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April 4, 2022

Dear Project Row Houses (PRH) Community,

On behalf of the Project Row Houses (PRH) Board and Staff, we are excited to share the strategic plan for our Fiscal Years 2022-2027.

Created amid the global COVID-19 pandemic, when unimaginable changes have been sweeping through our Houston communities...and across the world, this Strategic Plan addresses the work PRH will do to enrich communities through collective creativity.

In the heart of Houston’s newest Texas Cultural Arts District, the Historic Third Ward, known as “The Tre”, the 39 properties of Project Row Houses (PRH) serve a mix of creatives, residents, visitors, and a diverse community of emerging and mid-career artists. We encourage people to create and experience art in every part of our community, be it through performance, exhibition, architecture, or many other expressions of cultural identity.

With the critical support we receive from foundations, corporations, and individuals, PRH is not just in The Tre, it is of The Tre.

Our African American roots are planted deeply in the Third Ward. This plan grows from those roots, feeding our efforts to create opportunities for local entrepreneurs, students, artists, and young people. Every day, we are growing partnerships, cultivating diverse voices, and fostering societal change.

We hope you will share our excitement for this plan and that it inspires everyone to become better versions of themselves.

Let your voice inform our work. The near future still holds many unforeseeable changes, but we remain certain that our greatest resilience and opportunities will come from working together toward the goals outlined in this plan.

With gratitude,

Eureka Gilkey
Executive Director

Devaron Yates
2020-21 Board Chair

Dr. Elwyn Lee
2021-22 Board Chair
Project Row Houses (PRH) is a community platform that enriches lives through art with an emphasis on cultural identity and its impact on the urban landscape. Imagination and creativity have been central to PRH since its founding in 1993, not only to support artistic expression but also to sustain and enrich the neighborhood.

The seven founders—James Bettison, Jr., Bert Long, Jesse Lott, Rick Lowe, Floyd Newsum, Bert Samples, and George Smith—had witnessed a transformation of the area that began in the '70s and '80s. An exodus of residents who moved to suburbs left behind houses and streets that fell into disrepair.

The forces of gentrification, the high percentage of absentee landlords, poverty, and neglect all resulted in many signature homes being destroyed and replaced with architecturally out of character housing unaffordable for The Tre’s historic residents.

The seven founders established PRH as a non-profit organization dedicated to saving and restoring original homes and preserving the neighborhood’s history while building its future. Their approach to arts-led activism has made PRH a fundamental part of this community and garnered international renown for its success in protecting architectural and cultural integrity.

Many of PRH’s restored buildings house artists and serve as exhibition spaces. We do not draw a dividing line between our arts programs and our mentorship, community support, and neighborhood and enrichment programs: the neighborhood is art, and vice versa. Through Project Row Houses, we support vibrancy, sustainability, inclusivity, and creative expression holistically—these are the values that unite all our activities.

Always a trailblazer, PRH approaches its third decade with a strategic plan that honors and embodies the visionary principles of its seven founders while also reflecting the new challenges and opportunities this community faces.
Our 2022-2027 Strategic Planning Process

This strategic plan is built on extensive research, broad and deep stakeholder engagement, an honest, clear-eyed assessment of the organization’s challenges, and careful analysis of the tremendous strategic opportunities that will propel PRH forward.

Working with the international arts and culture consulting firm Lord Cultural Resources—we interviewed staff and volunteers, consulted with board members, and facilitated extensive conversations and workshops with external stakeholders, community members, and other constituents.

These consultations informed a report outlining PRH’s vital challenges and opportunities, which informed a subsequent strategic planning workshop.

We believe all those consulted will see aspects of their ideas and voices in this plan. We are grateful for the generous and visionary input we received, and hope that all those people who helped us create this plan will be equally involved in transforming it into reality.
OUR MISSION

We empower people and enrich communities through engagement, art, and direct action.
**GOAL 1**

**OBJECTIVES**

GROUND ALL PROJECT ROW HOUSES ACTIVITIES IN THE OVERARCHING ETHOS OF ART AND ADVANCEMENT OF THE SOCIAL SCULPTURE.

In all its actions, PRH has always publicly articulated a broad, deep definition and experience of art and culture. We engage communities and residents through imaginative, diverse avenues of arts programming.

Objectives:
A) Become the pre-eminent model of social sculpture in the country.
B) Elevate emerging and established artists both locally and globally.
C) Establish public education initiatives related to PRHs’ social sculpture model.
D) Collaborate with partners who strengthen the fabric of the community.
E) Promote and preserve the history and culture of Houston’s Third Ward through artistic and other means.

What is a Social Sculpture?
The Tre, our community—the people, places and culture—are our art. Project Row Houses is a social sculpture, a place that shapes and transforms society through artistic and societal activity.

**GOAL 2**

**OBJECTIVES**

ENSURE THAT HOUSTON’S THIRD WARD LEGACY RESIDENTS ARE ABLE TO STAY AND THRIVE IN THEIR COMMUNITY.

PRH believes that a holistic approach to neighborhood and community development, informed by residents’ contributions, will increase community wealth and residents’ ability to remain in Third Ward.

Objectives:
A) Affirm and promote Third Ward residents’ cultural capital through art-based and community wealth-building initiatives.
B) Maintain and expand the Financial, Artistic, Career, and Empowerment Center, the program build on the Financial Opportunity Center model.
C) Support long-term affordability for legacy residents and small business owners through a comprehensive land and property acquisition strategy.
D) Promote the preservation of Third Ward as the manager of the Third Ward Cultural Arts District.
E) Maintain and enhance the reputation of PRH by increasing PRH’s engagement with Houston’s Third Ward residents, businesses, community organizations and churches by increasing prosperity, opportunities, health, and knowledge about and respect for the neighborhood history.

The Third Ward Financial, Artistic, Career & Empowerment Center (F.A.C.E.) is a holistic, integrated services delivery approach to community wealth-building. Within F.A.C.E. we work with resource-limited Third Ward jobseekers as they navigate their career search, change courses professionally, or improve their financial literacy knowledge and skills. F.A.C.E. is best suited for neighbors working to reduce debt, increase savings, secure a full-time position, or explore creative career paths. F.A.C.E. offers two program tracks—one for job seekers and those working to improve their financial literacy knowledge & skills, and another, Building Blocks of Creative Careers, for artists & creatives seeking to learn critical business skills and to get help navigating their artistic practice.

https://projectrowhouses.org/
STRENGTHEN PRH’S ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE
BY INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE, PROCESSES, AND FACILITIES.

PRH will expand its internal infrastructure to support its mission and its people. This infrastructure will include organizational structure, governance, staff, technology, facilities and grounds, building maintenance, safety and security.

Objectives:
A) Review the legal relationships among PRH, Row House Community Development Corporation (RH CDC), and PRH Preservation (PRHP).
B) Attract and retain top talent by establishing PRH as a model workplace.
C) Dedicate adequate financial resources to increasing staff capacity and necessary to ensure long-term institutional stability.
D) Invest in capital improvements and associated maintenance for both PRH internal functions (office space, program space, storage) as well as its external functions (facilities leased for residential and commercial uses).
E) Align annual budgeting, goal setting, program evaluation, and reporting with this Strategic Plan.

Row House Community Development Corporation (RH CDC) Row House CDC was established in 2003 to complement the mission and goals of Project Row Houses (PRH) in direct response to PRH’s vision to “create community” in Houston’s Third Ward. RH CDC’s mission is to develop affordable multi-family housing for low- to moderate income residents, public spaces, and facilities to preserve and protect the historic character of the Third Ward.

PRH Preservation (PRHP) PRH Preservation, Inc., is an organization with charitable purposes consistent with those of Project Row Houses. PRHP’s mission is to maintain and enhance existing buildings in Houston’s Third Ward to ensure long-term safe and affordable housing for its residents.

DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE, SCALABLE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL STABILITY FOR PRH.

PRH believes a commitment to financial stability reflects our organizational values and commitment to Houston’s Third Ward. We want to develop a holistic approach to revenue and resource development that not only funds and allows for growth in the PRH annual operating budget but can also expand to absorb emergency expenditures and offer flexibility should outside factors accelerate the timeline for program or facility expansion.

Objectives:
A) Develop a 5-year staff roadmap to build a team that can conduct fundraising for PRH.
B) Create and maintain appropriate governance infrastructure and internal controls in conjunction with finance and board.
C) Develop a plan and budgets for site-wide capital acquisition, infrastructure, and maintenance needs for the next 25 years.
D) Create a robust individual giving program that includes membership or affinity groups, major gifts, planned giving, and annual giving.
E) Focus on the PRH-Institute and Eldorado Ballroom as the best potential revenue streams.
F) Create an integrated, agencywide communications and stewardship plan that supports fundraising and promotes PRH as a thought-leader in creative placemaking and social sculpture.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are grateful to the following board and staff members past who participated in the strategic planning process.

**Board Members**

- Shelley Adams
- Nory Angel
- The Honorable Nancy F. Atlas
- Rasheca Barrow
- Bert Bertonaschi
- Bert Brown, III
- Gregory Michael Carter
- James V. Derrick, Jr.
- Deepak A. Doshi
- Amber Doss
- Aarti Garehgrat
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- Terri Hamm
- Edwin Harrison
- Lynn Henson
- Linda Hunsaker
- Hasty Johnson
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- Nina Oakes
- Theola Petteway
- Phillip Pyle II
- Emily Rahbar-Daniels
- Bert Samples
- Andrew Schirrmieister, J.D.
- Ray B. Shackelford
- Anita Webber Smith
- Jackson Smith
- Kaneem Smith
- Andrew Speckhard
- Asmara Tekle
- Emily Todd
- Devaron Yates

**Staff**

- Eureka N. Gilkey, Executive Director
- Maria Anderson, Development Director
- Meredith Bossin, Chief Operating Officer
- Danielle Burns Wilson, Curator and Art Director
- Steven Carter, Financial Coach
- Sol Diaz, Docent Coordinator and Public Arts Assistant
- Sidney Garrett, Curatorial Assistant and Arts Coordinator
- Andrea Greer, Senior Advisor, Strategy and Research
- Anjeanette Gunter, Director of Community Enrichment Activities
- Wando Okongwu, Communications and Marketing Manager
- Candy Smith, Facilities Director
- Libby Viera-Bland, Neighborhood Development Project Coordinator

**Images**

- Project Row Houses
- Creative Time Reports
- Flash Art
- Alex Barber