



Image attribution: Lester Whiting, City of Houston

PROJECT CASE STUDY:

ST. ELIZABETH HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT

Working with artists to create opportunities for resident storytelling has helped Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation to hold up local histories in their community development work. These stories from the past have helped their redevelopment of a local hospital to be perceived as both a cultural asset from the past and a neighborhood asset for the future.

PROJECT SUMMARY

In Houston, Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation has been successful weaving place-based history and storytelling within their community development work. The rehabilitation of the historic St. Elizabeth's hospital into mixed-income housing units and arts gallery space has been an opportunity for the organization to pay tribute to the significance of the hospital within the neighborhood's history. At the same time, it has allowed the space to be redeveloped in a way that addresses current residents' needs. Using creative placemaking / placekeeping strategies that are focused on listening to the stories of long-time residents has helped Fifth Ward CRC to respond to the gentrification and displacement pressures by helping to preserve the historical significance of the neighborhood.

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING / PLACEKEEPING INVITES RESIDENTS TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN PRESERVING HISTORIC COMMUNITY ANCHORS.



LOCATION:
Houston



TYPE OF PROJECT:
Adaptive reuse development with resident engagement.

KEY TO SUCCESS:
Inviting residents to share their memories and stories to keep the historical significance of the neighborhood alive.

PRIMARY OUTCOMES:
Responding to gentrification and displacement pressures by place-branding and sharing the history of the community with new residents.

LESSONS LEARNED

Creative placemaking / placekeeping strategies can be **used as a way for community members to tell their stories, cultivate a community narrative on their own terms, and share in local pride.**

Funding packages can be developed in ways that recognize the need to **respond to gentrification and displacement in a culturally competent way.**

Case studies can be used as precedents to communicate the potential impacts or outcomes of a project to partners who have not used arts-based processes before.

MOBILIZING STRENGTHS TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS

THE COMMUNITY - The Fifth Ward of Houston is home to many historic Black and African-American organizations and institutions that have served, and continue to serve, as community anchors of the community. Today, the Fifth Ward community is home to just over 22,000 residents with an area median income of \$27,046, and an average household size of 7.2 - about 38% of resident families are living at or below poverty. Residents continue to be disproportionately burdened by housing costs and threatened by gentrification, displacement and disparity in the wealth gaps.

THE LARGER PROJECT VISION - The arts have been instrumental for inviting people to participate in Fifth Ward's community development work and connect in meaningful ways - such as with the celebration of the fact that St. Elizabeth's Hospital was the first hospital in Houston to allow Black doctors in private practice, and was a central location for black women to deliver their babies. Storytelling related to the project has opened the door for residents to be the originators, and ongoing stewards, of their own place-based history.



Image attribution: Houston Chronicle

PARTNERSHIPS

Texas Historical Commission Cloudbreak Communities

BRINGING A PROJECT TO LIFE

Fifth Ward CRC has been using creative placemaking and storytelling methods since the 1990s. While in the past these efforts were funded internally, the Fifth Ward and the Lyons Avenue corridor has since become a Cultural Arts District, as designated by the Texas Commission on the Arts. A tax increment reinvestment zone (TIRZ) exists within the Fifth Ward which has specific funds set aside for funding arts and culture as a part of its comprehensive plan. To complete the redevelopment of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Fifth Ward CRC combined both of these funding sources with their conventional financing, state and federal historic tax credits, and local disaster recovery funds.

Image attribution: Houston Chronicle



FUNDING

Foss Tax Credit Specialists	LISC Houston
State & Federal Historic Tax Credit	TIRZ 18
City of Houston Harvey CDBG-DR	Wells Fargo
Self-Help Credit Union	NeighborWorks America
National Equity Fund	Rockwell Fund
Community Housing Capital	

OUTCOMES & TAKEAWAYS

PROJECT OUTCOMES:

Engaging residents in more authentic ways within the development process.

Making space for residents to share their stories within their community.

Recording and documenting the lived experiences of residents to preserve the history of the ward.

QUESTIONS TO KEEP IN MIND

In your project scoping process, **is there time set aside early** in the planning and design process **for residents to tell their own stories** and inform how the project unfolds?

What is the current narrative of change in your community? Is it a narrative that focuses on community assets? What bridges can your project create to invite new residents to share their knowledge about the historical significance of their community?