

GENTRIFICATION

An Analysis of Place Based Strategies for
Preserving African American Neighborhoods in America



Protect Your Land

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INTRODUCTION

This report analyzes the impact of gentrification on historic Gullah and African American communities and presents strategies being utilized across the United States to preserve these communities. First, this report explores the forces which have shaped the development of historic Gullah and predominantly African American communities across the nation and the state of African American communities today. Second, this report analyzes the literature on gentrification and sets a working definition for the term that encompasses what communities - as opposed to academics, journalists, or scholars - have come to believe gentrification represents to them as the residents most impacted. Finally, this report examines the strategies being used in ten communities to preserve African American neighborhoods facing gentrification and makes recommendations for how communities can incorporate these strategies into a preservation plan

AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Over the course of six decades, a period between 1916 and 1970, an

estimated six million black southerners left their forefathers land and settled into an uncertain existence in nearly every other corner of America. This Great Migration, a turning point in our country's history, transformed urban America and recast the social and political order of every city it touched. Its imprint is everywhere in urban life, configuring cities by the social geography of black and white neighborhoods. (Wilkerson, 2010, pp. 9-10)

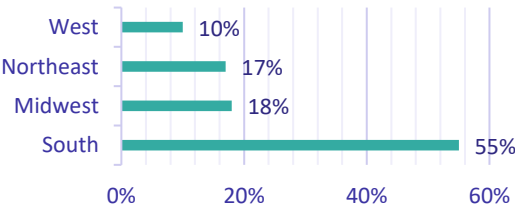
Recent sociopolitical uprisings have garnered renewed interest in historical African American communities. The Greenwood neighborhood in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where in the early 20th century African Americans created a self-sufficient prosperous business district. A four-block district on Parrish Street in Durham, North Carolina, the hub of African American businesses and financial services during the late 1800s and early 1900s. The town of Rosewood, Florida a predominantly black, self-sufficient whistle stop on the Seaboard Air Line Railway in the early 1900s. Each community destroyed as a result of racial hostility.

It would be this same racial hostility which once fueled the burning

of African American communities, which would also give rise to the creation of centers of both historical and contemporary African American art, music, and culture. The Bronzeville neighborhood in Chicago, Illinois, where the nation's most significant African American businesses were once concentrated. The Harlem neighborhoods in Manhattan, New York, the center of a major African American cultural renaissance. Leimert Park to Hyde Park, the commercial corridor along Crenshaw Boulevard known as the heart of African American commerce in Los Angeles. Each community born out of the massive migration of African Americans from the south to the north and west during the early 20th century.

Today, the majority of Blacks in the United States live in the South. **(Rastogi, Johnson, Hoeffel, & Drewery Jr., 2011)**

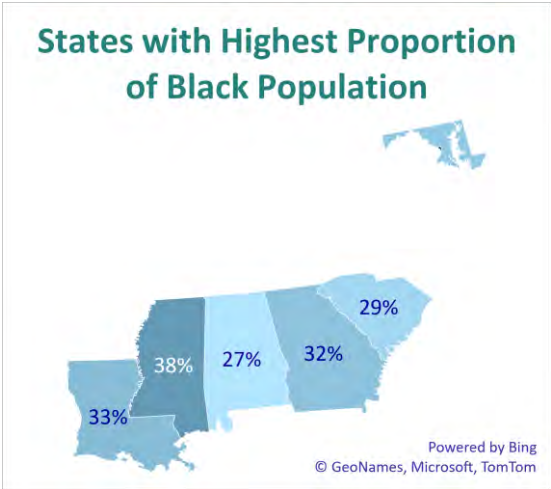
Percentage Distribution of the Black Population by Region in America



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The Black population represents over 25 percent of the total population in just six states:

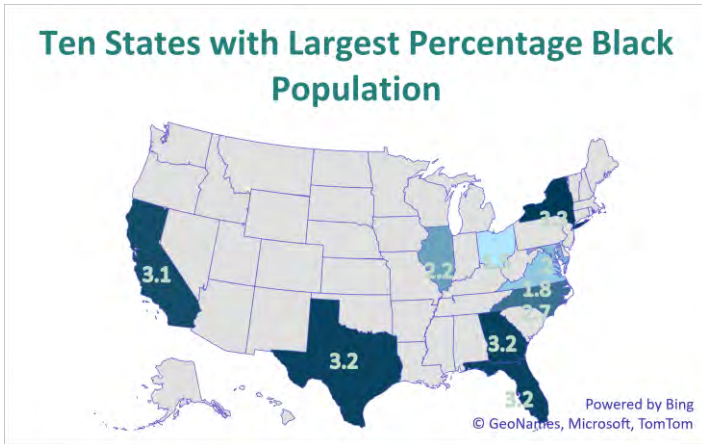
- | | |
|-------------------|-----|
| 1. Mississippi | 38% |
| 2. Louisiana | 33% |
| 3. Georgia | 32% |
| 4. Maryland | 31% |
| 5. South Carolina | 29% |
| 6. Alabama | 27% |



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

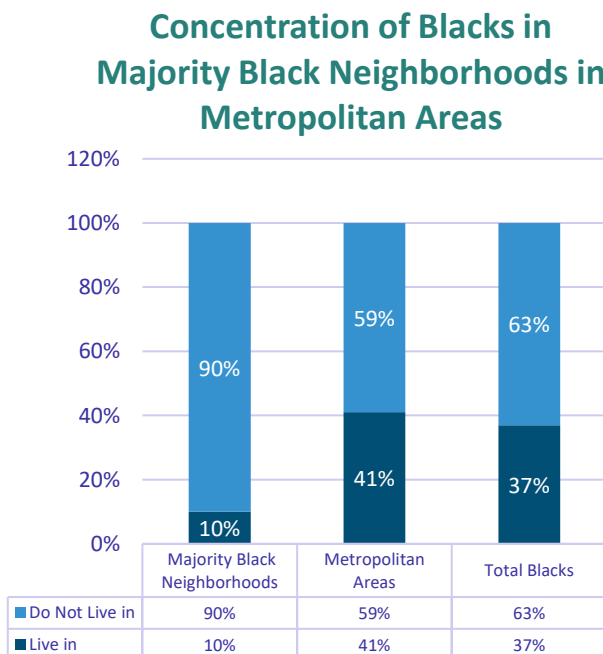
Nearly 60 percent of all people who identify as Black on the U.S. Census live in ten states:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| 1. New York | 3.3 million |
| 2. Florida | 3.2 million |
| 3. Texas | 3.2 million |
| 4. Georgia | 3.2 million |
| 5. California | 3.1 million |
| 6. North Carolina | 2.7 million |
| 7. Illinois | 2.2 million |
| 8. Maryland | 2.0 million |
| 9. Virginia | 1.8 million |
| 10. Ohio | 1.5 million |



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

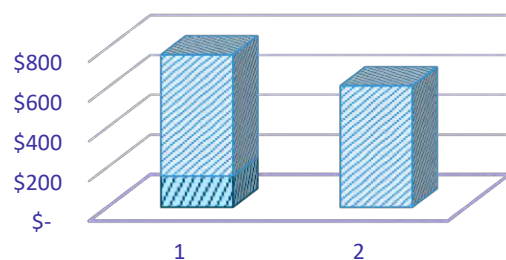
In U.S. metropolitan areas, only 10 percent of neighborhoods are majority black, but they are home to 41 percent of the black population living in metropolitan areas and 37 percent of the U.S. black population. (Perry, Rothwell, & Harshbarger, 2018)



Source: (Perry, Rothwell, & Harshbarger, 2018)

Homes in majority-black neighborhoods are worth \$48,000 less than homes of similar quality in neighborhoods with similar amenities but few or no black residents. These neighborhoods are home to approximately public schools and over 3 million businesses. Majority-black neighborhoods contain 3.2 million owner-occupied homes worth an estimated \$609 billion — but those homes are collectively worth \$156 billion more if not for the lower value that comes with the perceptions associated with being in a majority-black neighborhood. (Perry, Rothwell, & Harshbarger, 2018)

Additional Home Value Perceived Home Value

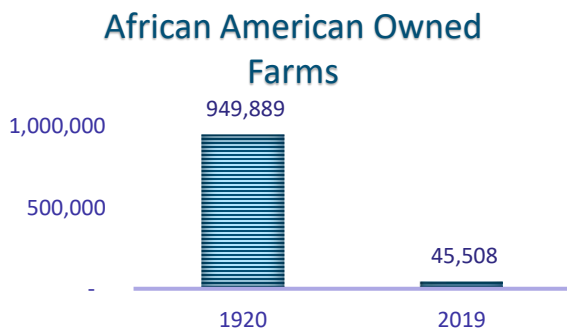


Source: (Perry, Rothwell, & Harshbarger, 2018)

And it is this untapped wealth of place which is fueling the gentrification of historic Gullah and African American communities from Charleston, South Carolina to Oakland, California, and many stops in between.

GULLAH COMMUNITIES

What of those who remained in the South? In 1900, nine out of every ten blacks lived in the South, and three out of every four lived on farms, but by 1970 the South was home to less than half of the country's African American population, with only twenty-five percent living in the region's rural areas. In 1920, there were 925,000 African American owned farms, representing about 14 percent of all farms in the United States. By 1975, just 45,000 African American owned farms remained. **(Douglas, 2017)**



The Gullah people are descendants of Africans who were enslaved on the rice, indigo and Sea Island cotton plantations of the lower Atlantic coast. The Gullah people have traditionally resided in the coastal areas and the sea islands of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida — from Pender County, North Carolina, to St. John's County, Florida.

(<https://gullahgeecheecorridor.org/thegullahgeechee/>, n.d.)



Gullah communities thrived for decades on the isolated islands, largely free of the restrictions of the Jim Crow South. For generations, they maintained an agricultural, barter-based economy. In areas where the Gullah once made up 90 percent or more of the population, they account for as little as 10 percent today. (Douglas, 2017) The Gullah have struggled to hold onto their ancestral homelands on the Sea Islands in the face of development, gentrification, and corporate intrusion. And because of the Gullah's unique history of agricultural production, the loss of land amounts to a loss of culture. (Douglas, 2017)



At the turn of the 20th century, formerly enslaved African Americans and their heirs owned 15 million acres of land, primarily in the South, mostly used for farming. Today, African Americans are only 1 percent of rural landowners in the U.S., and under 2 percent of farmers. Of the 1 billion acres of arable land in America, African Americans own a little more than 1 million acres. (Love, June)

Many factors contributed to the loss of African American owned land

during the 20th century, including systemic discrimination in lending by the US Department of Agriculture, the industrialization that lured workers into factories, and the Great Migration. (Douglas, 2017) Today, gentrification is the force driving land loss in both historic Gullah and African American communities across the country.

GENTRIFICATION

Gentrification is the process by which a low-income neighborhood becomes a high-income neighborhood. Gentrification is most often accompanied by shifts in the ethnic or racial makeup of a neighborhood, increases in education level among residents, new perceptions of resident political power, and a changed view of local government from enforcer to protector. Gentrification is a public-private capital investment process which facilitates the replacement of low tax yielding properties with higher tax yielding properties through (1) public policy and capital expenditures, and (2) private residential and commercial acquisition and development resulting in (A) higher median household income for new residents, (B) higher business income for new commercial property owners and tenants, (C) higher property taxes, and (D) displacement of existing resident and business through (a) property sales, (b) tax sales, (c) condemnation, or (d) eminent domain.

American development has always hinged on the idea of a conquered frontier. America's origin story that good, brave men came and settled a foreign, dangerous, and wild land of savages and made it civilized is a

gentrification story. (Moskowitz, 2018) Contemporary gentrification has elements of colonialism as a cultural force in its privileging of whiteness and the assertion of white Anglo aesthetics and culture into neighborhoods.

"Gentrification is deeply rooted in social dynamics and economic trends. Its signs, effects, and trajectories are to a large degree determined by its local context: the physical and social characteristics of the neighborhoods in questions, the positions, and goals of the actors, the dominant functions of the city, the nature of economic restructuring and local government policy." (van Weesep, 1994) From the earliest days of America's urban development, local governments have shaped the built environment to influence property values and strategically allocate public goods for the benefit of white property owners. (Trounstine, 2018) A city's power through planning and zoning to define where certain types of housing and buildings could be located and where public amenities and nuisances would be placed has been used to protect white homeowner neighborhoods and business properties from integration, concentrating delivery of public goods

to politically powerful constituents.
(Trounstone, 2018)

Today, the young, educated, and affluent are moving back into cities, reversing decades of divestment, suburban flight, and urban decline. (Florida, 2017) These new residents, and the urban growth they spawn, present challenges for communities, including gentrification, segregation, and inequality. History, very recent history, shows mounting frustrations, coupled with an unwillingness by political representatives to do anything about these challenges, leads to powerful social movements. (Moskowitz, 2018) History has also shown, when and where African Americans have political voice, segregation and inequality is lessened. (Trounstone, 2018)

“Regardless of whether it results from government or private market action, forced displacement is characteristically a case of people without the economic and political power to resist being pushed out by people with greater resources and power, people who think they have a “better” use for a certain building, piece of land, or neighborhood.” (Hartman, Keating, & LeGates, 1982) Gentrification is promoted positively by new residents

who ignore its less desirable impacts on existing residents. New residents often promote gentrification - calling it instead redevelopment, revitalization, placemaking - as a way to socially mix, balance, and stabilize neighborhoods. (Lees, Slater, & Wyly, Gentrification, 2008) Gentrification can minimize the extent to which quality of life is dependent on one’s class. To the extent the poor share residential space with those more affluent, they will benefit from the amenities the more affluent are able to command and the disamenities they are able to avoid. (Freeman, 2006) In contrast, gentrification is viewed negatively by existing residents who ignore its more desirable impacts because, so few are able to remain. New residents often resist gentrification – calling it racist, elitist, and extractive – due to its direct and indirect displacement of residents and businesses. Indigenous residents of affected neighborhoods have a moral claim on the area, having been there first and weathered the storm of bad times. (Freeman, 2006)

As one example, here are comments from new and existing residents of Atlanta’s Pittsburgh neighborhood:

New Resident Comments:

“As it stands today, Pittsburgh has no culture. Unless you call crime and blight culture.”

“I say diversification and inclusion versus gentrification because when you start diversifying the people, the places and things to do in a community, that changes that community to be sustainable and inviting.”

“I saw it for what it was going to be. I still see it for what it’s going to be.”

“It’s a lovely little community if you could just take a magic eraser and erase all the ills.”

“There is going to be more energy around this dormant complacency that happens in Pittsburgh,”

Existing Resident Comments

“We’ve been reaching and yelling out for resources to help mitigate these issues for decades and decades and they have been ignored and ignored.”

“But we want to make sure that we’re doing that in a way that doesn’t disrespect folks that are there and doesn’t dishonor something that these

communities have been working towards for so long.”

“That is a misconception, to say that people in their community do not want to see their home values rise, don’t want to see criminal activities decrease.

“It hurts, to be quite honest. It’s disappointing to see economic potential only thought to be real when other people come in, and not recognized for the culture that’s already here.”

Gentrification poses a dilemma for neighborhoods. While residents are appreciative of the community improvements associated with the gentrification process, the constant threat of displacement overrides the worth of the improvements. (Freeman, 2006) Alternatively, in some urban and rural neighborhoods, like Pittsburgh, a trend is emerging in which upper and middle-class black professionals, sometimes known as black gentrifiers, are remaining in or returning to their communities to engage in revitalization efforts that help boost the fortunes of all residents while keeping the area’s character intact.

Gentrification is no longer confined to the inner city. (Lees, Slater,



& Wyly, Gentrification, 2008)

Exacerbating the challenges of gentrification, high ground is becoming coveted property as sea level rises.

“Whether is climate change or an eye for good real estate returns, historically black communities on higher ground are increasingly in the sights of speculators and investors. Real estate investment may no longer be just about the next hot neighborhood, it may also now be about the next dry neighborhood.”

(Bolstad, 2017; Bolstad, 2017) However, the geographic divides that separate cities, suburbs, and rural places may be too deep for a national consensus on gentrification. Cities, suburbs, and rural towns are very different places with different needs. As such, strategies for

addressing gentrification are best tailored to local conditions and local needs. (Florida, 2017)

Because of the pervasiveness of gentrification and the staggering impacts of the loss of historic Gullah and African American neighborhoods in America, the wisest strategy is one that empowers a community, in partnership with a city, to manage the gentrification process to achieve a more equitable and just result. Regardless of the strategies employed, residents who are able to control the process tend to be the most successful at avoiding the full negative impacts of gentrification.

STRATEGIES

The gentrification pressures may be different, and the pace of change may vary, but African American communities throughout America are seeking strategies to hold onto their economic and cultural neighborhood wealth. Here are ten place based strategies being utilized to lessen the impacts of gentrification on African American communities on a large scale, through legal action, and on a small, project by project, scale guided by a neighborhood's youth.

1. Foundation Investment
2. Youth Job Training
3. Local Investment
4. Political Engagement
5. Community Benefit Agreement
6. Community Development
7. Place Keeping
8. Redevelopment
9. Historic Preservation
10. Legal Action

These strategies focus on the ecosystem in African American communities being utilized to implement a common set of solutions to the issue of gentrification. Build more affordable housing units, promote owner occupied rehab, fund real estate acquisition by legacy businesses, reduce

or freeze property taxes to protect long-time residents, give current residents first right of refusal to purchase or rent in redeveloped properties are some of the re-occurring solutions. These solutions are being folded into different approaches to create a wholistic strategy.

Yet, despite the many strategies, lower-income homeowners and renters still find it increasingly difficult to remain in their neighborhoods, both in urban and rural communities and in cities large and small. At a minimum, strategies seek to slow, or mitigate the process of gentrification to diminish the disruption to the lives of a neighborhood's current residents while enabling long-time residents to stay and benefit from new jobs, services, amenities, and maybe even better schools resulting from new investments in the community. The challenge is determining whether the implementation of a given strategy disrupts or accelerates gentrification. Some argue that new housing must be built in gentrifying neighborhoods to take pressure off the market and to accommodate rising demand. At the same time, others blame these very developments for accelerating the process of gentrification. .

ATLANTA, GA



NEIGHBORHOOD: PITTSBURG

STRATEGY: FOUNDATION INVESTMENT

Founded in 1883 by formerly enslaved people, Atlanta's Pittsburgh neighborhood consisted of housing built around Pegram railroad repair shops. The smoke from the rail yards resembled the heavy smog produced by the steel mills of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, resulting in the neighborhood's name.

Today, Pittsburgh Yards is an unprecedented redevelopment project with an ambitious goal to spur economic equity, job growth and entrepreneurship for residents of Adair Park, Capitol Gateway, Mechanicsville, Peoplestown, Pittsburgh and Summerhill—often referred to as Neighborhood Planning Unit V (NPU-V)—and other southwest Atlanta

neighborhoods. It is touted as being more than a development project, but a transformative, community-led catalyst to positively impact residents and entrepreneurs for generations to come.

Located near many of Atlanta's major redevelopment projects, including the Atlanta BeltLine, the former Turner Field and State Farmers Market, Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport and Fort McPherson, this 31-acre site is part of an area that is in the midst of gentrification.

The site, formerly referred to as 352 University Avenue, is actually named Pittsburgh Yards as a result of a community-led naming group's efforts. Community members developed several concepts, launched a call-in campaign to gather resident input on the proposed options and announced the final selection at an engagement meeting on October 12, 2017.

"As Pittsburgh residents, we have consistently been invited to contribute our ideas, opinions and knowledge of the community to the development of Pittsburgh Yards," said Dantes Rameau, who lives in Pittsburgh and is one of many neighbors who have attended meetings to help shape the project. "It's exciting that this is happening in our

neighborhood and I look forward to the many benefits it will bring to Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh residents.”

Community residents engage with the Pittsburgh Yards development through monthly gatherings on the second Thursday of every month. Additionally, residents and other stakeholders have the opportunity to join smaller work groups, to invest their skills and interests in shaping the future of Pittsburgh Yards, to dig deeply into issues and opportunities related to specific aspects of the project, whether they be short term or long term, and to draw on the rich knowledge and abilities of active community members to maximize the potential impact of the project.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation owns the parcel and has invested toward ensuring the development benefits the community. Once complete, the site will serve as a commercial, recreational and community anchor that offers living-wage employment as well as long-term career and entrepreneurship opportunities for residents in and around the city’s Neighborhood Planning Unit V. Development pressure and revitalization are putting affordable housing out of reach for many families.

“The Casey Foundation’s focus in redeveloping Pittsburgh Yards has always been on providing more equitable opportunities for residents in Southwest Atlanta,” says Kweku Forstall, director of the Foundation’s Atlanta Civic Site.

“As progress on the BeltLine continues, it’s more important than ever to intentionally create and preserve quality, affordable housing options for existing residents,” says Natallie Keiser, a senior associate at the Casey Foundation’s Atlanta Civic Site.

Additionally, the Foundation, will work with Invest Atlanta to help address major challenges experienced by small businesses and entrepreneurs of color in the surrounding area. The site is tapping a diverse range of workforce partners who are committed to hiring residents for secure, permanent, and construction-related jobs. The project is also prioritizing businesses owned by women and people of color for subcontracting opportunities. Through mid-2019, more than 60% of construction contracts in Pittsburgh Yards’ first phase were awarded to firms owned by people of color.

BROOKLYN, NY



NEIGHBORHOOD: BROWNSVILLE

STRATEGY: YOUTH JOB TRAINING

Founded in 1858, Brownsville was initially a settlement composed of Jewish factory workers. Starting in the 1930s, the demographics began to shift as African American migrants fled the Jim Crow-era South where they were racially discriminated against. In 1940, black residents made up 6% of Brownsville's population, today 80% of Brownsville's population is African American, close to half of whom are living in poverty.

Brownsville is dominated by public housing developments of various types. The neighborhood contains the most densely concentrated area of public housing in the United States. Ironically, Brownsville's high concentration of public housing, which some consider a source of many of the

neighborhood's woes, may be the thing that keeps it intact.

However, a March 2019 study from the revealed that Brownsville could be the next Brooklyn neighborhood facing gentrification. The report titled "[Shifting Neighborhoods](#)," showed that parts of Brownsville have already begun gentrifying, while other sections may be up next for the economic shift. The map reveals six Brownsville sections where real estate prices have been on the rise; in some areas they have nearly doubled. Yet, annual salaries on average just increased by \$5,000.

Community leaders in Brownsville, among them many African American professionals, are working to prepare for what is ahead by shaping the future of the neighborhood, from the inside out. Quardean Lewis-Allen, who was born and raised in Brownsville, returned to the area in 2013 after graduating with a master's in architecture from Harvard. Together with his partner, Alan Waxman, whom he met in college, he founded [Made in Brownsville](#) to give local youths an opportunity to learn about design and architecture so they can get related jobs

and also so they can play a role in shaping their neighborhood's future. (Walshe, 2015)

Made in Brownsville (MiB) is a youth creative agency and innovation hub providing a gateway for young people to learn marketable hard skills in STEAM, access postsecondary education, achieve economic mobility, and engage in place-based community revitalization. MiB projects teach design thinking, art, multimedia, tech, and communication skills to give young people the technical and leadership tools they need to compete in the innovation economy and to be leaders in their community.

MiB design mentors collaborate with youth on projects that impact the vitality of the community as well as client commissioned creative projects. One such project was the revisualization of the Belmont Avenue corridor, commissioned by the Brownsville Community Justice Center, a multifaceted initiative that seeks to prevent crime by investing in local youth and improving the physical landscape of the neighborhood.

For much of Brownsville's history, Belmont Avenue was a thriving market space, with dozens of pushcart merchants selling their wares. By 2015,

"The community knows what it needs and has a vision for how to implement those needs, but the problem is access to capital," Lewis-Allen said, acknowledging the major obstacle low-income residents face in determining their neighborhood's future.

it was mostly abandoned, with boarded-up storefronts, and was a no-go area at night. Made in Brownsville began working with court-involved youths to reimagine the space. Their renderings included green walls, a mural and a multifunctional pedestrian plaza, with special lighting features to make it inviting at all hours. Today, the plaza is permanent and a center of community activity. (Walshe, 2015)

"We're trying to disrupt the normal flow of things" says Lewis-Allen. "If we can empower the residents with jobs and skills that will help them shape the neighborhood's future, then they are less likely to be displaced when Brownsville suddenly becomes hip." (Walshe, 2015)

CHARLOTTE, NC



NEIGHBORHOOD: RENAISSANCE WEST

STRATEGY: LOCAL INVESTMENT

Charlotte Housing Authority selected Laurel Street Residential to redevelop the former Boulevard Homes public housing site into a beautiful new mixed-income community in several phases known as The Renaissance. The Renaissance is located in West Charlotte on West Boulevard, just east of Billy Graham Parkway.

The Renaissance includes 334 units of mixed-income housing. This includes 110 apartments for seniors (age 65+) and 224 units of family housing. Two-thirds of the housing will be for families that earns up to 60% of area median income. One-third of the housing will be for market-rate tenants.

The Howard Levine Child Development Center (HLCDC) and

Renaissance West STEAM Academy (RWSA), a CMS pre-K – 8 school, is located on site. RWSA opened for the 2017-2018 school year, followed by the HLCDC in the winter of 2018. In addition, adult education opportunities are being offered on-site, including High School Equivalency (GED), Financial Literacy and more.

Renaissance West Community Initiative (RWCI) is a non-profit organization coordinating the education and services continuum of the Renaissance. The initiative uses a holistic community redevelopment approach, focusing on multiple critical factors, including mixed-income housing, educational opportunities, youth and adult development programs, health and wellness services and commercial investment.

The mission of RWCI is to promote a collaborative community centered on quality housing, education, health, wellness, and opportunity. RWCI serves 1300+ residents and depends on over 50 partners to deliver programs and services in the community. RWCI is a member of the Purpose-Built Communities (PBC) Network: The focus is on defined neighborhoods where transformative programs and infrastructure can be established with

the support of a “Community Quarterback.” The three pillars are: mixed income housing, cradle to career education pipeline, and community health and wellness. RWCI’s vision is to end intergenerational poverty through a holistic community revitalization effort.

RWCI completed a Comprehensive Campaign and raised \$15.4M in capital and operating dollars. Since 2018, RWCI relies on annual giving through the Renaissance West Annual Fund to support RWCI as the Community Quarterback, Renaissance West STEAM Academy and the Howard Levine Child Development Center.

In alignment, the United Way of Central Carolinas’ United Neighborhoods strategy works to change the odds for individuals and families living in Charlotte’s most under-resourced neighborhoods. From helping families become financially stable and find affordable housing, to preparing children to enter school ready to learn and read, the needs of these communities are many and varied.

United Neighborhoods launched in 2017 with a \$2.4 million commitment over three years into the Renaissance and Grier Heights neighborhoods in Charlotte. Working with a lead partner in each community, United Way funds



The Residences at Renaissance, mixed-income family units, community center, playground, and pool.

and guides the work toward achieving its collective goal of building a thriving community where families want to live.

Transformation and revitalization efforts are driven through community-specific strategies backed by multi-year funding and staff resources from United Way. Needs are identified by residents and addressed by a coalition of community stakeholders that includes residents, schools, nonprofits, government officials, churches, hospitals, and businesses.

United Neighborhood’s “Building Block Grants” support neighborhoods in the early stages of comprehensive revitalization. Grants build the capacity of “community quarterback” organizations, fund community engagement activities and complete resident-driven neighborhood planning to identify needs and solutions.

CHICAGO, IL



NEIGHBORHOOD: WOODLAWN

STRATEGY: POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Up until 1948, Woodlawn was a middle class, white neighborhood, which grew out of the floods of workers and commerce from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Like other communities bordering the ghetto, Woodlawn experienced intense bouts of white flight when the first African Americans moved into the neighborhood. By the early 1960s Woodlawn was a predominantly African American neighborhood with a population of over 80,000 people. Today, Woodlawn, 10 miles from downtown and just steps from Jackson Park, is over 80% black, with nearly 40% of its 25,000 residents living below the

poverty line, according to Chicago demographer Rob Paral.

Fear of gentrification has spurred the residents of Woodlawn into action since Barack Obama announced his \$500 million presidential center would be built in Jackson Park, near Lake Michigan and where he started his political career, taught law, and got married. Jackson Park is a 500-acre park on Lake Michigan in the neighborhoods of Woodlawn, Hyde Park, and bordering South Shore. The center is expected to draw around 800,000 visitors a year, translating into \$110 million spent in the city each year, according to a 2014 University of Chicago-commissioned study. (Tareen, 2019)

A study by neighborhood activists estimated that up to 4,500 families would be at risk of displacement with development around the center. Some groups have demanded a community benefits agreement to protect residents. The Obama Foundation disagreed. (Tareen, 2019)

The disagreement fueled, local activist, Jeannette Taylor's run for City Council. She won. The same election featured a nonbinding ballot question spurred by activists asking voters from the areas affected by the center if they would support a community benefits

agreement. Voters said yes overwhelmingly. (Tareen, 2019)

Taylor has since gained sponsorship for an ordinance calling for protections in a 2-mile radius around the Obama library, including designating 30% of the area's housing as affordable, requiring buildings up for sale to first be offered to current tenants, and establishing a community trust fund to help residents with property taxes. (Tareen, 2019) Accordingly, the work of a mission-driven developer on the South Side shows what can be done to counteract gentrification's exclusionary tendencies. Preservation of Affordable Housing — POAH — has built a mixed-use, mixed-income development on Cottage Grove Avenue between 60th and 63rd Streets in Woodlawn that's a model for how to implement affordable housing without impeding private investment. (Zotti, 2020)

Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) is a nonprofit developer, owner, and operator of affordable rental apartments in several urban communities in the Chicago area. In 2008, at the invitation of concerned residents, POAH acquired the former Grove Parc Apartments, a 504-unit Section 8 housing development that was marked for closure. Where

“It is morally wrong to get investment in a community that’s long overdue investment and then to displace the very people who have been dealing with disinvestment,” Taylor said

buildings targeted for evictions and foreclosure once stood, new, mixed-income, mixed use buildings are now lining those streets – drawing visitors, commuters, and pedestrians back to this neighborhood.

All of the former Grove Parc's households were guaranteed new homes in Woodlawn, so there was no displacement. The original units were supplemented with market- and moderate-income phases to meet a renewed demand for market-rate for-sale and rental housing. Ultimately, nearly 1,000 mixed-income units will be created through new construction and the revitalization of vacant multi-unit buildings across the community.

As a result, Woodlawn is one of only a few South Side communities where housing sales are rebounding, low income residents were not displaced, and new mixed-use buildings are breaking ground. Additionally, a national grocery chain has opened a 48,000-square-foot full-service store in the former food desert.

HOUSTON, TX



NEIGHBORHOOD:

THIRD WARD

STRATEGY:

COMMUNITY BENEFIT AGREEMENT

The story of the Third Ward begins with the emancipation of the enslaved from across the Gulf Coast region populating the area around 1870. In 1872, Reverend Jack Yates, a Baptist minister and former slave, with the help of \$1,000 in donations, bought 10 acres of open land for a Juneteenth celebration. In honor of their freedom, they named it Emancipation Park. That is one piece of a very rich history of the Third Ward, home to the University of Houston and Texas Southern University.

Efforts to battle the negatives of gentrification in the neighborhood have been on-going for decades. A program proposed in 2003 by state Rep. Garnet Coleman to prevent gentrification took

advantage of a quasi-public tax increment reinvestment zone just outside of the Third Ward. A portion of its revenues were dedicated for the provision of affordable housing. This funding source was utilized by a related agency, the Midtown Redevelopment Authority, to acquire properties in the neighboring Third Ward instead. These properties would then be sold to developers required to build affordable residential projects. By 2018, the Midtown Redevelopment Authority land banking program owned 3.5 million square feet of land in the Greater Third Ward and had created nearly 400 affordable housing units with another 100 proposed.

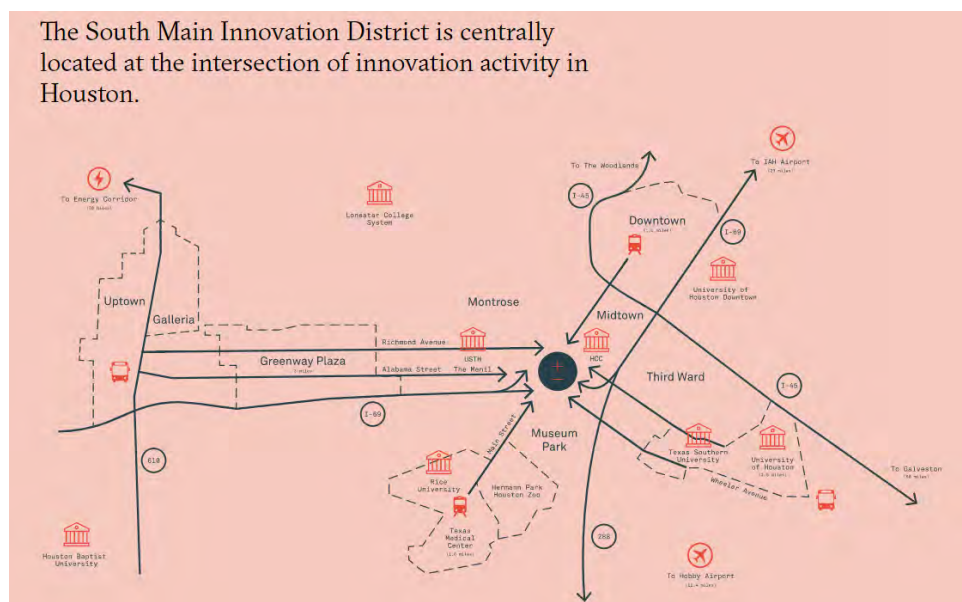
By 2017, gentrification had become noticeable as more non-black people moved into the Greater Third Ward; the white population increased by 100% from 2007 to 2017, and the black population decreased by 10%. Seeking to make a difference in underserved neighborhoods, the Third Ward was included as a part of the city of Houston's Complete Communities Program. Established in 2017, the initiative is designed to empower traditionally under-resourced communities, so they have access to the same resources and amenities as any

other areas. The vision is for residents from targeted areas to create and implement their own plans for healthier neighborhoods, supported by partnerships with banks, endowments, and other private entities. While time will be needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Complete Communities program, what has taken place to date and what can happen in the future, the Third Ward could become national model for community-driven, government-support efforts to revitalize without displacement.

However, the dawn of a new decade in 2020 saw more changes as longtime residents pushed back against gentrification efforts changing the face of iconic structures such as the historic Sears building to pave way for a \$100M innovation called The Ion. The Ion is Rice University's redevelopment of the 16-acre, 300,000-square foot former Sears Building marketed as a support for businesses at all stages of the innovation lifecycle and a resource for Houstonians seeking to participate in the innovation economy as

a part of the South Main Innovation District.

The Houston Coalition for Equitable Development (HCEDD) Without Displacement wants Rice University to agree to a community benefits agreement. HCEDD's goal is to develop, secure, enforce, and sustain a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) with Rice Management Company as they develop the South Main Innovation District at the edge of Third Ward. HCEDD envisions an Innovation District that benefits Third Ward and communities of color through historic and cultural preservation, housing, jobs, businesses, innovation, education, and food security in accordance with the Third Ward Complete Communities Action Plan, Comprehensive Needs Assessment Data Report, and HCEDD community meetings.



JACKSONVILLE, FL



NEIGHBORHOOD: HISTORIC EASTIDE

STRATEGY: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Jacksonville is the most populous city in Florida, and the largest city by area in the contiguous United States. There are more than 500 neighborhoods within Jacksonville's vast area. Once a prominent African American working-class community, Eastside is the last remaining historic neighborhood that borders downtown Jacksonville. Platted in 1869, the Historic Eastside neighborhood attracted former slaves with its working-class housing and employment opportunities at sawmills and docks along the river.

In 2018, the neighborhood was designated as an Opportunity Zone, a new community development program established by Congress to drive long-term private sector investment into

low-income urban and rural communities nationwide. By investing their money into real estate projects in Opportunity Zones, investors receive a variety of tax incentives. These projects could economically benefit or erase the community from existence.

Since that time, Atlanta-based Columbia Ventures has announced plans to convert the Union Terminal Company Warehouse into a \$30 million mixed-use development featuring up to 473 multifamily residential units and a mix of commercial, retail and dining space. A few blocks west, Fort Lauderdale-based REVA Development Corporation is poised to rehabilitate the historic Duval County Armory into a \$29.7 million mixed-use facility featuring a food hall with 12 vendors, makers' space for start-up artists and co-working space modeled after Tampa's popular Armature Works, called Armory Flats with workforce housing units next door.

In upcoming years, the Emerald Trail project being spearheaded by Groundwork Jacksonville will impact the Eastside. Anticipated to be completed by 2028, the project was initially envisioned decades ago as a series of parks, trails, greenspace, and creeks forming a necklace around downtown.

Furthermore, the Jacksonville City Council recently unanimously approved a land option agreement to sell five acres on the Eastside neighborhood's main drag to RP Sports Investments for the construction of office space and a soccer stadium for the Jacksonville Armada minor league soccer team. The Eastside is already home to Jacksonville's sports complex, including TIAA Bank Field, VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena, and the Baseball Grounds of Jacksonville.

"Ultimately, it comes down to creating a thriving business corridor, housing opportunities for our vulnerable neighbors, and quality programming for the kids and youth in the community. Eastside is a neighborhood with uniqueness that comes from the history of the people who have walked these streets." said Tia Keitt, an Eastside resident and urban planner. Instead of gentrification, they are accomplishing what the Eastside's residents call "Withintrification." That is the revitalization from within of the current community and preservation of its history and heritage.

Historic Eastside Community Development Corporation's (HECDC) is the neighborhood organization that serves as the resource and liaison to

"Through the Historic Eastside CDC (HECDC), we have collected a vision of what residents would like to see,"

**Tia Keitt,
an Eastside resident and urban planner**

preserve and transform the Eastside neighborhood through equitable community development by improving access to affordable housing, social services, cultural development, wealth building, education, and safety. HECDL main goal is the preservation of the rich history and heritage the Eastside Neighborhood. HECDL is dedicated to ensuring Eastside residents have access to affordable single family and multi-family housing by working with local developers, partners, and housing authorities to address the area's critical need for safe, affordable quality housing and home maintenance and repairs for low income residents allowing them to remain in the neighborhood. HECDL is building single-family homes for low-to-moderate-income first-time homebuyers and, through partnerships with private developers, has a goal to build 500 units of rental housing.

LOS ANGELES, CA



NEIGHBORHOOD: CRENSHAW DISTRICT

STRATEGY: PLACE KEEPING

African Americans started migrating to the Crenshaw District in the mid-1960s, and by the early 1970s were the majority. In the 1970s, Crenshaw, Leimert Park and neighboring areas together formed one of the largest African American communities in the western United States. The major commercial corridor in the Hyde Park, Leimert Park and Baldwin Hills neighborhoods is still known today as "the heart of African American commerce in Los Angeles".

As one of the largest Black communities west of the Mississippi River, Destination Crenshaw is an unprecedented community-led project that will celebrate the 200+ year history of Black activism in L.A. Through education, arts and culture, Destination

Crenshaw will cement itself as a cultural hub that will facilitate economic security and entrepreneurship for residents as a method of place-keeping and community building.

Destination Crenshaw is an under-construction 1.3-mile-long (2.1 km) open-air museum in Los Angeles, California, dedicated to preserving the history and culture of African Americans. The museum stretches along Crenshaw Boulevard, enhancing the public structures and business facades with landscaping and public art by adding pocket parks, gathering points, overlooks, murals, sculptures, and texts. the 1.3-mile open-air museum will create community gathering spaces surrounded by over 100 unapologetically Black public artworks that will serve as cultural landmarks and cement Black L.A.'s role in creating a Black Renaissance.

The project was conceived to celebrate the Crenshaw business district as a black community amid fears of gentrification with the arrival of the Crenshaw/LAX light rail line. For many residents and community advocates, the upcoming Crenshaw/LAX Metro Line raises health, public safety, and environmental concerns. Equally as pressing are the reservations about the

impact the metro line would have on the viability of legacy businesses along the Crenshaw Corridor. The project has led the push to offer infrastructure improvement grants for business owners who own their properties, including code compliance work, new parking spaces, building repairs and culturally stamped sidewalks. To date, \$1.2M in renovation funds has been invested in two legacy businesses and six more legacy businesses have been identified for assistance.

To harness the change the train was sure to bring, Leimert Park Village stakeholders launched the 20/20 Vision Initiative in 2014 – their effort to brand the village as a hub for Black creatives and safeguard it as a site of celebration of the diaspora. Two years later, Eighth District councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson embarked on a series of conversations with community members about the future of Crenshaw. The goal was to build a vision for how to permanently stamp the “capital of Black life,” as an unapologetically Black space. Over the course of the next year and a half, the community advisory council and a team of architects from settled on an overarching theme for the project: Grow Where You Are Planted.

"Destination Crenshaw is being built for and by Black Los Angeles atop a rich history of Black activism."

Marqueece Harris-Dawson, District 8 Councilmember, City of Los Angeles,

Some in the community have challenged the idea that the project will protect the community from erasure, arguing instead that the creation of a cultural attraction will just hasten their displacement. When confronted with a similar line of questioning, Harris-Dawson acknowledged investment can be a double-edged sword. He also made the case that part of the work of helping a community remain in place included the neighborhood first being clearly identifiable as a Black space.

The goal was to “lead with culture” and communicate to community members that the project was, first and foremost, for them. That the corridor would not just be a place to celebrate unapologetically Black contributions, but also a place where it was safe to be unapologetically Black in Public – a Black Space, full stop.

MIAMI, FL



NEIGHBORHOOD: OVERTOWN

STRATEGY: REDEVELOPMENT

Located northwest of downtown Miami, Overtown was a vibrant black community and cultural hub before construction of I-95 in the 1960s. Originally called Colored Town during the Jim Crow era of the late 19th through the mid-20th century, the area was once the preeminent and is the historic center for commerce in the black community in Miami and South Florida. By the 1960s, Overtown had become a thriving musical culture known as “The Harlem of the South”, catering to artists such as B. B. King and Aretha Franklin.

Since 2014, big changes have come to Miami's historic Overtown neighborhood, but local leaders are

trying to make sure that gentrification does not overtake the neighborhood's current residents.

The reopening of the neighborhood's historic Lyric Theater, which had hosted performances by the likes of musician Duke Ellington and poet Langston Hughes, before falling into disrepair. A \$10-million makeover of Overtown's Gibson Park complemented by another \$5 million in improvements, including a gymnasium and classrooms, and the development of Overtown Gateway, a mixed-use block-size project next to the Lyric Theater.

To stem the tide of gentrification, the Southeast Overtown/Parkwest Community Redevelopment Agency closed on a \$60-million loan to finance several major projects, including 402 new affordable housing units and 21,000 square feet of commercial space in four new mixed-use projects. The loan also financed the rehab of 263 units at the Town Park South and Town Park Village affordable housing projects, which will become co-ops, and the Town Park North condominiums. The new developments have land-use restrictions that mandate they remain affordable housing for 50 years.

ST. PETERSBURG, FL



NEIGHBORHOOD: THE DUECES

STRATEGY: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Barely a mile from St. Petersburg's bustling downtown, 22nd Street South – nicknamed The Deuces – offers a rich story of courage, perseverance, love, and purpose. It once was the busy main street of the Sunshine City's African American population. At its peak during the early 1960s, more than 100 businesses, retail stores, professional offices and entertainment venues thrived on the thoroughfare. Oldtimers have estimated that perhaps 75 percent were black-owned or operated. They served residents in all of St. Petersburg's African American communities. Today, a detailed African American heritage trail reflects the street's glory days.

In 2001, it was designated as a part of the Florida Main Street program, a rare feat for historic African American districts in the state. Florida Main Street is a technical assistance program for traditional historic commercial corridors that advocates a return to community self-reliance. Deuces Live is a nonprofit organization created to revive and revitalize this historic neighborhood where Duke Ellington and Billie Holiday played, famous African American baseball stars stayed and the black residents of St. Petersburg lived, worked, and worshiped. Deuces Live. uses the Main Street four-point approach, focusing on the organization of working towards the same goal, promotion of the district's image, physically improving through building improvements, window displays and landscaping, and economic revitalization built on strengthening the community's existing assets. Florida Main Street is a self-help program. The Bureau of Historic Preservation supplies technical assistance, but the credit and responsibility for success rests with the many community leaders who offer their time, expertise, and enthusiasm to revitalizing downtowns or historic commercial corridors.

In Central Florida, the Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail stretches 47 miles in Pinellas County along an abandoned railroad corridor. In 2008, it was extended through The Deuces to connect with downtown St. Petersburg. In the decade since the opening of the Pinellas Trail, several once boarded up buildings and storefronts have successfully given way to facade upgrades and new local businesses.

The African American Heritage Trails are walking tours of 19 markers that provide details about the history and influence of the African American community in St. Petersburg, including The Deuces. The 22nd Street S. trail is titled “Community, Culture, and Commerce” and focuses on the rich cultural heritage of the neighborhood, community leaders, landmark

businesses, and the evolution from the Jim Crow era to desegregation and the Civil Rights Movement. The 9th Avenue S. trail is titled “Faith, Family, and Education” and

delves into the more personal aspects of life in the community, highlighting the local schools, housing stock, community organizations, and churches that enriched the social fabric of the neighborhood.

A part of St. Petersburg’s Southside Community Redevelopment Area, in December 2019, Mayor Rick Kriseman unveiled a plan to invest millions in The Deuces to support existing businesses, encourage new businesses to open in the area and create jobs. Improvements include streetscapes, a new community park, funding of a new African American Museum and 2.6 acres of city-owned land being developed into workforce housing, ground floor retail and office space.



WASHINGTON, DC



NEIGHBORHOOD: BARRY FARM

STRATEGY: LEGAL ACTION

The District of Columbia has had a significant African American population since the District's creation. Several neighborhoods are noted for their contributions to black history and culture and it is home to America's preeminent historically black college or university, Howard University. Like numerous other border and northern cities in the first half of the 20th century, the District of Columbia received many black migrants from the South in the Great Migration. The District was a majority-black district from the late 1950s through 2011. In 2011, the District of Columbia's black population slipped below 50 percent for the first time in over 50 years. Today, it is consistently ranked as one of the

fastest gentrifying communities in the country.

One example, Barry Farm in southeast Washington, DC, is one of the city's poorest areas, but rich with historical significance. In 1867, the Freedmen's Bureau (officially the U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands) bought a 375-acre farm from David and Julia Barry, white landowners, and transformed Barry Farm into a post-Civil War community of formerly enslaved and free-born African Americans

Now, many Barry Farm residents have been evicted to make way for an upscale development that will include apartments, houses, stores, and some public housing. The DC Government is in the process of redeveloping Barry Farm through the city's New Communities Initiative and the Federal Choice program from single-use public housing where 432 households pay 30% of their incomes to reside in the community, into a mixed-use, higher density community with 1,600 units including homes for sale.

In 2013, about 50 Barry Farm residents teamed up with community organizing group Empower DC to form the Barry Farm Tenants and Allies Association to stop the city from

evicting them from their homes. Barry Farm residents prevailed in a 2018 suit and the D.C. Court of Appeals agreed that community members should have a say about the plan for new housing. However, despite the community's legal success, from April 2018 until January 2019, hundreds of families had been relocated from Barry Farm and then in early 2019, demolition started occurring in Barry Farm.

Today, Washington DC is being sued for gentrification. The \$1 billion lawsuit is against Washington for catering to "the creative class." The 82-page class action lawsuit brought grievances against the city for its alleged discriminatory policies favoring creatives and millennials at the expense of the city's historically African American, low-income residents. Aristotle Theresa, a civil rights lawyer from nearby neighborhood Anacostia, is representing three individuals from Washington and over 20 members of the community group CARE.

Washington's sweeping DC Cultural Plan "articulates that policies will be changing to attract people of a certain age and people with certain professions," says Theresa. The lawsuit alleges lawmakers and bureaus, including former mayors Adrian Fenty

"These policy documents say outright, we are planning to alter land use in order to attract people who are of a certain age range, in order to attract people who are a certain profession."

**Aristotle Theresa,
Civil Rights Attorney**

and Vincent Gray, have championed discriminatory practices such as the Creative Action Agenda and the Creative Economy Strategy. According to the DC Office of Planning website, the Creative Action Agenda was primarily a study that "examined ways to support creative employment and business opportunities" in D.C., while the Creative Economy Strategy under Gray sought to generate 100,000 additional jobs and \$1 billion in new tax revenues by 2018. However, the lawsuit alleges that these policies are discriminatory on the basis of age, income, and race, which goes against the DC Human Rights Act. Business necessity exemption does not justify unlawful discrimination, according to the act.

CONCLUSION

The strategies presented here represent a diverse set of anti-gentrification tools and programs successfully being implemented across the country in ten different cities. The forces of gentrification weigh most heavily upon low income African American neighborhoods unable to harness the political or economic capital needed to address the self-identified investment. No matter the tools and programs used, community organizations, residents, and stakeholders that are able to control the revitalization process tend to be the most successful at avoiding the full negative impacts of gentrification. Change is inevitable, communities have a choice on whether change happens to or with them.

It is the marrying of capital with community - the replication of external investment models combined with the elevation of internal community strengths - which has created the most durable African American neighborhoods in this country. African American communities need only to look to other affluent African American communities to understand the political and economic gains possible through the preservation and

investment in their own neighborhoods.

It is the rich historical, familial, and cultural ties within African American neighborhoods which give rise to the greatest possibilities for the realization of political and economic power to halt gentrification. The common denominator in the U.S.'s most affluent African American neighborhoods: Middle to upper income residents who can afford a more expensive neighborhood, make the choice to remain in the community.

By investing in their community and living alongside low income residents, higher income African American residents actively dispel the myth that the presence of whiteness is what makes for a good neighborhood. Residents move in because they want to give back and invest in a Black community.

Each of the communities highlighted here would benefit from a similar community commitment. If existing residents can reap the benefits of rising home values, educational levels, and incomes; new small business and job opportunities; and increased capital access and lower loan interest rates, while maintaining the historic and cultural uniqueness of a neighborhood, that is good community development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDED READING

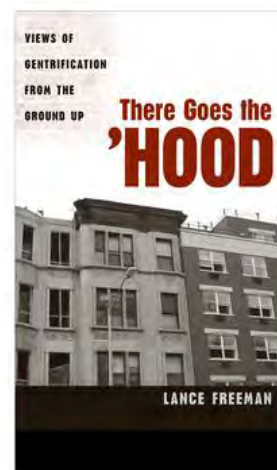
There Goes the 'Hood: View of Gentrification from the Ground Up

By Lance Freeman

BOOK DESCRIPTION

How does gentrification actually affect residents of neighborhoods in transition?

To find out, Freeman does what no scholar before him has done. He interviews the indigenous residents of two predominantly black neighborhoods that are in the process of gentrification: Harlem and Clinton Hill, Brooklyn. By listening closely to what people tell him, he creates a more nuanced picture of the impacts of gentrification on the perceptions, attitudes and behaviors of the people who stay in their neighborhoods. Freeman describes the theoretical and planning/policy implications of his findings, both for New York City and for any gentrifying urban area.



There Goes the 'Hood provides a more complete, and complicated, understanding of the gentrification process, highlighting the reactions of long-term residents. It suggests new ways of limiting gentrification's negative effects and of creating more positive experiences for newcomers and natives alike.

AUTHOR

Lance Freeman is a Professor in the Urban Planning program at Columbia GSAPP. His research focuses on affordable housing, gentrification, ethnic and racial stratification in housing markets, and the relationship between the built environment and well-being. Professor Freeman teaches courses on community development, housing policy and research methods. He has also taught in the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Delaware. Previously, Dr. Freeman worked as a researcher at Mathematica Policy Research, a leading social policy research firm in Washington D.C. Lance Freeman holds a Master degree and a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

BOOK REVIEW

"Focusing on New York City neighborhoods Harlem, in Manhattan, and Brooklyn's Clinton Hill, (Freeman) asks residents about everything from widespread retail development to expensive apartments and residential developments. What he uncovers is a 'nuanced reaction toward gentrification.... welcome by some and feared and loathed by others, and even dreaded and welcomed at the same time by the same people.' It's Freeman's pursuit of this duality that makes the book strong—he's willing to admit that gentrification is both a pleasure and a problem, rather than setting up camp on one side.... That sense of balance, combined with the powerful voices of the folks involved, that makes this study important and informative." —Publishers Weekly

African Americans and Gentrification in Washington, D.C.: Race, Class and Social Justice in the Nation's Capital

By Sabiyha Prince

BOOK DESCRIPTION

This book uses qualitative data to explore the experiences and ideas of African Americans confronting and constructing gentrification in Washington, D.C. It contextualizes Black Washingtonians' perspectives on belonging and attachment during a marked period of urban restructuring and demographic change in the Nation's Capital and sheds light on the process of social hierarchies and standpoints unfolding over time.

African Americans and Gentrification in Washington, D.C. emerges as a portrait of a heterogeneous African American population wherein members define their identity and culture as a people informed by the impact of injustice on the urban landscape. It presents oral history and ethnographic data on current and former African American residents of D.C. and combines these findings with analyses from institutional, statistical, and scholarly reports on wealth inequality, shortages in affordable housing, and rates of unemployment.

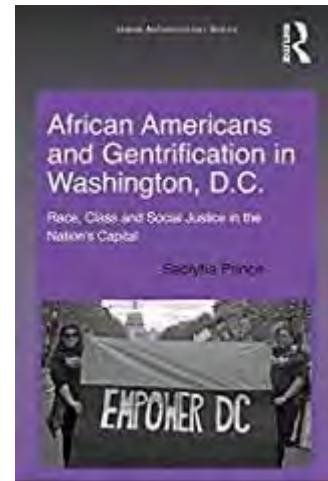
Prince contends that gentrification seizes upon and fosters uneven development, vulnerability and alienation and contributes to classed and racialized tensions in affected communities in a book that will interest social scientists working in the fields of critical urban studies and urban ethnography. African Americans and Gentrification in Washington, D.C. will also invigorate discussions of neoliberalism, critical whiteness studies and race relations in the 21st Century.

AUTHOR

Artist/anthropologist Sabiyha Prince is a native Washingtonian whose paintings explore memory, personal growth, identity, and African American experiences in the US. A former faculty member in the department of anthropology at American University, Sabiyha has authored books and journal articles that explore the impacts of urban change and societal stratification on Black populations. She has also directed educational programming and political mobilization campaigns for The Washington Office on Africa, Greenpeace, USA, and Black Voices for Peace.

BOOK REVIEW

'An important and much anticipated study that places race at the center of a rigorous and sustained analysis of gentrification. As skillful in exposing the neoliberal policies at the root of gentrification as it is in appreciating the look and feel of gentrification as lived by residents. An eye-opener and must-read work.' —Arlene Davila, Professor of Anthropology and American Studies at New York University



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