tulane city center
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015 - 2020
We advance community-driven ideas through collaboration, design education, and scrappy problem-solving.”
01 INTRODUCTION
- DIRECTOR’S LETTER .................................. Pg 5
- BELIEFS ................................................ Pg 6
- VISION, MISSION & VALUES ................... Pg 7-8
- HISTORY .............................................. Pg 9-12

02 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- GOALS IN NEXT 5 YEARS ...................... Pg 14
- APPROACHES ..................................... Pg 15
- IMPACT AREAS .................................... Pg 16

03 PROJECT STREAMS
- IMAGINE ......................................... Pg 19-20
- BUILD ............................................. Pg 21-22
- EXPLORE ......................................... Pg 23-24
- INFORM .......................................... Pg 25-26
- PROCESS & SCHEDULE ....................... Pg 27-32

04 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS
- TEACH ............................................. Pg 35-36
- SHARE ............................................. Pg 37-38
- REFINE & SUPPORT ......................... Pg 39-40

05 CLOSING STATEMENTS
A year ago, I was proud to join a strong team here at Tulane City Center; I had first learned of TCC’s work as I was researching innovative solutions to vacant lots. TCC’s design study done with Jericho Road, proposed a kit of parts that responds to the social, economic, hydrologic context of a site, and continues to be used as a tool by Jericho Road to address vacant properties. This example of thoughtful design and its meaningful application is a central aspect of the TCC approach, a tradition I am excited to help carry on. I continue to be impressed by the ten years of work at TCC, as it balances a tailored, nimble approach to the specific needs of each project with broader engagement in multiple dialogues about the built environment in New Orleans.

The work for each project is grounded in deep engagement and research, leading to individual results, such as the many design awards for Grow Dat Youth Farm, and laying the groundwork for larger projects, like Circle Foods Store and Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative. Tulane City Center is able to advance conversations around multiple issues and in multiple neighborhoods, by contributing thoughtful design work, trusting in the strength and expertise of our partners and collaborators, and believing that these often small, but critical advances at multiple projects add up to much more.

Over the past year, our team has applied the same thoughtful approach to an examination of our work, and the process of charting our course forward. Together, we have looked carefully at the work of the last ten years and talked with past partners and collaborators, to learn more about how we have been effective and how we can improve. We have gained important insights into how to communicate better our own capacity and skills, and how to bring additional value by sharing our own network across peer programs. We look forward to building on this feedback, while expanding opportunities for our students to gain meaningful experiences.

We are grateful to the inspiring and dedicated leaders who helped to chart our course over the last decade: Deans Reed Kroloff and Ken Schwartz, former directors Alan Lewis, Scott Bernhard, and Maurice Cox, and founding Assistant Director Dan Etheridge. Also thank you to the hundreds of collaborators, faculty designers, students and community partners, who have contributed their time and shared their expertise with us over the years…

We know that there continues to be a need in New Orleans for the work we do, and as we move forward we hope to expand our contributions to our city and our field by including both models of success and lessons from failures, to expand our reach in terms of working to make invisible systems visible, and to contribute to the growth of a community engaged in the future of New Orleans’ built environment.

Now we hope you will join us as we continue to build on the work of the last ten years!

Maggie Hansen
The Tulane City Center brings together creative makers and doers, working for a better city. We advance community-driven ideas through collaboration, design education, and scrappy problem-solving.

**VALUES**

The work of the Tulane City Center is guided by our core values and a fundamental commitment to increasing equity and making life better for people in everything we do.

**Collaborating:** The Tulane City Center creates through partnership and actively engages diverse perspectives.

**Creative Thinking:** The Tulane City Center applies thoughtful and inventive design processes to meet the needs and honor the values of our partners and collaborators.

**Making:** The Tulane City Center creates spaces and produces innovative design solutions.

**VISION**

At the Tulane City Center, our vision is a strong New Orleans where vibrant neighborhoods are shaped by engaged citizens and thoughtful designers.

**MISSION**

The Tulane City Center brings together creative makers and doers, working for a better city. We advance community-driven ideas through collaboration, design education, and scrappy problem-solving.
The Tulane City Center was first conceived in early 2005 as a way of applying the skills and energy of Tulane School of Architecture faculty and students to real world design and planning issues. The idea was to create an applied urban research and outreach program under the Tulane School of Architecture, in which faculty and students could work with community groups throughout New Orleans to address difficult problems with good design. With a founding mission to educate, advocate and provide design services to New Orleans neighborhoods and non-profit partners who are traditionally under-resourced and underserved by the design disciplines, the Center sought to help Tulane students become more socially engaged, technically competent, and innovative designers by working with communities and using design to improve the quality of life.

In August of 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans and the ensuing federal levee failure flooded 80% of the city, presenting an urgent and immediate need for the Tulane City Center. In late 2005, Tulane University’s School of Architecture launched the Tulane City Center as a way to take part in the recovery of the city, educate students through applied projects, and work with the non-profits and community groups who would be instrumental in the return of New Orleans citizens, culture, and traditions. The Tulane City Center quickly connected the energy, conviction and expertise of Tulane University faculty, students, and staff to grassroots design projects and strategic research.

In our first 10 years, the Tulane City Center has completed more than 80 projects with 70 project partners, engaged over 500 students and 35 faculty, and built over 25 structures with our partner organizations across the city. Our work has helped local nonprofits leverage millions of dollars to build the capacity and infrastructure needed to support their missions. These numbers, however, do not capture the full story. Throughout this plan are brief stories of the people we have engaged, the projects we have created, and the impacts we have had. Projects of the Tulane City Center range from small furniture interventions to Grow Dat’s 7-acre urban farm with innovative water management strategies to Jane Place – a multi-million dollar cooperative affordable housing development. Our nationally recognized projects provide examples of community based, environmentally sensitive designs that are locally responsive yet suggest solutions to national issues many cities and communities face. The Tulane City Center has established itself as one of the pre-eminent university applied public interest design programs in the country.

As we approach our tenth anniversary, we have a new Director and Community Engagement Manager, and a new 7,000 square-foot building equipped with a fabrication shop in the heart of Central City. Our new building provides us a platform to expand not just our ability to design and build structures, but also to convene the community conversations that allow all of us to continue to learn from and improve our public interest design work. We are poised to build upon this decade of work to expand our impact across New Orleans and the broader field of architecture and public interest design.
We advance community-driven ideas through collaboration, design education, and scrappy problem-solving.

WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR...

- COMPLETED PROJECTS: 80
- STRUCTURES BUILT: 25
- WITH THE HELP OF:
  - STUDENTS: 500
  - FACULTY: 35
  - COMMUNITY PARTNERS: 70
The Tulane City Center has established itself as one of the pre-eminent university applied public interest design programs in the country. Our nationally recognized projects serve as examples of community based, environmentally sensitive designs that are informed by their New Orleans context yet suggest solutions to national issues that many cities and communities face.

As TCC approaches its tenth anniversary, our work is shifting to more strategic, long-term efforts to educate public interest designers, engage citizens in design, and use public interest design to make communities more equitable. We are poised to build on a decade of engaged work and to establish a sustained force for positive change in the built environment of New Orleans.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

We will engage at least 2,000 New Orleans community members in 80 community-based projects in neighborhoods across New Orleans. We will identify and implement tools to track the quality and impact of resident engagement and share those results. By doing this, we will teach Tulane students how to ensure meaningful community voice throughout the design process.

We will engage young people in meaningful ways in every project we undertake. They will be the designers, builders and users of what we create. As part of this commitment, we will engage at least 600 Tulane students in our projects, including 75% of all students enrolled in the Tulane School of Architecture in our projects. We will also leverage our new Baronne Street facility and partnerships to help incubate design education programs for children and youth in order to build a robust pipeline of local youth entering college with an interest in design.

We will support at least 200 community leaders in connecting to the resources and networks they need to succeed and in learning how to use the design process to improve their communities. We will also provide opportunities for faculty and advanced TSA students to take on design leadership through our projects as well as new fellowship and internship opportunities.

All of our projects will address the need for improved access to information, services and public spaces by communities that have been marginalized. We will track who accesses the Tulane City Center – who attends our events, who responds to our requests for proposals – and work to ensure increased access to our services in communities of greatest need in neighborhoods across the city.

**IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS...**
**Engaging communities.** The Tulane City Center believes that meaningful participation is fundamental to the success of any community improvement process – whether it is the design of a streetscape, the construction of a sitting area, or the development of plans to renovate a blighted property.

**Empowering young people.** The Tulane City Center believes in educating and investing in young people as active leaders in making improvements in their community, carrying forward cultural traditions and creating new ones, and learning to use design to create positive change. We seek to expand access to design education to young people across New Orleans, and to promote a model of thoughtful design leadership to Tulane School of Architecture students.

**Promoting leadership.** The Tulane City Center has found that strong leadership is one of the most important ingredients for the success and sustainability of its projects. We invest our resources and expertise in promoting and supporting strong community leaders and mentoring a new generation of community-minded designers.

**Increasing equity and access.** The Tulane City Center focuses its efforts on addressing issues of equity and access to information, services, and public spaces. We believe sustainable community improvement depends on equitable access for all residents.
OUR NEW PROJECT STREAMS ARE...

- IMAGINE
- BUILD
- EXPLORE
- INFORM
We work with partner organizations to develop and describe their proposal to transform a lot or building. These projects typically result in a report that illustrates a design proposal, and may include appropriate feasibility or business studies.

Each year, we will select four “imagine” projects, in which we conduct early research and design for partners and help them prepare for and connect with funding and a developer who can help take the project through to completion. Each year, we anticipate 75% of these projects will secure funding, professional services or other partnership commitments to further advance the project within six months of our involvement, and at least one of these projects will break ground within three years of our involvement.

Student Learning Objectives: Students build skills in developing a visual argument and concept, informed by real estate and regional context.
We work with partners to design and construct their ideas for a small structure or small space.

Each year, we will select four small build projects in which we engage Tulane School of Architecture students in researching, designing, and constructing the projects. All build projects will result in a completed product that increases the effectiveness of the selected organization and meets our internal goals for partner and student satisfaction.

**Student Learning Objectives:** Students learn basic construction skills and develop the ability to think through construction details and assembly.
The Tulane City Center has established itself as one of the pre-eminent university applied public interest design programs in the country. Our nationally recognized projects serve as examples of community based, environmentally sensitive designs that are informed by their New Orleans context yet suggest solutions to national issues that many cities and communities face.

As TCC approaches its tenth anniversary, our work is shifting to more strategic, long-term efforts to educate public interest designers, engage citizens in design, and use public interest design to make communities more equitable. We are poised to build on a decade of engaged work and to establish a sustained force for positive change in the built environment of New Orleans.

We will engage at least 2,000 New Orleans community members in 80 community-based projects in neighborhoods across New Orleans. We will identify and implement tools to track the quality and impact of resident engagement and share those results. By doing this, we will teach Tulane students how to ensure meaningful community voice throughout the design process.

We will engage young people in meaningful ways in every project we undertake. They will be the designers, builders and users of what we create. As part of this commitment, we will engage at least 600 Tulane students in our projects, including 75% of all students enrolled in the Tulane School of Architecture in our projects. We will also leverage our new Baronne Street facility and partnerships to help incubate design education programs for children and youth in order to build a robust pipeline of local youth entering college with an interest in design.

We will support at least 200 community leaders in connecting to the resources and networks they need to succeed and in learning how to use the design process to improve their communities. We will also provide opportunities for faculty and advanced TSA students to take on design leadership through our projects as well as new fellowship and internship opportunities.

All of our projects will address the need for improved access to information, services and public spaces by communities that have been marginalized. We will track who accesses the Tulane City Center – who attends our events, who responds to our requests for proposals – and work to ensure increased access to our services in communities of greatest need in neighborhoods across the city.

We work with community partners to research and plan their vision for their street, neighborhood or city.

Each year, the Tulane City Center will select up to three “explore” projects in which we work with an established partner to conduct research that examines the city as a network, and identifies important sites for further investigation. This early research will support critical conversations about the systems of the city and will lead to steps toward improvement at least once every three years.

**Student Learning Objectives:** Students develop the ability to understand and analyze systems and policy frameworks that impact the built environment.

**Explore Projects:**

Each year, the Tulane City Center will select up to three “explore” projects in which we work with an established partner to conduct research that examines the city as a network, and identifies important sites for further investigation. This early research will support critical conversations about the systems of the city and will lead to steps toward improvement at least once every three years.
We work with partners to produce **graphics that inform** people about **important community issues** and promote action.

Each year, the Tulane City Center will work on one overarching theme and create a pamphlet, website, infographic, postcard or other visual materials to illustrate an idea or issue, **enhancing our partners’ ability to mobilize public understanding and support** behind the issue. In the long-term, these materials will build public understanding and engagement, spur dialogue around important issues, and help improve city-wide policies. We will host one public convening on the issue with at least five diverse stakeholder perspectives, and we anticipate the dialogues to expand to at least five regional or national articles on the issue.

**Student Learning Objectives:** Students learn to create a succinct visual argument by building skills in graphic design, communications and messaging.
DEFINED USER SEEK

Funding, professional services or other partnership commitments to further advance the project

DEFINED USER BUILT STRUCTURE

VISION FOR A PROJECT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

COMMUNITY PARTNER

TULANE CITY CENTER INVOLVEMENT

TCC STAFF TSA STUDENTS TSA FACULTY OUTSIDE EXPERTS

ASSEMBLE A TEAM RESEARCH ENGAGE FEEDBACK

DESIGN REVIEW REFINE / BUILD

FINAL VISIONING DOCUMENT
PROCESS
NON-SITE-SPECIFIC

COMMUNITY PARTNER

VISION FOR A PROJECT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

TULANE CITY CENTER SELCTS THE PROJECT

TCC STAFF

AREA EXPERTS

TSA STUDENTS

TSA FACULTY

ASSEMBLE A TEAM

RESEARCH, ENGAGE, DESIGN

PARTNER ORG

END USER

AREA EXPERTS

REFINE, FEEDBACK

TOOL

PUBLIC

TULANE CITY CENTER INVOLVEMENT

USER
2-4 week long projects quickly advance a project to the next phase. These are very limited in scope and build on existing research.

4-6 month long projects take on a slightly larger scope of work and allow time for design research. Projects may continue to be developed through multiple phases, durations, and scopes.
OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS BUILD ON THE UNIQUE MODEL OF PUBLIC INTEREST DESIGN WE HAVE DEVELOPED OVER THE PAST DECADE
TEACH THE MODEL

Educate public interest designers:

Integrate Tulane City Center’s work into course opportunities at Tulane School of Architecture in areas related to public interest design.

Develop and strengthen partnerships to support interdisciplinary learning among Tulane faculty, students and community members.

Leverage the Baronne Street spaces to identify, connect and facilitate learning across fields, organizations and communities as a component of every project of the Tulane City Center.

Develop the Tulane City Center’s capacity to teach graphic advocacy - using visuals to educate, motivate and mobilize the public around specific issues.
SHARE THE MODEL

Increase access to design resources in marginalized communities, advance the field of public interest design, and increase the public visibility of the Tulane City Center:

Improve our communications messaging and outreach locally to New Orleans and regional audiences and citizens.

Establish public rituals surrounding our work, including project completion celebrations, design critiques, RFP information sessions, exhibitions and learning events.

Build the field of public interest design locally, regionally, and nationally, by promoting our work, and attracting talented and engaged faculty and students.

Promote honesty and rigor in the public interest design field, by analyzing the results and process of our work regularly from multiple perspectives, and sharing these critical reflections, with a goal of elevating the field’s best practices and improving our own work.
REFINE & SUPPORT

Continue to establish the necessary assets, capacity and infrastructure to support Tulane City Center’s model of public interest design.

Improve our project selection, partnership development and implementation processes.

Develop a more sustainable, multi-year funding model that supports basic staffing and overhead.

Refine the staffing model to support the activities outlined in this plan, and to clarify the responsibilities of staff, students, and collaborators.
Having spent the last thirty years as an architect and educator, it is particularly heartening to see the emergence of Public Interest Design as a vibrant and defining characteristic in some communities and schools. The so-called Boyer Report (Building Community: A New Future for Architecture Education and Practice, 1996) highlighted the crucial need for schools and educators to shift focus toward urgent needs in society rather than perpetuating internal and self-referential obsessions. Dr. Ernest Boyer and Lee Mitgang’s prescient study noted that architecture students should prepare for lives and careers of greater civic engagement:

“In the case of architecture education, it isn’t enough for graduating students to be able to create beauty...they should be prepared for the broader professional mission of promoting the value of beauty in society, for connecting buildings to human needs and happiness, and for creating healthier, more environmentally sustainable architecture that respects precious resources.”

The Tulane School of Architecture has been at the forefront of this agenda for the past nine years through the agency of the Tulane City Center and other community outreach programs. Our support and advancement of Public Interest Design Fellowships and programs is only the latest chapter in an ongoing story of civic engagement. We are not only collaborating in building community, we are educating a new model of engaged professional: inclusive, creative, collaborative, empathetic and dedicated to the idea that design matters in the many challenges faced by communities.

Kenneth Schwartz, FAIA
Favrot Professor and Dean

THE TULANE CITY CENTER STAFF
Director: Maggie Hansen, ASLA
Design Build Manager: Emilie Taylor, RA, AIA, TSA MArch ’08
Community Engagement Manager: Sue Mobley
Project Manager: Nick Jenisch, AICP, TSA MArch ’03
Assistant Project Manager: John Coyle, TSA MArch ’14
Accountant: Doozenia Marshall

TULANE CITY CENTER ADVISORY BOARD
To be formed Fall 2015

PAST AND CURRENT SUPPORTERS OF THE TULANE CITY CENTER
INDIVIDUALS
Anonymous
Ellen Ball and Macnaughton Ball
David and Stephanie Barkdole
Maziar Behrooz
Patti Harp and Michael Bernstein
Andy Byrnes (TSA ’92)
Marjorie Cowen and Scott Cowen
Cara Cox and Alvin Cox
Teresa Denard and Steven Reider
H. Mortimer Favrot, Jr. F.AIA (TSA ’92)
Katrina Gewirtz and Steven Gewirtz
Brad Hastings
JP Hymel
Judith Kinnard, FAIA and Kenneth Schwartz
Jeannie Klein and Michael Klein
John and Anne Mullen
Cathy Pierson and Hunter Pierson
Gina Rosenfield and Lome Rosenfield
Camerson Richard and Paul Richard
The Sizeler Family
Tina and Albert (Sonny) Small, Jr. (Tulane A&S ’79)
Ray Woolridge

FOUNDATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS
The Abz Fund
Blue Moon Foundation
Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley
Enterprises Holdings Foundation
The Environmental Grantmakers Association
Foundation for Louisiana
Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities
National Endowment for the Arts
National Trust for Historic Preservation
New Orleans Food and Farm Network
SURDNA foundation
Transforma Projects
Tulane School of Architecture (TSA) – multi-year
Xavier/Tulane Center for Bio Environmental Research

PAST FACULTY WHO HAVE LED TULANE CITY CENTER PROJECTS
Scott Bernhard
Will Bradshaw
Carey Clouse
Coleman Coker
The Sizeler Family
Tina and Albert (Sonny) Small, Jr. (Tulane A&S ’79)
Ray Woolridge

COMPANIES
The Construction Zone
Johnson Controls, Inc.
Dash Lumber
Enterprise Holdings
Waggoner & Ball Architects, AICP
Williams Architects, LLC

FOUNDING SUPPORTERS OF THE TULANE CITY CENTER
Sonny Small
Ray Woolridge
Tulane School of Architecture
Tulane/Xavier Center for Bioenvironmental Research
HUD/Urbanbuild

PAST FACULTY WHO HAVE LED TULANE CITY CENTER PROJECTS
Scott Bernhard
Will Bradshaw
Carey Clouse
Coleman Coker
The Sizeler Family
Tina and Albert (Sonny) Small, Jr. (Tulane A&S ’79)
Ray Woolridge

PAST FACULTY WHO HAVE LED TULANE CITY CENTER PROJECTS
Sonny Small
Ray Woolridge
Tulane School of Architecture
Tulane/Xavier Center for Bioenvironmental Research
HUD/Urbanbuild

Please see our website for the complete list of students who have worked with the Tulane City Center