Chicago Park District, accessed March 2, 2022, <https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/hoard-edison-park>.

<sup>117</sup> P.J. McCarthy, "Weekly Administrative Bulletin (Number 13)" (Chicago Park District Department of Recreation and Building & Facilities Operating Division, April 1, 1968), 1, Abakanowicz Research Center, Chicago History Museum, JS712.P2 W4.

interracial violence, or both.<sup>118</sup> Given the connotations of the often-euphemistic “dense areas,” however, it seems likely that this statement refers to the Black areas of the city. Whether the gangs in question were White, Black, or Latino is up for debate, but given the past interracial gang violence at parks, I suspect that the document refers to the possibility of interracial, rather than intraracial, intimidation and abuse.

The first mention of race and interracial conflict in the Bulletin—or even of violence in general—after the riots in the first week of April was not until May 20th. In the section on the transition to summertime policy, employees are told to notify supervisors immediately “in cases of special events, unusual incidents, turmoil or local disturbances.”<sup>119</sup> Additionally, the same Bulletin describes the reopening of beaches for the summer as “in restricted areas under supervision,” a phrasing that certainly suggests nervousness about racial conflicts in the aftermath of the riots, but could be a standard way of describing beach openings.<sup>120</sup> I was unable to find similar phrasing in other years’ bulletins.

In the June 17th Bulletin, officials wrote under the headline “Commission on Human Relations,” “Park District personnel are requested to call (the Commission on Human Relations) and report racial disturbances, etc. Further instructions will be forthcoming.”<sup>121</sup> Further, that week’s Bulletin seems to have been where the dam broke in regards to racial incidents and parks

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<sup>118</sup> Andrew J. Diamond, “Gangs,” in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/497.html>.

<sup>119</sup> P.J. McCarthy, “Weekly Administrative Bulletin (Number 20)” (Chicago Park District Department of Recreation and Building & Facilities Operating Division, May 20, 1968), 1, Abakanowicz Research Center, Chicago History Museum, JS712.P2 W4.

<sup>120</sup> McCarthy, 1.

<sup>121</sup> P.J. McCarthy, “Weekly Administrative Bulletin (Number 25)” (Chicago Park District Department of Recreation and Building & Facilities Operating Division, June 23, 1969), 2, Abakanowicz Research Center, Chicago History Museum, JS712.P2 W4.

after the April riots; immediately below that section was a section headlined “‘Tension/Problem Areas’ Meeting.”<sup>122</sup>

On June 6th, Superintendent of the District Erwin Weiner chaired what the Bulletin described as “the 1968 meeting on ‘Tension/Problem Areas’” between officials from the Park District, Chicago Police, the Board of Education, and the Commission on Human Relations. This is an extremely fascinating event due to its relevance to the topic of this paper, but I was unable to find documentation from the meeting itself. Additionally, the fact that it was described as “the 1968 meeting” suggests that it may have been an annual meeting.<sup>123</sup>

It is fascinating that the framing of racial “problem areas” and “tension,” almost word for word, remained unchanged in the lexicon of parks officials from Lohman in 1947 to this document, more than two decades later. Twenty years later, Park District officials never stopped conceptualizing racial boundary zones as places of conflict.

## **Section 9: Conclusion**

From 1947 into the 1970s, the Chicago Park District’s conceptualized interracial conflict as an inevitability. Decisionmakers treated the areas of the city in proximity to both White and Black residents as “problem areas” and, as such, deprived these areas of equitable amounts of park space. This led to a disparate impact on Black residents, who were more likely than White residents to live in these boundary areas, and hampered the purported efforts of the late 1960s to invest in previously disinvested parts of the city.

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<sup>122</sup> McCarthy, 2.

<sup>123</sup> The information that could be provided by notes or minutes from this meeting would be invaluable, but I made the hard decision that I did not have the time to submit a FOIA request, and that even if I did, a FOIA librarian likely would not be able to locate such materials. If future researchers could find records from this meeting or those in other years, that would be a truly excellent resource in investigating this topic.

Additionally, and perhaps equally importantly, the Park District viewed and treated certain parks as White and others as Black, even if they were located in diverse neighborhoods and even if they were supposedly “city-wide” parks. This meant, in practice, that Black residents had less access to resources such as the lakefront and the Lincoln Park Zoo. This disparity is due in large part to the much more expansive forces of residential segregation, but was exacerbated by individual decisions by the Park District, exemplified by the cases of the Hyde Park beaches and the Lincoln Park Zoo guidebook.

This study of the Chicago Park District, limited to thirteen years and limited by the resources available, does not purport to address every aspect of segregationist policy taken by the District nor the full socio-cultural impacts of these policies. Despite this, it serves as an informative and thought-provoking examination of one previously unexamined municipal entity’s participation in segregation.

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