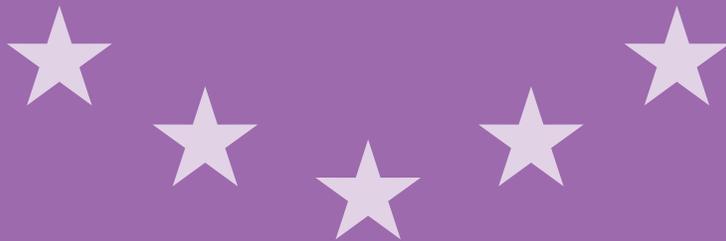




# 5TH WARD

CULTURAL ARTS DISTRICT



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation ("CRC") has led revitalization efforts in the 5th Ward neighborhood over the last thirty years. In doing this work, Fifth Ward CRC and community leaders have initiated transformative projects throughout the neighborhood, connecting people to place through memory, design, and economic development. The CRC initiated this Cultural Arts District plan to support the community-driven need for additional creative placemaking initiatives that encourage artistic expression. Fifth Ward CRC thanks its partners, including the City's Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs ("MOCA") and the Houston Arts Alliance ("HAA"), for partnering to explore the feasibility of creating a Cultural Arts District along the historic Lyons Avenue as a vehicle for preservation, stabilization, and sustainable economic development.

A placemaking grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to FWCRC made planning work possible, by allowing multiple stakeholders to engage the community, city leaders, artists, creatives as well as others in a multi-step planning process that has culminated in this Cultural Arts District Plan.

Fifth Ward CRC also thanks all the community members who participated in the planning for this project, and in particular, the Artist Advisory Group who committed substantial time and energy to ensuring that this plan reflects the views and ideas of local artists.

The Artist Advisory Group included:

- Harrison Guy: dance
- Ann Johnson: sculptural/visual artist
- Lanecia R. Tinsley: visual art/photography
- Jason Woods: ethno-musicologist

- Emily Sloan: visual artist/performance artist
- Chap Edmonson: photography
- Elia & Noah Quiles: civic art/murals
- Brian Ellison: photography/documentary
- Tony Parana: dance/visual artist
- Mel Chin: sculptural/visual artist
- Jesse Lott/found art/sculptural
- Keiji Asakura/planning
- Arnea Williams/ production/photography
- Michelle Barnes/textiles/visual artist

In addition to the council, influential creatives and subject matter experts were engaged during council meetings and other convenings for their thoughts, experiences, suggestions and feedback. A few of those who contributed their time include:

- Deniz Lopez: All Real Radio
- Patricia Blacklock Sloan
- Kola
- Dwight Baxter
- Patricia Smith Prather
- Naomi Carrier
- Reginald Adams: multi-disciplinary, labyrinths
- Lauren Luna: visual artist
- John Whaley: visual artist
- Mark Francis: photography

The consultant team for this project included:

- Asakura Robinson
- Erin McClarty, PLLC
- Mel Chin
- Michelle Barnes
- Sophie Asakura

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**"Never be limited by other people's limited imagination." – Mae Jemison**

Houston's Historic 5th Ward community is one large masterpiece. It is a place where art is a way of living, from its food, music, and sculpture; to its historic buildings and gathering spaces like the Deluxe Theater; to its iconic stoops, its language and its corner jam sessions. 5th Ward artist, Jesse Lott, describes Houston as an Urban Frontier, a rich landscape where materials to create can be found and the soul to conceive art is nurtured. The 5th continues to be that landscape of culture and history that reaffirms the art of living through its community. Lives that have been tested by hard times – strained by racial and economic segregation and challenged by

environmental disasters – bring us a story of a community that continues to adapt, survive, and celebrate its history and culture.

In the spirit of this celebration, we aim to establish the 5th Ward's Lyons Avenue Cultural Arts District, a living cultural arts district that is tied to the Lyons Avenue corridor, 5th Ward's main commercial corridor. The District will recognize Lyons Avenue as a center of African American culture while acknowledging its diversity in both history and future, and giving room to evolve as the area grows.

The District will build on the renaissance that the 5th Ward community is undergoing today, much to the credit of the Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation (FWCRC) and the many partners and financial

resources that have helped accelerate inclusive development that preserves and enhances the core of the 5th Ward. By focusing on transformative projects that create destinations and quality housing along the community's "front door" of Lyons Avenue, this work has created economic growth and a healthier community. FWCRC and its partners are fostering an environment that supports the vision of a Community of Choice – A Great Place to Live, Work and Play!

This plan recognizes that art is at the core of the 5th Ward's economic revitalization, because it is an inclusive economic driver that allows everyone to partake in the process of comprehensive redevelopment and revitalization. This plan for the 5th Ward Cultural Arts District will support ongoing efforts to revitalize the community and will interact with all of the other economic and community development plans and projects already underway. By planning explicitly for arts-based development and growth, we will strengthen the existing community fabric and identity, provide new creative imagery and branding, provide placekeeping of existing assets, and build new placemaking opportunities that encourage a thriving, healthy, economically stable and balanced neighborhood that is attractive to its residents and visitors alike.

Art is also a response to challenges that include climate change, long-term disinvestment, gentrification, and displacement. In recent community engagement, we have heard 5th Ward artists express a willingness to "not confine artists to purely 'artistic' endeavors" and "to allow the community to define what 'art' is." We start by openly expressing the shared challenges we face. It is time for a call to collective invention, heeding a wish to "continue expanding and stretching in the mind of the community what art looks like, and their role in its creation and consumption." We must preserve the historic legacy of places and people of the 5th as keystones that stand as foundations for building the new frontier, while enhancing the future with initiatives that engage with the changing climate of our times in brilliant and innovative ways.

The assembly of a Frontier of the Future begins now. The cohesive community of the 5th Ward has the opportunity to identify and accept the challenge of imagining and designing, with boldness, the paths of the future for their neighborhood – and to become a model for the rest of Houston in purposefully creating space for art to become a solution to the biggest challenges we face today.



## OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

This plan for the 5th Ward's Lyons Avenue Cultural Arts District is based on five core principles.

- ★ **5th Ward Is Art**
- ★ **Art is Democratic and Accessible**
- ★ **There is No Art Without People**
- ★ **Art is More than A Hobby**
- ★ **Art Responds to Our Largest Challenges**

### 1. 5th Ward Is Art

We believe there is no such thing as "art deserts." Rather, there is a disconnect between the one-dimensional way institutions present "art" and how art lives in communities. In 5th Ward, we define and consider art more comprehensively. It can be a choice of clothing, jewelry, hairstyle, or dishware, and it incorporates people's stories, movement, and language. In other words, we are all essentially artists or creatives. Through the District's efforts, all people within the District's boundaries (temporary or permanent; perceived or actual) will see themselves as part of the artistic and cultural fabric of the community.

Given the many existing assets, natural creatives, and professional artists already present in the 5th Ward, the community does not need to import art from other areas to become a Cultural Arts District. Rather, it must build the places, spaces, and opportunities

that empower and showcase the artists (in their many forms) already living and working within its boundaries. The District will preserve the 5th Ward's rich history and cultural traditions while welcoming new expressions and thoughtful innovations.

"The character of the future 5th Ward will grow from a commitment to sustain the culture and population that have made it their home; to invite new residents, uses, events, places and opportunities to share in the future; and to celebrate the heritage of the past and the possibilities of the future assembled through the music, art, and lively expression of the community." - The Fabulous Fifth strategy, 2012

### 2. Art is Democratic and Accessible

The growth and development of arts and culture within a community requires opportunities and stability as well as open exchange and expression. For the District to thrive and succeed in its goals, it must make art and culture fully accessible to the community. For example, host poetry jams in barbershops and performances on street corners; make art mobile with art stations in parks, or trailers filled with art supplies destined for various community locations on a regular basis. The District has the opportunity to change the way people touch and interact with art by meeting them where they are, and to infuse art into everything the District does and creates.

Democratizing art requires a shift from audience size to the intimacy of interactions. The District must build the confidence of the artists, residents, and visitors by helping people recognize their own creativity and continuing to stretch what art and culture looks like, as well as their role in its creation and consumption.

### 3. There Is No Art Without People

Art is not just an object, it is a felt experience. To fully engage an audience in arts and culture, one must also create a sense of home, place, and community. The District will only authentically reflect the style and stories of the 5th Ward community if that community is able to stay in the District as its prominence grows. As creatives contribute, they must be able to stay and cultivate ownership (physically and metaphorically). As visitors come to the District, they must be so enveloped in its culture as to become community members themselves.

The District has the challenging task of creating a vibrant arts and culture community that is able to support its creatives and residents. As Arts Advisory Group member Harrison Guy notes, "Art is a universal language" which can help to tackle this challenge. Arts programs will prioritize the creation of stability for residents who are the core of the District's identity and soul, while also building bridges that welcome and engage visitors to the 5th Ward. Artists and creatives can lead much of this charge, engaging their activist spirit and communal nature to create connections to larger service initiatives such as health, community stabilization, and social services in addition to visitor and tourism initiatives. There is power in the way creativity empowers residents and makes visitors welcome.

### 4. Art Is More Than A Hobby

Art is not just a hobby - it creates jobs and economic growth, it educates those of all ages, and it preserves and widens community legacies.

Art can be a positive economic force with support from a variety of local ecosystems. For creatives, that is the creation of spaces

and places that make artistic and cultural expression simpler, cheaper, and more accessible. To facilitate this requires more attention on affordable rehearsal and makerspaces to accommodate a variety of arts, needs, mediums, and experience. The District will support interdisciplinary collaborations to connect artists and creatives with other community partners through "spark spaces." It will also foster creatives of color by building local, regional, and national audiences through opportunities such as biennials and residencies. For visitors, positive experience will come from enjoying an ecosystem that accommodates lingering in unique and engaging coffee shops, parks, galleries, juice bars, restaurants and other features yet to be determined.

Built into every creative project and program, there must be an entrepreneurial component that allows those engaging with the District to see its money-making (or economic) potential. Young creatives, or those just entering the creative field, must find easy access to opportunities to create, promote, and sell their work. This will counteract the often exclusive nature of creative careers, in which career pathways are often determined by connections or are simply unclear.

Art also is a means to preserve and grow the legacy of the 5th Ward through education and intentional feedback and storytelling from community members. Artists see their creations as a feedback loop: the community must be able to give feedback, tell its stories, and contribute, and there must be accessible opportunities for creatives to reflect back what they hear from the community. Serious investment into educating 5th Ward's youth through arts programming ensures the longevity of this exchange and deepens the creative pool of local talent

as well as the expansion of knowledgeable audiences. Culturally speaking, investments into intercultural exchange are the only way to ensure the stories of 5th Ward continue to spread and evolve. Simple interventions such as inter-generational story-telling or archiving photos and memories are good vehicles for this.

### 5. Art Responds to Our Largest Challenges

The 5th Ward community is deeply aware that surviving and thriving economically and socially may no longer be adequate as

the unforgiving reality of climate change is expected to continue its ravaging effects. Adverse environmental conditions will erode culture and our communities, as we know them. We believe that the stakes are higher than simply establishing a singular quest. The path to equity and social justice, something that the 5th has contributed to throughout its history, must also carry a response to climate change. Mobilizing into an active mode to gather strength, intelligence, and meaningful direction to confront the future is an obligation the living have to the following generations.



## AN ACTIONABLE VISION FOR SUCCESS

Utilizing the five core principles of the 5th Ward Cultural Arts District, one all-encompassing vision will be presented as the face of the District: **May the 5th Be with You**. This message promotes two ideas:

1. The 5th Ward is a place for everyone. We want everyone to be able to appreciate the unique aspects and cultural beauty of the 5th. The 5th should also be a space where everyone is included.
2. The 5th Ward is the embodiment of the future, a space that will be forward thinking that other places will wish to follow. The message "May the 5th Be with You" is a desire for all other neighborhoods to emulate the 5th.

Underneath the main message of **May the 5th Be With You**, there will be three action brands highlighted: **I Am the 5th**, **Memory Builds the Monument**, and **Frontier of the Future**. These brands provide "corridor definition" and will be integrated throughout all projects.

### I Am the 5th

Actions to celebrate a unified community persona and identify its contents and boundaries, such as I Am the 5th, face opportunistic outside development with an undeniable, cohesive presence. As a component of the vision, I Am the 5th helps to solidify collective neighborhood worth, essential to tackling new and ongoing problems in unity. It also enables new residents, visiting artists, businesses, and others to identify with and support the 5th Ward neighborhood through patronizing local businesses, purchasing local art, and becoming a part of the neighborhood's

creative power. In this way, I Am the 5th encompasses the idea that "You Are Art" – that each person in the 5th Ward is part of the collective creation of culture, art, and memory, which is the neighborhood's greatest asset.

### Memory Builds the Monument

Memory Builds the Monument puts emphasis on capturing and honoring some of the finest aspects of the 5th's past. We acknowledge that the memories of elders need to be collected, catalogued, and archived and fused with the creative art forms emerging with the new generation of artists and neighborhood pioneers, to present new and old spaces for gathering and performances within the 5th. It is our obligation to challenge these designers to consider their own futures, to place the most inventive perspective on what "to build for the future" means.

### Frontier of the Future

Frontier of the Future calls for mobilization of the design community to work with neighborhoods, starting with the 5th, listening to and learning from the people who carry the stories of pioneers and place, and with them, informed by science and the most thoughtful and brilliant 21st-century innovations, to re-vision homes, landscapes, and infrastructures climatically adaptable and pragmatically innovative enough to face the harsh challenges of a permanently altered climate. A frontier is right in the neighborhood, a 5th Ward magnetized, not solely by high-tech solutions, but by conjoining the early histories and future smart growth in a soulful and manageable environmental existence, where families and businesses thrive and collective creative choices made here offer a model for future development.

# BUILDING SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS FOR ART

In order to support the 5th Ward's Lyons Avenue Cultural Arts District, we must build and maintain sustainable systems that support the arts, now and in the future. These systems will build upon five overarching verbs, each of which are related to one of the five core principles of this plan:

- ★ Engage
- ★ Preserve
- ★ Experience
- ★ Prepare
- ★ Enjoy

## 1. Engage

**Core Principle: Art is More than a Hobby**

**“Art is not just a hobby - it creates jobs and economic growth, educates those of all ages, and preserves and widens community legacies.”**

The District will consistently and collaboratively engage with the 5th Ward's residents, artists, and creatives, as well as visitors of all types. The 5th Ward's residents are the primary foundation on which the District will be built. Through projects and



programs that consistently engage residents and visitors, we strive to ensure that no one in the community is left out and that the Cultural Arts District embodies all of the ways in which art can benefit the community - from education to job creation.

**Associated Projects\*:**

- Storefront Activation: Club Matinee (see page 27)
- Swing Spaces (see page 28)
- Marketing and Recognition of Local Businesses (see page 29)
- Locally-taught Arts Classes and Programming (see page 30)

## 2. Preserve

**Core Principle: There is No Art Without People**

**“The District will only authentically reflect the style and stories of the 5th Ward community if that community is able to stay and cultivate ownership (physically and metaphorically).”**

The District aims to preserve the 5th Ward community by honoring its physical and cultural history and ensuring that future efforts preserve this diverse, thriving community. Interactive, intergenerational efforts will truly preserve the legacy of the 5th Ward for generations to come.

**Associated Projects\*:**

- Memory Builds the Monument Documentary (see page 33)
- Arts and Culture Pathway (see page 34)
- Story, Memory, and Memorabilia Collection Drives (see page 36)

\*All associated projects referred to in the Executive Summary can be found in detail in the full report at [fifthwardcra.org](http://fifthwardcra.org).

## 3. Experience

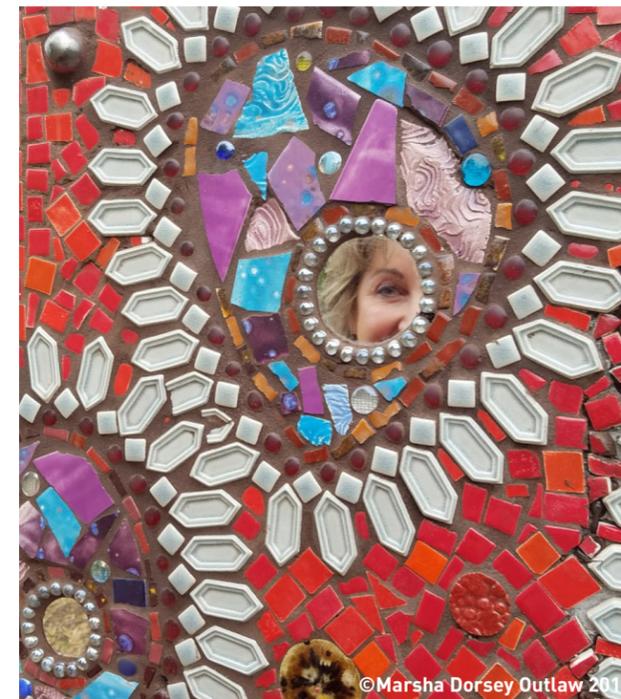
**Core Principle: Art is Democratic and Accessible**

**“Democratizing art requires a shift from audience to the intimacy of interactions. The District has the opportunity to change the way people touch and interact with art by meeting them where they are.”**

The District will create unique experiences for each individual based on their connection and history with the 5th Ward. The focus of the District is not simply the types of art it produces or sponsors, but rather how it makes the people who engage with it feel. Public art, community branding, and other projects will deepen residents' and visitors' connections with the 5th Ward and with one another.

**Associated Projects\*:**

- Lyons Avenue Renaissance Festival (see page 37)



\*All associated projects referred to in the Executive Summary can be found in detail in the full report at [fifthwardcra.org](http://fifthwardcra.org).

## 4. Prepare

**Core Principle: Art Responds to Our Largest Challenges**

**“The path to equity and social justice must also carry a response to climate change, and [5th Ward must] mobilize into an active mode to gather strength, intelligence and meaningful direction to confront the future.”**

The Cultural Arts District will help prepare our community for future challenges. Climate change, one of our starkest realities, is not only a global threat, but a very tangible one to the residents of Houston and the 5th Ward. The District will integrate climate resilient design into its projects and, through art, will build the means for future adaptations that other communities throughout the Gulf Coast and the world can learn from.

**Associated Projects\*:**

- Frontier of the Future (see page 38)

## 5. Enjoy

**Core Principle: 5th Ward is Art**

**“In 5th Ward, we define and consider art comprehensively and we are all essentially artists or creatives.”**

5th Ward's Cultural Arts District aims to breed enjoyment. Art is meant to elicit numerous emotions from anger to empathy to hope, but the overall purpose of the CAD is for residents and visitors alike to consider themselves part of the artistic and creative community and to enjoy the experience that the CAD brings.

**Associated Projects\*:**

- Music Playlist (see page 39)
- Branded Items (see page 40)

## Organizational Strategies

In addition to the physical and social projects listed in the five principles above, we know that making a successful Cultural Arts District involves ongoing organizing and engagement that brings people together and fosters the collaboration that allows all residents to be a part of this work. To support and connect the projects and principles and make truly sustainable systems, the Fifth Ward CRC and its partners will undertake the following strategies that support implementation in the District:

### Establish a cultural arts and entertainment committee, including but not limited to:

- Compiling a list of stakeholders that represent different but vital viewpoints to the District,
- Formalizing annual goals specific to the committee's oversight role,
- Creating key performance indicators in which to measure the success of specific programs and policies

### Ensure that all projects and associated administrative tasks have adequate funding and resources, including but not limited to:

- Developing a comprehensive budget for each project including potential revenue if applicable,
- Compiling an inventory of local, state, and federal grants for the arts, and
- Assembling a list of corporate and non-profit sponsors as part of District assets.

### Promote small business formation and retention, including but not limited to:

- Hiring or using businesses from within the neighborhood when the need arises,
- Creating a quarterly art-focused business workshop, e.g. financial literacy

for creative industries, similar to the classes that the CRC currently holds,

- Providing potential economic incentives for working with the District.

### Nurture arts programming, including but not limited to:

- Building a circle of creative "representatives" who will be responsible for providing feedback and updates with regards to the CAD,
- Fostering relationships with other cultural arts districts in the state, country, and globally, and
- Hosting a bi-annual speak-out open to all to ensure that all voices are heard.

### Building climate resiliency in ways that support placemaking and placekeeping, including but not limited to:

- Working with other stakeholders such as the Harris County Flood Control District or the City of Houston's Office of Sustainability,
- Initiating interdisciplinary collaboration with scientists and researchers, and
- Creating space for climate-based art and activism across the programs and projects in the District.



## SUMMARY OF PROJECTS

The table below provides a summary of the projects listed in this document. The numbers are estimates and the implementation time and cost of each project will vary according to the implementation strategy.

NAME OF PROJECT	TIME	COST
Storefront Activation: Club Matinee • Pop-up (short-term) • Redevelopment (long-term)	4 months (short-term) 24 months (long-term)	\$20,000 (short-term) \$4 million (long-term)
Swing Spaces, includes: • Artist residency and housing • Existing spaces (short-term) • Coworking and makerspaces (long-term)	6 months and ongoing 6 months (short-term) 36 months (long-term)	\$1.5-\$3 million \$500,000 (short-term) \$10 million (long-term)
Marketing and Recognition of Local Businesses	8 months	\$10,000
Locally-taught Arts Classes and Programming	Ongoing	\$150,000 annually
Memory Builds the Monument Documentary	9 months	\$90,000
Arts and Culture Pathway, includes: • Asset map and wayfinding signage (short-term) • Public realm arts activation (long-term)	3 months (short-term) 15 months (long-term)	\$20,000 (short-term) \$300,000 (long-term)
Story, Memory, and Memorabilia Collection Drives	12 months	\$25,000
Lyons Avenue Renaissance Festival, includes: • 5th Ward Currency	12 months	\$10,000
Frontier of the Future	Ongoing	\$2 million
Music Playlist	8 months	\$500
Branded Items	3 months	\$10,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$18.64-\$20.14 million</b>



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**"Each generation leaves a legacy to succeeding generations... That legacy may be solid, etched as if in stone, or it may be as fragile as a house of cards, tumbling in the first gust of wind."**

**– Barbara Jordan**

In the 5th Ward, art is a way of life. The 5th Ward's Cultural Arts District will use a myriad of strategies to preserve and build on the cultural legacies of the 5th Ward's past, while also looking to art as a means to navigate future challenges.

The Fifth Ward CRC and partners set several goals for the District planning process:

- To engage with the community and understand its desire for a cultural arts district in the neighborhood.
- To assess any challenges, oppositions, fears, or concerns the local community has concerning the creation of a cultural arts district.
- To engage the artistic, creative, and cultural community to document existing pain points, wins and needs in the artistic community and creative economy.
- To research and document existing cultural and artistic assets in the 5th Ward community.
- To identify gaps in assets, expertise, infrastructure, or funding that challenge the creation of a cultural arts district.
- To identify possible programming in the short-term, near-term, and in the long-term.

- To develop an implementable plan outlining next steps in the creation of a Cultural Arts District.

## CENTERING HISTORY

The District centers on the Historic Lyons Avenue – a 2.2 mile corridor between Elysian Street and Lockwood Drive less than five minutes from Downtown that includes over 36 arts and culture destinations within a half mile in either direction of the corridor.

The 5th Ward is one of Houston's six original wards, settled by freemen after the Civil War. Mid-twentieth Century urban renewal efforts razed and divided significant parts of the 5th Ward's rich commercial and retail centers – bisecting it twice over with Interstate 10 and US Highway 59.

Remnants of the neighborhood's vibrant past were identified by the community as important assets to present-day creative placemaking – places like the DeLuxe Theatre, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Club Matinee, Mystic Lyons, Mt. Vernon Methodist Church, or Peacock Records. The Fifth Ward CRC and its partners have already begun efforts to preserve and enhance some of these landmarks to play new roles that meet community needs.

## BUILDING ON PAST PLANS

Fifth Ward CRC has been involved in numerous planning and design initiatives throughout the years, focused on inclusive community development. There are three particular plans that have had a particular influence on placemaking and placekeeping in the 5th Ward. The District will build on the outcomes of these plans and continue to achieve their goals and benchmarks.

### 5th Ward Arts District Master Plan (2006)

The Arts District Master Plan highlighted the redevelopment of the then-vacant DeLuxe Theater on Lyons Avenue as a potential cornerstone for cultural placemaking in the 5th Ward. Since then, the Fifth Ward CRC and its partners have brought the DeLuxe back to life as a multipurpose venue that hosts a variety of community programs. As the CRC looks to the future, considering additional types of arts-based programming for this venue will be a priority.

### The Fabulous Fifth: A Revitalization Strategy for Houston's Fifth Ward (2013)

The Fabulous Fifth plan established the Fifth Ward CRC's key principles of community building: "Sustain, Invite, and Celebrate." It calls for elevating the legacy of the 5th Ward through the arts while welcoming new development. This arts district plan seeks to further those principles by ensuring that community members in the neighborhood now are fully sustained and supported by the future neighborhood vision, and that the arts provide venues for celebration of the area's history and future.

### 5th Ward Pattern Book (2018)

The Pattern Book focuses on the 5th Ward's public realm, and suggests a distinctive palette of interventions. For example, it calls for highlighting historic landmarks, painting crosswalks in bright colors, encouraging hand-painted signage for storefronts, and using 5th Ward colors in street furnishings. The Central Arts District plan furthers these ideas for the public realm, while also introducing new opportunities for art to highlight the community's history, bring generations together, and bring new visitors and economic opportunity to the neighborhood.

## ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

5th Ward residents, property owners, businesses, and artist stakeholders all played key roles in identifying cultural, historic, and arts-based assets and opportunities to guide the Cultural Arts District planning process.

The initial engagement process included a survey, demonstration project, focus groups, a website and workshops to gather input and build awareness about the project. Surveys were collected in person at events like the Arts Pop-Up and Lyons Avenue Renaissance Festival. Survey results are shown on the following page.

Throughout the months of January, March, April and May, community workshops were held in community spaces throughout Houston such as MATCH Theatre, Mobile Art Space for Artists, and Community Artists' Collective. Attendees were asked to talk about their experiences with arts and culture, experience with the 5th Ward, interest in a cultural arts district, and potential concerns. Civic groups, arts organizations, businesses,

artists and creatives from Greater 5th Ward, Denver Harbor and Near Northside were engaged individually with personal conversations and workshops.

The Artists' Advisory Council, a group of artists with connections to the 5th Ward and the Houston arts community convened monthly. Discussions included existing programming and initiatives, needs, priorities, opportunities, gaps, and brainstorming programs that fit the 5th Ward community. The Council members' familiarity with the creative economy and creative community ensures the District's initiatives and resources align with the creative needs of 5th Ward and Houston at large. Each creative also had roots in community activism and engagement, so proposed artistic programming and initiatives are relevant, authentic, inclusive, and accessible. The recommendations in this report rely heavily on these artists' thoughts, suggestions, recommendations, and ideas as well as those suggested by other community partners.



## Arts & Culture Destinations

### Where do you currently go if you're interested in seeing or attending an event with arts and culture?

Participants highlighted museum districts, art shows, gallery openings, and street festivals as popular events. Notably, several participants identified Discovery Green, Project Row Houses, Miller Outdoor Theater, and Jones Hall/Plaza.

## Top Destinations

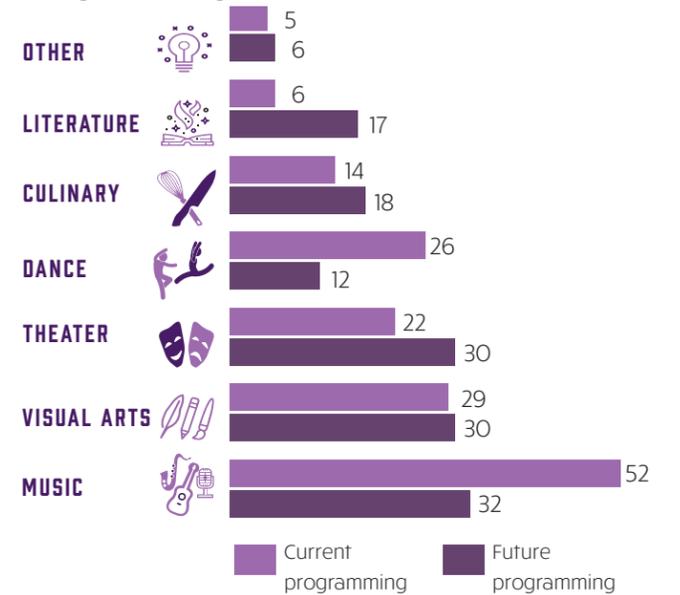
TOP EVENTS/FESTIVALS/MUSEUMS	FREQUENCY
Discovery Green	●●●●●
Project Row Houses	●●●●
Miller Outdoor Theater	●●
Ensemble Theater	●●
Jones Hall/Jones Plaza	●●
Local 5th Ward CRC Events	●●
Museum District	●

## Attendance Factors

### What would encourage you to attend more arts and culture events?

In addition to understanding current events, participants were also asked to provide input on the factors that would encourage future attendance. The responses suggest that attendance is largely about providing a family-friendly atmosphere, centralized/walkable activities, and community/civic oriented events. Many participants also echoed the creation of an "arts calendar" where all events would be listed.

## Programming Preferences



## Programming

### What types of programming, exhibits, or events do you currently attend? What part of 5th Ward's history in arts and culture should be a part of its future?

The next set of questions was targeted toward the types of programming that participants are currently interested in as well as the types of programming they would like to see in the 5th Ward. Participants identified visual arts, music, and dance as their preferred programming (see Programming Preferences Table) In addition to the programming types provided, participants who selected 'other' indicated interest in the following types: ceramics, classes, demonstrations, and guided tours.

## Identified Assets

### Historic Assets

Negro Cemetery ●  
Jensen Drive Business Corridor

### Arts Assets

Deluxe Theater ●  
Lowe's Theater  
ABC Records Company

### Cultural Assets

Burt's Meat Market & Cajun Foods ●

### Community Assets

Wheatley High School  
E.O. Smith Elementary  
Fifth Ward CRC ●  
Legacy Clinic ●  
New Grove Church ●  
Lyons Unity Baptist Church ●  
Pleasant Hill Baptist Church ●  
Ross Mortuary ●  
Mason Lodge ●  
Julia C. Hester House ●  
St. Elizabeth Hospital

● = Existing Asset

## Memories & Assets

### Are there any buildings or locations in the community you consider to be historically important?

The survey also addressed memories of the 5th Ward and space was provided to indicate whether participants were interested in sharing more memories and/or imagery. Many of the assets that were named were existing assets, but many only live in the memory of residents.

## SUSTAINING 5TH WARD INTO THE FUTURE

The District is a core part of the Fifth Ward CRC's strategy for sustaining the 5th Ward community into the future. The CRC has worked on housing and economic development issues in the community to sustain its residents and meet local needs for many years. Through their work, and through the input of artists and community members involved in this planning process, they have seen that art can help to focus, promote, and shape these efforts.

Encouraging and building arts and culture into housing and economic development strategies therefore is a core means of ensuring that local residents and businesses can thrive long into the future. This includes live-work studios that enable artists to thrive, makerspaces and collaborative workspaces that allow for small-scale manufacturing and art alike, and event venues that create opportunities for performance and community gathering.



©Michelle Barns 2018

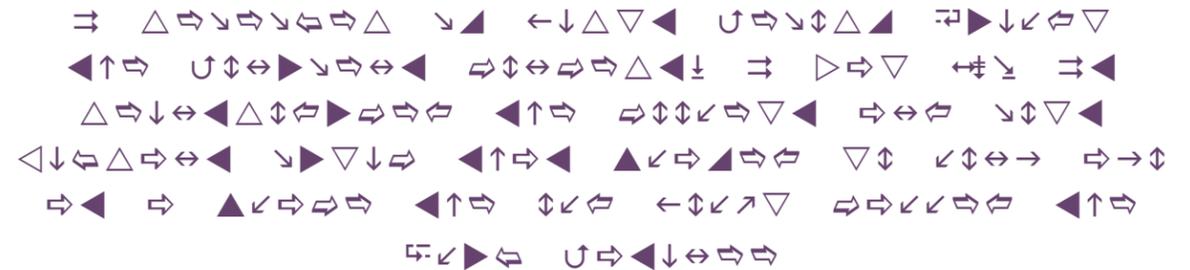
Art can also help the 5th Ward confront some of its most significant challenges, including climate change and economic displacement. Rebuilding the neighborhood's historic anchors, like St. Elizabeth's Hospital and Barbara Jordan's office, with sustainable features can provide a template for climate-adaptive development throughout the 5th Ward and other areas of Houston. Community gathering spaces and multi-purpose venues become a focus of community organizing and economic development.

### Story of the Year 2049

**On the following page is the story of an adult in the year 2049, who would be a child today, talking about their perspective on all of the events that led up to 2049 and how art became the center of all of the other sustainable changes that allowed the 5th ward to grow and thrive over time. This narrative shows how the District will truly be a factor in sustaining the 5th Ward community and making it ready to meet future challenges.**



## A MESSAGE FROM THE FUTURE



### Translation:

I remember my first Memory Builds the Monument concert, I was 10. It reintroduced the coolest and most vibrant music that played so long ago at a place the old folks called the Club Matinee. It was crazy how the venues moved all around the Nickel... opening on Lyons, then in KG, Lockwood...and how it found a place, settled down and became the most advanced music stage in the world. It played the old schoolio blues and hip hop and now it transmits through bio-enhanced tunes playing internally. This Houston "Bayou" self music is best. The Frontier of the Future in the 5th was on embracing ecology for our survival. It was also the key to our economic sustainability, the 5th was the place to come to learn how to cope when things went really bad! I was twelve, when the great flood and heat wave of 2031 hit hard and I remember folks from all over the world coming to check out my Grandma's house that adjusted to the rising water and heat like it was living. The historic places still stand and hold carbon like they were meant to... Mickey Leland's prep school, Barbara Jordan's office, Jesse Lott's studio were all redesigned with smart grading and plantings. They are the places where people can take in visionary art, our history and chillax in a miniature green paradise. Lott's Lot is a favorite place for dominos, among his wonderful art and Barbara Jordan's former office became the place where elders got together and transformed the criminal justice system. The "I am the 5th Movement" was something else! It pushed back greedy developers who wanted in... let us get money and our own financing to do our "green dealio"! Some of the places those people built in Houston are swampy ruins now... they were too big and built cheap, messed up by the rising seas that happened so quick. But the 5th was ready! Yes, I have seen some changes! We welcomed everybody who wanted to come in to the 5th and live a life of learning, we demonstrated how to hold on to our roots, make them strong and thrive...living well is a work of Art, ever growing and giving fruits! The year is twenty, forty-nine.



*"Summer time was the time of Motown, and Wheatley had parades. Playing jax, marbles, hopscotch or cards on the concrete steps. There was a record store on the feeder. Would go to the Jensen Theaters on Saturday but snuck to the further Deluxe from time to time because it was better looking. Music was quintessential. Would hear Motown playing with the windows up. Boudin, dirty rice, catfish from our Mother of Mercy. I went to Dolgan Elementary learning classical music from Ms. Calhoun. Didn't really go to the museum or plays as a child, but would spend time in Grandma's garden, canning the fruits of what was picked. Classmates would have parties and BBQs. It was a community village, and you didn't want to live anywhere else. Mother always regretted that they left."*

**- Debra Blalock Sloan (5th Ward Native)**

The Memory Builds the Monument section of this report focuses on how the current and historical assets of Lyons Avenue have informed the recommendations in this Cultural Arts District Strategy.

emerging cultural destination. The projects recommended in this Cultural Arts District will build on these existing assets and add new assets to attract visitors and neighbors to the unique sites in the community.

**LYONS CORRIDOR ARTS AND CULTURE ASSET MAP**

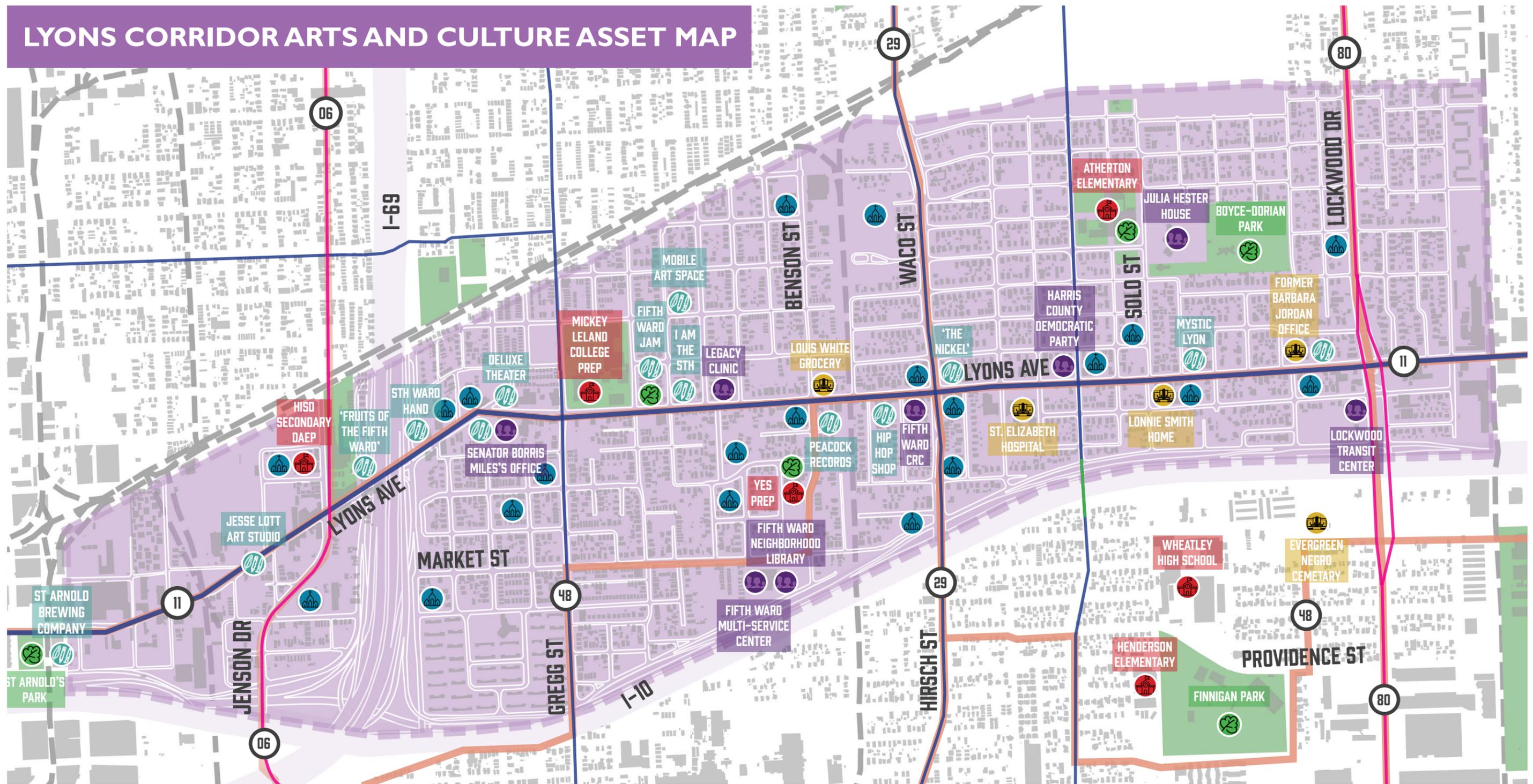
On pages 22-23, the Lyons Corridor Arts and Culture Asset Map displays existing places along Lyons Avenue and in the near vicinity that have a historical, cultural, or community-based arts significance. The project team interviewed neighbors, artists, and community leaders to identify and map these places. These are the assets and areas that have already made 5th Ward into an

**LYONS AVENUE VISUAL SURVEY**

On pages 24-25, a graphic illustration shows how the building stock along Lyons Avenue and in the 5th Ward neighborhood has evolved over time, and the many styles of architecture that are already found in the neighborhood. The eras include are intended as a general overview of the city's development history, to follow architectural patterns of the neighborhood—and not intended to cast the neighborhood's history into these time periods.



# LYONS CORRIDOR ARTS AND CULTURE ASSET MAP



- 06 - JENSON / GREENS
- 11 - ALMEDA / LYONS
- 29 - CULLEN / HIRSCH
- 48 - MARKET
- 80 - MLK / LOCKWOOD

- FIFTH WARD CULTURAL ARTS DISTRICT
- RAILROAD
- EXISTING BIKEWAY
- FUTURE BIKEWAY

- HERITAGE
- CHURCHES
- ARTS
- COMMUNITY
- PARKS
- SCHOOLS

# HISTORIC VISUAL SURVEY

## LYONS AVE

The African-American  
Downtown of Houston

Post War Era

Redevelopment Era

Return to the City

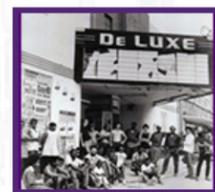
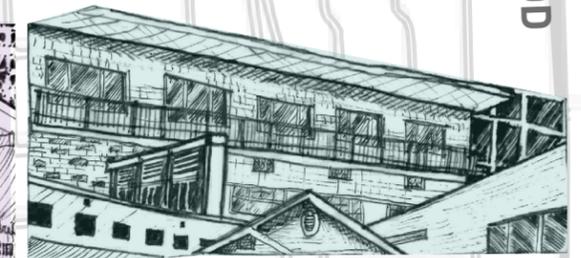
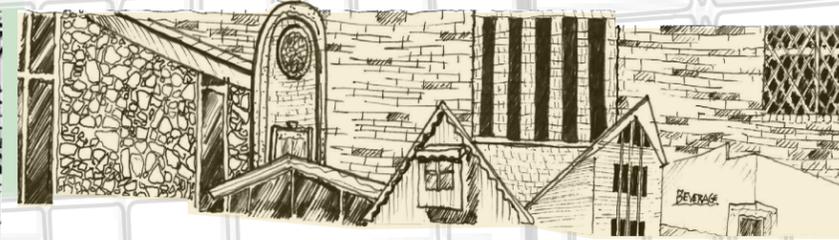
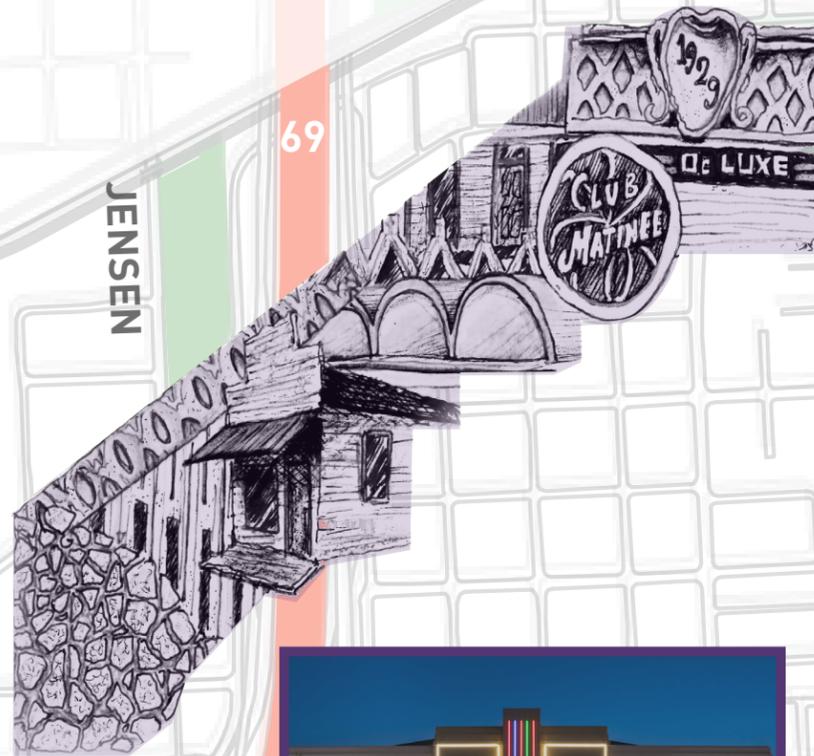
LOCKWOOD

JENSEN

69

WACO

1-10



# FRONTIER OF THE FUTURE: PROJECTS

The projects in this section represent the initial priorities of the 5th Ward's Lyons Avenue Cultural Arts District. These projects were informed by feedback from community members and the Artists' Advisory Council. These projects fall under the overarching verbs, which are in turn linked to the five core principles.

- ★ Engage → Art is More than a Hobby
- ★ Preserve → There is No Art Without People
- ★ Experience → Art is Democratic and Accessible
- ★ Prepare → Art Responds to Our Largest Challenges
- ★ Enjoy → 5th Ward is Art

KEY		COST	
TIMELINE			
	≤6 months	\$	≤\$10,000
	7-12 months	\$\$	\$10,001-\$50,000
	13-24 months	\$\$\$	\$50,001-\$500,000
	>24 months	\$\$\$\$	>\$500,000



## ENGAGE

### 1. STOREFRONT ACTIVATION: CLUB MATINEE



Club Matinee is a major piece of the cultural heritage of 5th Ward. Founded in 1936, this cultural landmark was an exceptional musical venue. After opening with Cab Calloway, this visionary Cotton Club of the South hosted entertainment legends from Ray Charles (one of his first gigs) to James Brown, Aretha Franklin, Quincy Jones, Louis Armstrong, Sam Cooke, Little Richard, and B.B. King. The Club remained open until 1973 but was unable to survive the insensitive highway and urban renewal projects of the 50s and 60s that fragmented the neighborhood. While much of the physical archives of the Club were lost in the flooding of Hurricane Harvey, the memories of the Club still resonate with the elderly population of the community, and the importance of recording these recollections remains urgent.

Because the club is no longer operational, there is a major opportunity to resurrect it as a cultural idea. The eventual goal would be to have a new physical location for Club Matinee, but initially, the focus should be on gaining momentum and support by using Club Matinee as an idea. By being free-flowing and fluid in concept, Club Matinee can operate in many spaces and serve

multiple purposes. The Club would start as a branding concept and organizing principle under which to host events, thus operating as a community organizing tool and a symbol of the resiliency and heritage of 5th Ward.

In the short-term:

- Obtain a portable or mobile stage for use in District events
- Create, as a pop-up, an affordable multi-use program to connect artists with available space in the neighborhood
- Establish a program committee for Club Matinee
- Host events for the community that support local artists and organizers

In the long-term:

- Develop a fundraising campaign for 3-5 years for property acquisition
- Identify storefront activation opportunities
- Consider a historic designation

#### PARTNERS

- Havel/Ruck
- GoNeighborhood

## 2. SWING SPACES



Securing space for individuals and groups to be able to create art is one of the primary projects of the Central Arts District. Swing spaces can be allocated into three categories:

### Artist residency and housing

Artists' residencies provide dedicated time and space for creative work. They allow artists and creatives the space and time to hone and grow their art in conducive spaces. Housing that supports artists is generally affordable and often can be used as a studio as well as living space due to its flexible design; the Fifth Ward CRC is currently working to develop artist housing in the neighborhood.

### Extended use of existing spaces

Many spaces currently exist within the 5th Ward neighborhood that can easily function as multi-use facilities. Spaces like churches, schools, and stores can also serve as yoga and dance studios, theatre and performing arts spaces, or even as pottery or jewelry making ateliers during extended hours. The Fifth Ward CRC will develop an inventory of all businesses or organizations who would be willing to volunteer their spaces as well as an associated list of spaces for needed activities.

### Coworking and makerspaces

The Fifth Ward CRC will work with partners to establish multipurpose collaborative spaces that can serve as coworking spaces, makerspaces, rehearsal spaces, and more. Spaces of this nature are valuable not only because they provide an affordable place for artists and creatives to work on their

craft, but also because they build networks and offer valuable networking opportunities. Coworking spaces and makerspaces in the community can also, for example, be the headquarters for local arts programming and education.

The Artist Advisory Council mentioned that, when planning a typical coworking space, there is often a lack of focus on the need for flexible larger spaces that can be used as rehearsal spaces or makerspaces for small manufacturing uses. The Fifth Ward CRC will work with potential users of multipurpose collaborative spaces to better understand their varying needs for physical space -- such as floors appropriate to the movement of modern dance, quiet contemplative spaces for writing, rehearsal spaces for theater, gallery spaces for display, studio space with appropriate equipment and cleaning areas, or areas equipped with technology for shared remote work.

The Fifth Ward CRC will work to move coworking and makerspace development forward by assessing local demand and needs from the creative and business communities, as well as identifying potential sites, and creating a financial plan for development and operations that considers affordability and access. Depending on the ultimate plan for the space, the CRC may seek to partner with or learn from current operators of makerspaces and coworking spaces in the Houston area.

### PARTNERS

- Fifth Ward CRC
- Mystic Lyon
- Existing coworking and makerspaces

## 3. MARKETING AND RECOGNITION OF LOCAL BUSINESSES



Consistent marketing of area businesses on travel sites, travel platforms, and the District's media channels will encourage more engagement within the District and healthier bottom lines. The use of a program similar to HeartSpots in Maine, where residents phoned in to record stories and memories related to specific downtown sites, can allow visitors and residents to vote on beloved 5th Ward institutions that can receive special designations, special recognition, and promotional items. In the era of digital

marketing and consumer engagement, the ability for cities and businesses to be able to hone an image is essential to both popularity and profitability.

### PARTNERS

- Area businesses
- District visitors
- Area residents
- Houston First



## 4. LOCALLY-TAUGHT ARTS CLASSES AND PROGRAMMING

Arts programming and classes were a major focus of discussion throughout the District planning process. Residents and creatives see the existing programs in the area as a great start, but they also identified many more opportunities to build out a full suite of programs that support the many creative residents and businesses in the area. Education for children and adults, and programming that supports local visitation and spending, were major themes that came up repeatedly with community members and local artists alike.

### Support and Advance Existing Arts Programming

Local residents and artists recognized many of the creative programs and assets that already exist in the District, such as the Houston Blues Museum's "About Blues Culture" program; the youth music and drama lessons and senior arts and crafts offered at the Julia C. Hester House; and events such as the Lyons Avenue Renaissance Festival and Summer Concert Series hosted by the Fifth Ward CRC. Supporting these programs that already build on community assets should be a high priority.

### Child and Adult Education

Community members and creatives saw the arts as an essential educational tool for lifelong learning, from young children to senior residents of the District. Opportunities identified included:

- Integrating arts into schools by partnering with teaching artists-in-residence (for

example the ArtBound! Program by Art League Houston or the Focus Creative Schools program by the Houston Arts Access Initiative); facilitating field trips to local arts and cultural destinations; coordinating performances and workshops by local artists during the school day; offering teachers resources and professional development for integrating arts into curriculum; and offering after-school and summertime workshops and classes for youth.

- Providing additional adult arts programming through regularly scheduled classes or workshops in visual arts, music, dance, and other areas of interest to the community in partnership with local artists, arts/community spaces, and social service organizations.
- Creating more opportunities for families and residents of all ages to engage with art in venues across the district, including schools or community spaces.
- Providing arts therapy that supports social and emotional learning for children and adults. Programs could engage specific audiences such as veterans, children in foster care, or others needing therapeutic art services.

### Visitation and Tourism

Building the profile of local artists, creatives, and businesses through visitation and tourism programming will help bring asset-based economic development to the District.

- One suggested opportunity was public art walking and biking tours for residents and visitors. These can be pre-planned



self-guided 30 minute - one hour walking/ biking tours that feature public art by local artists as well as other statues, murals, historic landmarks etc. located throughout the district. Free informational pieces, such as brochures and pamphlets--located along planned stops of the tour and at businesses throughout the district--would accompany the tours and include maps/ wayfinding for where each art installation is and information about each art piece. The

CRC could also collaborate with a local bike share program to expand public art biking tours.

- Another potential opportunity is to host a major public event that focuses on showcasing local arts and/or architecture, which could help draw local, national, and international visitors to support businesses and creatives in the area. For example, the CRC and partners could sponsor an

accessible event involving the decoration of prominent landmarks or buildings, similar to that in Miami, or a yearly biennial and showcase of artists of young artists of color not under gallery representation. These events could coincide or support existing major events such as the Renaissance Festival or the Summer Concert Series.

### Additional Programming Ideas from the Community

The community members and creatives engaged in this process had many other programming ideas, all of which hold potential. The District and Fifth Ward CRC will need to work to determine top priorities and funding sources among the many programming options suggested.

- Art in the public realm, including art in underpasses to re-connect areas divided by the highway, and/or banners that depict photographs of 5th Ward residents throughout the neighborhood
- Communal neighborhood dinner with activist culinary powerhouses in the area.
- Annual cook-off to showcase tastes and talent from around the 5th Ward
- Spaces open for all community members to exhibit talent, such as an arts festival open to everyone's participation, community gardens with a culinary or other creative focus, and/or the re-creation of a community art gallery.
- Classes in specific subjects including sewing and textile classes available, field photography classes for visitors or area students, DJing and music entrepreneurship, documentary and film production classes, and classes on using art as activism and engagement

- Events at area restaurants, bars, and clubs such as poetry and spoken word events or dance classes
- Mastermind groups for those with creative inclinations who want to professionalize the hobby and generate additional income
- Jazz programming with the intention of building out a space dedicated to jazz
- A temporary community radio station and installation

### PARTNERS

- Local and visiting artists
- Urban Souls Dance Company
- Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs
- Houston Art Alliance
- Artists' Collective
- Mystic Lyon
- Mel Chin



## PRESERVE

### 5. MEMORY BUILDS THE MONUMENT DOCUMENTARY



The CRC will create a documentary film, *Memory Builds the Monument*, about the living history of the 5th Ward. *Memory Builds the Monument* is an activist form of documentary filmmaking. Within this process, filmmakers will record community elders' recollections of a lost Houston cultural landmark, Club Matinee. The captured memories will be shared with architects and designers or even an architectural department at a university as a tool for designing a new Club Matinee that becomes a place of community revitalization, gathering, and cultural celebration.

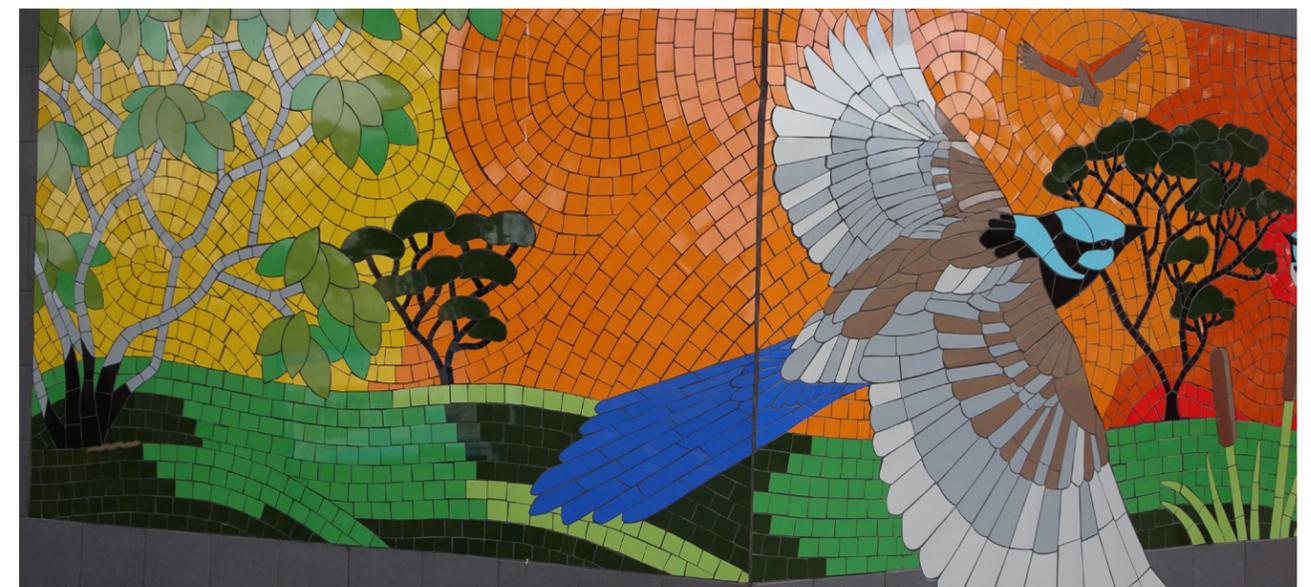
Filmmakers will record the process of creative development and of actualizing a new, dynamic point of destination back into the community for the entire city. The soundtrack for the documentary will incorporate a mix of the music heard at the original Club and contemporary music being made in Houston. A previously developed

grant application, the "A Community Thrives Grant Application," will serve as a starting point to develop the documentary's narrative, budget, and action plan.

Once the documentary is complete, the CRC and the filmmakers will submit it to local film festivals and promote it using the *Memory Builds the Monument* action brand. This promotional work will enhance the visibility of the 5th Ward and its history and culture, will further neighborhood pride and cohesion, and will attract new visitation and tourism to the area and to the new Club Matinee.

### PARTNERS

- Local filmmakers, musicians, architects, and designers
- University of Houston, Rice University, and Texas Southern University interns
- Mel Chin



## 6. ARTS AND CULTURE PATHWAY



The arts and culture pathway connects 5th Wards premiere arts, culture, heritage, and greenway amenities while also reinforcing economic growth, future creative endeavors, and an inspired sense of place. This pathway will continue to build upon the overarching **May the 5th Be With You** brand, in addition to the subordinate action brands of the 5th Ward Cultural Arts District. Four pieces have been identified that are essential to the success of the arts and culture pathway:

### An Arts and Culture Asset Map

This map identifies the core arts, culture, and historical places on the Lyons Avenue Corridor. This is the foundation of an Arts and Culture Trail that can be promoted and marketed throughout the city as a way to provide visitors with resources on where to eat, shop, learn, and play. A preliminary sketch of the map can be found on pages 22-23.

### Strategically-placed Kiosks

Strategically-placed kiosks around the District would serve as arts and culture

information points for locals and visitors alike. These kiosks could serve as Wi-Fi hotspots and also have the ability to send text messages with information or links to user's cellphones.

### Wayfinding Signage

In addition to the kiosks, wayfinding systems should be incorporated along the Lyons Avenue corridor and should reflect the 5th Ward brand by incorporating the 5th Ward logo and purple and white colors. Directional wayfinding signs should be placed at major destinations and intersections on Lyons Avenue and along Buffalo Bayou, as the bayou trail develops. Monument signs are more suited to areas with more pedestrian activity. These signs will point residents and visitors to major attractions, landmarks, and corridors. They are also a cheaper complementary asset to the kiosks.

### Public Realm Arts Activation

In the age of "Instagrammable moments," public realm arts activation plays a large role in creating pride in 5th Ward residents

as well as attracting non-resident visitors.. In conjunction with the **2018 5th Ward Pattern Book**, below are several examples of what an arts activation in the Central Arts District could look like:

- **Painted signs:** Painted signs for private businesses are present along Lyons Avenue and are numerous enough that they could easily become a signature branding element for the area. Businesses could be assisted to hire professional sign painters or artists from the neighborhood through a small-dollar facade renewal program. New developments, especially those with a food, craft or artistic emphasis and that have small setbacks and street frontage, should be encouraged to include painted signs in their facade plans.
- **Paw print paving:** Residents have expressed a desire to include "paw prints" like those present at Phillis Wheatley High School to achieve moments of visual interest in the sidewalk. Historical areas and buildings of significance throughout the TIRZ may be identified by the clearly visible placement of a "paw print" motif in one sidewalk square fronting the property.
- **Banners:** Banners should be placed on City lighting and new pedestrian lighting along the Lyons Avenue corridor. The banners will be branded with the 5th Ward logo, a historical/cultural icon, or "I am the 5th."
- **Furnishings:** Branded furnishings will include lighting, historical/cultural landmark markers, benches, and bicycle racks. Benches are encouraged as part of a vibrant streetscape and are useful particularly for elderly persons and families who wish to participate in street

life. They should be incorporated in all priority investment locations, and in all multi-family residential development or mixed-use development projects. Benches on Lyons Avenue should act as a visual branding element supporting the overall branding strategy. Bicycle racks should be included in all green spaces and commercial or mixed-use destinations where they are not currently available.

- **Lighting:** All new projects should incorporate site lighting at street frontages, pedestrian paths, and parking areas. Over time, the TIRZ should replace existing large overhead street lights with pedestrian scale street lights for pedestrian interest and comfort.
- **Underpasses and bridges:** Public realm presents an opportunity to present creative expression in ways that intrigue, surprise, engage, and educate visitors. Building interactive commemorations into places and spaces not only tells the story, but also makes visitors part of the story moving forward. Underpass art can connect disparate areas of 5th Ward, make walking and bike-riding more comfortable, and increase security.

### PARTNERS

- Area residents and businesses
- Houston Arts Alliance
- Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs
- Fifth Ward Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone
- METRO
- Anna Mod

## 7. STORY, MEMORY, AND MEMORABILIA COLLECTION DRIVES



Many feedback participants who do not live in 5th Ward expressed remorse knowing their family had lineage ties to 5th Ward, but because they had no tangible or intangible memories to evidence the family's time in the community, it is difficult to understand exactly how strong the ties were. Additionally, because of a lack of sufficient knowledge in archiving and preservation, the condition of photos, newspapers, and homes often deteriorate with even environmental disaster.

Aside from small collections at the Menil, University of Houston, and local photographers, very few high-quality resources were found that documented 5th Ward throughout the years with. The ability to collect, preserve, and share memories originating from 5th Ward will create more authenticity around branding initiatives and further the District's preservation priorities. A few examples that speak to this include:

- Using call-in lines allows residents to call in memories of 5th Ward that can be placed on a map. A community in Maine was invited to call in and record their memories of a space as well as share what they would like to see happen to that space moving forward. Memories were then placed on a "HeartSpot" map for others to visit and listen to real-time.
- Setting up of a photography and memory collection drive at area churches, senior homes, libraries, service centers, and festivals. Volunteers can help scan photographs, record memories, or man memory booths. Alternatively, virtual inboxes or physical memory boxes can be set up.

- Coordinating with The African American Library at Gregory School on its archive days where Houstonians can have archivists look through photographs and help with preservation.
- Embedding of story-telling into the District's artistic, cultural, and educational programming. Project RFPs can encourage artists, residents, or students research a historic event and formulate their own expressions of what they learn.
- Hosting a council of elders that engages with younger populations. There are examples at SHAPE Center and the Compensatory Hour. To quote Community Artists' Collective CEO Michelle Barnes, "There has to be a deliberate effort to transfer the culture. A grassroots approach to conveying the culture and have the metaphorical (or literal) monument you can point to. Give the children the power to tell the stories as they want and help the elders do it better."
- Creating strategic touchpoints where new residents, and visitors, absorb the culture in way that empowers them to tell stories and experiences that the District captures and shares.

### PARTNERS

- The African American Library at Gregory School
- University of Houston
- Mayor's Office for Cultural Affairs
- Texas Southern University
- Local churches

## EXPERIENCE

### 8. LYONS AVENUE RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL



Since 2015, the Lyons Avenue Renaissance Festival has been held annually. The festival celebrates the history, art, culture, and current revitalization of Houston's 5th Ward. The festival attracts thousands of residents and visitors every year and includes musical performances, a helicopter egg drop, face painting, among other family-friendly activities.

The Fifth Ward CRC already works with vendors at the festival to provide coupons that volunteers can use as a benefit for their service. As a next step, the CRC will work to transform these coupons into a "Fifth Ward Currency" that allows participants to exchange money for currency in the form of tickets or coupons which would be unique for each festival year.

In the future, the CRC may seek to use the currency at additional events or transform it

into a coupon system that works at multiple businesses in the neighborhood.

Creating a neighborhood currency for participating businesses and residents can help build collaboration as well as strengthen the economic and social roots of the neighborhood. In addition, it would provide marketing collateral for District businesses or discounts for residents in exchange for advertisements in, for example, the District's music streaming playlist. The currency could leverage local talent if an open competition for its design were to be hosted in the District.

### PARTNERS

- Local artists
- District businesses



## PREPARE

### 9. FRONTIER OF THE FUTURE



Climate change has contributed to major flooding over the past few years in Houston. Parts of the 5th Ward have been affected, and neighboring areas like Kashmere Gardens have also experienced major flooding. Thus, there needs to be a special focus on the effects of climate change as part of the Cultural Arts District's programming and projects.

Frontier of the Future will be a program that weaves elements of climate change into the District's projects and help prepare residents and visitors alike for a future with increasing climate change. Additionally, this

program will also aim to fight the effects of climate change through, for example, utilizing sustainable materials for art pieces, partnering with environmental organizations, showcasing the possibilities of the future - with and without change. As mentioned previously, Frontier of the Future will be an action brand. However, the brand will be built upon the Frontier of the Future program.

#### PARTNERS

- University of Houston Office of Sustainability
- City of Houston Office of Sustainability



## ENJOY

### 10. MUSIC PLAYLIST



Music is a universal language that speaks to everyone. During the 20th Century, the 5th Ward was a cradle for blues, jazz, and zydeco music, and it continues to be a home for many artists today. Creating a branded arts district playlist would be able to further showcase the neighborhood's culture and flair. This playlist, potentially to be called the Skipper Lee Playlist - an ode to the Houstonian radio giant - can be created on Spotify or a similar music streaming platform using the collaborative playlist feature. This playlist can be used to:

- Promote area businesses, community centers, local arts and culture destinations,
- Promote artist collaboration and expression with guest "curators," such as local artists and musicians, and
- Use digital messaging to promote local events or ongoing exhibits.

#### PARTNERS

- Radio stations in Houston
- Museum of American Music History
- Houston residents



## 11. BRANDED ITEMS



Brand affects us very deeply when it's personal and emotional, and the best brands tap into those deeply-held feelings and self-identifications. Think of Houston Strong. The message was powerful, a refusal to be beaten down by the tragedy of Hurricane Harvey and a simultaneous tribute to the Houston Astros. The Astros built on this momentum and collaborated with local artists creating murals across the city. The 5th Ward can utilize a similar strategy. Local artists can create extensions of the action brands and create branded items like buttons,

bumper stickers, t-shirts, hats, etc. In turn, this will demonstrate the amount of creativity living in 5th Ward. Anyone will be able to self-identify as a local artist or creative. It will also help amplify the identity of the 5th Ward community as a creative and unified place.

### PARTNERS

- Makerspaces
- Schools
- Area residents



MAY THE 5TH BE WITH YOU

