

COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES FOR NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY
REHABILITATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE MISSION DISTRICT, SAN
FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

By

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Abstract

COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES FOR NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY REHABILITATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE MISSION DISTRICT, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Francesca Gallardo

Through the case study of San Francisco, CA's Mission District, this research project addresses how community-based affordable housing development is operationalized to rehabilitate communities and neighborhoods experiencing effects of gentrification, mass displacement, and cultural dilution. My goals were to identify how the processes of building a sense of community, trust, and cohesion, through affordable housing development efforts, are critical in rehabilitating the Mission District; and, how are nonprofit community development organizations engaging with these processes in collaboration with citizen and community partners. The final objective is to provide evidence-based strategies to assist other at-risk minority communities and neighborhoods in the built-environment.

I partnered with the Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA)'s Community Real Estate (CRE) department to implement and test community and trust building, and cultural place-keeping strategies. The strategies were influenced and shaped by the Mission District's rich history, Latinx and artistic cultures, and activism. Co-facilitated with Precita Eyes Muralists, we conducted ten-week mosaic workshops at

three of MEDA's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) properties; I designed survey activities to encourage engagement and create spaces for community participation; and, conducted semi-formal interviews with MEDA's CRE teams, and the architect's creative design teams.

Through an affordable housing development lens in gentrifying neighborhoods, it is evident that utilizing creative and cultural place-keeping practices to engage with neighborhood community members is an empowering and rehabilitating strategy; moreover, it prompts community and relationship building, has mental and physical benefits, and addresses specific design needs of low-income, working-class residents.

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Introduction

San Francisco, a notoriously beautiful and welcoming city with rich history of artistry and celebration of culture. Tourists from all of the world come to see the city's glorious hills, landscape views, infrastructure, innovation, and vast vibrant display of the arts. However, just as any other American city, San Francisco has a dark past and even darker present.

Walking down the streets of San Francisco, the truth inevitably comes out that this city has its own problems. Completely normalized to locals, a houseless woman lays on feces stained sidewalk quivering as she suffers withdrawals from her drug addiction; a father and his daughter evicted from their home beg for money in front of the headquarters of a multi-billion-dollar social media company- with only \$1.65 in their cup; a man with stained and torn clothes screams into space as professionals walk unbothered to their glossy office jobs. Positively, San Francisco is filled with hard working socially conscious communities. On the frontlines, they are pushing for a more equitable future and opportunities: from mass mobilization to introducing and campaigning for progressive initiatives, and maximizing resources to serve and provide for San Francisco's most vulnerable populations.

San Francisco's communities have a history of activism that is continuously utilized to push equitable economic policies to allocate funds for community and neighborhood projects and services. A combination of financial and community resources to develop strategies and create community-based initiatives to preserve the cultures and

prevent displacement of each neighborhood provided by various departments in the San Francisco's local government and nonprofit organizations. The overall plan is to include the art and culture of the respective communities, in relation to its specific history, e.g. The Mission District's connection to the Latinx population.

Resulting from decades of spatial segregation in cities, low-income minority neighborhoods are susceptible to "redevelopment." A process, commonly referred to as gentrification, benefits a small demographic of economically stable individuals, disproportionately impacts working class communities, communities of color, immigrant communities, and other communities not comprised of predominantly affluent, white populations (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000; National Equality Panel, 2010). The process of gentrification systematically replaces a diverse and heterogeneous built environment into homogenous high- end one, specifically tailored to people of a particular economic background.

Further, gentrification and displacement forces are direct reflections of the current socio-economic and political condition of a city. A more equitable solution to high-end luxurious residential development entails providing affordable housing units in gentrifying neighborhoods, especially in ways that incorporate minority and low-income residents by empowering them through the design and development stages and prioritize cultural preservation strategies. This research project addresses how community-based creative initiatives through an affordable housing development lens is operationalized to

rehabilitate communities and neighborhoods experiencing the effects of gentrification and displacement through the case study of the Mission District, San Francisco, CA.

To implement and test community democratic participation, trust building, and cultural place-keeping strategies I partnered with the Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA)'s Community Real Estate (CRE) department. The community, trust, and cultural place-keeping strategies were tested on the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) residents and the prospective community for new construction development projects. I designed community surveys and conducted semi-formal interviews with affordable housing developers and their architect's creative design teams. The final objective of this research project is to provide evidence-based strategies to guide and assist other at-risk minority communities and neighborhoods in built-environments.

First, I will introduce my research questions and positionality. Following with the literature review to support my research topic of community and trust building efforts paired with affordable housing development to rehabilitate a neighborhood experiencing rapid gentrification and mass displacement of vulnerable minority communities; additionally, within the literature review I study cultural preservation and place-keeping, housing scarcity, and vulnerable communities, socio-political and economic influences, and community-based initiatives and art of the San Francisco, CA and the Mission District. Next, I provide brief organizational profiles and overview of the two affordable housing developers in the Mission. Subsequently, describe the methods utilized on the

field; lastly, I analyze my field research data to determine overarching themes and connect prior academic studies to my case study.

Research Questions

The link between escalated property values, history of residential segregation and redlining, and economic growth have led to rapid gentrification and mass displacement of minority neighborhoods; as a result, this led to a loss of affordable ethnic community spaces replaced by luxury housing, expensive coffee shops and cafes, and white spaces.

Each question was devised to understand specific opportunities that would positively influence vulnerable minority Mission residents and support the work of neighborhood-based affordable housing developers.

1. How are the processes of building sense of community, trust, and cohesion rehabilitating and critical to affordable housing development efforts in the Mission District of San Francisco, CA?
2. How are nonprofit community development organizations engaging with these processes in collaboration with citizen and community partners?

Positionality

Growing up in a predominately Hispanic/Latinx community and neighborhood I have experienced first-hand social inequities that affect other communities of color across the United States. This is one of the many reasons why I chose the Mission District's culturally rich community. My experience growing up in a Hispanic/Latinx communities as a child has evolved and influenced my career path well into young adulthood. My personal background in interior architectural residential, facility, and commercial design paired with my social-political and environmental community organizing background, influenced my research project surrounding affordable housing issues.

Throughout design school I worked and interned with a variety of nonprofit organizations as a community organizer and graphic designer in San Francisco, CA: Greenpeace (Shell No and overfishing prevention campaign), Forests Forever (California forest clearcutting policy reform), Evolve (California's Proposition 13 policy reform), and Latin@ Young Democrats of San Francisco (LYDSF) (Mission District based political organization). I am an active member and current executive board member of LYDSF, our efforts are focused on elevating the political power of young Latinx San Franciscans; our duty is to organize around civil to federal campaigns and elections resulting in potential endorsements that reflect our collective values, especially concerning housing issues.

Through this work I was introduced to the Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA)'s newly established Community Real Estate (CRE) affordable housing developing department. Later I became their intern to not only learn from the teams, but to test and implement community engaging and trust building strategies to support my graduate studies.

Literature Review

This literature review explores the subjects of gentrification and displacement, vulnerable communities and neighborhoods, community-based projects and processes, and housing scarcity through the case study of the Mission District, San Francisco, CA. The section concerning the Mission District explores the socio-politics, economics, identity and place, and the neighborhood's experience with gentrification, displacement, and housing scarcity; and, the community-based affordable housing and initiatives work to rehabilitate the community and neighborhood.

Gentrification and Minority Displacement

A familiar and yet disturbing process, the gentrification of working-class neighborhoods, had resurfaced with a speed and precision that had not been seen for years. Housing prices soared, new businesses opened, rents were at their peak, and thousands moved into the city to participate in what newspapers, politicians, academics, and business leaders were calling the dot-com boom. (Mirabal, 2009. Pg, 12.)

The marginalization of a minority (predominately racial) groups is historically prominent throughout housing and neighborhood segregation in the United States. Today, communities of color continue to be targeted and displaced at a high rate as a method of “urban redevelopment”, economic growth, and social “progress” (Lees, 2000). The extreme split between “high-end” luxurious lifestyles and abject poverty that exists in many cities is highly visible and produces an uneven landscape across the urban space.

The visible components of inequitable redevelopment include the influx of high-end residential housing, influence of capitalist corporate growth, and the development of contemporary luxury commercial/retailers such as coffee shops and restaurants (Harvey, 1987). This pattern of “redevelopment” known as gentrification is commonly to blame as the main factor for mass displacement in neighborhoods across the country, including in the Mission District in San Francisco (Casique, 2013).

In metropolitan areas like New York and San Francisco, affordable housing and land space is limited and displacement often results in houselessness (Freeman, 2006). Substantial historical and systematic processes make gentrification possible, including discriminatory housing policies, uneven socio-economic development, and the capitalization of the urban core (Harvey, 1987). Gentrification is the process of reinvestment of low-income, inner-city neighborhoods experiencing a socio-economic shift towards highly educated, affluent, influx of predominantly white residents, and rising housing costs (Deutsche and Ryan, 1984; Ley, 1986, 2003; Mathews, 2010; Zukin, 1982). The broader pattern of gentrification typically identifies housing and commercial developments as the primary forces of neighborhood transformation, resulting in the displacement of low-income residents further from housing programs and resources, community, and economic opportunities. There is extensive concern that the location of affordable housing facilities and subsidized housing programs intensify segregation of ethnic communities and reinforce concentrated poverty (Ellen, 2009; Freeman and Braconi, 2004; Oakley, 2008; Rohe and Freeman, 2001).

Some scholars argue that gentrification is an opportunity for improving neighborhood conditions, enriching amenities and services, lowering crime rates, and creating higher property values (Brown-Saracino, 2010; Freeman and Braconi, 2004; Papachristos et al, 2011). On the contrary, other scholars and social scientists understand gentrification for causing displacement and “out-migration” of ethnic minority long-term residents who will not be able to benefit from reinvestment (Bridge, Butler, and Lees, 2012; Doucet, 2014; Newman and Wyly, 2006; Slater, 2009; Smith, 1979; Zukin, 1982, 2010). Additionally, displacement is generally appointed the most pernicious factor of gentrification (Bridge, Butler, and Lees, 2012) The two diverging perspectives are important to identify because one refers to accepting gentrification as an opportunity if displacement is prevented; the other signifies gentrification having negative impacts like changing and displacing low-income communities with no positive outcomes. Gentrification is a threat to vulnerable ethnic communities as it converts low-income, minority, inner-city neighborhoods into a bourgeois playground for new wealthy residents. (Schaeffer and Smith, 1986; Freeman, 2006).

Additionally, many immigrant and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipient residents are afraid of getting involved in politics as it may be detrimental to their status in the U.S. In many cases, they do not have the necessary funds to support political initiatives at their disposal; thus, they are at a disadvantage for housing policies passing in their favor. The marginalization of racial and ethnic minorities is prominent throughout the socio-political history of housing in the United

States. There is an evident disconnect between wealthy and mid to low-income residents in cities.

Housing scarcity is a direct result of urban governmental failures. Urban governmentality refers to power relations within the political system: nation-state, and the local government's relationship to the public and the environment (Mallach, 2011). Governmentality is the structural mechanism comprised of strategies of action, procedures, and institutions to exert power over population (Dean, 2017). As housing determines the functionality of communities and the well-being of their social actors, it is important that housing be viewed as a top priority in neighborhood and community development (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014).

Housing Vulnerabilities of Low-Income Minorities

Affordable housing scarcity is too common of an issue amongst communities across the world, state, and cities. Housing crises derive from various influences including bad policies and economic inequalities: racial discrimination, extreme wage gaps, escalated property values, and dominant industrial booms (Valdez, 2016). Housing inequities and segregation are responsible for many disruptions in subjugated communities of color. When housing demands ultimately exceed the supply, low-income mainly minority groups are forced to seek government aid whether Section 8 or government subsidized housing (public or community-based) (Goering, 2007; Seicshnaydre, 2010).

Racial discrimination, segregation, disinvestment of neighborhoods of color, otherwise known as “redlining”, in American cities began with National Housing Act of 1934 by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) (Haag, 2000; Dymski, 2012; Turner, 2013). Also, discriminating lending practices by banks that denied homeownership loans to minority groups reserving specific neighborhoods for white populations (Haag, 2000; Dymski, 2012; Turner, 2013). Redlining resulted people of color being pushed into cities, economic decline, withholding of services, and the rise of crime in neighborhoods of color. Thus, decades later these exact neighborhoods are vulnerable to gentrification and displacement (Darrah and DeLuca, 2014; Anderson and Turner, 2014; Valdez, 2016).

Current political and economic factors are the prominent influences of societal disruptions resulting in affordable housing scarcity: its consequences have caused high levels of physical and mental health problems, crime, substance abuse, toxic living situations, polluted environments, and poor education in disenfranchised neighborhoods and communities (Bentley at el., 2011; Jacobs, at el., 2014; Morley, 2010) Additionally, the complicated interplay between housing affordability and society determines whether children thrive and families succeed, and particularly whether cities or communities prosper (Bentley at el., 2011; Jacobs, at el, 2014; Rose and Miller, 2016). The challenges encountered by minority communities struggling to afford housing in opportunity-rich communities is staggering. Many low-income and poor community members are deprived of their basic rights to housing accessibility, and face displacement from their homes.

Housing shortages is most severe with working poor and low-income residents (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014). Between the years of 1980-2003, federal funding for low-income housing was reduced by forty-nine percent by the US government as a result of a deficiency in funding at the federal level (Coalition & Council, 2005). In 2011 federal policymakers approved the strict Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA), which sequesters budgets containing non-defense discretionary programs that include most low-income family housing assistance through 2021 (Heniff Jr. at el., 2011). These policy decisions caused housing assistance funding to be reduced by \$6.2 billion/13.3 percent annually between 2010 and 2013 (Heniff Jr. at el., 2011). Although policymakers attempted to relieve budget sequestration in 2014 to 2016- in 2016 housing assistance funding remained below the 2010 adjusted inflation level at \$2.1 billion/4.6 percent (*Figure 1*). The most affected grants are the public, community-based housing subsidies declined to \$1.6 billion/21 p Heniff Jr. at el., 2011).

Federal Housing Assistance Funding Remains Well Below 2010 Level

Discretionary budget authority for housing assistance, relative to 2010, adjusted for inflation



Note: "Federal housing assistance" includes the Section 8, public housing, homeless assistance, Section 521, HOME, Native American Housing, HOPWA, and Section 202 and 811 programs, as well as many smaller programs, but does not include community development programs.

Source: Office of Management and Budget.

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Figure 1. Refer to text. (Rice, 2016)

Furthermore, most recently, in 2017 the Trump administration pushed for a \$6 billion in federal funding HUD budget cut (Reuters, 2017; DelReal, 2017). The overall cutback in HUD's budget will eliminate the community development grant and place tension on housing authorities who manage public and community-based housing (DelReal, 2017). The Trump administration is managing funding for government-subsidized housing. But as a result of rising housing and property costs, local housing authorities may be forced to pull back on housing vouchers, which could indicate a

\$200,000 loss of government subsidized housing costs over the next few years (Reuters, 2017; DelReal, 2017). Currently on average, low-income residents seeking housing sign onto a thirty-five month “waiting list” for Section 8 vouchers (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2004). In addition, as a result of the extreme waiting lists for public housing, displaced residents are forced to seek and rely on shelters or the street: the majority of those being non-white, disabled, and/or senior citizens. Public housing being typically substandard and underfinanced, the deficit of federal budget cuts only worsens and limits the ability to manage public housing property and the services offered to support low-income classes. The types of public housing available are 1) Rental Assistance Demonstration, a federal program funded and initiative by U.S. HUD; 2) community-based housing for seniors and people with disabilities; and 3) family housing.

The initial objective of developing public housing was to provide affordable, safe, and sanitary environments for communities; decades of underinvestment resulted in substandard living conditions have noticeably lead to major health and safety concerns (Rose and Miller, 2016). Housing is an essential element of maintaining not only the body, but the mind. Significant problems of sleep deprivation, isolation, malnutrition, high levels of stress, separation from their families and friends, financial burdens to make rent, unemployment, and an increase of single parent families affect the physical and mental health of at risk residents and houseless. (Freeman, 2002; Veale, 2016). Furthermore, the consequences of government subsidized housing include a heavy presence of toxins (lead) leading to high levels of poisoning and irreversible brain

damage, and tremendous amount of crime and substance abuse problems (Freeman, 2002).

The U.S. federal government is aware that architectural and social features influence crime, public health and safety in public housing and community-based housing (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016; Frisch and Servon, 2006). The linkages to health and safety made are prominent in diagnosing the problems to accurately address affordable housing circumstances. The urgency to protect vulnerable communities is evident to residents and housing advocates. Public involvement in housing development projects encourages community participation in neighborhood development, builds relationships, and most importantly, addresses the specific design needs of low-income, working class residents (Van Vliet, 1997). For example, a unique attempt to provide the necessary management for buildings, units, and residents, San Francisco sold their public housing buildings to community-based nonprofit housing organizations (CBNHO) (Epstein, 2017).

Rehabilitating Culture and Community, Preserving Place through Community-Based Housing

This section seeks to provide a critical analysis of the complex interconnections between the influence of place, culture, housing, and community-based efforts. The baseline of community-based processes and cultural approaches to housing development

aids in meeting particular needs within communities; moreover, it is understood as claiming place or territory (Fraser, 2007; Beider, 2011; Melchar et al., 2017).

A planned effort to build assets that increase the capacity of resident to improve their quality of life” (Green and Haines, 2008. Pg 7); and, “based on the principle that the environment works better if the people affected by its change are actively involved in its creation and management instead of being its passive consumers. (Sanoff, 2000. Pg 2).

As a result of the U.S. government’s urban renewal plan that displaced minorities, putting them at a disadvantage in comparison to white citizens, minority and multi-cultural groups formed their own organizations (Hester Jr, 1989; Mattius, 2001; Toker, 2007; Stiefel & Wells, 2018). Consider the development of minority led housing associations that seek to effectively meet the needs of black and brown communities (Mattius, 2001). In urban minority neighborhoods where there are substantial social disadvantages and spatial segregation, the vulnerabilities associated with isolation, gentrification, and displacement are severe (Melcher, 2013). Community-based projects and processes are critical tools in preserving and rehabilitating the cultural identity of a neighborhood; additionally, they have the power to prevent further displacement of vulnerable residents (Melcher, 2013). The mixed-use of community-based housing programs and initiatives are significant tools for rehabilitating neighborhoods experiencing rapid gentrification, mass displacement and provide a unique approach to community development. Unlike public housing, community-based housing seeks public and private funding sources and is functions autonomously (Kim, 1999; Rusk, 1999).

Community participation fosters social change by developing relationships, empowering groups to get involved in civic engagements, and building the capacity for project management. Furthermore, the concept of contributing to a community or neighborhood projects essentially claims a group's "right to their city"- a term introduced by theorist Le Droit Ville in 1968 (Delgado, 2000, 2000; Melchar et al., 2017).

The community-based or -built movement was initiated in the 1960's by activists, artists, muralists, designers, and urban planners. Their work was created to involve local residents in the decision-making process of design that impacted their neighborhood (Hester Jr, 1989; Toker, 2007). Over the decades, across the U.S. there is a widespread number of initiatives and programs created to build low-income community-based housing and rehabilitate inner-city neighborhoods through nonprofit and community organizations (Kim, 1999). Four decades after the exploration and success of community-based efforts (playgrounds, parks, murals, public gardens, and sculptures), the Community Based Housing (CBH) program was established in 2004 in the U.S. (Community Built Association, 2014).

[PBH] Provides loan funding for the acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction, and redevelopment of housing developments for persons with disabilities and senior citizens ...The program provides permanent, deferred payment loans, with 0% interest, for a term of 30 years. CBH funds may cover up to 50% of the total development cost for a single project, up to a maximum of \$750,000 per project. Eligible award recipients are generally nonprofit organizations. A for-profit developer may act in a joint venture with a nonprofit, if the nonprofit has 51% ownership in the venture (National Low-Income Housing Coalition, 2016).

Cultural place-keeping through the Arts in Community-based Efforts. The term cultural identity is referring to commonalities within a place or group, i.e. customs,

practices, activities, experiences, ethnicity, race, LGBTQ, religious, identification, etc.; many groups that identify culturally often experience systematic oppressive forces that empowers them to unite (Ortiz, 2000). Globally and historically humans have created attachments and given meanings to spaces in one way or another- giving it the title “place” (Cresswell, 2016; and Melchar et al., 2017). Moreover, place-keeping is a complex phenomenon with the dimensions of politics, economics, design, management, governance, and evaluation (Dempsey, et al., 2014; Dunning, 2016). The vision of place-keeping is to provide sustainable inter and multi-generational spaces (Dunning, 2016); it enquires concerns of who should be involved; who are the decision-makers; what are the funding sources; and what are the overall attitudes of place-keeping (Dempsey, et al., 2014; Dunning, 2016).

In the United States, heritage or historical conservation is an initiative that began as a community-based, grassroots movement (Melchar et al., 2017). As a result, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 emerged (NCSHPO, 1966); from then on, communities have the ability to designate and nominate to the National Register what was considered historic. In addition to physical repairs and/or maintenance of property- this was no longer under the authority of the president of the U.S. and Secretary of the Interior (National Park Service, 2014). Preservation and celebration of cultural identity of a place is the main purpose of community-based historical conservation (Melchar et al., 2017).

Community identity differs from one specific group to another, therefore spatial design and development must accommodate the aesthetic and serviceability of a community's culture (Oliver, 1987, Abonyo, 2005). Design and development of residential projects have physical and natural properties, yet there are substantial cultural components that must be accounted for. Cultural identity of a community and neighborhood affects how spaces are constructed and how places are given a particular meaning (Oliver, 1987, Ozaki, 2002 Abonyo, 2005; Jabareen, 2005 Melchar et al., 2017). When an extensive cultural shift occurs, conflicts between contemporary trends and traditional, historical, and heritage place-keeping are apparent (Ozaki, 2002 Abonyo, 2005; Jabareen, 2005). When residential prospects assess the nature of the surrounding environment of a potential dwelling- whether as a resident or as a building developer- the decision is inseparably linked (Mulder, Dieleman, Feijten, 2002). Housing has significantly more meaning and purpose than simply providing "shelter": it is a form of community and individual expression- just as one's soul is much more profound than the human body that encompasses it (Ozaki, 2002 Abonyo, 2005; Jabareen, 2005; Cresswell, 2016).

Community art projects were the most effective component of the 1960's community-based movement: through this collective creative process a feeling of connectedness, belonging, trust building, habits of civic involvement, and empowerment is created (Brooks, et al., 2004). Similar to historic and cultural preservation, community-based creative processes or creative place-making can help marginalized and vulnerable

groups express shared and individual identity (Stiefel & Wells, 2018) Markusen and Godwa, define creative place-keeping as a process that “animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability, and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired” (2010; Pg 4).

Community-based art projects to build community, creative place-making, and adaptability to a community’s culture was used across the United States; then expanded internationally in underdeveloped countries. To name a few of the historic professionals who were the forefront of the community-based movement: 1) Harlem artist Lilli Ann Rosenberg- who worked with neighborhood youth and seniors together to design and create murals in 1965; 2) In 1999, established artist Laurel True brought communities together in Ghana, Haiti shown in Figure 1, and New Orleans to create mosaic murals; 3) In 1973, landscape architect Karl Linn organized groups of residents in inner-city Philadelphia; and 4) Architect Bob Leathers brought parents together in Ithaca, New York to develop community playgrounds and neighborhood parks- all to express culture identity and form community cohesion (Melcher, 2013).

The example provided above and Figure 2, of a successful community art project, the image presents young Ghana artists working with True Mosaics founder Mary McDermott on their mosaic project in front of their Fisherman's Tale, Nungua Ghana. This project was executed through a partnership with Cross Cultural Collaborative, Inc. The completed community mosaic project called Respect the Earth is shown in Figure 3.

The figures illustrate the significance and effectiveness of art, cultural place-keeping and preservation, and community building. In relation to the Ghana mural projects, consider San Francisco's Precita Eyes Muralists, who utilize the power of community-based art projects to empower residents, display social injustices, and improve the overall quality of life during a period of substantial economic change.



Figure 2: Young Ghana artists working with True Mosaics founder Mary McDermott on their mosaic project in front of their Fisherman's Tale, Nungua Ghana (True Mosaics Studio, 2016).



Figure 3: True Mosaics - Global art project (True Mosaics Studio, 2016); completed community mosaic project called Respect the Earth, Nungua Ghana.

Mission District, San Francisco, CA

For decades, the Mission District was a neighborhood for low-income, communities of color and artists to reside; now, a hot trendy neighborhood of tech workers who are diluting the pre-existing culture (Corbyn, 2014). Located south of South of Market (SoMa) and north of Bernal Heights neighborhoods, as presented in Figure 4. The purpose of this next section explains the interconnections between housing, gentrification, displacement, cultural identity, and community activism in the Mission District, San Francisco. Distinguishing the various components provides a better understanding of the severity of gentrification and displacement within the neighborhood; and why there is a prominent need to preserve and protect the minority residents and culture, as well as the strength of community-based resistance and activism.



Figure 4. This is a map of San Francisco, CA's neighborhoods (Amuses Bouche, 2008).

Identity and Place in the Mission District, San Francisco, CA. The concept of “place” has influenced the celebration of cultural identity within the neighborhood. This section aims to identify historical and evolving identity and culture of the Mission neighborhood. The Mission District, a sub-neighborhood of San Francisco's District Nine, is located on the southeastern region of the city; Hispanic/Latino occupancy is traced back to colonial era when Spanish missionaries established the Mission Dolores

Church in dedication to St. Francis de Assisi in 1776 (Godfrey, 1988; Arreola, 2004). Accordingly, this is how the district got its name. After an abandonment of Mission Dolores Spanish settlement, San Francisco's Spanish and Latino residents moved out to North Beach and Telegraph Hill, subsequently the "Cape Horn en route" to California during the Gold Rush (Arreola, 2004). In this period, the Mission district belonged to Irish and Italian working classes as a temporary settlement (PODER, 2014). After WWII, Italian immigrants moved to the North Beach neighborhood then bought out buildings and established businesses (Godfrey, 1988; Arreola, 2004); the rise in rents pushed the growing Hispanic/Latinx population back to the Mission District (Godfrey, 1988). During the depression after the interwar period, the Mission became a low-income and dilapidated district; as a result, of cheap housing prices; and, Spanish services offered at Mission Dolores Church attracted more Hispanic and Latino's leading to an abundance of culture identity (Arreola, 2004). Prior to Mission settlement, the Yelma Ohlone tribe resided in the area. The history of colonialism over the indigenous peoples of what is now the Mission District parallels with current issues of mass displacement of people of color in the neighborhood.

In relation to the economic evolution and limited spatial geography of San Francisco, the immense amount of people becomes problematic to the gentry favored Mission district's current socio-economic condition. The city's developments within the past decade included the construction of "The Infinity, One Rincon Hill" (Beggs, 2015), "Beast on Bryant" (SF Chronicle, 2016) and other luxurious residential infrastructures.

The “Beast on Bryant” is the most controversial development project in the Mission, as the entire city block of 2000-2070 Bryant Street (Figure 5), owned by private investor Nick Podell is under development with 335 units designated as “maker-spaces”.



Figure 5. “Beast on Bryant,” the most controversial development project in the Mission District, resides on the entire city block of 2000-2070 Bryant Street (Brinklow, 2016).

Developments of this kind offer hundreds of units that continue to transform the city’s Mission District’s economic and cultural structure. The notion of having more units to hold more residents seems legitimate, but the cost per unit and gentrifying businesses only appeals to wealthy elites (Corbyn, 2014); and, are absent of cultural preservation and community building spaces.

If housing surpasses thirty percent of a family’s income, it is considered unaffordable (U.S. HUD, 2017). Private investors in juxtaposition with different levels

governmental forces have substantially affected the housing situation in the Mission District. Resident housing situations vary in the Mission and in San Francisco from renters to homeowners. The costs of living per type of housing vary from scale presented in *Table 1*.

Table 1: (Urban Mapping, Inc., 2018)

<u>Cost of Living Per House Type</u>	<u>Mission</u> <u>District</u>	<u>City of San</u> <u>Francisco</u>
Average estimated value of detached houses in 2015 (12.1% of all units)	\$799,159	\$1,134,589
Average estimated value of townhouses or other attached units in 2015 (6.2% of all units):	\$672,155	\$846,333
Average estimated value of housing units in 2-unit structures in 2015 (15.1% of all units):	\$882,706	\$1,001,026
Average estimated '15 value of housing units in 3-to- 4-unit structures (20.5% of all units):	\$524,465	\$984,108
Average estimated '15 value of housing units in 5-or- more-unit structures (26.7% of all units):	\$219,400	\$921,371

Community established organizations are on the frontlines working to combat rising housing costs and support residents with vouchers and economic opportunities.

These supportive efforts have developed over decades to provide assistance to marginalized residents.

Identifying the Effects of Displacement and Gentrification. The rapid sweep of gentrification and displacement becomes real and legitimizes the severity of unequitable and unaffordable housing. The extreme split between “high-end” luxurious lifestyles and abject poverty that inhibit the city of San Francisco is highly visible. The most affected neighborhood is the Mission district: historically thriving with Hispanic/Latino and artistic culture; yet, over the past decade rapid displacement and stripping of the community’s culture identity is an ongoing battle. The neighborhood, once providing extensive affordable housing, is now the target of displacement and gentrification. The outer Mission’s industrial buildings were the first to be converted into high-end luxurious lofts, trendy café’s/restaurants, and boutiques.

As redevelopment occurs, new high-economic residents begin to displace and replace pre-existing Mission residents. Between June 1999 and June 2000 there were over 600 evictions in the Mission District (Urban Mapping, Inc., 2018). By 2000, there were 25,180 Hispanic and Latino left (Budget and Legislative Analysis, 2015). Rapid gentrification has displaced 8,000 families, where forty percent of the existing Hispanic and Latinos continue to reside in the district. If development continues to occur at this rate by the year 2025 Hispanic and Latino resident demographic will drop to 28% (Budget and Legislative Analyst’s Office, 2015).

The convenience and amenities of the districts are attractive to new wealthy residents, especially after ongoing renovations and redevelopment. With the privatization of resources providing a direct link to Silicon Valley, the Mission is a prime location for tech. industry employees. The desire to live in a neighborhood with appealing neighborhood amenities investors use commonly offer small compensation to low-income pre-existing residents (Forman-Greenwald, 2015). The initial gentrification conflict evolved around those who truly belonged in the Mission (Nyborg, 2008); even more so, who had the right to regulate the district's future. This notion plays a substantial role in the future of the district as combatting gentrifying and displacement efforts attempts to dilute the power of pre-existing minority residents; yet, the Mission community's history of activism and resistance empowers the remaining minority community to fight for the preservation of their neighborhood (Wagenaar, 2007).

Community-based Gentrification and Displacement Tracking Tools and Resources. The Mission community has established tools, resources, and organizations to inform residents and document the personal stories, spaces, and time periods of gentrification in the neighborhood. The Mission Local is a community and neighborhood based local news resource that publishes articles and opportunities for engagement. One program devised to inform the public of new neighborhood developments is called the Mission Local Housing Watch (Mission Local, 2018). The system compiles data from the San Francisco planning department, maps and lists of intended and completed projects, and links to stories written by residents about the projects (Mission Local, 2018). In

addition, a community-based resource is available to help visualize and map out the gentrification and displacement occurrences.

Additionally, the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project is an organization and data-base that documents dispossession in the SF Bay Area (Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, 2016). The outlet provides an opportunity for the community to share their eviction stories and view statistics through interactive maps. According to their *Evictions by Neighborhood* map, the Mission district has the highest eviction rate in San Francisco- with 908 evictions since between 2011 and 2016. The neighborhood with the next highest eviction rate of 497 is the “Tenderloin”, with high proportions of black, Southeast Asian, low-income and houseless residents. The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project is a great tool for tracking gentrification, and demonstrating which specific demographic groups are impacted, comparing one neighborhood to another. The increasing number of evictions has contributed to the escalation of the number of homeless residents. San Francisco’s houseless population reached 10,000 to 12,000 people between 2010 and 2016 (Brinklow, 2017).

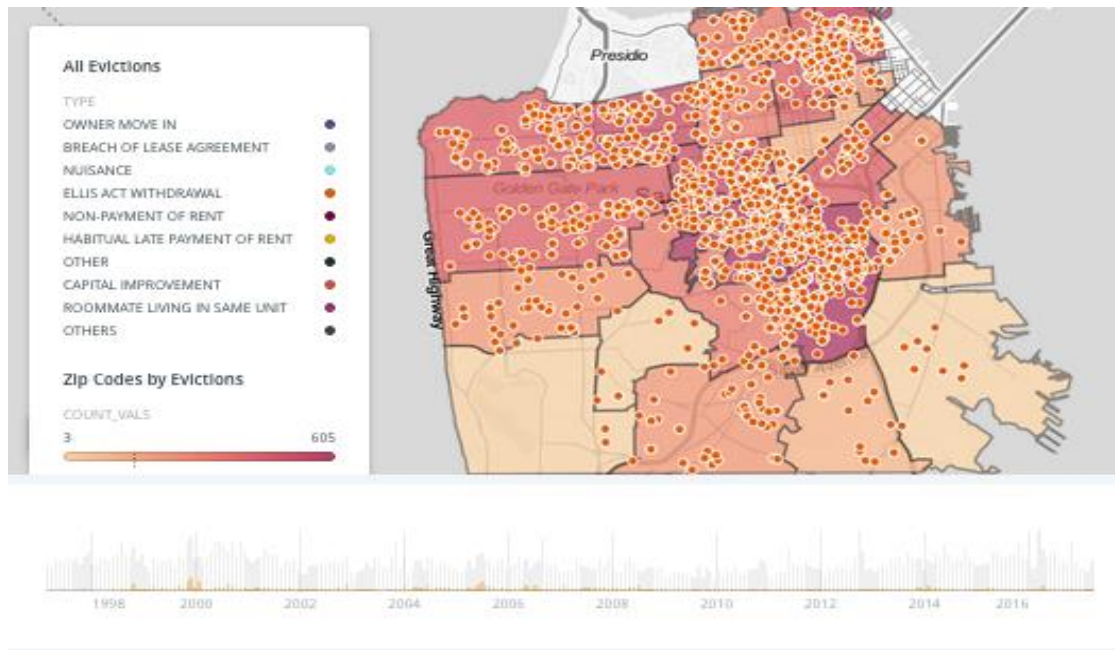


Figure 6. All San Francisco Eviction Notices, 1997-2017 map- filtered to show evictions imposed by the Ellis Act (Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, 2018).

Figure 6, pulled from *All San Francisco Eviction Notices, 1997-2017*- filtered to show evictions imposed by the Ellis Act (Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, 2018). The California state’s “Ellis Act” permits landlords to have unconditional rights to evict tenants in order to “go out of business.” Further, per the Ellis Act, landlords must remove all units in a building from the rental market, the landlord must evict all the tenants and cannot single out one tenant (for example, with low rent) and/or remove just one unit out of several from the rental market (San Francisco Tenants Union, 2018).

One of the most impacting and beneficial resources for low-income displaced residents are CBHOs. Community and affordable housing development agencies like the Mission Economic Development Agency, Mission Housing Development Corporation,

Mission Neighborhood Center, and Homeless Coalitions are working to preserve the diverse demographic and cultural place-keeping will hopefully counter the devastating loss of pre-existing community members. Their goal is not to push out newcomers from the neighborhood; but, to preserve the preexisting communities and culture.

Community Resistance and the Affordable Housing Movement

The Mission, a place where immigrants, racial minorities, artists, low-income, working class and social outcasts celebrated their culture and created a sense of community. The production of urban spaces and neighborhoods represent how race and class influence residences and industrial districts (Pulido, 2000). Prior to the influx of white elites, the Mission district was as industrial neighborhood housing low-income Hispanic and Latino demographic. Formerly, the Mission district held significant attributes of the inner-city, otherwise known as the urban ghetto or “barrio”. The inner-city is an area known for high concentrated poverty, crime, and resource deprivations (Quane and Wilson, 2012). The historical marginalization of racial minorities and other minority groups empowered them to work democratically to push for social equity (Cresswell, 2016; and Melchar et al., 2017)- this was especially true in the Mission neighborhood prior to the tech. industrial boom.

Currently, as gentrification efforts and speculators displace pre-existing residents and diluted the culture of the neighborhood, a new wave of community-based housing organizing and advocacy reproduced from the 1960-70’s Mission Coalition Organization

(MCO) activist movement (Nyborg, 2008). As a result of MCO's initiative, the neighborhood was declared a part of the "model cities program" for community development (MHDC, 2017). This authorized programs for better housing, social services, and economic development. Neighborhood organizations in coalition with each other push for neighborhood security in preservation of cultural identity, and to further empower the minority residents. Their purpose is to create and maintain a safe, comfortable atmosphere within the neighborhood to contest societal discrimination via socio-political activism, community events, cultural centers, and art galleries (Sandoval, 2002; Casique, 2013).

One effort for example, the Calle 24 Latino Cultural District established by San Francisco Latino Historical Society, San Francisco Heritage, the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development, and former District Supervisor David Campos' office. The historical presence of Hispanic and Latinos in the Mission aided in the formation of the cultural district (Calle 24, 2017). Other organizations like Precita Eyes Muralists work with community members and community-based organizations, like the Mission Economic Development Agency, to use murals and mosaic art for cultural place-keeping in newly renovated public/community-based housing (Precita Eyes Muralists, 2018; MEDA, 2018; Calle 24, 2017); in addition, the San Francisco Latino Parity and Equity Coalition (SFLPEC) developed a long-term strategic neighborhood investment and community building plan. SFLPEC is a community-based coalition that works

demand funding from the city to support their efforts and elevate together the socio-political power of the Latinx community (Wenus, 2017).

Mission-based community organizations have resisted gentrification and displacement through numerous coalitions to develop more sustainable and effective strategies. The pre-existing minority community attempts to work with the city government in halting gentrification and provide affordable housing infrastructure. Further, community-based housing agencies have the ability to place developmental decisions into the hands of project residents. Strategies formed to combat gentrification and displacement largely stem from the notion that diverse racial and income integration produce positive socio-political and economic outcomes (Cutler et al, 1999; Schwartz and Tajbakhsh 1997; Wilson 1987). Community developed programs in the district provide resources specifically for low-income minority Mission residents. These programs and organizations included the MEDA, MHDC, SF Housing Action, PODER, Mission Neighborhood Centers, INC (MNC), and SF tenant Union.

Housing development agencies, such as the Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA), Community Real Estate (CRE) and Mission Housing Development Corporation (MHDC), work with low-income individuals and families of color by promoting economic equity and social justice through asset building and community-based housing development (MEDA, 2018; MHDC, 2018). They have the ability to ease burdens. Compared to other subsidized public housing, the community-based nonprofit sector, have been characterized by highly devoted staff and have greater flexibility and

willingness to provide supportive programs, and who continuously work to improve their services and distinguish them from government subsidized public housing (Van Vliet, 1997).

Recent Housing Conditions in the Mission District, San Francisco, CA

This section investigates the links between socio-cultural, economic, and political dimensions of gentrification, displacement, and community-based affordable housing development as it relates to Mission District, San Francisco. Affordable housing scarcity has overwhelmed residents, developers, and local politicians in San Francisco; the geographical dimensions of San Francisco of forty-seven square miles leaves minimal space for outward development leading to residents seeking more space and affordability moving out of the city (Kapps, 2016). Therefore, it forces developers to push district supervisors to alter zoning codes to permits vertical building. Even more so, as a result of rapid gentrification, displacement, decades of absentee property management, public housing residents “were all but neglected by the city of San Francisco” (Epstein, 2017). This section aims to identify the severity of the current overall housing condition in San Francisco, CA.

Inequitable policies and economic distribution influenced by neoliberal capitalist procedures permitted rapid gentrification and displacement in the city. Between 2000 and 2012, the average median rent increased twenty-two percent and continues to accelerate into 2018. Further, the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area experienced a massive

population influx during the years 2010-2014, following the “tech” industry boom. The city of San Francisco’s 5.4 percent jump of high density growth added 47,274 residents (California Housing Partnership Corporation, 2016)

To illustrate the current housing market rate, fourteen percent of the 182 one-bedrooms sold between, December 2015 – March 2016 cost on average \$1 million (Bermingham, 2015). This surpasses prices in Manhattan, a city largely known for expensive costs of living. Meanwhile, there is a 35,855-unit shortfall of affordable housing available to low-income and working poor residents (California Housing Partnership Corporation, 2014). Those exact residents are below the average median income of the \$78,240 required to live securely in San Francisco (California Housing Partnership Corporation, 2014). Households are forced to spend a higher percentage of their income to sustain their living situation. Unfortunately, underprivileged families and residents do not have the financial ability to support themselves. Finally, the city’s homeless survey reveals that 71% of the homeless population were actual residents who were evicted from their homes (Brinklow, 2017). Political economics, growing number of residents, and high rates of minority displacement has sparked initiatives by local community-based organizations to move forward in pursuing solutions to protect vulnerable resident and neighborhoods.

Contemporary San Francisco Legislation on Housing. Systematic prejudices and financial compensations that influence political outcomes are especially present in local governments. San Francisco’s wealthy residents guilty of endorsing policies that are

detrimental to their community's most vulnerable members, yet prevent many equitable policies from passing that would benefit these same residents. But with Mission-based political groups, e.g. Latinx Young Democrats of San Francisco (LYDSF), San Francisco Latino Democratic Club (SFLDC), SFLPEC, and other community- established groups are working to build the political power in local decision-making processes. Having this political presence and influence elevates the opportunities for more equitable outcomes, especially in regard to housing issues.

Consider for example, "Proposition Q (Prop. Q)" passed in November 2016. An initiative introduced by Mark Farrell, a local politician who resides in Pacific Heights, a neighborhood with the average household net worth of \$1,104,725 (Ballotpedia, 2016); and, until his recent interim mayoral appointment on January 28, 2018 he was the city's district two supervisor (Eskenazo, 2018; Fracassa, 2018). Prop. Q orders the policing of houseless residents living in encampments to dismantle their minimal abodes and move from their position within twenty-four hours; they are obligated to move, post-haste, after a written warning from the San Francisco Police, to a homeless shelter (Ballotpedia, 2016). Prop. Q was highly opposed by community-organizations, -political groups, and homeless advocates.

Houseless residents primary concern is shelters do not allow the residents to keep additional possessions, forcing them to throw away their belongings such as tents and other equipment. Additionally, the shelters limit residents' time to forty-eight hours. Once the homeless occupants' meet the maximum hours allowed, they are sent back out

onto the street without their possessions. Initiatives such as Prop Q. only further marginalizes houseless residents and is a temporary “solution” to the growing issue of housing scarcity.

Moreover, although there are a number of services, homeless shelter programs, temporary and public housing options, there are 7,499 people houseless residents displaced (Applied Survey Research (ASR), 2017). San Francisco’s grassroots organizing community attempts to push local politicians and policies to halt gentrification and provide permanent affordable housing; however, the city’s efforts to move forward with the community’s requests are limited (Brinklow, 2017). For example, as the Mission neighborhood’s minority demographic drops it’s continuously losing its ethnically rich culture and diverse economy (Corbyn, 2014)

In response, community members and representatives devised a strategy for the November 2015 city election ballot entitled Proposition I (Prop. I), *City of San Francisco Mission District Housing Moratorium Initiative*. Construction of buildings with anything larger than five units or Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR) for commercial infrastructure would be prohibited exempting the construction of affordable units (Ballotpedia, 2016).

Unfortunately, for the Mission’s minority community, the proposition was defeated. Although gentrification and luxury housing development continued to occur limited funds became available for affordable public housing. Proposition A, was passed to secure \$310 Million in funds for affordable housing (Ballotpedia, 2016). The bond

ensures finances towards “the construction, acquisition, improvement, rehabilitation, preservation and repair of affordable housing for low and middle-income households” (SFMOHCD, 2015).

The bond will address pressing housing needs by:

- Investing in neighborhoods;
- Developing and acquiring housing for a broad population, from families to seniors; transitional-aged youth to single working adults; and veterans to disabled households; and,
- Meeting housing needs through a range of activities, including new multi-family construction, acquisition of existing apartment buildings, SRO rehabilitations, down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers, and other efforts that will effectively increase the affordable housing supply.

(SFMOHCD, 2015)

Although \$310 million may seem like a substantial amount of funding but with expensive property values and competing market rate housing developers, there is still a need for additional funding. The subsidy filters through San Francisco’s Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development (SFMOCD) to affordable housing developers and services agencies to fund government programs like the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD), small sites, and other new construction programs (SFMOHCD, 2015).

Local political organizations with political capacity are generating strategies, lobbying, mobilizing, and sending their executive board representatives to the capital in resistance. The evidence provided by the approval of Prop. Q further marginalizes and polices minority communities. Contrarily, measures like Prop. I., which was introduced to pause additional luxurious development, thereby giving opportunity to build low-income housing, did not pass. This validates the local government’s struggle with intense

political economic inequalities and issues of uneven power relations that directly affect minorities of the Mission District; and, presents the importance of community and grassroots political mobilization and organizing to mandate equitable policy and economic decisions.

A Celebration of Artístico y Cultura

In the 1970's Hispanic and Latino artists began to use the district's infrastructure and streets as canvases to display their cultural pride; thus, creating a culturally dynamic, ethnic neighborhood (Nyborg, 2008). The Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts, Precita Eyes Muralists, La Galeria de la Raza, etc. are a result of the district's historic abundance of artistic expression (Calle 24, 2017). The organizations became a prominent place for the Hispanic and Latino community within the Mission. During the tech. industrial boom, art increasingly became a visual strategy to essentially to mark the territory of preexisting residents and to tell the story of the neighborhood through its cultural roots; even more so, housing infrastructure as product of art, design, and socio-politics is being utilized as a tool of neighborhood rehabilitation by preventing further displacement, and cultural place-keeping by providing spaces of unification within those facilities.

In addition to pre-existing low-income residents, nonprofits and creative place-making spaces are victims are subject to displacement. A variety of organizations, neighborhood activists, and sponsorships for decades have pushed for cultural and

creative place-keeping by community-based developments through the arts, i.e. mural workshops, cultural art exhibits, such as *Paseo Artístico* and other neighborhood initiatives (Calle 24, 2017).



Figure 7. *Pasado/Futuro*, acrylic mural on brick depicts a celebratory image of Native American and Latinx cultures and unity amongst all ethnicities (Precita Eyes Muralists, 2005).

In addition to murals, there are other forms of art, e.g. mosaics, photography, poetry, dance, cinematography, prominent tools to celebrate, represent, and build community cohesion. Figure 7, called *Pasado/Futuro*, depicts a celebratory image of Native American and Latinx cultures and unity amongst all ethnicities; it is an acrylic

mural on brick completed by the Precita Eyes Community Mural Workshop located on 24th and Potrero Streets, San Francisco, CA.

Mission community-based organizations are combating gentrifying forces that attempt to dilute the artistic expression and community of the neighborhood. The culture of the Mission is visible to locals and visitors because of art- to lose those creative making space would be a loss to the city of San Francisco as a whole. Community-based creative place-keeping organizations and preservation spaces:

- Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts
- Precita Eyes Mural Arts and Visitor Center
- Galeria de la Raza
- Calle 24
- Dance Mission Theater
- Mission Cultural Center
- Loco Bloco
- the Red Poppy Collective
- Alley Cat Bookstore
- Clarion Alley
- Balmy Alley
- Women's Building
- Acción Latina

The organizations above are examples of the historic and active creative movements. For example, the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts (MCCLA) shown in Figure 8, was established by community activist and artists in 1977; their purpose was to preserve, develop, and promote, Latino cultural arts (MCCLA, 2015). And, to make creative opportunities for positive community development; the organization provides affordable rental space for nonprofits on a budget.



Figure 8. Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts' building façade mural (MCCLA, 2018)

Another organization, Dance Brigade's Mission Dance Theater was established to involve a diverse range of San Francisco Bay Area communities especially artists; the initial goal was to produce, present, and create multi-cultural dance reflecting socio-political issues (Dance Brigade's Mission Theater, 2014). Furthermore, MEDA's CRE department work is aimed to preserve artistic culture through affordable residential and commercial development with interactive strategies to engage with their community and project residents. The rendering in Figure 9 presents the design of the new affordable housing construction project site located at 1990 Folsom Street, San Francisco, CA; the project is project managed by MEDA and Tenderloin Neighborhood Development

Corporation (TNDC) and funded by MOHCD. The infrastructural design is based from community input, cultural understanding and research of the Mission, and local legislation (MEDA, 2018).

The building's unit mix will offer 50 percent two- and three-bedroom units, with 20 percent of all units earmarked for formerly homeless families. The building will also host a child care center, plus more than 10,000 square feet of affordable, much-needed arts space." (MEDA, 2018)



Figure 9. A rendering presents of the design for the new affordable housing construction project site located at 1990 Folsom Street, San Francisco, CA (MEDA, 2018).

The community organizations listed above are prominent social capital for the (MEDA, 2018) culture of the neighborhood. Furthermore, structures developed for cultural place-keeping is not a new phenomenon. The efforts to utilize architecture for cultural preservation and prevent further dislocation is tool used by indigenous communities to reaffirm their identity and existence (Lommerse, 2009). There are four

general approaches indigenous tribes use to translate their culture into buildings: paraphrasing traditional living necessities, symbolism, embodiment of values, and strong references to nature (Redquill Architecture, 2011). This is a strategy that has worked for indigenous peoples to preserve their heritage to combat colonialism for decades; thereby other at-risk minority communities and spaces can acquire these effective developmental processes.

The Mission's history of community engagement through intergenerational and intercultural artistic expression prepares contemporary efforts of combatting gentrification possible (MEDA, 2018; MHDC, 2018). The dire condition of the Mission forces the residents and community-based organizations to rely and utilize its activist and creative roots paired with new development efforts to rehabilitate the culture and life of the neighborhood.

Organizational Profile

Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA)- Community Real Estate (CRE)

Purpose, Mission, and Values.

MEDA is often on the front lines of the neighborhood's development battles.
-San Francisco Business Times

MEDA originally established as a services agency, MEDA's Community Real Estate department was established in 2014 in response to gentrification and displacement of low-income minority residents (MEDA, 2018). To successfully function as affordable housing developers in a neighborhood undergoing rapid gentrification and mass displacement their approach must be aggressive; this means the department must be competitive market rate real-estate stakeholders, include cultural-place keeping efforts, have ongoing and engaging relationships with the Mission community, and be persistent with local political decision-making processes.

The department took on the challenge of being affordable housing developers by devising a well-rounded Mission Action Plan (MAP 2020) strategy that includes the acquisition of the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD), and large sites/new construction, and small sites programs (Figure 8). Furthermore, through tactical policy and advocacy procedures MEDA has worked to build coalitions to elevate their political power and push for more equitable development local legislation, i.e. Proposition I and A

(Ballotpedia, 2016). MEDA's ambitions are aimed to combat neighborhood concerns, corridor by corridor.

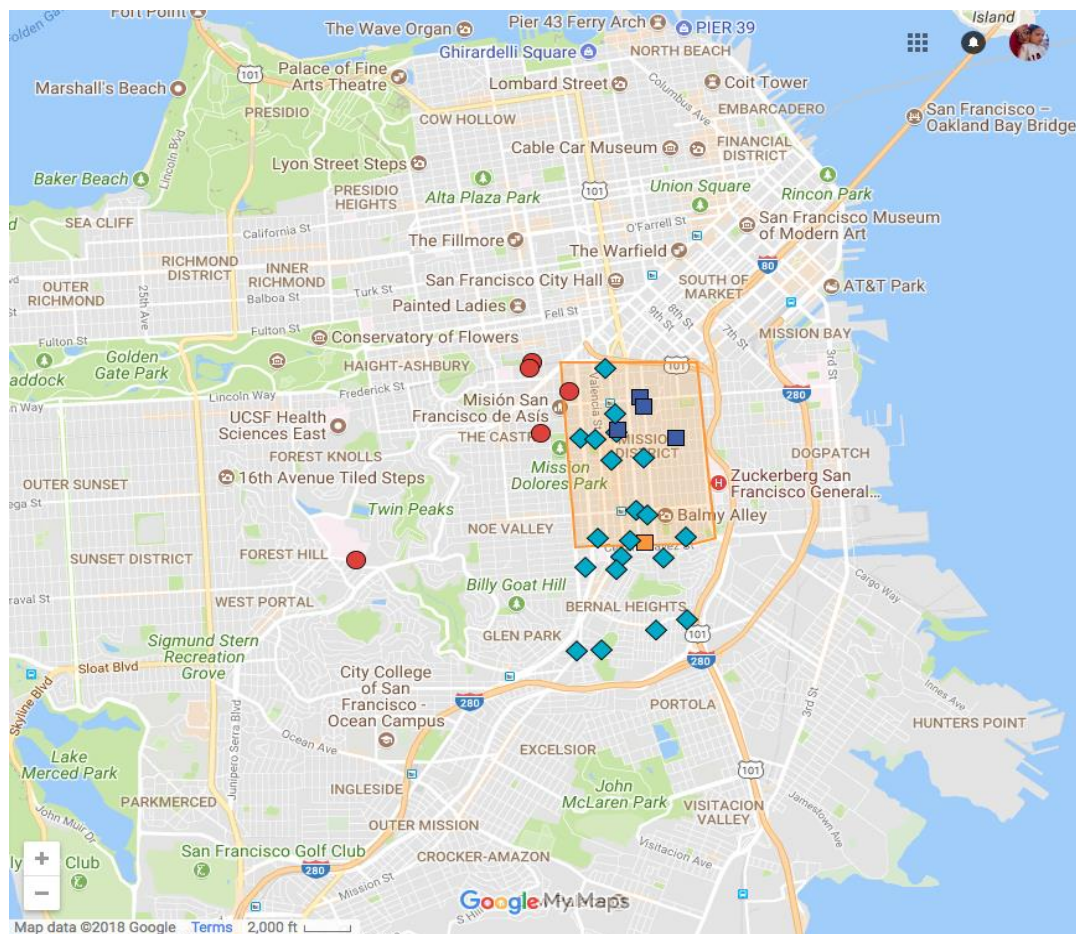


Figure 10. MEDA's map of current properties owned (MEDA, 2018).

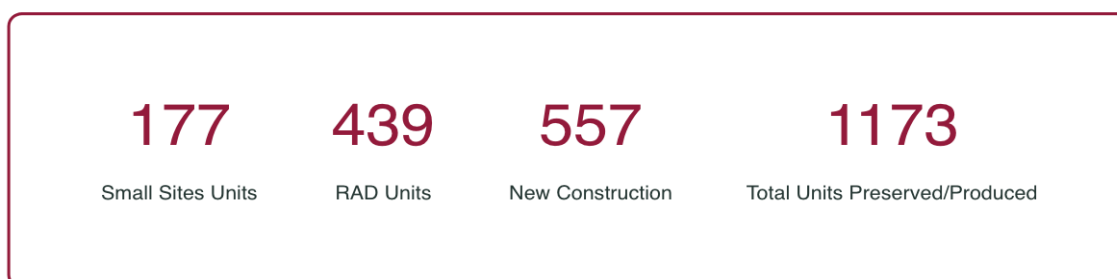


Figure 11. MEDA's diagram of current properties owned (MEDA, 2018).

Strategies and Tactics.

MAP 2020. MEDA CRE developed MAP 2020 to ensure a strong, safe, and inclusive future for the Mission District by 2020. Their vision focuses on creating opportunities (housing and community development services) for families and children to thrive economically. The primary goal of MAP is to preserve 400 multi-family apartments, 320 Small Sites and Single Resident occupancy (SRO) spaces, and develop 300 new apartments in addition to commercial retail and mixed-use buildings- totaling 2,000 units and 200,000 square feet of commercial space. The agency has laid out the basics of their action plan made available online for their community: preserve Mission District as a Latino cultural corridor through residential and commercial anti-displacement plan, generating new projects, and continuous collaboration with Mission community members and San Francisco agencies.

The primary goals set forth by the department for MAP 2020 are:

- To engage the Mission District, and especially those most affected by gentrification and housing disparities (low-income and working-class residents, SRO tenants, Spanish-speaking tenants, local school families, school workers and small business owners) and to develop popular support and advocacy for the changes necessary to protect their right to remain in their neighborhood.
- To develop an inspiring framing that makes housing equity, in terms of housing preservation and production, and preservation of community resources, a central planning principle for all decisions by local activists and through advocacy, to be incorporated by city staff and elected officials.
- To combat the loss of families in the Mission District, through a housing preservation strategy that combines tenant protections, regulations to encourage tenants and nonprofits to purchase vulnerable multi-unit buildings and the sufficient resources dedicated to the neighborhood for that purpose.
- To achieve a percent of low-income housing that keeps pace with market-rate development, including funding for new construction and identification of

publicly and privately-owned sites to be purchased by the city, and tools for neighborhood residents to access this new housing.

- To preserve vital community resources, including small businesses, legacy businesses and cultural/community resources.
- To increase job pathways for low-income residents into growing sectors of the economy.

(MEDA, 2018)

The agency's investments and goals seem ambitious especially considering the substantial economic constraints, rapid influx of property value and luxury housing developments. But, within three years of CRE's launch the team achieved the impossible by preserving and producing 1,000 homes in the neighborhood. The momentum has motivated the department to double their number of 1,000 homes by 2020 (2018).

Well, here we are just three years later, and all of your support has translated to us having 1,000 units of affordable housing and 100,000 square feet of commercial and nonprofit space in the pipeline. (Feng, 2017)

Utilizing and continuously evolving their MAP 2020 strategy will ensure successful outcomes for present and future projects.

Creative Place-keeping. In addition, to MAP 2020, MEDA has centered their strategy around pursuing efforts of creative place-keeping. As the Mission District has deep artistic and creative cultural roots it is crucial that the department makes a commitment to preserving and growing creative place-making spaces. Art and culture is the foundation of the renovations and new construction affordable housing and commercial developments.

MEDA vows to continue to be at the vanguard of creative strategies for the creative community. It's all about the building of cultural capital. (MEDA, 2018)

Their portfolio includes the preservation of Precita Eyes Muralist's (Figure 12) original home through their Small Sites program. Further MEDA is dedicating approximately 10,000- square- feet of space for Dance Mission within the new development plan for 2205 Mission Street; and, with the redevelopment of formerly 2070 Bryant Street, now 1990 Folsom Street and 681 Florida Street will provide an additional 10,000 square feet of affordable rental spaces for creative and arts organizations, like Galeria de la Raza. The creation of sustainable and resilient community and cultural asset building plans are only the beginning to a long journey of neighborhood rehabilitating efforts.



Figure 12. Façade of Precita Eyes Muralists store and office front on 24th Street, Mission District, San Francisco, CA (Precita Eyes Muralists, 2005).

Resources. MEDA CRE is funded by government subsidies from Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) filtered down from U.S. HUD. As presented in a previous section, the bonds passed to provide substantial funding for

affordable housing initiatives allows for the acquisition of new equitable mix-use, residential developments; even more so, for the renovation of inherited public housing facilities.

Ultimately, the strength of the organization's voice comes from Mission residents and partnerships with other neighborhood community-based organizations. Coalition building is a proven method used for generations of social movements, especially in the Mission District. Thereby, MEDA relies on the efforts and work of their neighbors and partners to endorse political incentives.

Mission Housing Development Corporation (MHDC)

Purposes, Missions, Values. MHDC is a community-based, technical assistance nonprofit originating from the Mission Coalition Organization created in 1968; MHDC creates, manages, and preserves quality affordable housing for residents of low and moderate incomes in the Mission District and San Francisco. In addition, they provide housing for families, seniors and special needs individuals; and, assist other organizations to ensure future housing developments meet the program needs of physically disabled, intellectually challenged, and critically ill residents. And, consistently collaborates with city partners to provide high quality and equitable housing opportunities (MHDC, 2017).

Moreover, MHDC focuses on preserving families rooted in the Mission District especially those in danger of displacement by building positive relationships. Their portfolio includes public, senior, special needs, multi-family, and single room occupancy

affordable housing and new construction developments. The organization utilizes their mission and values for the community as their decision-making compass: concentrating on residential infrastructure program development, operational, and policy decisions.

MHDC is committed to transparency as a key component of their operation as an organization. By working with their residents and the Mission community they are able to reflect and advocate for the needs and requests of the neighborhood- while respecting the cultures that make up the neighborhood and city. Each newly development residence is well-designed, environmentally sustainable, and built resiliently to serve future generations; the residences are maintained and renovated to preserve community assets.

MHDC efforts are strongly supported by various departments within the organization: executive, financial, housing development, asset managers, and resident services representatives. Each team's obligation is to support the specific efforts like financial security, obtaining appropriate planning and zoning permits, provide critical residential services, etc. The real estate development team sets the foundation for MHDC's overall purpose. The development team manages existing and plans future projects; they are responsible for the logistics and working with the community and residents to devise appropriate architectural programs.

Mission Housing is now one of the largest nonprofit housing agencies in San Francisco; they own and manage thirty-five residential buildings with a total of 1,600 units, shown in Figure 13. Currently 350 new rental units are being developed (MHDC,

2017).

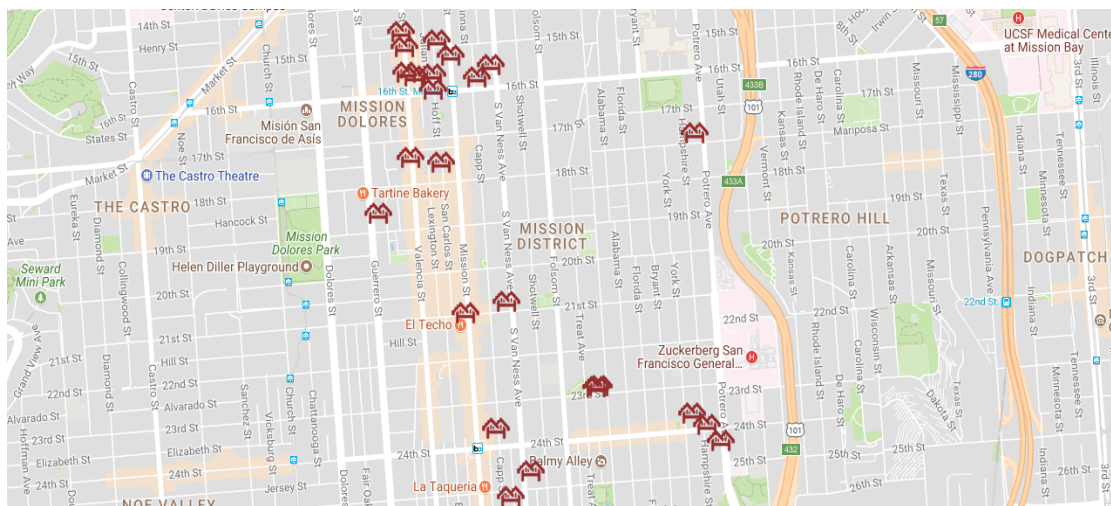


Figure 13. MHDC's map of current properties owned (MHDC, 2018).

One new development in particular is: 1950 Mission Street. Motivated by San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Developments (SF MOHCD)'s ambitious goals to necessitate equitable housing for San Francisco residents. SF MOHCD's criteria requires eighty percent of the units to be affordable for families earning between forty-five to sixty percent of area's median income and the remaining twenty percent of the units must house formerly homeless families (SFMOHCD, 2017). The project's architectural program includes a supportive services center courtyard, community rooms with kitchenettes, a rooftop community garden, media room, and art studio.

The Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development was very impressed by the excellent submissions it received in response to the RFP, commented Olson Lee, Director of MOHCD. We look forward to a successful partnership with the Mission Housing/BRIDGE team, and, especially, to the

completion of high-quality affordable housing and community services at 1950 Mission. (Bridge Housing, 2017)

Strategies and Tactics. MHDC approaches the housing crisis by partnering with real estate developers Bridge Housing, Mission Neighborhood Centers, David Baker Architects, Cervantes Design Associates, and Lutheran Social Services. MHDC's most crucial strategy to develop high-quality low-income housing is to work experienced developers, design teams, and a social service agency.

The MHDC+BRIDGE team is deeply committed to developing a project that preserves the Mission District's social and architectural strengths. Providing high-quality affordable housing in the heart of the Mission District requires wide-ranging and thoughtful community outreach efforts... By establishing working connections with Mission community organizations and other strategic stakeholders from the design phase through operations, MHDC+BRIDGE will attempt to empower the Mission community with the knowledge, skills and input necessary to affect a long-lasting quality affordable housing development. (Sam Moss, Executive Director of MHDC, 2015)

Additionally, MHDC is heavily involved in local politics to ensure socio-economic support for their projects. By endorsing San Francisco's affordable housing bonds such as Proposition A and I (MHDC, 2015). The outcome of each local bond is a direct reflection of the constant battle community-based housing organizations and residents of the Mission face. They also have representatives on the frontlines at the state level pushing for more equitable policies and funding.

MHDC decision making processes shall remain within the organization itself and their partner developer, i.e. Bridge Housing. It is critical that decisions are taken internally in order to keep the primary goal of the organization in mind. In the end, there

is the incentive that these ideas will spread to other areas that encounter the same issues, but the initial actions must be specifically targeted executed in the Mission area.

Methods

The purpose of this research project is to understand how processes of building sense of community, trust, and cohesion are rehabilitating within affordable housing development efforts. Additionally, how are community-based affordable housing development organizations engaging with the processes? To appropriately engage with this research project, I partnered with a neighborhood and community-based nonprofit organization, Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA) in their Community Real Estate Department (CRE) department. Working with MEDA, I utilized a combination of Participatory Action Research (PAR), semi-structured interviews, and creative survey activities.

As a result of rapid gentrification, displacement, decades of absentee property management, public housing residents “were all but neglected by the city of San Francisco” (Epstein, 2017). Within public housing facilities, there is diluted of a sense of community, culture, and trust. Additionally, low-income minority Mission residents face similar issues that public housing residents encounter; and, many other neighborhood residents are experiencing high levels of distrust, anxiety, and skepticism with new development projects. Thereby, my graduate project tested new tools and engagement strategies that would rebuild, rehabilitate, and preserve the community and culture that is being implemented by MEDA. My goals were to ultimately gain experience and understanding of the current community-engagement strategies attempted by the CRE’s

new construction and Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) teams, and to test the effectiveness of new strategies.

I utilized PAR to accurately study the issue and adopt appropriate community building and cultural place-keeping strategies. PAR is best suited for conducting this form of immersive and hands-on investigation; it is commonly used by activists and by numerous community organizations to ensure goals and campaigns are approached with as much knowledge as possible. PAR relies completely on community engagement and outreach; it allows space for firsthand interactions, observations, and on-the-ground experiences to play a central role in addressing the research questions. In comparison to studying a community as an outsider- PAR provides an opportunity for the researcher to build relationships and connections directly with a community. Without making community connections the accuracy of accumulated data is limited and prevents a full comprehension of the issues being addressed and specific needs of the community being served, and to connect a neighborhood's identity to materiality of the neighborhood. In addition, unlike basic surveys and general observations that extract information- this form of research leaves a community with tools and materials to succeed. There must be an intimate understanding of the individuals that make up a community and their own personal values to encode the collective values of trust, community, and place in the built environment that is achieved through PAR.

In this specific case, I was able to observe the efforts of various community-based development project teams, who test/implement strategies to further engage their target

community (Stoecker, 2005). To actively participating in community development practices, I conducted semi-structured interviews with project developers and their architect's creative design teams of new construction and RAD projects.

The interview questionnaire was designed to collect crucial insight into the efforts and attitudes that go into rehabilitating a neighborhood. The full questionnaire can be found in the Appendix. The goal of the questionnaire was to probe key stakeholders in the design and development process of how they view the spaces and communities where these developments were taking place. Some of the questions include: How do individual team members perceive gentrification and displacement? How is each team approaching their roles and processes of rehabilitating a vulnerable gentrifying neighborhood? What forms of community outreach and engagement tactics are previously implemented? What are the relationships between the development teams and the community?

The development of the research methods for this project was designed on the basis that community feedback is pertinent to developing culturally sensitive and multifunctional housing projects. Thus, each activity was shaped around the culture and needs of the residents and were photographically documented to provide visual evidence of the community transformation and outcomes.

Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD)

The first strategy tested was aimed for cultural place-keeping, trust and community rebuilding amongst residents. Through my partnership with MEDA's RAD team and Precita Eyes Muralists- funded by MOHCD and Bridge Housing, to organize

ten-week intensive mosaic workshops at three of MEDA's RAD community-based senior centers: Woodside, Duboce, and Sanchez Senior Centers. The project follows the model established during the 1960's community-based movement; by integrating these creative processes within the newly renovated buildings, the residents are provided with opportunities for expression and peer engagement. Similar to historic and cultural preservation, community-based creative processes or creative place-making can help marginalized and vulnerable groups express shared and individual identity (Stiefel & Wells, 2018). The goal for the mosaic workshops was to test a collective creative process to build a sense of community, connectedness, belonging, and trust.

In my position, I co-facilitated and mediated the workshops with the Precita Eyes' artist teams. Each week the residents were given a different step in the mosaic process to design, color, and glued each tile (Figures 14 and 16). The goal was to create eight mosaic tile panels, each 24" X 25" for their landscape areas that would contribute to the newly renovated buildings. The process was made fun and interactive and encouraged the residents to collaborate with one another. I created a "lessons learned" document, which I will detail in the upcoming section, with my observations and the tools for the RAD team to continue to strengthen their resident engagement.

As a part of making resident outreach accessible, I created flyers for each participating property with the clear, large font and laid out each workshop date with the corresponding mosaic workshop plan (Figure 15). Precita Eyes Muralists' artists instruct

group on the purpose and process of the mosaic workshop. Participants get inspiration from photography books to begin the line drawing for their mosaic designs





Figure 14. Five images capture workshop participants working collectively drawing and coloring their designs (Precita Eyes Muralists, 2018)

Precita Eyes Muralist Workshop

Design the artwork for the garden

**Mosaic Intensive Workshop
with Professional Artists**

Agenda

Week 1 – June 26th
Design Workshop Begins

Week 2 – July 10th
Finalize Design in scale and color

Week 3 - July 17rd
Finalize Design and review for approval

Week 4 – July 24th
Enlarging the approved design to scale and transfer onto Tyvek

Week 5 -9 Aug. 31st – Sep 28th
Mosaic sessions transferring onto netting

Week 10 – Sep. 11th
Installation of mosaic on trash containers

**Starting Monday
June 16, 2017
10 am – 12 pm**

**25 Sanchez
Community Room**







Figure 15. Original graphic. Flyer example used in MEDA's RAD properties to inform residents of mosaic workshops schedule.



Figure 16. Two images of workshop participants and myself working collectively to draw, color, and assemble their designs (Precita Eyes Muralists, 2018).

Resident Renovation Surveys. Additional efforts, to engage the residents in the design and development process was to collect feedback on the exterior, interior, and landscape design. A variety of schematic designs and architectural surveys provided by the project manager and architects, i.e. paint colors for building exteriors and landscape plans provided by project architects for the residents to vote for their preferred design elements (Figure 17 and Figure 18). This strategy was used to support the architectural needs of project residents and to ensure they have a voice in the renovations.



Figure 17. Original photograph. Building façade rendering example used as survey for MEDA's RAD residents to engage with design decision making process. Mission Dolores Senior Center, Mission District, San Francisco, CA.



Figure 18. Original photograph. Building façade rendering example used as a survey for MEDA’s RAD residents to engage with design decision making process. Mission Street Senior Center at 18th Street, Mission District, San Francisco, CA

New Construction Development Projects

The new construction projects are set to provide one-hundred percent of affordable family and traditional youth housing. Additionally, to maximize cultural place-keeping efforts, aside from embracing the current Hispanic/Latinx and artistic cultures, the developers and architects are using architectural elements to pay tribute to historical indigenous roots of the area prior to Mission settlement.

Prior to going out to the field to interview the field architects, the senior project manager, Mithun’s project architects, and myself met to discuss community engagement

strategies specifically for the 2060 Folsom low-income housing project. The goal of this meeting was to collect feedback on art, art placement, and building name. I created interactive, educational, and engaging survey activities to obtain community feedback (Figures 19 and Figure 20); the surveys gave brief historical indigenous information on the neighborhood and project site, i.e. Yelma Ohlone tribe: figure 19 shows the survey activity one which asked participants to use the historical information provided to inspire the name of 2060 Folsom resident facility; Figure 20 depicts activity two to choose what type of art the community want installed for 2060 Folsom. Next, I designed a new construction milestone map (Figure 21) to inform the community of pertinent construction and grand opening dates.

The surveys were presented during mobilization opportunity at three community events: Folsom Street's In Chan Kaajal park opening, Mission's traditional Sunday Streets, and a community meeting. Figure 22, MEDA's CRE Senior Project Manager Feliciano Vera and myself explaining the survey activity to neighborhood residents for 2060 Folsom Street project. Further, we included detailed descriptions of the new affordable housing development projects and enlarged building renderings printed by Mithun Architects.

The community trust building strategy was a new effort tested by CRE, in addition to building dialogue amongst community member a substantial amount of pertinent information was gathered to assist the design and development of the housing developments. Each survey and visual element were formed and used in a unique

approach compared to a standard written questionnaire or multiple-choice survey. Most importantly, the surveys were presented in English and Spanish. The boards were later repurposed in other community meetings.

2060 Folsom

Actividad #1: Ayúdenos con ideas para el **NOMBRE** del nuevo proyecto de vivienda económica.

		<p>Breve Historia</p> <p>Para caminar siempre recordando que el pasado vive en el presente. Este lugar fue el territorio de</p> <p>Yelamu Ohlone, tierra del pueblo Abalone, y tenía nombres como Chutchui y Sitlintac.</p> <p>Los Yelamu habitaron en este distrito por mas de 2,000 años hasta que los Españoles llegaron el el siglo 18</p> <p>Ahora esto lo llamamos</p> <p>La Mission.</p>	 <p>Adelante con el presente, Cómo podemos nombrar este edificio que conecte con la historia pero que tambien nos conecte con</p> <p>FUTURO, VISION- PROMESA?</p>
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Conecte la historia y el futuro,

Use las letras de magnetos para escribir posibles nombres!

Figure 19. Original survey activity designed by researcher. "Ideas for the name of the new affordable housing projects."

2060 Folsom

Actividad #2: Seleccione el **Arte** para el edificio



Mosaico



Mural



Instalación Colgante

Por favor haga un **círculo** en la papel que le dimos del tipo de arte que prefiere ver en 2060 Folsom usando los ejemplos de arriba, y si selecciona, OTRO, explique: _____

Figure 20. Original survey activity designed by researcher for type of art exhibited in 2060 Folsom Street, San Francisco, CA.



Figure 21. MEDA's new construction project original map designed by researcher. The map represents the four projects in MEDA's pipeline along with pertinent information and dates.



Figure 22. Original Photograph. Senior project managers Feliciano Vera and Elaine Yee, and myself engaging with community member at In Chan Kaajal park opening.

Analysis

Housing disparities and displacement of low-income minorities in pre-segregated urban areas resulting from gentrification has sparked community mobilization in substantial forms. Through decades of socio-economic and political prejudices minority communities have built community-based organizations working to provide economic support and community development for equitable growth and opportunities. One need in particular that affects the health, well-being, and future of a neighborhood is housing, which is subpar for the majority of minority neighborhoods. This forced communities of color to maximize their resources and organizational efforts to not only protect low-income residents but preserve the culture that lives within.

With this research project, I studied how community-based affordable housing development is operationalized to rehabilitate a gentrifying neighborhood through the case study of the Mission District, San Francisco, CA. By conducting field research during an internship with the Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA)'s Community Real Estate (CRE) department, I evaluated the implementation and testing of community democratic participation, trust building, community building, and cultural place-keeping strategies. The strategies were tested on the MEDA's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) residents and the perspective community for new affordable housing development project in the Mission. Additionally, I designed community surveys and conducted interviews with developers and their architect creative design teams. The

final objective of this research project is to provide evidence-based strategies to guide and assist at risk minority communities and neighborhoods in built-environments.

The semi-formal interviews and surveys offered in this document combined with PAR and field observations paint a rich picture of the ways community-based initiatives are used to rehabilitate a vulnerable community of color in a gentrifying neighborhood. This analysis section will provide an overview of the results and data gathered. Presented in the order of 1) Mosaic workshops community building arts for RAD residents; 2) and, New Construction Community Trust Building Strategies.

Mosaic Workshops Community Building Art for RAD Residents

Throughout the duration of the workshops it was clear that trust between residents, staff, and property owners formed. In addition, new friendships and a sense of community was established. The residents expressed gratitude, pride, and empowerment during each workshop. Moreover, the resident's participation in an activity that required them to use their motor skills (beneficial for their health) attested how impactful community building projects are, especially through the arts.

The following photos and direct quotes from senior workshop participants were gathered directly from Precita Eyes Muralist website's portfolio. Throughout the duration of the project participants grew closer as a community by working together on different mosaic pieces. Further, the following photo story captures the final weeks of the workshop when the mosaics were completed to present the community building

transformation. Each image is crucial in depicting the individual impacts of the community building and cultural place keeping strategy.

Mosaic Workshops Individual and Collective Impacts.

We're creating our own little Golden Gate Park here in Woodside, commented 91-year-old Fira Valentina (Figure 23).



Figure 23. Workshop participant laying and gluing tiles to panel at Woodside Senior Center (Precita Eyes Muralists, 2018).

Another participant shared feelings of nostalgia,

Learning a new craft keeps the mind young... Even at my age, I love to keep building things. Stated a former construction supervisor, resident of Woodside Senior Center (Precita Eyes Muralists, 2018).

The participant's feedback was essential in providing evidence that the workshop beneficially influenced their experience living in the newly renovated RAD residents and as a community overall. By prompting a positive feelings and connections within themselves and each other, the objective of the workshop exceeded the expectations of a of how effective a democratic, engaging, and creative activity is. Another example, a participant with physical limitations who I worked directly with every week for eight weeks, who will remain anonymous, shared with me their physical improvements. Their motor skills increasingly progressed from pushing the broken tile pieces to form an image. The individual results of emotions and physical capabilities is an additional success. Figure 24, shows a resident, a local artist who was present each week of the workshop. At the beginning phases of the project he presented his drawings and ideas. I then partnered with him to create and install the tile to represent himself throwing a ball to his dog at Duboce Triangle Park located down the block from the residence. The image reflects the most peaceful and fulfilled moments of his time living in the facility. The accessibility of the park encourages activity to increase overall health.



Figure 24. Local artist and workshop participant holds up completed mosaic panel at Duboce Senior Center (Precita Eyes Muralists, 2018).

Additionally, at a group level the workshop encouraged opportunities for friendships. Figure 25, shows a group of women proudly holding up their completed mosaic artwork; they worked collectively over the weeks building friendships and new connections. These new friendships will impact their experience living in the facility by providing support and encouraging an active and creative lifestyle.

The individual and group examples are crucial to provide evidence of how impactful and effective the creative project was; especially after the residents underwent rigorous construction and renovation to their building. Furthermore, the workshop that

encouraged creativity, collective engagement and relationship building established a sense of community and other benefits to their health and livelihoods.



Figure 25. Group of participants hold up completed collaborative mosaic panel at Sanchez Senior Center (Precita Eyes Muralists, 2018).

The Final Mosaic Installments. The following images are the mosaics' installments from each respective property. Each piece's design symbolized a deeper emotion and lived experience by the residents and staff. There is an obvious appreciation for life and growth and each piece depicts an organic connection being made by the respective groups' participants.

Ultimately, the creative process and the development of art is a tranquil experience that is beneficial to the overall mental wellness of the participants; therefore,

the participants were more willing to work collectively and were inspired by their group's members. The completion of the mosaics reflect a positive collective experience and portrayed a celebration of life, community, connection, and identity. Moreover, as referred to in the *Cultural Place-keeping through the Arts in Community-based Efforts* subsection of the Literature Review, community-based creative processes animated their new spaces, rejuvenated their outdoor space, and brought a diverse group people together “to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired” (Godwa, 2010; Pg 4); accordingly, the workshop created a collective community identity that gave their newly renovated residence a new meaning.

Duboce and Sanchez Senior RAD Residence Facilities. Figure 26, presents two series of four panels located in the outdoor recreational space at Sanchez Senior Residence- the panels are placed in quadrants together telling a story of natural relationships between plant life and animals. Figure 27, captures the second series of four panels at Sanchez Senior Center separated to express the individual stories depicting the life experiences of fungi, insect, human, and culture thriving in their habitat.



Figure 26. Two completed mosaic installments at Sanchez Senior Center (Precita Eyes Muralists, 2018).



Figure 27. Three completed mosaic installments at Duboce Senior Center (Precita Eyes Muralists, 2018).

Figure 26 and Figure 27 *located at the Duboce Senior Center*, have similar symbolic interpretations as they present images of the natural world and different species living peacefully within their environment.

Woodside. Located in San Francisco's Forest Hill neighborhood neighboring Twin Peaks, Woodside Seniors created and titled their mosaic story, *From the Garden to Beyond the Sky*, Figure 28 (Precita Eyes Mural Arts, 2017). The Woodside resident's mosaic mural is a story of a much larger connection between the creatures of the earth, manmade infrastructure, and the universe.

Through this community-building art process the resident expressed their artistic stories with their community and neighborhood; the symbolism easily translates to the new lifestyles of the residents: positive, rehabilitating, natural, nurturing, thriving, and most importantly shared connections. There were many critical learnings of how to productively and successfully rehabilitate a vulnerable community- beginning with how projects are strategized, implemented, the approach used, and most importantly how facilitators engage with the participants.

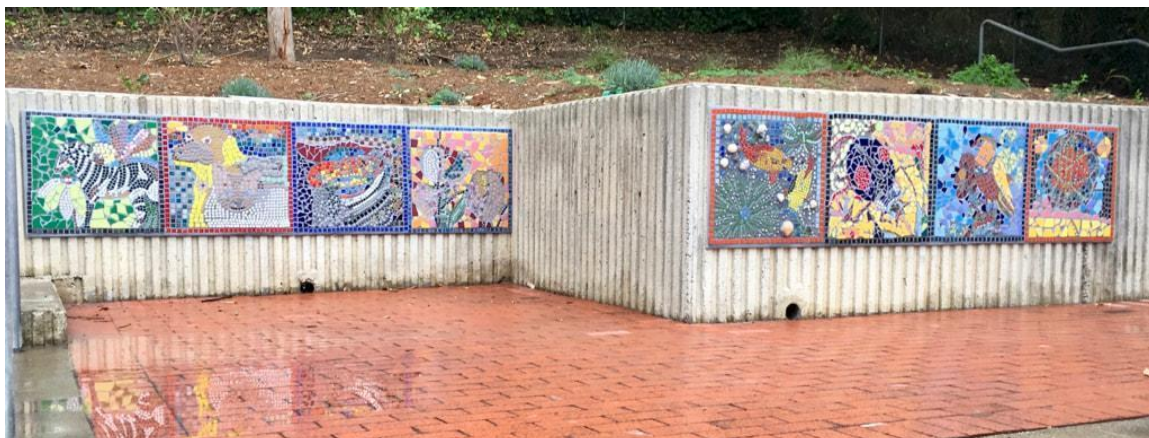


Figure 28. Completed mosaics installed as mural at Woodside Senior Center (Precita Eyes Muralists, 2018).

Lessons Learned. Precita Eyes has worked on community-based art projects for decades- their methods community engagement has influenced the theme, styles, genre, and value, and symbolism of their murals. Thereby, it was constructed to observe how Precita's Eyes' artists interacted and co-facilitated the workshops to then improve the interactions between the new property owners. After ten weeks of close observations I formulated a lesson learned guide of overall themes of the intimacy and practice of community-based art projects. The interactions between facilitators and participants is careful, precise, and strategic to meet the goals of trust and community building:

- Step-by-step guidance
- Accommodation
- 1:1 direction
- Full Inclusion
- Maximize the participants skills
- Develop participants skills
- Regular check-ins with participants

This information will guide project managers and other community-based groups, organizations, and developers build future strategies and interactions around interactive projects. This information was then applied guide the new construction teams to positively build trust and connections with their prospective residents; further, to develop a more respectful and democratic dialogue with the community they serve.

New Construction Community and Trust Building Strategies

It is possible in many different ways through affordable housing development to work towards rehabilitating a community and neighborhood. Although, developing physical infrastructure is a substantial need to provide shelter, much more must be considered. There must be opportunities for community empowerment by involving them in the design and development decision making process. A majority of minority residents are kept out development conversations, especially with luxury housing developments in the Mission. Thereby, creating opportunities for dialogue generates a more democratic process; and promotes equitable services, accessibility, and necessary adaptations for families, transitional houseless, youth, single person occupancy, and income-based rent. Moreover, architecturally provide safe spaces for these families, high-quality and easily manageable infrastructure.

Even more so, being educated on the geography and history of the neighborhood developers, architects, and community builders can culturally rehabilitate and preserve a gentrifying neighborhood. Of course, there are other factors that influence housing

developments, i.e. socio-politics, funding, etc., but, community involvement has the strongest influence.

Survey Results. The 2060 Folsom Street housing project survey activity data from In Ka Chaal park opening to collect community ideas; *Table 2* presents the survey activity results at two community events, In Ka Chaal park opening and Mission Sunday Street. The input has important influence on the final name chosen for 2060 Folsom Street facility and ensures community democratic participation. Moreover, working to incorporate indigenous historical roots is a tremendous relief for the community; in an era of rapid gentrification and displacement of minority residents, there a collective connection to colonial attempts to permanently remove communities of color. Thereby, conducting outreach and developing residential projects that focuses creating spaces for recent minority cultures, but architecturally celebrating the indigenous roots of the area. Considering the use of a Mayan language for the community-based Folsom Park Opening, the communities feedback includes a strong presence of the cultural history and abundance of the sites. Further, similar to the final mosaic panel installments, the names and art types suggested symbolized value for growth, connectivity, culture, family and ancestry.

Figure 29 shows two submitted art suggestions to assist the developers on culturally sensitive and celebratory murals for the new housing project. The two submissions reflect the ethos of the Mission; additionally, the images present life, growth, family, Latinx, and connectivity comparable to the RAD mosaic projects; the values of

the communities are expressed through their art understood from the symbolism and themes across the art projects and submissions.

Table 2. Survey Activity One Results

<u>Community Suggestions for 2060</u>	<u>Common</u>	<u>Art Suggested</u>
<u>Folsom Street Name</u>	<u>Words</u>	<u>Themes- Tallies</u>
Casa Tierra (Earth Home) (1)	Casa/Home	Mosaic: 18
The people	Village	Mural: 19
Yelma Village (4)	Mission	Art Installation: 7
Native Water (1)	La Gente (1)	
Mission Garden (1)		
La Lente		
La Hacienda Del Pueblo (The Ranch		
House)		
Home		
River		
Promesa(Promise)		
Peace		
Casa Promesa		
Peace		
Liberatad(Liberate)		

<u>Community Suggestions for 2060</u>	<u>Common</u>	<u>Art Suggested</u>
<u>Folsom Street Name</u>	<u>Words</u>	<u>Themes- Tallies</u>
Cóol		
Sombra or Sembra		
In Wootoch or ootoch = Mi Casa/ Mi		
Hogar		
Buena Vista		
Buen hogor		
Chutui Village		
Chalon		
Casa De Shalom		
Casa Popular		
Mission Caza		
Casa Talavera		
Tribu		

DESIGN THE ART YOU WANT TO SEE! CHECK THE OTHER SIDE FOR INSPIRATION



DESIGN THE ART YOU WANT TO SEE! CHECK THE OTHER SIDE FOR INSPIRATION

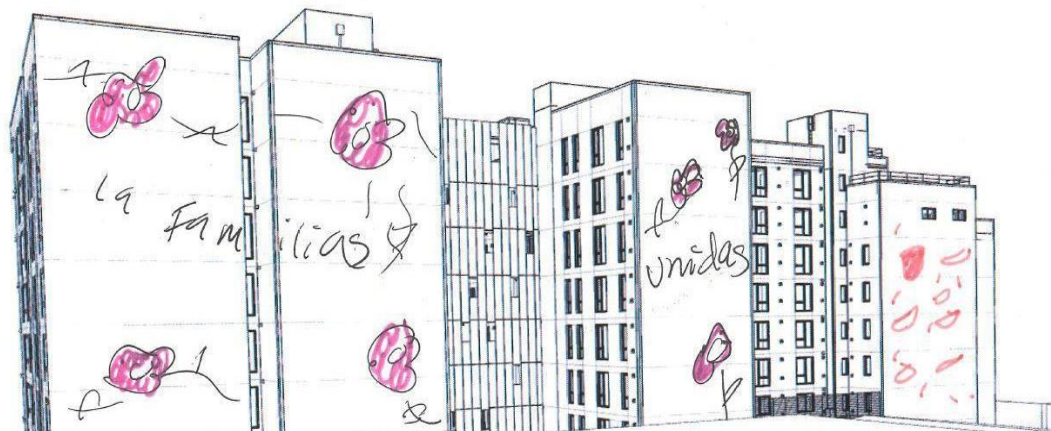


Figure 29. Original survey submissions of prospective mural displayed on the side of 2060 Folsom Street new construction. Rendering provided by Mithun Architects.

The results of 2060 Folsom building mural survey were similar to that of the feedback received, and completed analysis from the final mosaics' installments, which

reflected the same values: the celebration of culture, nature (as a celebration of life and organic connections), as well as of Latinx culture, and finally, that of unity. The surveys and the mosaic workshops were conducted separately. From a community building standpoint, it was crucial to make the effort to communicate and prioritize community values, which foments trust between the project developers and residents of the neighborhood; this ensures that the project's outcomes will be more culturally sensitive and support the needs of the community and neighborhood.

Semi-formal Interviews. The interviewees share the unique perspectives and various roles of affordable housing development paired with persistent community involvement, and community-building strategies, in response to gentrification and mass displacement, generally and in relation to the Mission District. The following categories were pulled from the interview transcripts to diagnose the priorities and values of the development teams and architects.

Post project review, three overarching themes were identified as prominent terms and concepts to consider when developing democratic community and affordable housing strategies. Each component is explained and includes quotes from interviewees for accurate assessment.

Gentrification and Displacement. The most recent notion of gentrification is commonly understood as a negative and destructive force due to the displacement of over 8,000 low-income minority residents in the Mission District and thousands more across the United States. From the perspective of professionals on the front lines of the

affordable housing crises, their impressions of the massive phenomenon of gentrification is contrarian to the general notion amongst communities.

We all start to look at it from a more social and intangible standpoint because you're changing the neighborhood physically but that's also impacting the people that are living there.

Considering the textbook definition, gentrification as an economic boost, for developers and some scholars is viewed as an opportunity *if* there are inclusive initiatives for low-income residents, i.e. community-based affordable housing, cultural preservation tactics, and non-discriminating socio-economic policies and policy enforcement. The interview questionnaire asked about the participants background, why they chose their field of work, and their perspective on gentrification and affordable housing development. The information shared by the interviewees assisted in understanding their education and experiences that affect their development and design approaches. Further, to compare general perceptions to professionals in the field on gentrification and displacement. One project architect shares their viewpoint on gentrification:

You know when I first started architecture in high school in Jersey New York gentrification meant something good because all these derelict neighborhoods had nobody living in there- there's was just half empty warehouses. And, the lots got gentrified. People were put in new places. I grew up with gentrification meaning that it was good to put people in buildings. Now that that term is so controversial. It basically means rich white dudes coming in. And that's I think it's appropriate, that happens... so I tend to never use the word gentrification... It's kind of too easy to kind of wave the flag of gentrification or burn the flag of gentrification. It doesn't really accurately portray what's happening...

Likewise, an affordable housing developer shared their view on gentrification:

I see it {gentrification} as an everyday phenomenon that resides in community's experience. The technical definition means that a neighborhood is undergoing economic change; it's a phenomenon that is commonly defined by changing a socio-economic status within a community and an influx of newcomers that are typically affluent. But I think that probably the most troubling aspect of that change is the conversation failure. There are those communities that existed prior to the beginning of the phenomenon and a lot of newcomers come in and don't bother with the knowledge. They don't take the time to understand the communities that they are becoming part of and oftentimes show no interest in doing so. You don't have conversations that requires listening but requires engagement.

The two perspectives are crucial and must go hand in hand for designing and developing functional, successful, culturally sensitive, below market rate housing. For a neighborhood that is undergoing immense economic change and mass displacement, it is evident the key to preventing further community and neighborhood disruption is to encourage dialogue and engagement. This is in the form of cultural place-keeping and community building projects, as seen throughout this project; in addition, when creating a democratic platform and spaces for low-income minority residents to voice their concerns and requests it must be translated into action. This is where developers, architects, community advocates, and elected officials must fulfill community demands by developing affordable housing, implement equitable social services, and maximize cultural place keeping or preservation strategies.

Gentrification, generally being an overused word to negatively describe an area's economic and demographic change; yet, another professional in the midst of housing crisis has a contrarian position,

It [gentrification] creates opportunities. The economy is thriving. I think what is so negative- is the displacement that happens as a result. Gentrification can be positive, if people are able to benefit from it. People connect displacement with gentrification, that's where the animosity comes from...

To further support the importance of democratic affordable housing, interviewees were questioned whether they believed affordable housing was an effective strategy to combat displacement. An architect working on the new 1990 Folsom Street housing projects shares,

Well that's the idea right, and that's the aspiration...we're taking existing sites that may not necessarily be built to the highest and best use but we're increasing density in inserting residential where residences didn't exist.

Another interview participant adds:

It is definitely a start! But it won't fix the problem alone. There just isn't enough space in the city [San Francisco] to get housing for everyone that needs it. I personally am still working on understanding other ways I can help with these issues. I think working in your community as a mentor to kids or people that are less fortunate is huge – to help them understand what their options are for their future and get them on track to be able to support themselves

The developers and architects have unique understanding of what gentrification can offer to low-income neighborhoods; it's not surprising they have pro-development viewpoints, but it's critical when working to address such a severe societal issue, like houselessness. The sense of urgency amongst development teams and the communities at large to building below market rate and poverty rate housing is prominent.

Urgency. To anyone whether an individual or community experiencing gentrification, there is an obvious urgency to protect low-income, vulnerable residents

from being displaced out of their home onto the street or completely out of a city. The pressures to respond to the housing crisis are translated into effective action through social services, policy work, and housing.

It's very different because there's an urgency. The crisis is deeper. But, construction prices are higher and space is limited. Three years ago, because of this housing crisis, we knew that it wasn't just something that was new but became a very very urgent matter..., an architect expressed.

The urgency isn't experienced by the developers or architects alone- communities are directly facing the issue, therefore utilizing a democratic approach, housing advocates are creating a platform for residents to voice their concerns.

We brought people to the city board for the planning commission meeting. That was the most successful, because people from the community, seniors, families coming to city hall and expressing the urgency for affordable housing.

The action of providing affordable housing in a gentrifying neighborhood in and of itself, creates opportunities for families and prevents further displacement. Housing is a critical effort that can additionally serve as a method of cultural place-keeping, preservation, and community rebuilding/rehabilitation.

Cultural Place-keeping and Democratic Dialogue. Community engagement serves to involve residents in the development process from bureaucratic participation to design implementation. As illustrated in the literature review, community-based efforts are critical components to build, or in a gentrifying neighborhood's case, to rebuild a sense of community. Paired with the action, of affordable housing development to not just put "a roof over their [residents] head", but to create an accommodating and

comfortable atmosphere for the years to come. This is where surveys, community meetings, petitions, and other forms of outreach come into play; and, by making these outlets accessible to minority communities.

Segued from questions and conversation on gentrification, the interviewees were asked about cultural influences on program development; moreover, importance of community participation and community building for affordable housing developments.

In response developer stated,

Newcomers come in and don't bother with the knowledge- they don't take the time to understand the communities that they are becoming part of oftentimes show no interest in doing so. So, there's been a lack of resolution a lack of growth and that comes from this conversational failure and relationship. You can't constitute community if you don't have conversation. You don't have conversation and that's that requires listening and that requires engagement.

The lack of necessary dialogue between the “newcomers” [gentrifiers] and luxury housing developers has noticeably diluted the existing and thriving culture, especially in the Mission. As studied throughout this research project, there must be a presence of democratic participation and conversation with all residents of the neighborhood.

Thereby, an architect said,

I think that probably the most troubling aspect of that change is the conversation no failure.

It is evident that change is inevitable, but conversation and building connections is not impossible. Another developer shared their take on community dialogue,

We have to be very deliberate about how engaging people in conversation and we have to be very critical of our own conversation failures. And we've got to own

that. An openness to conversation and learning from others and mistakes that that is part of the process. We have to bring a tactical and strategic balance to development and community involvement.

Moreover, to accurately address the housing crisis there must be strategic and ongoing communication with the resident of the neighborhood effected; by initiating community meetings, focus groups, and activities the developers and architects engage with their target communities. Further, the initiatives must be accessible for families and especially for neighborhood with a large demographic and culture of Latinx immigrants -

Most of the time with presentations them and focus groups All my work in community meetings and survey are always in Spanish. A housing advocate shared.

Furthermore, implementing community input into the development program for new housing projects is another important phase of development. As a result of the housing crisis and escalated rent many families are forced into studios or one-bedroom apartments. To comfortably accommodate families, a developer shares their approach to affordable family housing,

I'm more concerned about the program design and the need to accommodate the communities that we're serving. And that's going to be a major component how we [developers] structure a project... the need is for two bedrooms and three bedrooms for families and family day care centers for family housing. So, the program has to reflect the needs

Additionally, another developer stated,

...the design of the building, how much it actually increases people's likelihood to interact and how much it increases the inviting nature for families.

Considering the perspectives of developers, housing advocates, and the architects: the next step is creating spaces that preserve indigenous and other minority cultures, whether that is from an architectural standpoint or with community asset building. When a community and neighborhood is undergoing the processes of gentrification there's not just an economic shift, but cultural transitions. There are many complex ways of approaching affordable, transitional, and poverty rate housing, but the process much be approached strategically to ensure family, culturally, and economically accommodating outcomes.

Finally, the semi-structured interviews exemplified the urgency of housing development and the lack of housing available; and, the many ways low-income communities of color can work collectively to guarantee equitable opportunities are available, cultural preservation, and community building for stronger social constructs.

Conclusion

As cities are ever-changing socio-economic and demographic transitions are expected. Resulting from systematic racial inequity and neighborhood redlining low-income minority neighborhoods are susceptible to issues of mass displacement, cultural dilution or elimination, severe homelessness, and lack of access to equitable social services. The larger issue of gentrification and displacement in minority neighborhoods, especially the Mission District's case, illustrates the need for community-based housing, initiatives, and rehabilitation efforts.

When gentrification occurs, integrating community building efforts and cultural place-keeping strategies operationalized through affordable housing development will preserve indigenous and other minority existing cultures, and rehabilitate communities and neighborhoods; and, is a preventive strategy for the displacement of low-income renters. Moreover, utilizing democracy and the public voice to change policy, divert funding, address unattended issues of existing public housing properties, and to improve the overall livelihoods of residents.

Community-based programs, neighborhood coalitions, creative and cultural place-keeping has significantly strengthened vulnerable communities to combat socio-political inequities: displacement of low-income minority residents and community places. Therefore, in regard to affordable housing development in gentrifying neighborhoods it is evident that engaging with local residents and community members in

creative and cultural place-keeping practices is empowering and rehabilitating. Moreover, encourages relationship building, and most importantly addresses the specific design needs of low-income, working class residents.

Ultimately, as concluded from this research project, by creating spaces for dialogue and involvement in underrepresented communities ensures more diverse socio-politics and economics; further, will guarantee cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness especially around new neighborhood residential developments. Even more so, the engagement in program and project processes empowers and gives residents authority over neighborhood developments.

Housing development agencies like the Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA) and Mission Housing Development Corporation (MHDC) partner with other neighborhood-based organizations and mainly work with low-income families by promoting economic equity, social justice, supportive services through asset building, community development, and affordable housing development (MEDA, 2018; MHDC, 2018). Funding is a crucial element to the residents and frontline community-based organizations; consider *City of San Francisco Housing Bond Issue, Proposition A*, strongly supported by MEDA, MHDC, and other community organizations to secure \$310 Million in funds for affordable housing that was passed in 2015 (Ballotpedia, 2016).

Furthermore, resulting from decades of low management in public housing and lack of equitable services offered to residents the living conditions were subpar, uncomfortable, and didn't provide spaces for community building (Epstein, 2017).

Contrarily, through the acquisition of public housing by the city of San Francisco to nonprofit affordable housing developers allowed for a more self-governing process. Determined from the analysis of this project it is evident that community-based organizations and developers can successfully provide the necessary attention, resources, services, and property management to low-income and public housing projects. Furthermore, residents are given spaces to actively voice their needs and requests making the efforts more democratic. The community and trust building activities, i.e. mosaic workshops, integrated as a program exceeded the expectations of developers and property staff; surprisingly, there was substantial physical and mental health benefits to the interactive, engaging, and creative activities.

In an ethnically and artistically rich neighborhood such as San Francisco's Mission District, applying community-based building approaches, via affordable housing development, is necessary to combat displacing forces. An effective strategy for rehabilitating a neighborhood that has undergone severe displacement, as a result of exclusive gentrifying pressures, is to marry cultural preservation and community-based initiatives into one concentrated effort.

All people deserve to benefit from high quality infrastructure and a thriving economy regardless of background, economic status, and race. The definitive goal is to create a more socially, politically, and economically diverse society. The final conclusion, from an affordable housing development standpoint- gentrification is an opportunity to improve the livelihoods of low-income minority residents when

government and/or grant funding is available to fund projects; and, especially when paired with democratic participation, cultural preservation strategies, and community building activities, i.e. RAD mosaic workshops and new construction surveys.

Broader Impacts

Considering gentrification and mass displacement of low-income minorities across the country- this research project has tested the effectiveness of community-based initiatives. The strategies used were adapted for the culture and socio-political constructs of San Francisco's Mission District. The Mission's history of community activism is continuously strengthened to unapologetically demand for more funding and opportunities to thrive as a neighborhood. But, not all strategies fit every case, there other communities and neighborhoods that are more limited in their socio-political power and may not possess the same history of activism as the Mission District. Thereby, this research project can provide a guide and model to accommodate the needs of other communities and neighborhoods experiencing displacement and gentrification; additionally, other communities should maximize their funding and resources available to strengthen and build their communities through creative efforts.

Positively, communities, especially those of color are on the frontlines combating social injustices by mobilizing their communities, challenging policy makers and elected officials, pushing for more equitable policies, and confronting destructive cultural norms.

Organizational partnerships, coalitions, and intersecting alliances have formed to strengthen communities as active participants in decision making processes. It is critical to have collective involvement to approach societal issues in new and innovative ways. Thus, at a much larger scale, maximizing the momentum of community mobilizations

happening across the country the ability to confront mass displacement and the housing crisis epidemic is achievable. Communities and political representatives can begin to push for tangible policy initiatives requiring funding and assistance specifically for programs like RAD and community building partnerships. But, even more so to preserve diverse cultures and empower communities of color across the nation.

Future work

As I begin to explore my career options, my goals are to continue working in the nonprofit sector as a designer and campaign, program, and project developer. In hopes to assist organizations in building their outreach and communities through evidence-based strategies. As a young creative, designer, and professional I am moving forward in utilizing my skills to work with nonprofits to grow as a brand and help those who are experiencing the effects of structural and societal inequities. Furthermore, I am an activist and community organizer, but before those titles I am a woman of color who believes in people power and the ability to change our world for the better.

As I conclude this research project I have worked at an international gender-based violence prevention nonprofit and local political campaigns. As a sitting member of the Latinx Young Democrats of San Francisco, communications committee member for Alliance for Girls, and general body member of three other organizations I continue to be active in the most important election for the city, state, and country. The city underwent two election cycles in 2018- voting on Mayoral candidates, Board of Supervisors candidates, and progressive ballot measures like Proposition C (Prop. C), the “*Our City Our Home*” initiative. Prop. C, on the November ballot, passed and will begin to initiate a business tax on all companies who make over \$50 Million annually to fund homeless and mental health services. Essentially, the work I will continue to do is towards

preserving the culture and improve District Six (D6), the district I currently reside. As the neighborhoods with D6 are located downtown and Treasure Island, real estate investors, billionaire tech. companies, and corporations are working and pouring millions of dollars into the D6 supervisor race. To prevent further mass displacement and gentrification of the district comparable to the early stages of the Mission District- communities are coming together to fight in the frontlines to protect the future of San Francisco, neighborhood by neighborhood.

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Appendix

Two semi-formal interview questionnaires as presented and evaluated in the Methods and Analysis sections; the developers and architects had similar but adapted questionnaire to suit their role and differing projects. “Developers Interview Questionnaire” presents the developers questionnaire; and “Architects and Designer’s Interview Questionnaire” was adapted for the architects appointed projects.

Community Organizer and Developer’s Interview Questionnaire:

- 1) What forms of community outreach are attempted to identify community needs? (focus groups; surveys)
- 2) Have any community outreach tactics been unsuccessful or could have been improved?
- 3) From your professional perspective, is affordable/equitable housing an effective strategy to combat the rapid sweep of gentrification?
- 4) Is there a relationship with the community? If so, what type and how strong are those relationships?
- 5) Is there a relationship with the creative design team? If so, what type and how strong are those relationships?
 - a) Is funding a challenge?

- b) Is there a lack of funding?
 - i) If so, how has it affected the project?
- 6) Who provides the funding for each project?
- 7) What ways can the community get involved in the affordable-housing developments?
- 8) Why did you choose to work in affordable-housing development?
- 9) Working with low-income and underserved communities, has there been a specific story that resonated with you?

These next questions will be added for Project Managers (Developers) only:

- 10) How does the material and aesthetic of affordable-housing infrastructure affect the neighborhood?
- 11) And, what design methods are being used to reflect the culture and people of the neighborhood in these new developments?
- 12) What are the attempts at providing more equitable housing and community assets?
- 13) As a developer, how are you supporting the specific design needs of the community and neighborhood?
- 14) What is your current relationship with the architects?

- 15) How are you communicating the community's needs to the architects?
- 16) How has the community's feedback on previous developments been applied to the buildings?

Architects Creative Design Team Interview Questionnaire

- 1) Knowing that you're developing in the Mission, how do you think your developments are affecting neighborhood and community rehabilitation?
- 2) Other than 2060 Folsom and 681 Florida, are there any other affordable housing projects you've worked on?
 - a) If yes, please describe.
- 3) If no, how did you and/or the firm prepare to take on this type of project?
- 4) On other projects, have the finished building designs been successful in meeting the needs of the target users?
- 5) What current design needs of the community are being addressed?
- 6) What specific materials and architectural elements are being used to proficiently reflect the historic culture and community of the Mission?
- 7) The future residents are those of marginalized groups who will be transitioning from rough living conditions into newly constructed residential facilities.

- 8) What type of systems are being considered to improve the quality of life for future residents?
- 9) What are the standard features and building assets typically implemented in mix-use multi-family housing?
- 10) What are the community and sustainability goals for new affordable housing projects?
- 11) Is there a relationship between the architect's creative design team and the community?
- 12) How engaged is the target community in the program development process?
- 13) What forms of community outreach is attempted to identify community needs?
- 14) (focus groups, surveys?)
- 15) How are community requests being communicated to the architect's creative design team?
- 16) Have any community outreach tactics been unsuccessful or could've been improved in providing information on what the community is requesting and expecting?
- 17) Is there a relationship with the developers and community outreach team?
 - a) If so, what type and how strong are those relationships?

- 18) 19. From your professional perspective, is affordable/equitable housing an effective strategy to combat mass displacement and gentrification?
- a) If so, what types and how strong are those relationships?
- 19) 20. Is funding a challenge?
- 20) 21. Is there a lack of funding?
- a) If so, how has it limited project development?
- 21) 22. Why did you choose this line of work?
- 22) 23. How long have you been working as an architect/designer?
- 23) 24. What is your favorite aspect of working as an architect/designer?