**The urban bias of Pokémon Go**

Pokémon GO, as most probably know by now, is a massive cultural mobile gaming phenomenon with people obsessively hunting their surroundings for Pikachus, Charmanders and more.

But for some, the journey to “catch ‘em all” is tougher based on where they live.

A chief mechanic of Pokémon GO involves finding “PokéStops”, which are checkpoints where players can replenish vital supplies like eggs, potions and Pokéballs – items necessary to collect and maintain a growing stable of digital battle monsters and increase a character’s strength.

But the physical location of these pit stops are found in publicly accessible spaces, creating heavy concentrations in urban corridors and leaving many players in rural areas and suburban neighborhoods struggling to keep pace.

“Only landmarks near me are the post office and some dilapidated bookstore that looks like it went out of business 10 years ago,” said <a href=” https://www.reddit.com/r/gaming/comments/4s81ah/when\_your\_town\_is\_pokemon\_af/d57b77k “ target=”new\_”>Reddit user Czsixteen last month</a>, echoing sentiments found on social media and message boards across the Internet.

PokéStop and gym locations in Pokémon Go are drawn from Niantec’s previous augmented reality project, Ingress, a game where players on two opposing teams compete for control of crowdsourced portals, which were repurposed for Pokémon GO.

Data from the <a href=”https://www.ingress.com/intel” target=”new\_”>official Ingress intel map</a> reveals a favoritism toward public spaces with landmarks in dense urban corridors – historical markers, statues, museums, old churches, skyscrapers, street art, city parks and the like. Gyms and stops around residential suburban communities are fewer, further between and stretched across landscapes less friendly to walking.

PNG HERE

Pictured: The in-game view from residential Maple Grove (left) and from Downtown Minneapolis (right) with PokéStops represented by the blue checkpoints.

Big public spaces in urban areas are prime Pokémon hunting territory, including the downtown cores of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Victory Memorial Parkway, the State Fair Grounds in Falcon Heights and elsewhere across the Twin Cities and their first-rung suburbs. The further out one gets, the harder it gets to find these game markers.

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Players wandering the city might also find portals for locations that longer exist, like the clock tower on Nicollet Mall, so some reality the game augments provides a glimpse into the past of a transforming Minneapolis.

Some locations have complained about Pokémon hunters flooding residential neighborhoods where rare Pokémon have appeared and there have been complaints from the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. as well. Niantec has since allowed businesses to request the removal of PokéStops and gyms.

The ability for players to request new PokéStops was briefly available some weeks ago, but has since disappeared.