

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

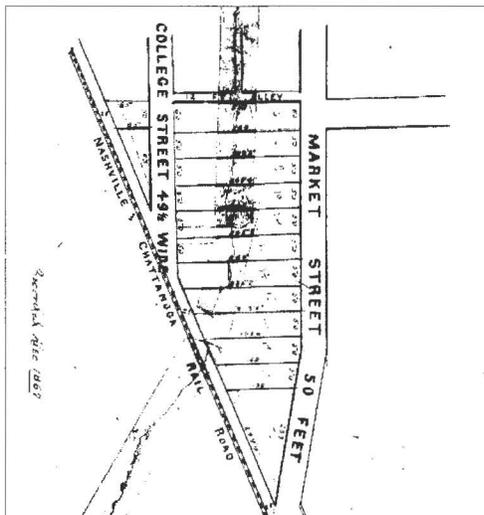


Metropolitan Historical Commission
 Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission
 Sunnyside in Sevier Park
 3000 Granny White Pike
 Nashville, Tennessee 37204
 Telephone: (615) 862-7970

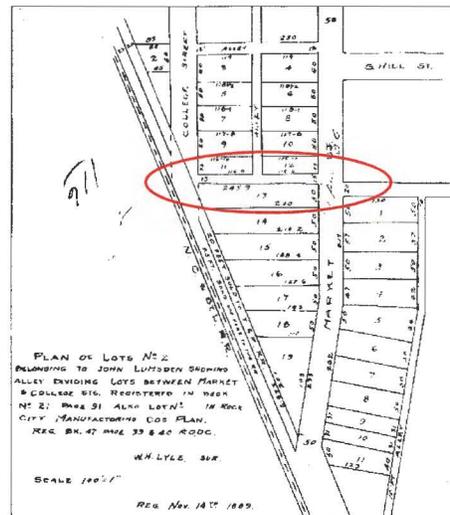
To: Metropolitan Council
 From: Metropolitan Historical Commission, Staff
 Date: December 18, 2019
 Re: BL2019-112

An ordinance to amend the Geographic Information Systems Street and Alley Centerline Layer for the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, by changing the name of Gray Street to “3rd Avenue South.” (Proposal Number 2019M-003SR-001).

The subject segment of Gray Street began as a 15’ wide alley platted in 1889 by *John Lumsden’s Plan No. 2* (attached sketch; Fig. 2).¹ The plat was a subdivision of *John Lumsden Plan No. 1*, previously recorded in 1867 (Fig. 1).² The new plat (*Plan No. 2*) divided five of the original northern lots in half and created two new alleys within the plan, including the one that would eventually become Gray Street. At the time, 3rd Avenue South and 2nd Avenue South were known as College Street and Market Street, respectively, and were labeled as such on the 1867 and 1889 plats.³



Left, Figure 1:
*John Lumsden
 Plan No. 1, 1867.*



Right, Figure 2:
*John Lumsden's
 Plan No. 2, 1889.
 Alley in red.*

¹ *John Lumsden’s Plan No. 2*, recorded on November 1, 1889, in Plat Book 57, Page 116, R.O.D.C. Referred to in short as *John Lumsden’s Plan No. 2* in subsequent deeds, the original plat contains the following caption, “Plan of Lots No. 2. Belonging to John Lumsden showing alley dividing lots between Market & College Sts. Registered in Book No. 21, Page 91 Also Lot No. ___ in Rock City Manufacturing Co’s Plan, Reg. Bk. 47 Page 39 & 40 R.O.D.C.”

² *John Lumsden Plan No. 1*, recorded on December 1, 1867, in Plat Book 21, Page 91, R.O.D.C.

³ City Council passed the bill (Ordinance No. 90) renaming “certain streets lying on the west side of Cumberland river and running north and south” to consecutively numbered avenues at third and final reading on December 22, 1904; Mayor Albert S. Williams approved the ordinance on December 23, 1904.

In 1891, John Lumsden, H.B. Gray, and A.M. Hagan, owners of property adjacent to the newly-drawn alley, agreed to “give and dedicate to the public use the following described property.”

The said John Lumsden agrees to give a ten (10) foot strip off of the south side of lot No 12 in said addition, said strip extending along the north side of the alley, from Market St to the alley in the rear of lot No 12. The said A.M. Hagan agrees to give a ten (10) foot strip off of the south side of lot No 11 in said addition, said strip extending from College St to the alley in rear of said lot No 11 and along the northern line of the alley extending from Market to College Sts. The said H.B. Gray and A.M. Hagan agree to give a ten (10) foot strip off of the North side of lot No 13 in said addition, said strip extends from Market St, to College St on the line of the N & C & StL RR, and along the Southern line of the alley extending from Market to College Sts. The above described property is hereby given and dedicated to the public use **for the purpose of widening the alley** extending from Market to College Sts, **so that said alley can be used as a street and said property is hereby dedicated as a street and named Gray Street.**⁴

Harry Bascom “H.B.” Gray was the son of William Francis “W.F.” Gray of Madison, manufacturer of Gray’s Ointment, “a remedy of wide reputation, prepared first by his father, a prominent physician of Raleigh, N.C.”⁵ For decades, W.F. Gray & Co., operated at the corner of Broad and Summer (Fifth Avenue), and H.B. was associated with the business for many of those years.⁶ H.B. Gray, described as “formerly one of the most popular and successful business men of this city, taking an active part in all movements of public interest,” died in Hickory, Indian Territory, on March 14, 1907. He had been traveling in Mexico, Texas, and the territory for his health. H.B. Gray had two daughters, Viola and Consuello, with his wife, Lula Purdon Gray.⁷

It is not clear in the historical record when construction of Gray Street commenced, but it does appear on maps by 1908. The 1908 Hopkins Map notes “J. Lumsden’s Add. No. 1” across the platted area and attributes several groups of properties, on both sides of the railroad, to H.B. Gray (Fig. 3).⁸ At that time, Gray Street connected to Cass Avenue on the west side of the

⁴ “Jno. Lumsden et al To Dedication to the Public,” recorded November 6, 1891, in Deed Book 159, Page 150, R.O.D.C., emphasis by this author.

⁵ “Prominent in Business Life,” *Nashville Banner*, 16 September 1908, Wednesday, page 7. Dr. W.F. Gray died about 18 months after H.B. Gray. H.B.’s widow, Lula P. Gray, would later file suit in Chancery Court to recover H.B.’s interests in W.F. Gray & Co. and the Gray estate. “Long Litigation Brought to Close,” *Nashville Banner*, 4 July 1911, Tuesday, page 3.

⁶ “Prominent in Business Life.”

⁷ “Harry B. Gray,” *Nashville American*, 16 March 1907, Saturday, page 6. According to his will, published by the *Nashville American*, he claimed residency in Wapaunucka, I.T., at the time of its writing. “Harry B. Gray’s Will,” *Nashville American*, 4 May 1907, Saturday, page 12. Gray’s death occurred just a few months before Oklahoma’s 1907 statehood.

⁸ G.M. Hopkins, Atlas of the city of Nashville, Tennessee: from official records, private plans and actual surveys. Philadelphia: Hopkins, 1908. “Atlas of the City of Nashville 1908.”

<<http://digital.library.nashville.org/cdm/ref/collection/nr/id/997>> (accessed 16 December 2019).

railroad via an iron trestle bridge with a plank walk (Fig. 4).⁹ City Council approved the renaming of Cass Avenue to Gray Street in May 1908, after the map's publication.¹⁰

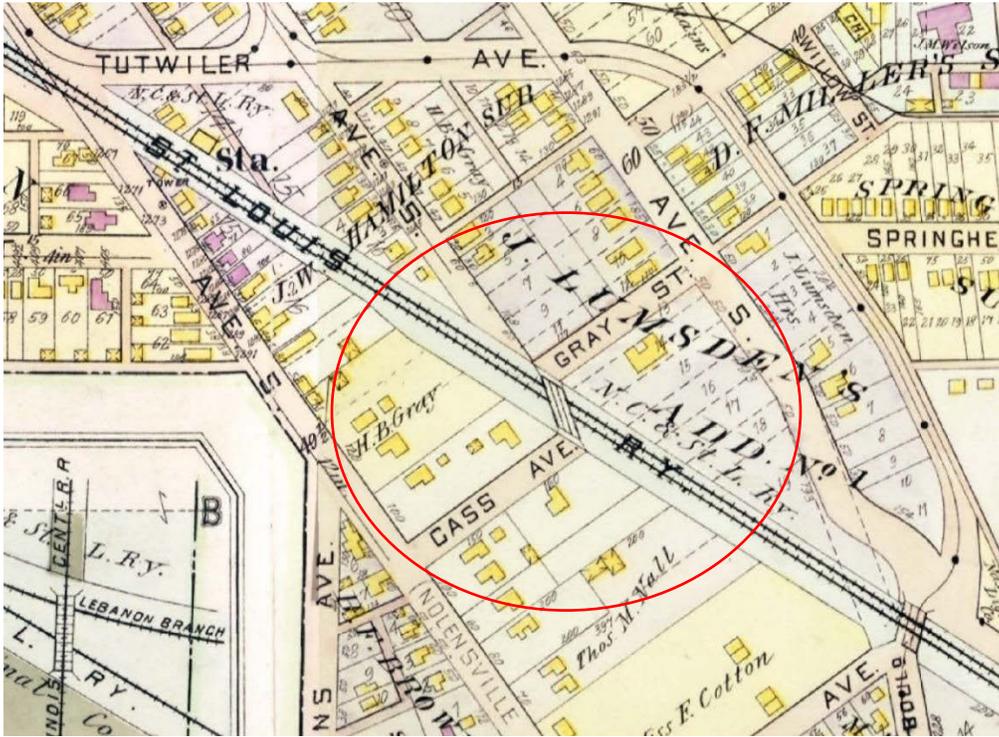


Figure 3: 1908 Hopkins Map. Cass Avenue and Gray Street in red.

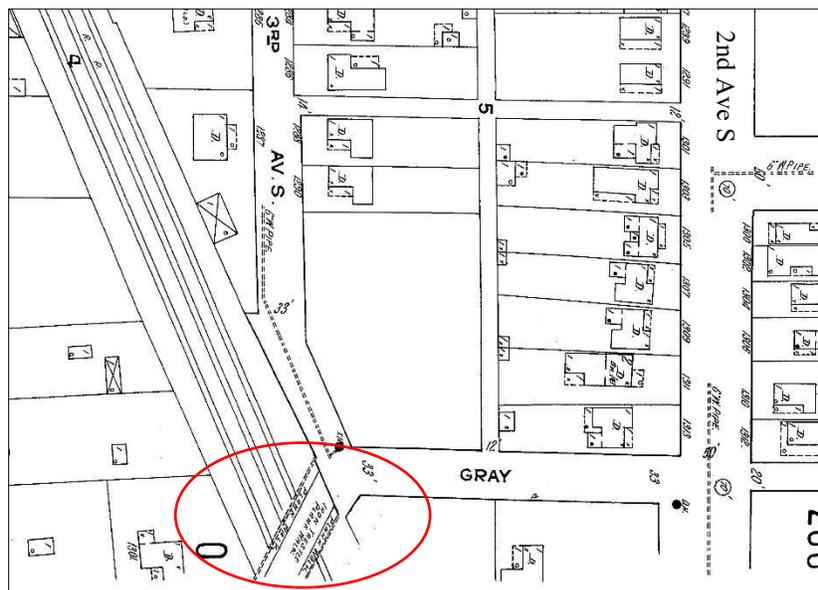


Figure 4: 1914 Sanborn fire insurance map of Nashville, Tennessee. Bridge in red.

⁹ 1914 Sanborn fire insurance map of Nashville, Tennessee, Sanborn Map Company, New York, New York. The bridge does not appear on the next round of map updates (1944-1951).

¹⁰ Ordinance No. 063, approved May 14, 1908, Minute Book 12, Page 244. Metro Council closed this road, from Fourth Ave east to the railroad, on April 7, 1981, by Ordinance No. 081-497, Minute Book 47, Page 225.

Despite the removal of the adjacent bridge, Gray Street appears to have changed very little in the years between publication of the 1914 and 1951 Sanborn Maps. However, on the 1957 Sanborn Map, for the first time the eastern end of the subject road was labeled as “Impassable,” indicating that access to Gray Street was limited to the 3rd Avenue end (Fig. 5).¹¹ Likewise, the June 1957 drawings for Public Works Project 57-R-24 note a similar portion of Gray Street as “unimproved,” suggesting that the street was not fully constructed, but the City had construction plans for all or part of it.¹²

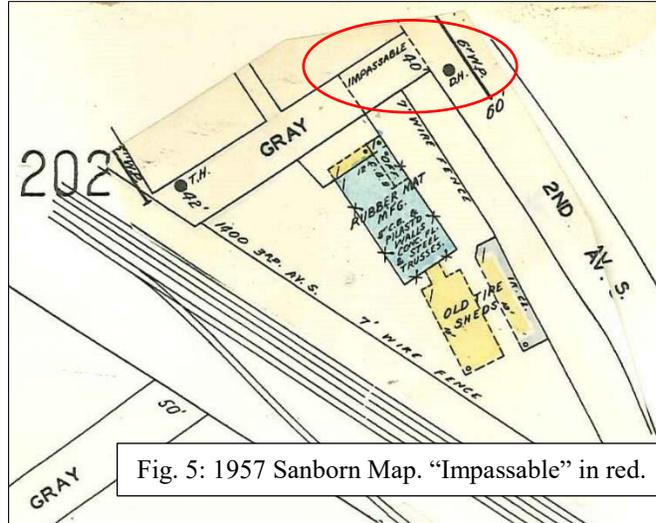


Fig. 5: 1957 Sanborn Map. “Impassable” in red.

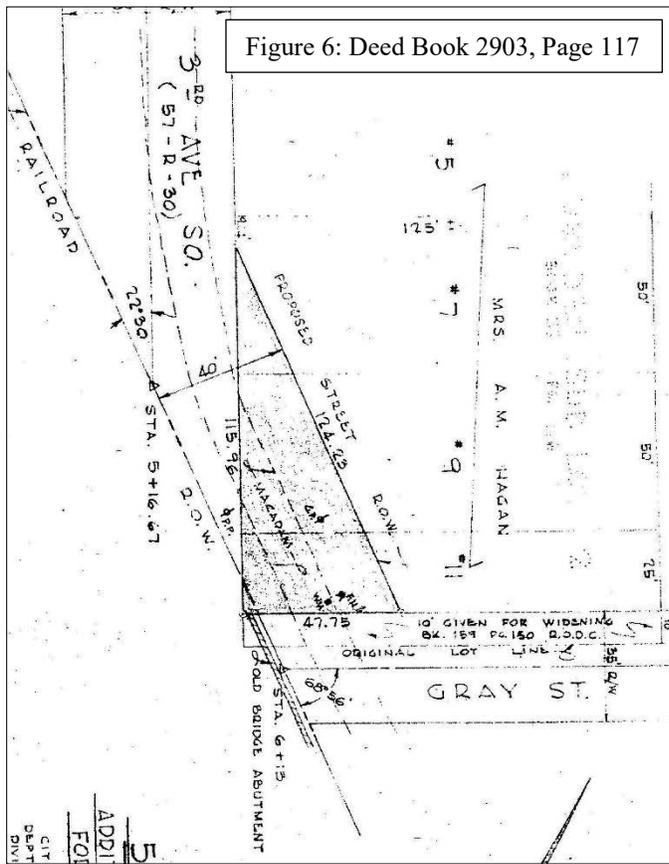


Figure 6: Deed Book 2903, Page 117

In 1959, Flora McIver Hagan granted to the City of Nashville, “A tri-angular section of the southwesterly part of Lots Nos. 7, 9 and 11 of John Lumnsden’s [sic] Plan of Lots, No. 2, said plan being of record in Plan Book 57, Page 116 of the Register’s Office for said County.”¹³ Alfred Merritt “A.M.” Hagan, one of the previously-mentioned property owners who deeded land for Gray Street, had died in November 1937 leaving the property to his wife, Mrs. Hagan.¹⁴ According to the deed, “The above tri-angular tract of land is conveyed to the grantee for the purpose of same being used in widening and improving Gray Street and Third Avenue South, aforesaid. Same being for a public use and if same should ever cease to be used for such purposes then this deed shall be null and void and said land shall revert to the grantor and her heirs.”¹⁵ The accompanying plat, prepared by the Division of Engineering, Department of Public Works of the City of Nashville and

¹¹ 1957 Sanborn fire insurance map of Nashville, Tennessee, Sanborn Map Company, New York, New York.

¹² Drawing for 57-R-24 Project obtained by this author via email correspondence with Metro Nashville Public Works. The quality is extremely poor, so the drawing is not included in this report.

¹³ “Mrs. Flora M. Hagan to City of Nashville,” Deed Book 2903, Page 116, recorded April 28, 1959, R.O.D.C.

¹⁴ Ibid. See also, “Hagan,” Death Notices, *Nashville Banner*, 21 November 1937, Sunday, page 11.

¹⁵ Ibid.

dated April 3, 1959, notes the old bridge abutment, the original lot line for Lot 11, and the 10' of property given for the original widening of the alley (Figs. 6, 8).¹⁶ The angled right-of-way also appears on the 1914 Sanborn Map, suggesting that the road may have passed through the property informally for several years.

Today, Gray Street remains only partially complete. It runs from 3rd Avenue South eastward and terminates at 1400 3rd Avenue South. At this point, the grade drops and the remaining right-of-way to 2nd Avenue South is overgrown (Fig. 7).

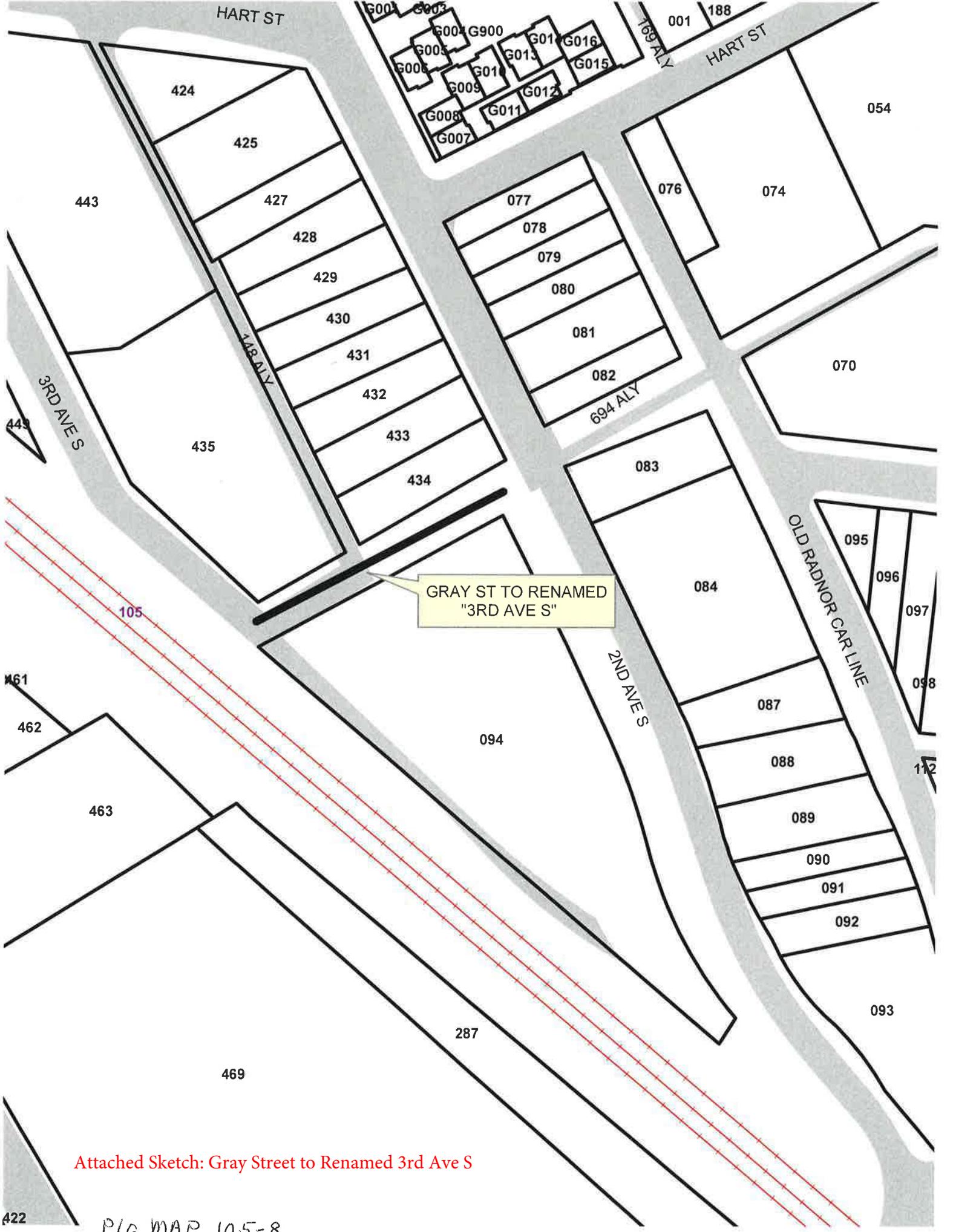


Figure 7: View to Gray Street from 2nd Ave South (photographer facing southwest, 12/17/2019).



Figure 8: West bridge abutment (photographer facing southwest, 12/17/2019).

¹⁶ Ibid, Public Works project 57-R-30: Additional R.O.W. for 3rd Ave So. The stone bridge abutments remain and are visible from the 3rd Avenue South/Gray Street intersection.



GRAY ST TO RENAMED
"3RD AVE S"

Attached Sketch: Gray Street to Renamed 3rd Ave S