

PLACEMAKING PROJECT

Souly Austin supports the vision of a Merchants Association by providing seed funding for a placemaking project. Placemaking is the process in which community input guides the development of quality public spaces and projects. Placemaking facilitates creativity in a community and focuses on the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

Project Goals Include:

- Foster a sense of community by bringing together and empowering stakeholders
- Highlight unique community characteristics and assets
- Allows the community to lead positive change and build strong relationships
- Enhancing community relationships and the sense of place through the execution of innovative projects
- Help further a district’s vision and a merchants association’s mission

Project Description

One of the goals of the East 12th Street Merchants Association (ETSMA) is to honor and celebrate their District’s significant history, culture, and legacy. As the initial contribution to the East 12th Street Community Archive housed at the Huston-Tillotson University Library, the group commissioned *Reflections on a Legacy: East 12th Street*. This 17-minute film was created with funding from their Souly Austin placemaking grant funding, and features 3 native East Austin residents on their experiences living near, and patronizing numerous, historical East 12th Street businesses, and how those businesses contribute to the larger East Austin narrative. The film was premiered during ETSMA’s annual Return and Discover Festival. The premiere, which attracted over 120 people, screened the documentary and hosted a panel with the film curators, participants, and other community members. The film has since been screened at community forums and educational panels across the State of Texas, exposing a wide variety of stakeholders to the district.



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Partners:

- Public City (Placemaking Consultant, Execution Coordination)
- Funmi Ogunru (Documentary Development and Production)
- Rachel Winston (Documentary Development and Production)
- Stephanie Lang (Documentary Development and Production)
- Volma Overton Jr. (Documentary Participant, Native East Austinite)
- Margaret Wright (Documentary Participant, Native East Austinite)
- Diane Gilmore Lang (Documentary Participant, Native East Austinite)
- Sam’s BBQ (Provided famous chili burgers sold in the District)
- Michael Corcoran (Curated Spotify playlist)
- Huston-Tillotson University (Host of East 12th Street Community Archive)
- East 12th Street Business District businesses and property owners



Metrics

Documentary Premiere Attendees - 120

Video Screening Requests - 7

East 12th Street Community Archive -
Established 2019

District Strategy Alignment:

- Economic Growth, Objective 1: Explore the feasibility and resources needed to host events and programming in the district that highlight the District culture and history, promote unique business offerings, and attract patrons.
- Music, Culture, and Arts, Objective 4: Develop additional cultural programming and family-friendly programming to enhance district identity and enhance and celebrate a sense of place.

Challenges:

- Lack of City developed parameters and processes around project feasibility
- Clear procurement standards and clarity of project requirements
- Clear communication between all project parties to ensure proper messaging for implementation
- Public relations/media strategy to increase awareness
- Long-term maintenance strategies
- Identification of long-term stewardship of content
- Project funding structure presents challenges to final product ownership.

Successes:

- Video documentation met and exceeded the stakeholder’s desires to share their community’s story. The development of this video received significant stakeholder support as it allowed them to share their story with the community, but also positioned ETSMA as a clear leader in the community that delivers its community’s needs.



EAST 12th STREET DISTRICT



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- Event attendance and community support exceeded expectations.
- The documentary has been screened both locally and around the state since its release in October 2018. It has positively and greatly shared the story of the community that once lived on the East Side.
- Provided an opportunity to increase district identity and district brand awareness.