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# Reconnecting Rondo: Repairing, Restoring and Revitalizing the Rondo Neighborhood

Thursday February 23, 2023, 12 Noon  
Marvin R. Anderson, Presenter

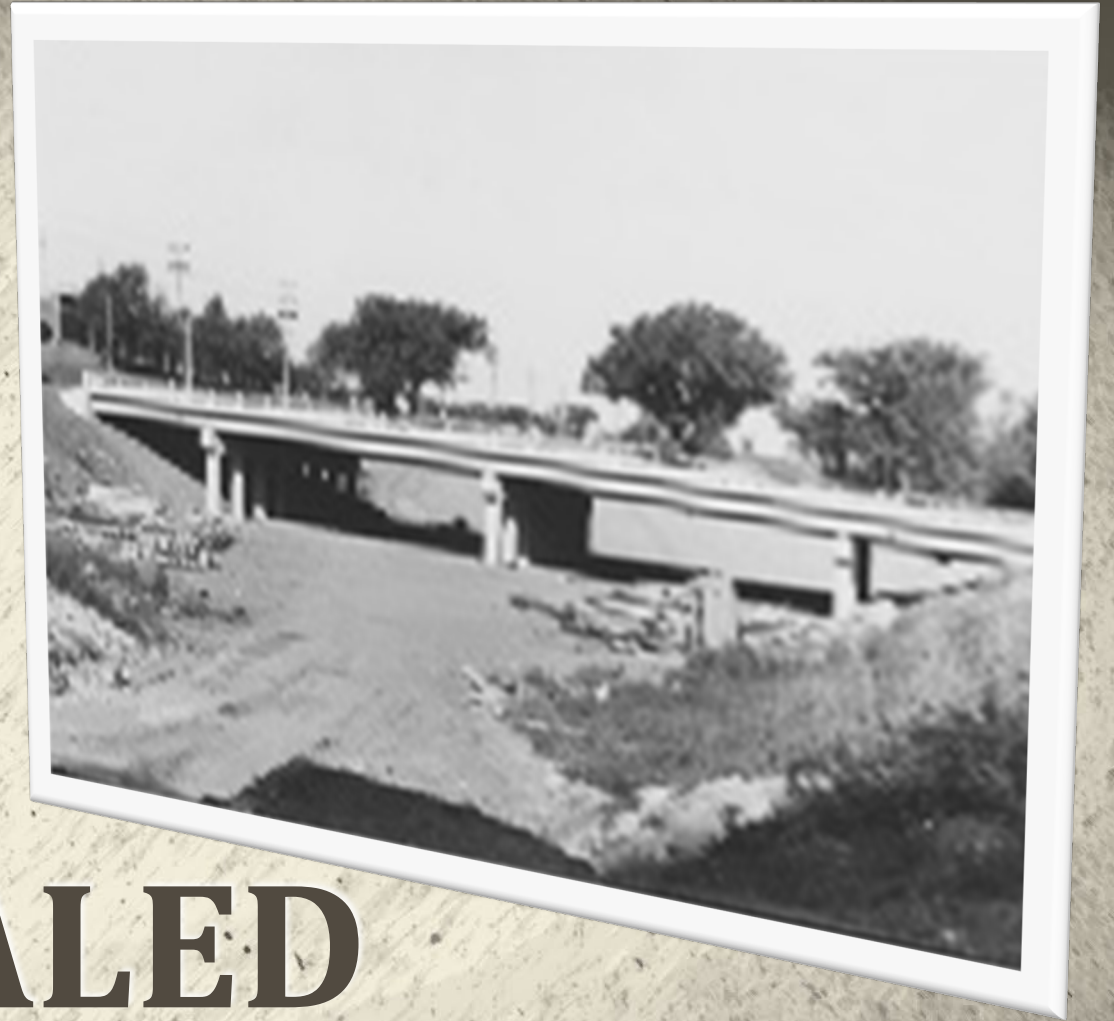
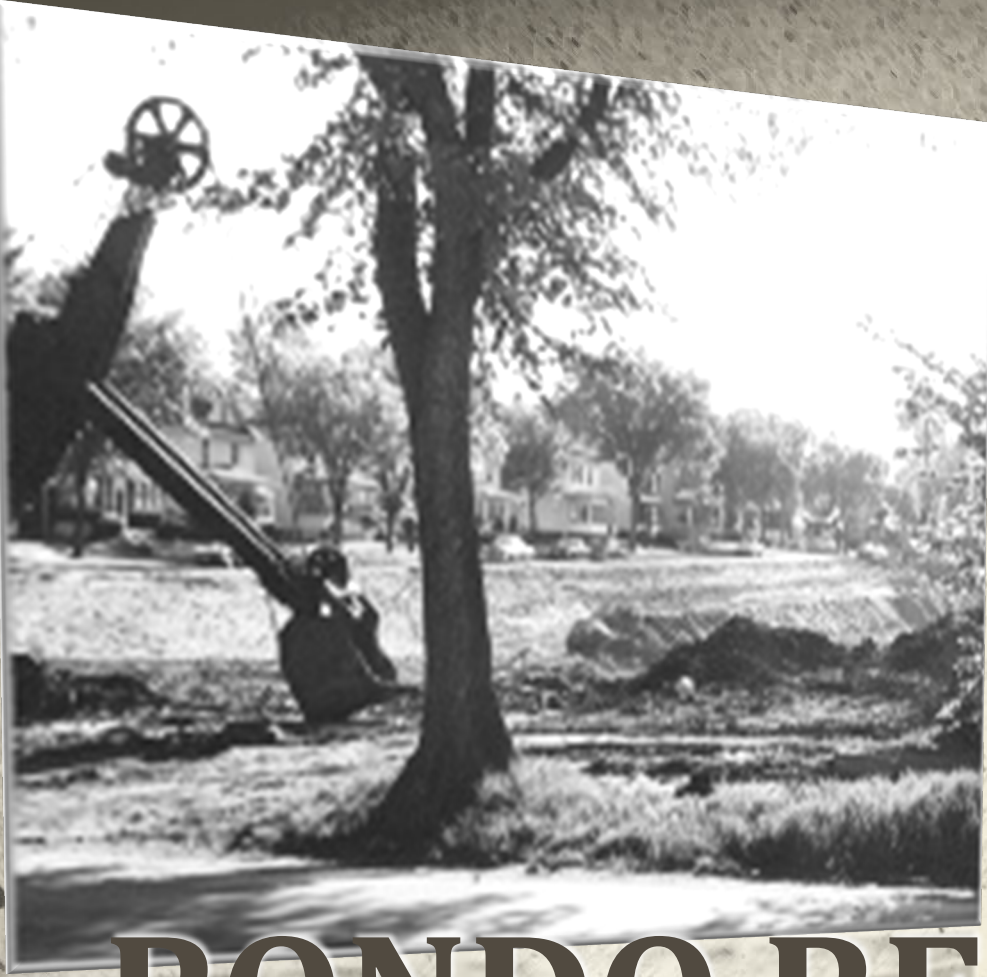
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Expression / Rondo  
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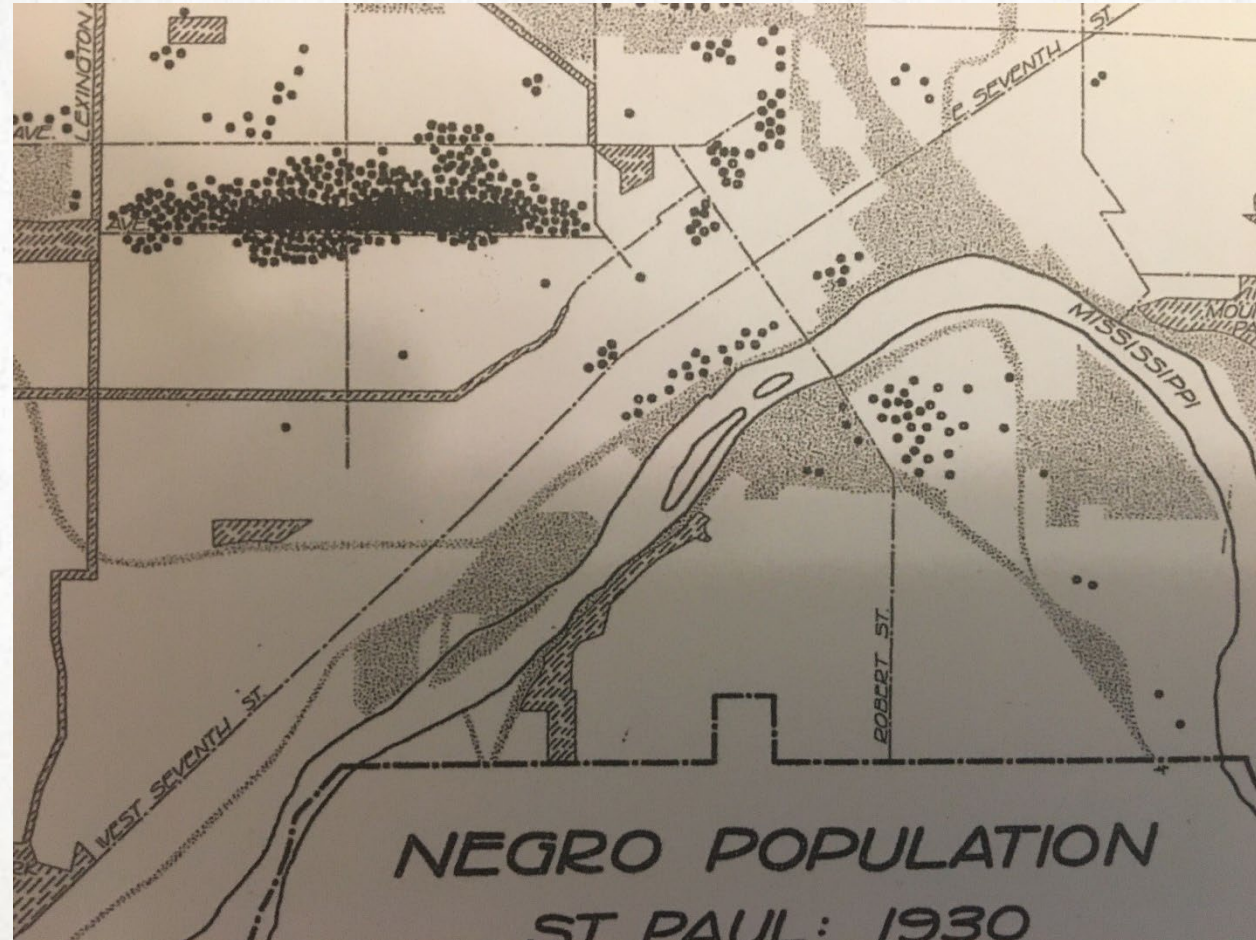


# RONDO REVEALED

**FEDERAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S BIRTH OF A HIGHWAY LEADS TO THE DEMISE OF A COMMUNITY**



# RONDO COMMUNITY 1930





### CENTRAL SAINT PAUL, 1935

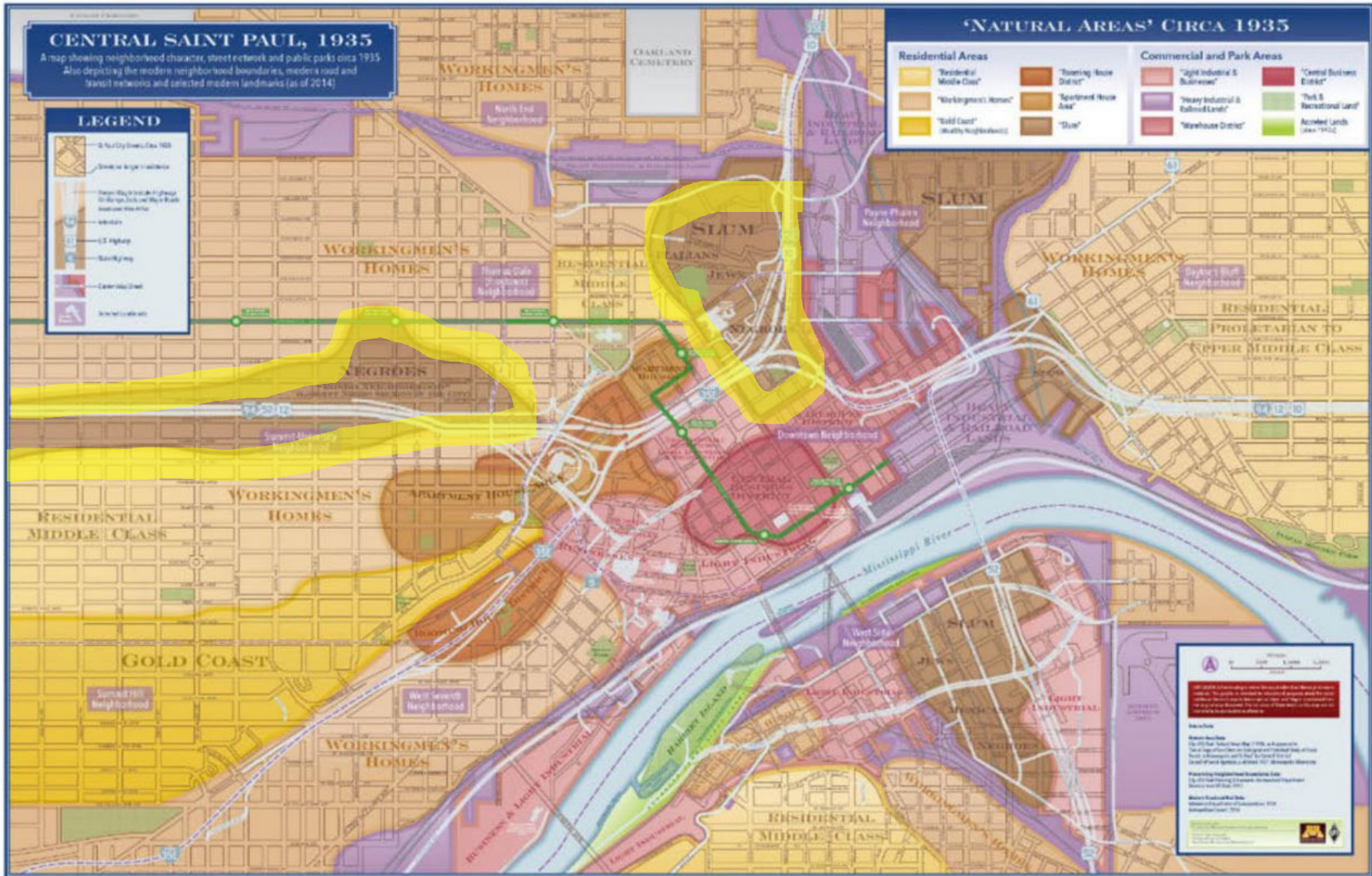
A map showing neighborhood character, street network and public parks circa 1935. Also depicting the modern neighborhood boundaries, modern road and transit networks and selected modern landmarks (as of 2014).

#### LEGEND

- City limits 1855-1935
- City limits 1935-2014
- Major roads 1935-2014
- Major roads 1855-1935
- Transit lines 1935-2014
- Transit lines 1855-1935
- Public parks 1935-2014
- Public parks 1855-1935
- Modern landmarks 2014

### 'NATURAL AREAS' CIRCA 1935

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Residential Areas</b>          | <b>Commercial and Park Areas</b>  |
| Residential Middle Class          | Light Industrial & Business       |
| Workingmen's Homes                | Heavy Industrial & Railroad Lands |
| Gold Coast (Luxury Neighborhoods) | Warehouse District                |
| Tenement House District           | Central Business District         |
| Apartment House Area              | Park & Recreational Land          |
| Slum                              | Acquired Lands (1864-1912)        |



**Scale:** 0 1 2 Miles

**Map Data:**  
 1935 City of Saint Paul, Minnesota, as of 1935. The map shows the city limits of Saint Paul, Minnesota, as of 1935. The map is based on the 1935 City of Saint Paul, Minnesota, as of 1935. The map is based on the 1935 City of Saint Paul, Minnesota, as of 1935.

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In the 1930s, Rondo Avenue was at the heart of St. Paul's largest African American neighborhood.

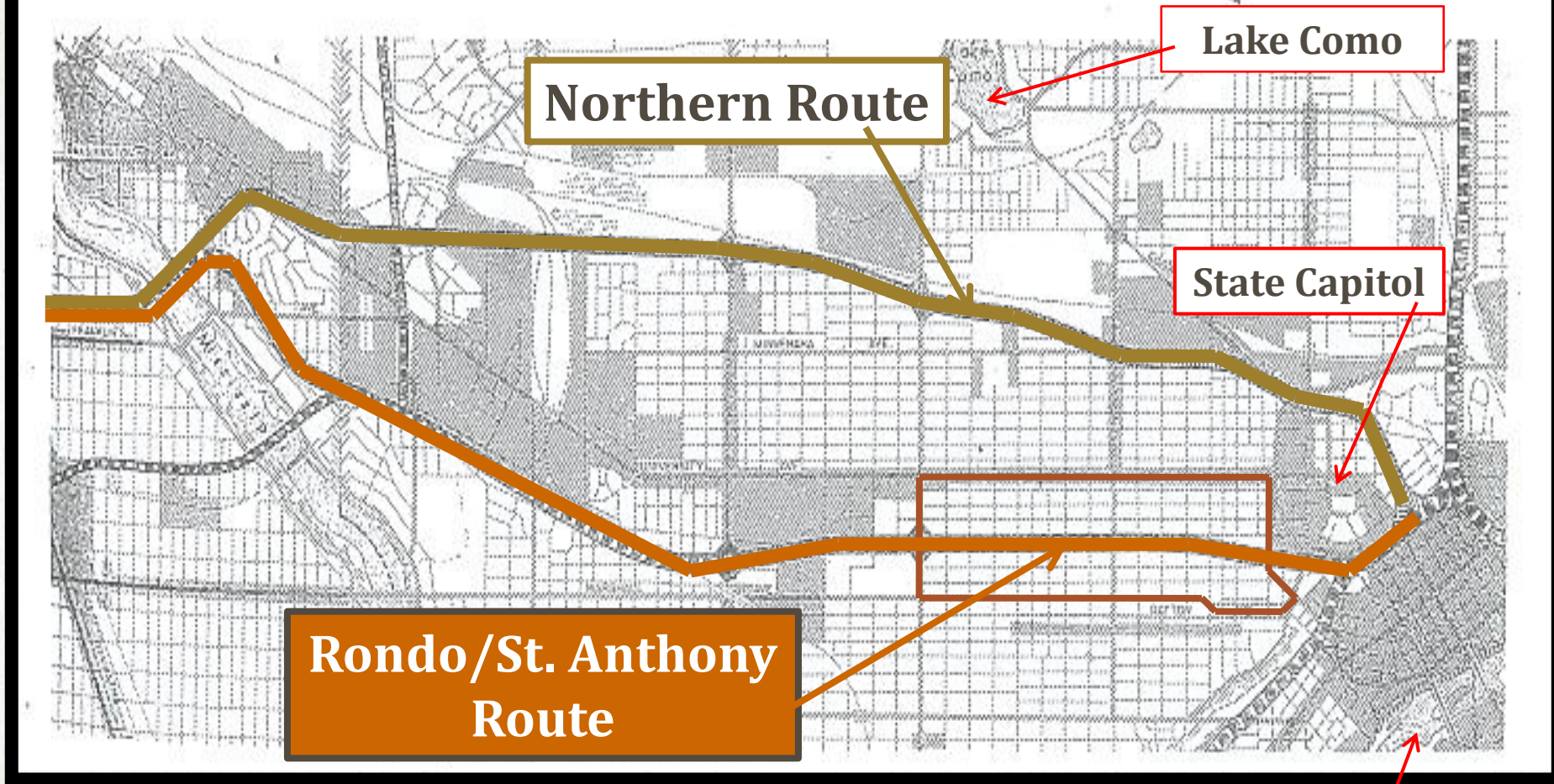




African Americans whose families had lived in Minnesota for decades and others who were just arriving from the South made up a vibrant, vital community that was in many ways independent of the white society around it.



ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS FOR THE INTERCITY ROUTE



**Northern Route**

**Lake Como**

**State Capitol**

**Rondo/St. Anthony  
Route**

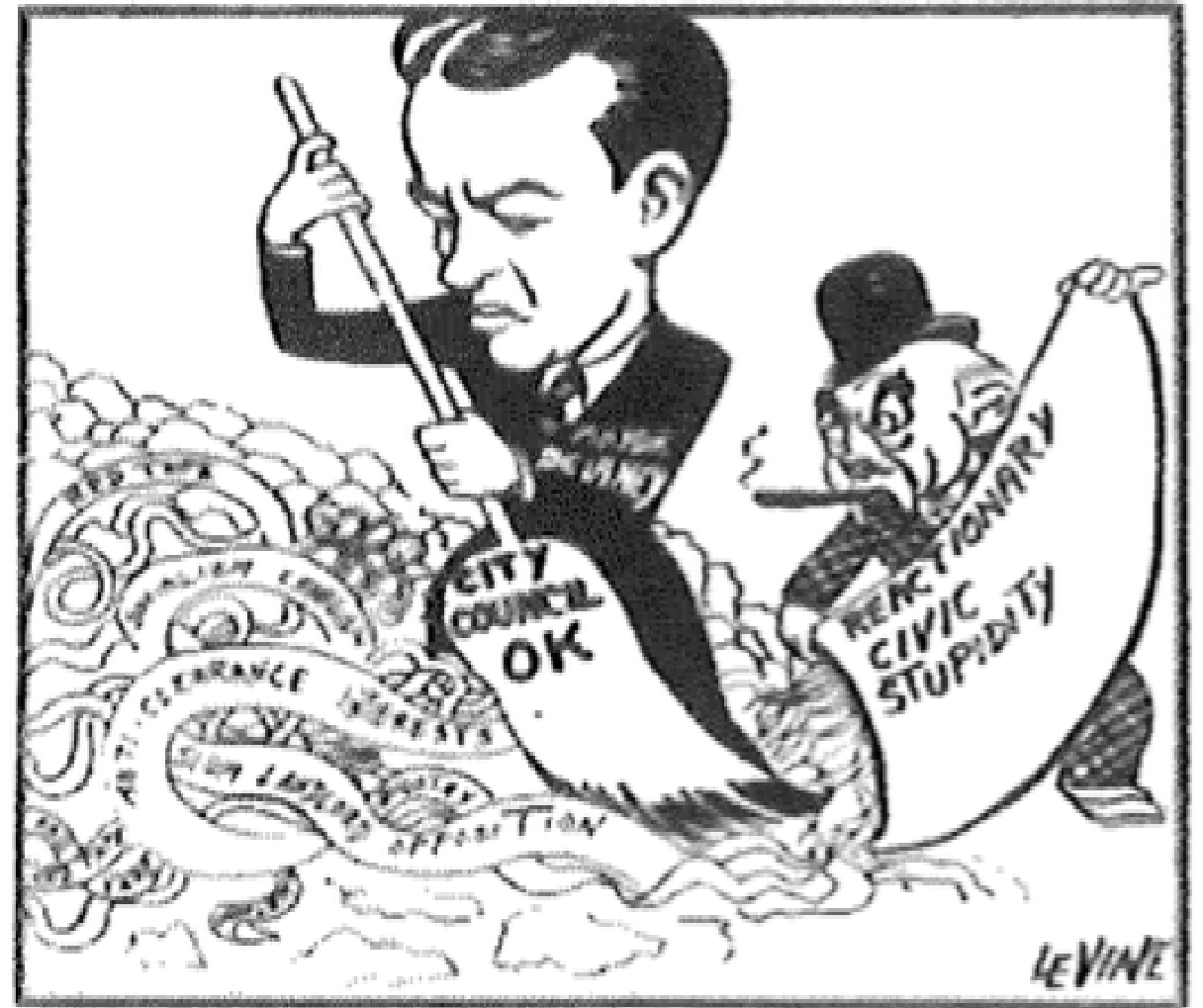
**Mississippi River**



'Which Would You Prefer?'



'Slum Clearance'



# AN ANSWER TO THE MAYOR...

*“IT WASN’T A SLUM...”*

## **Freeway location**

The article Jan. 18 about the location of I-94 through St. Paul did not discuss the real reasons for this location.

George Herrold was not the only one objecting to the proposed freeway’s location. Long before Mr. Herrold there were many local engineers, state and federal engineers, planners and others who strongly felt the freeway should be located miles north of the capitol.

However, the downtown businessmen, Chamber of Commerce and the City Council felt that it would be good for business if the new freeway were located close as possible to the downtown area. Also,

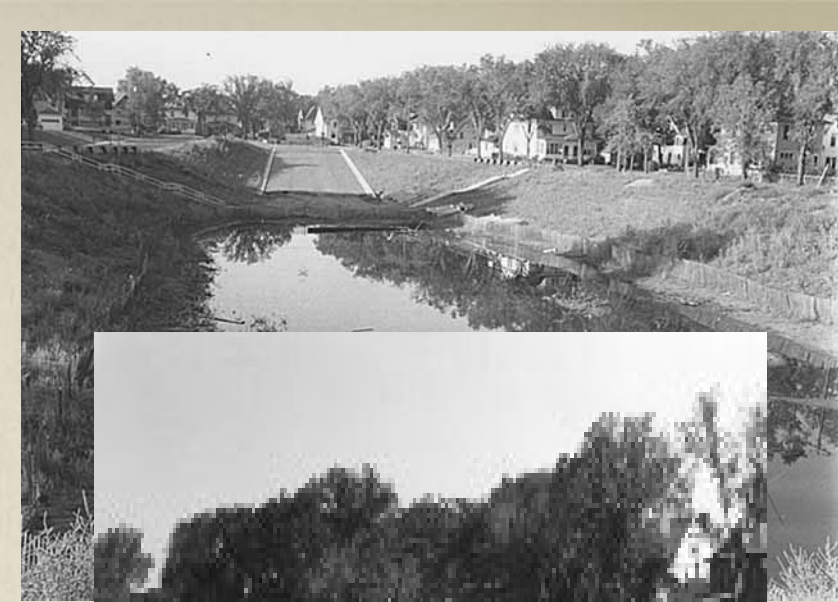
George Shepard, then the powerful city engineer, street and highway coordinator and planner (before the days of urban renewal) wanted to clear out the “slums” along Rondo Avenue. The state Legislature wanted to remove the “slums” south of the Capitol for expansion, access to and enhancement of the Capitol grounds.

So, the downtown business interests, City Council and state Legislature successfully lobbied for the freeway location as now built. The freeway location was a political design — not an engineering one.

**CLAUDE THOMPSON**  
ST. PAUL

■ The writer, now retired, was assistant to Shepard from the late 1950s to the early 1960s. He also was head of the St. Paul public works street design division for many years.





The construction of I-94 shattered this tight-knit community, displaced thousands of African Americans into a racially segregated city and a discriminatory housing market, and erased a now-legendary neighborhood.



# MEMORIES OF RONDO





# AFTER THE I-94 CONSTRUCTION (1956-1968)...

**Loss** - 700 homes 300 Business

- **Home Ownership** - 48% decline
- **Population** - 61% decline
- **Intergenerational wealth** - \$35m
- **Education** - \$35m = 4800 college degrees
- **A wealth gap** - \$157m from home equity alone



## Wrong is Wrong

- Rondo was literally split in half
- 700 African American owned homes were destroyed
- 300 African American businesses were destroyed
- \$270 million home ownership equity gap in Rondo\*

\* Rondo Past Prosperity Study





# ...MINNESOTA RANKS WORSE FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS...



- **Ranked 4<sup>th</sup> worst place nationally for African Americans**
- **Home ownership—25% of black vs 76% of whites**
- **Lack of affordable housing**
- **Ongoing racial tensions**
- **Lack of Generational Wealth**
- **Educational Disparities**
- **Healthcare Disparities**
- **Economic and employment disparities**

# BEFORE AND AFTER.....



**A Rondo home prior to I-94**



**The same location after I-94**



## ROOT SHOCK

- Root shock, at the level of the individual, is a profound emotional upheaval that destroys the working model of the world that had existed in the individual's head. Root shock undermines trust, increases anxiety about letting loved ones out of one's sight, destabilizes relationships, destroys social, emotional and financial resources and increases the risk for every kind of stress related disease from depression to heart attack. It leaves people chronically cranky.
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## ROOT SHOCK

- Root shock at the level of the local community disperses people to all directions of the compass. People who were near are too far and people who were far are too near. The elegance of the neighborhood, each person in his social and geographic slot is destroyed and even if the neighborhood is rebuilt exactly as it was it won't work. The repaired geography is not enough to repair injuries to the multiple maze ways that make up a community.
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## DISCUSSION

- **Nashville I-40 Steering Committee, Etc., et al., Plaintiffs-appellants, v. Buford Ellington, Governor, et al., Defendants-appellees, 387 F.2d 179 (6th Cir. 1968)**

**Certiorari Denied January 29, 1968**

- **See 88 S. Ct. 857.**
  - Jack Greenberg, New York City, and Avon N. Williams, Jr., Nashville, Tenn., for appellants, Avon N. Williams, Jr., Nashville, Tenn., James M. Nabrit, III, Michael Davidson, Charles H. Jones, Jr., New York City, on the brief.
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# DISCUSSION

**U.S. Supreme Court**  
**Citizens to Preserve Overton Park v. Volpe, 401 U.S. 402 (1971)**  
**Citizens to Preserve Overton Park v. Volpe**  
**401 U.S. 402**

The case concerned the decision by the [Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe](#) to approve the construction of [Interstate 40](#) through [Overton Park](#) in [Memphis, Tennessee](#) pursuant to his powers under the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 and the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968. These acts prohibited the Secretary from financing interstate construction through public parks if a "feasible and prudent" alternative route existed. Further, if no alternative route was found by the secretary, the secretary could only allow the construction through the park if "all possible planning to minimize harm" had been conducted.<sup>[1]</sup>

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# DISCUSSION

## National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)

NEPA, sometimes referred to as the Magna Carta of environmental legislation, was the vanguard of a collection of legislation enacted in the 1970s in response to increasing public pressure on the federal government to address pollution, air quality, and other signs of environmental degradation. NEPA requires all federal agencies to assess the environmental impacts of any major federal agency action before the action is undertaken.

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# DISCUSSION

Archer, Deborah N. (2020). “White Men’s Roads Through Black Men’s Homes’: Advancing Racial Equity Through Highway Reconstruction”. *Vanderbilt Law Review*. 73: 1259.

This Article is the first in the legal literature to explore in depth the racial equity concerns and opportunities raised by modern highway redevelopment. It also builds on the work of legal scholars who advocate for addressing systemic racial inequality by requiring that policymakers conduct a thorough and comprehensive analysis of how a proposed action, policy, or practice will affect racial and ethnic groups. The Article concludes by proposing a way forward for highway redevelopment projects: requiring jurisdictions to complete comprehensive racial equity impact studies prior to any construction. Racial equity impact studies have been used or proposed in various contexts to reform racialized institutions and structures. This Article argues that highway redevelopment projects should join this growing list.

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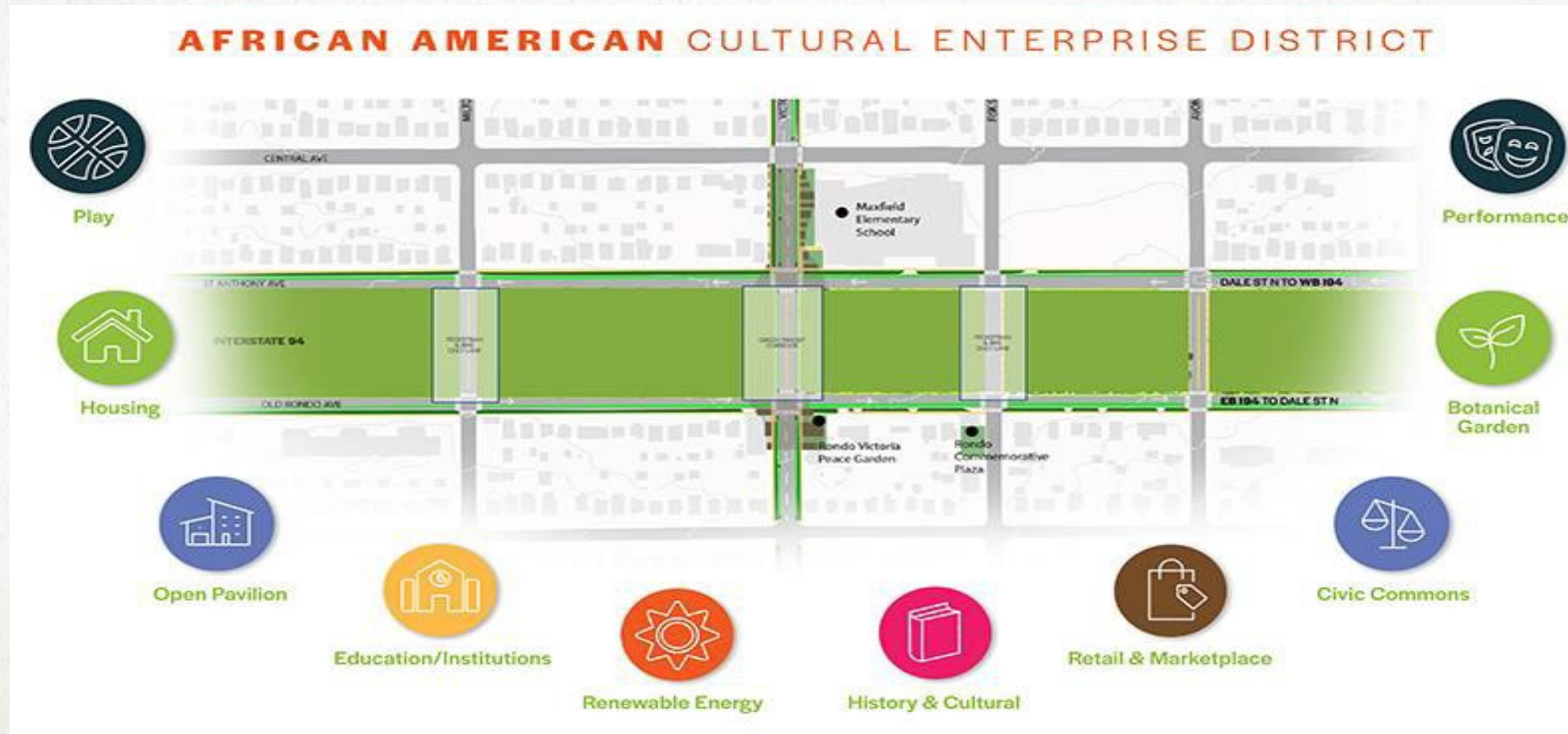
# RECONNECT RONDO IS LEADING A RESTORATIVE MOVEMENT

- **Mission:** Lead the effort to revitalize Rondo and reignite a vibrant African American cultural enterprise district connected by a land bridge.
- **Plan:** Connect Minnesota leaders, equity organizations and the Rondo community to ensure a better, brighter and more equitable future



# THE IDEA IS BIG

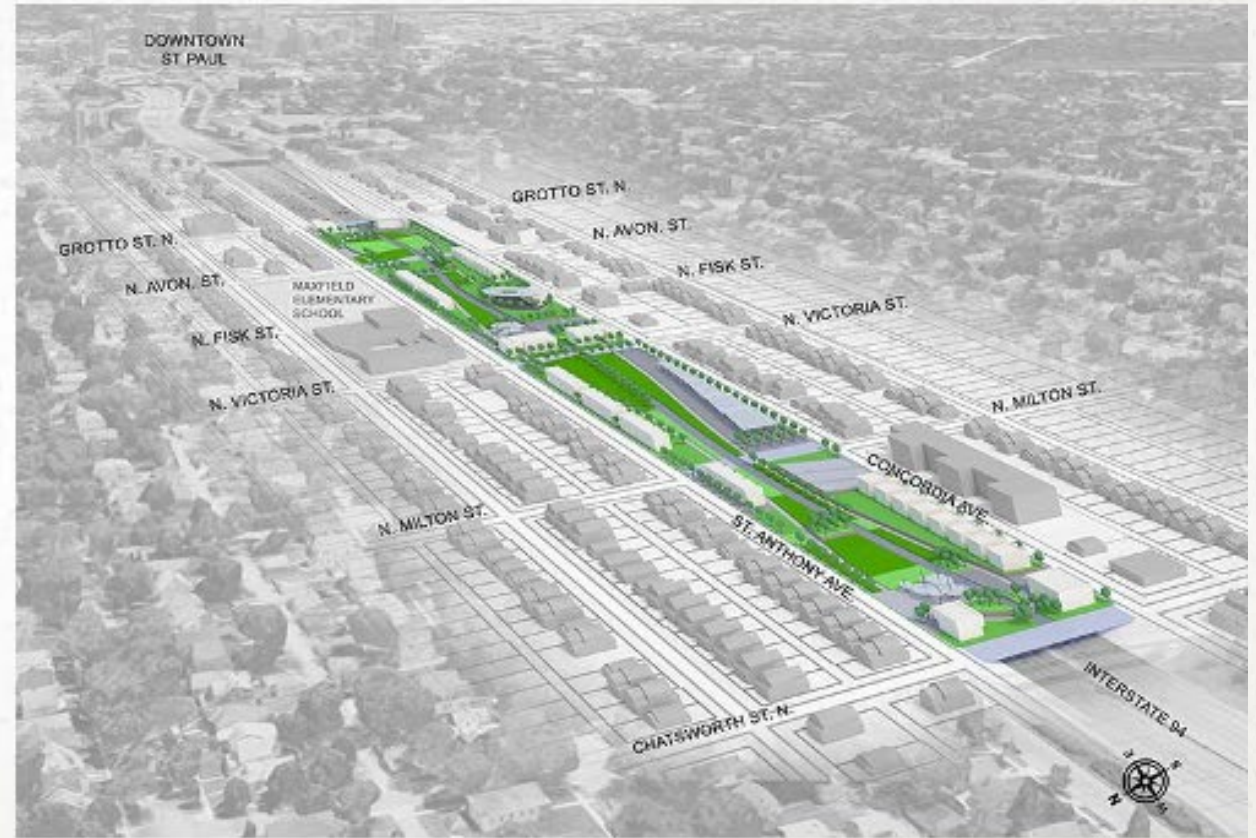
- Minnesota's first cultural enterprise district connected by a community landbridge





# THE LAND BRIDGE

- Length 2,600-3,200 lin. ft.
- Total capital cost up to \$458.9 million
- Total O&M cost up to \$6.9 million annually



# ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES ARE CONSIDERABLE



## New housing

468 - 576 housing units in Rondo



## Growing community

1000+ new residents



## New jobs

1,304 - 1,872 new permanent and construction related jobs



## Retail & Office

87,750 - 108,000 square feet



## Nonprofit & Institutional

29,250 - 36,000 square feet



## Increased city revenue

approximately \$3.8 million - \$4.2 million annually



# A PURPOSEFUL PATH TO EQUITY



# FUN FACTS





# FUN FACTS



# FUN FACTS

- **Interstate Exit Numbers**

- The States typically use one of two methods of numbering the Interstate interchange exits.
  - The *Consecutive* numbering system -- Starting at the most westerly or southerly point on each Interstate route, interchanges are numbered consecutively. Thus, the first interchange becomes Interchange #1. Each succeeding interchange is numbered consecutively as #2, 3, 4, etc.
  - The *Milepost* numbering system -- All Interstate routes are mile posted beginning at the most westerly or southerly point. The beginning point is milepost '0'. If the first interchange on the route is located between milepost 4.0 and 5.0, it is numbered as Interchange #4. The next interchange, if located at milepost 8.7, would be numbered as Interchange #8, etc. With this system the motorist can easily determine the location and distance to a desired interchange.
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## FUN FACTS

### Longest Interstate Routes:

I-90, Seattle, WA to Boston, MA 3,085.27 miles

I-80, San Francisco, CA to Teaneck, NJ 2,906.77 miles

I-40, Barstow, CA to Wilmington, NC 2,554.29 miles

I-10, Los Angeles, CA to Jacksonville, FL 2,459.96 miles

I-70, Cove Fort, UT to Baltimore, MD 2,175.46 miles

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## **FUN FACTS**

Shortest (2-Digit) Interstate Routes:

I-97, Annapolis to Baltimore, MD 17.57 miles

I-99, Bedford to Bald Eagle, PA 53.00 miles \*

I-73, Emery to Greensboro, NC 56.70 miles \*

I-86, I-84 to Pocatello, ID 63.18 miles

I-19, Nogales to Tucson, AZ 63.35 miles

(\* Additional miles of I-99 in PA and I-73 in NC are expected to be built)

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## FUN FACTS

States with Most Interstate Mileage:

Texas            17 routes        3,232.04 miles

California      25 routes        2,453.31 miles

Illinois                    23 routes        2,160.13 miles

Pennsylvania 21 routes        1,754.55 miles

Ohio              21 routes        1,565.39 miles

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## FUN FACTS

### States with Most Interstate Route

New York	1,496.79 miles	28 routes
California	2,453.31 miles	25 route
Illinois	2,160.13 miles	23 routes
Pennsylvania	1,754.55 miles	21 routes
Ohio	1,565.39 miles	21 routes

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## **FUN FACTS MINNESOTA**

I – 90 is 275 miles from the southwest corner to the southeast corner

US-75 is 410 miles from MN-IA border in south to Kittson County in North, and US-71 is 399 miles from the MN-IA border in south to International Falls in north

I-35 from Shepard Rd to Downtown/Kellogg exit speed limit is under 50 miles an hour. It is not called an interstate but a parkway.

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HGA



Thank you and stay  
safe.

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