



THE ALBERT AND TINA

**SMALL
CENTER**

FOR COLLABORATIVE DESIGN

**ANNUAL REPORT
2024-2025**

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2025 marks the 20th anniversary of the roots of Tulane School of Architecture and Built Environment's Albert & Tina Small Center for Collaborative Design. This longevity is both a testament to all the staff, community partners, students, faculty and supporters that have remained committed to the Center's mission to provide high quality design services to those who have been under resourced by design professions and to train the next generation of designers to think critically about their roles and responsibilities. I am excited to share the 2024-2025 annual report that represents what this work looks like today.

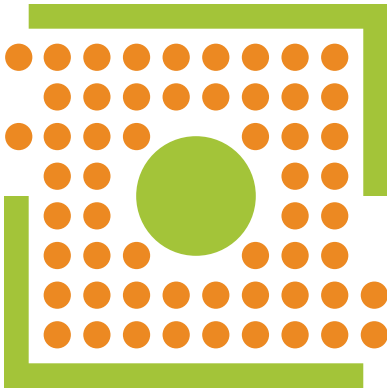
From exhibitions to design build to research, this report highlights how the center's work responds to immediate needs and engages with possibilities. At the core of all these projects remains a belief that each of us should be empowered to shape the places we live, work and play now and into the future. In the past year, the center had the privilege of partnering our design expertise with artists, faculty, design professionals, non-profit organizations, and local governments to bring their ideas to life through collaboration.

We are excited to share that we have expanded our team this year. Brandon Surtain is our new Assistant Director of Community Engagement. A native New Orleanian, Brandon received his Master of Architecture and Master of Sustainable Real Estate Development degrees from Tulane. Brandon will build on the legacy of Jose Cotto, who is now the Director of Community Engagement & Design Justice at Utile Design in Boston. Ben Derlan, a graduate of the Yale School of Architecture Master's of Architecture program, is also new to our team. Supported by grant funding from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine Gulf Research Program through the Gulf Coast Climate Futures project and gifts to the Small Center, his position is intended to support the next generation of emerging public interest design professionals in developing interdisciplinary solutions to critical local and regional issues in the Gulf.

Let the 20th anniversary be a call to get involved with the Small Center. Visit small.tulane.edu to make a tax-deductible donation. Stay connected on social media. Attend a public program. Spread the word about our work to others. Volunteer your expertise. And finally, please feel free to reach out with your thoughts or ideas for the Center; we would love to hear from you.

ANN YOACHIM
DIRECTOR

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ann M. Yoachim". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.



WELCOME COMMUNITY

The Small Center is a space for community to gather around a shared belief that **design should be leveraged as a tool in the fight for justice and equity.**

We believe that **every resident of New Orleans has the right** to be part of the conversations that shape our built environments.

What are the borders and openings that define our community?

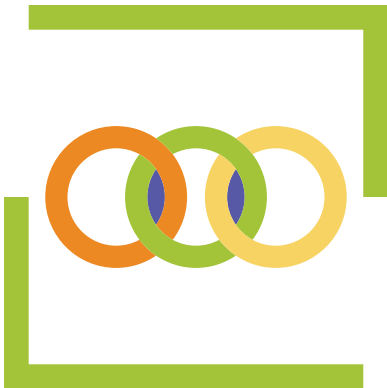


MAKE SPACE

Public Interest Design is about **making space together.**

Including multiple perspectives while creating a vision is not just a benefit, **it is a requirement for our work to move forward.**

What perspectives are and should be informing the design of space?

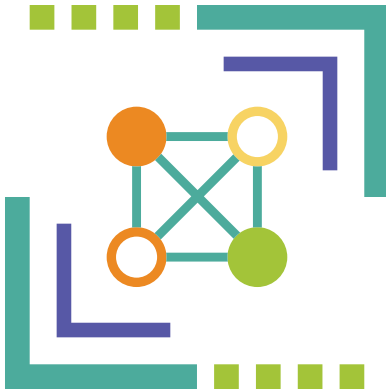


EXPLORE LINKS

We believe it's important to honor and celebrate the work of those **that came before us and to identify and support those who want to carry it forward.**

Past projects, experience, and research should serve as **anchors and bridges that provide perspective and inspire** new ways of knowing and doing.

Where do ideas and solutions that move us beyond what we see and know emerge?

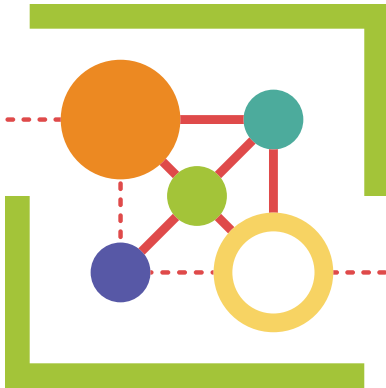


CULTIVATE KNOWLEDGE

Cultivating and sharing knowledge is at the core of our work. We recognize knowledge can be expressed in many ways and exists beyond our scope of view.

We aim to create space where moments of exchange offer opportunities to find common ground and produce new knowledge.

How can we amplify our collective knowledge within and beyond the spaces we occupy?

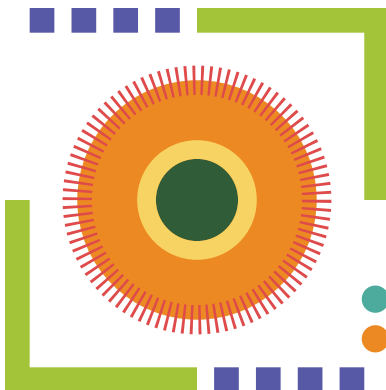


BUILD NETWORKS

Part of our role is to serve as a conduit between partners, resources, and possibilities. We do this by zooming out and leaning on the skill sets of our interdisciplinary team and partners.

Building networks that center intentional collaboration means all entities contribute and benefit.

How might we leverage these networks to expand and grow ourselves and our work?



VISION FUTURES

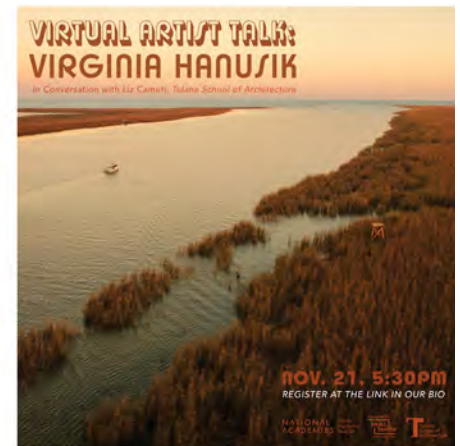
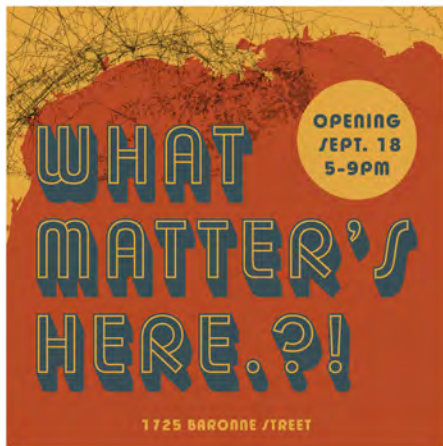
We work collaboratively to ensure broad participation in the development of a collective vision.

Working together to envision a project allows for big ideas to be tested against real needs and obstacles.

Let's imagine a world where our vision has been actualized; what's our next step?



**WHAT MATTERS
HERE .?!**



What Matter's Here.?! reimagined traditional exhibition design by creating a dynamic space for exploring legacies of extraction in the Gulf Coast region. Following several local construction materials from industrial use to potential for socio-ecological repair, the show demonstrated how landscape architects are leading in climate adaptive design. The exhibit was created with intentional adaptability, modeling the resilience essential to climate-responsive landscapes. Throughout its run from September 2024 - May 2025, the show evolved, functioning as both a revolving gallery and local forum where artists, students, and community partners collectively envisioned reparative futures for the region.





What Matter's Here.?! was a collaboration between Small Center and Tulane School of Architecture and Built Environment's new Landscape Architecture and Engineering program. Led by Assistant Professor Liz Camuti, the exhibit brought together student work from the program's research studios, designs and graphics from Small Center and its summer fellows, photography and sculpture by partnering artists, and material research by other professors at TuSABE.

A large CNC-milled map was created for the center of the exhibit, bringing light to how active the Gulf remains, with oil leases and pipelines etched into the water and continuing inland.

The exhibition was supported by the Gulf Research Program of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM).





The exhibition's approach to climate communication highlighted how the selection and documentation of construction materials could ask powerful questions: how might we rewrite the material languages of our built environment? What new forms of beauty and function can emerge from the ashes of extractive industries? How can landscape architecture serve as a catalyst for ecological regeneration and social repair? How do we create space for what really matters?

Through a collective exploration of matter and meaning, ***What Matter's Here?!*** invited visitors to envision a Gulf Coast where the distance between extraction and regeneration narrows, where human ambition aligns with natural processes, and where we measure abundance not by what we take, but by what we restore, protect, and reimagine together.



Small Center student fellows helped to conceive of and design the exhibition, including material research with local recycling organizations, concepts, layouts, and production of the wall-sized CNC-milled Gulf of Mexico map central to the exhibition.



Events included performance, artist talks, panel discussions, and workshops. Interactive material displays drew both kids and adults, while partnerships with local artists added visual interpretation of material sustainability and the faces and stories of those most affected by environmental threats to the coast.

SPROUT URBAN FARM PAVILION



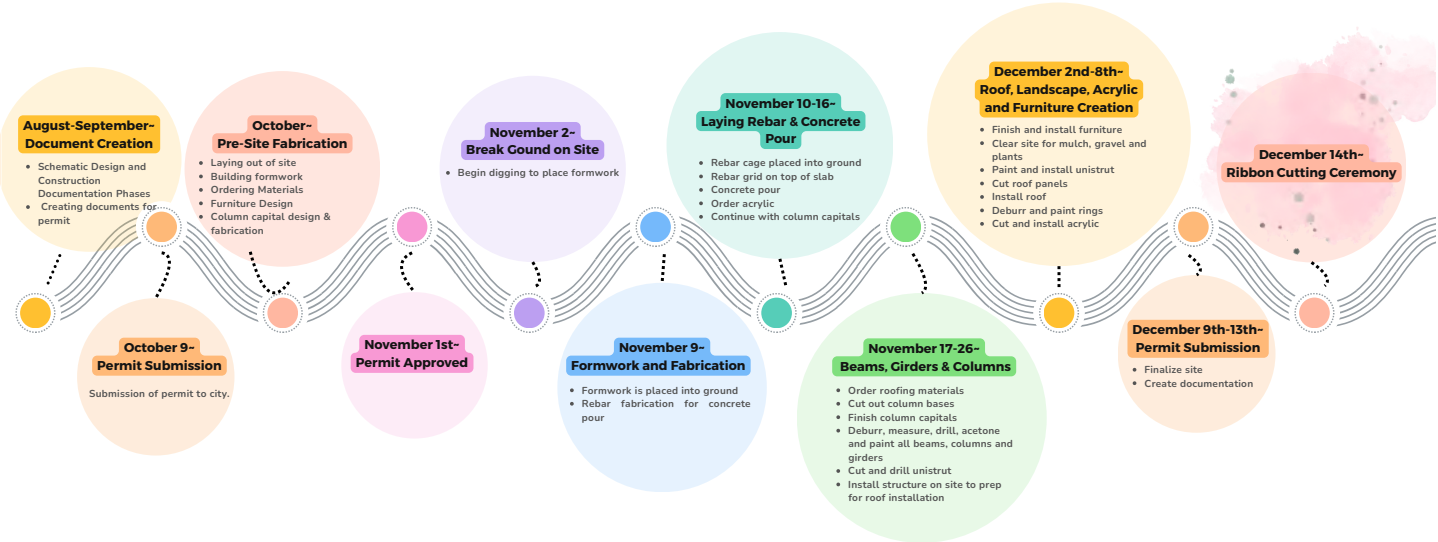


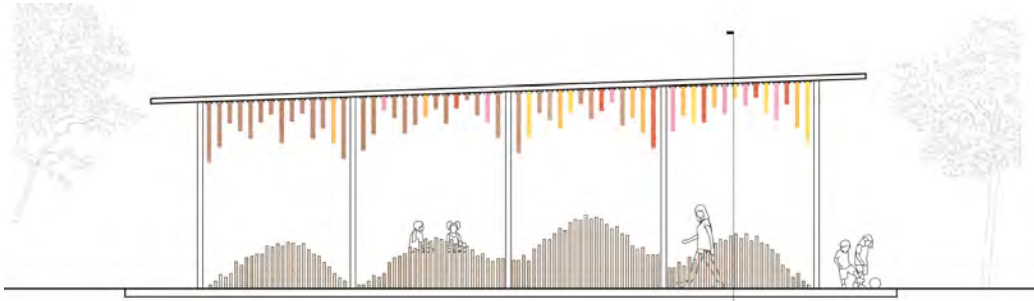
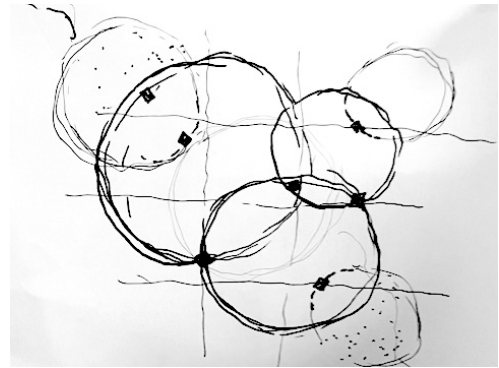
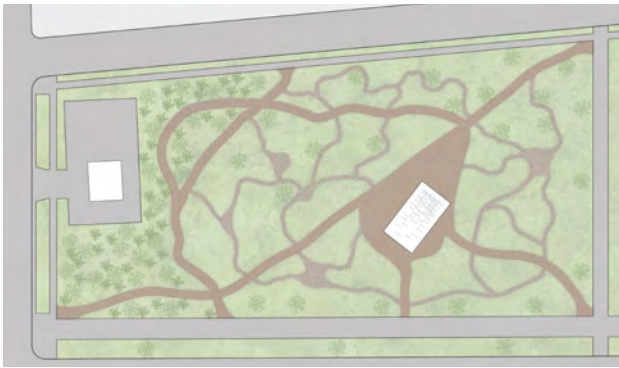
Sprout New Orleans is a local non-profit whose mission is “supporting established and developing small-scale and sustainable farmers, community gardeners, and farm workers in Louisiana with technical and social support to build a stronger, more equipped community of growers in Louisiana and help all New Orleanians be part of a community food system.”

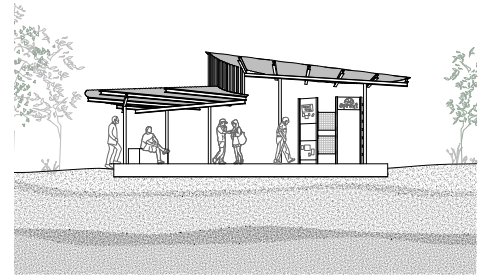
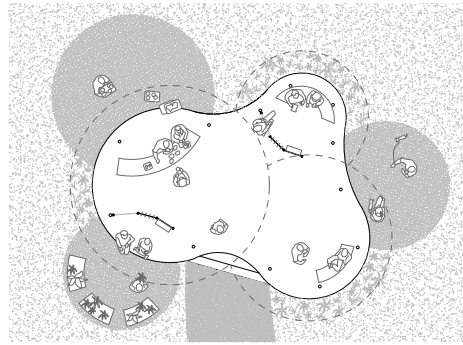
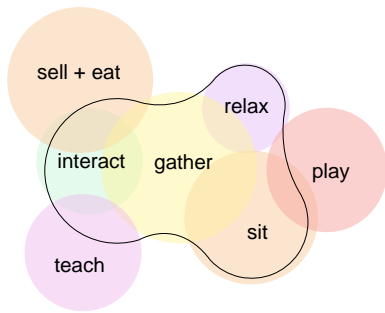
Small Center’s Fall 2024 design/build studio worked closely with Sprout and its constituents to develop a new campus for their community gardening and small farmer support programming on the beautiful, central, and highly visible Lafitte Greenway, a 2.6 mile linear park that connects a broad cross-section of neighborhoods across New Orleans.

The completed Phase 1 included a central pavilion for events and shade for gardeners, storage, branding, and public gathering areas that extend out from the pavilion into landscaped areas on the Greenway. Phase 2, led by Sprout, will feature new garden beds for local growers.

TIMELINE



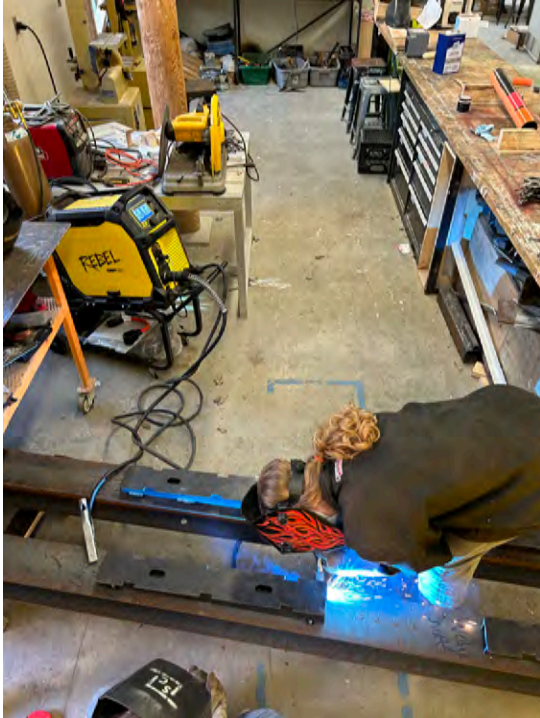




During the first several weeks of studio, students developed material research and schematic designs, which were continually reviewed at additional public meetings held near the project site. Sprout also asked the team to consider its future expansion by developing a master plan for the entire block of the Lafitte Greenway where the pavilion would soon be built. Designs created a relationship between the pavilion and the garden beds to be completed in Phase 2, and considered pedestrian and bike access to both the pavilion and various amenities including compost, storage, and seating.

Final designs, seen above, combined a series of circles at both the ground and roof planes, angled to maximize shade and to create dynamic spaces that spill out and overlap with surrounding landscape, pathways, and event gathering areas. While awaiting a permit, students began fabricating elements of the structure at Small Center's shop, managing the budget and material orders, and creating mock-ups for planned public furniture. On-site construction began in early November, and the project was completed on time in six short weeks.



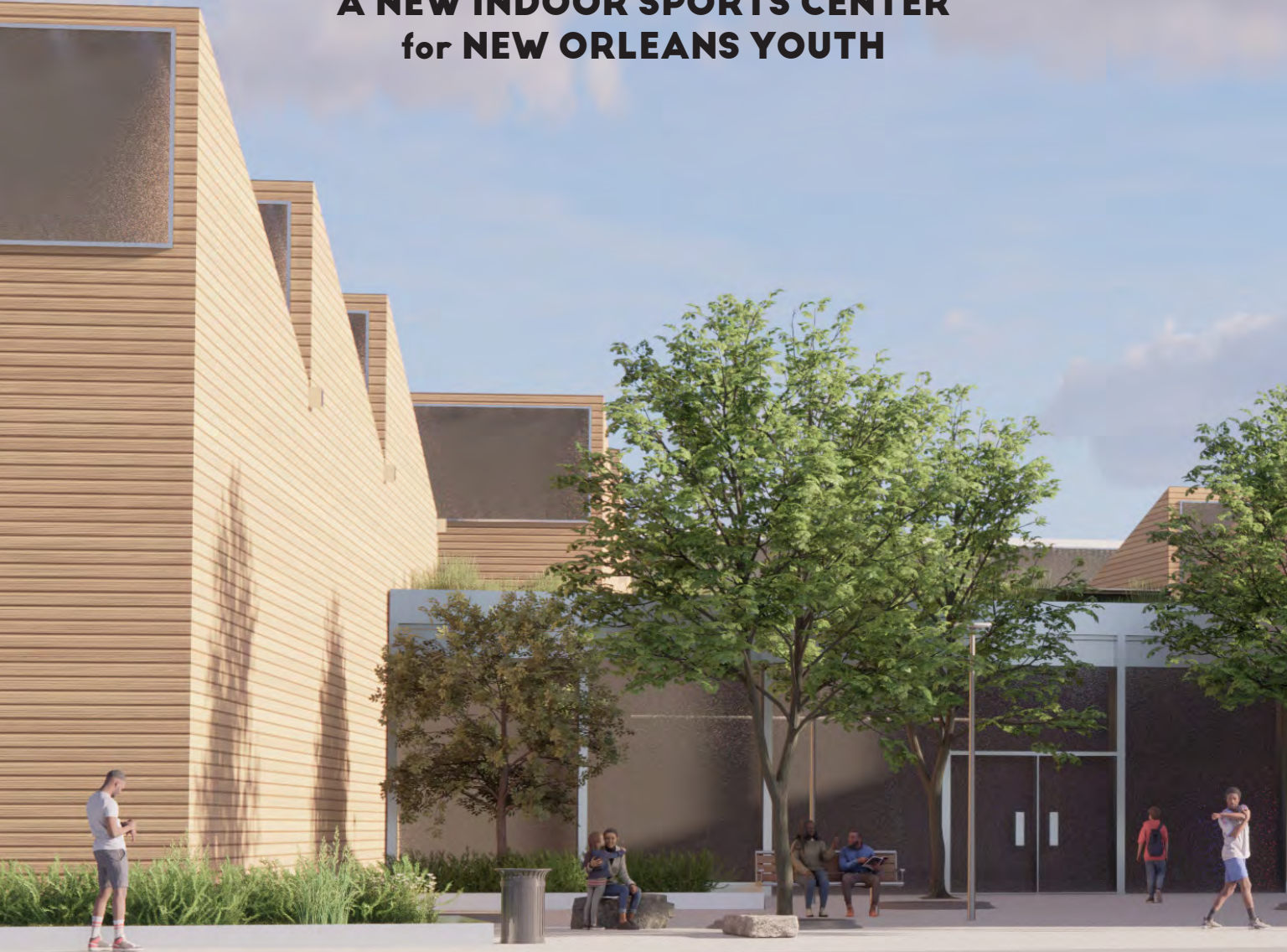






THE 18th WARD

**A NEW INDOOR SPORTS CENTER
for NEW ORLEANS YOUTH**



The 18th Ward is a nonprofit that builds community through high-quality, affordable sports programming and workforce development for youth and families from every neighborhood in New Orleans. Small Center worked with the 18th Ward to imagine and design a proposed indoor sports facility in New Orleans' St. Bernard neighborhood. Designed to serve youth across the city, its central location will feature indoor soccer, basketball, swimming, and space for community to come together. The new facility will allow 18th Ward to significantly expand its programming, especially during the hot summer months, and offer affordable housing options for its youth leadership employees. The organization has used Small Center's design document to secure funding for the land purchase and are in talks with others interested in underwriting the buildings.







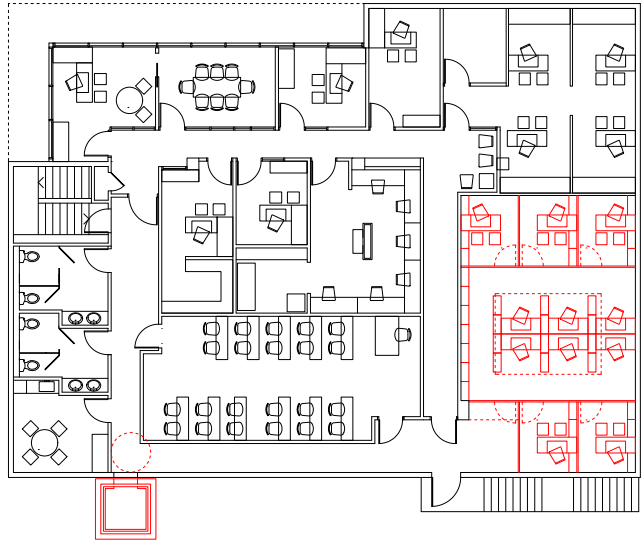
Schematic site planning, architectural design, programming, and an assembled fundraising booklet allowed The 18th Ward to market the project to funders during locally hosted Super Bowl LIX.

EL CENTRO

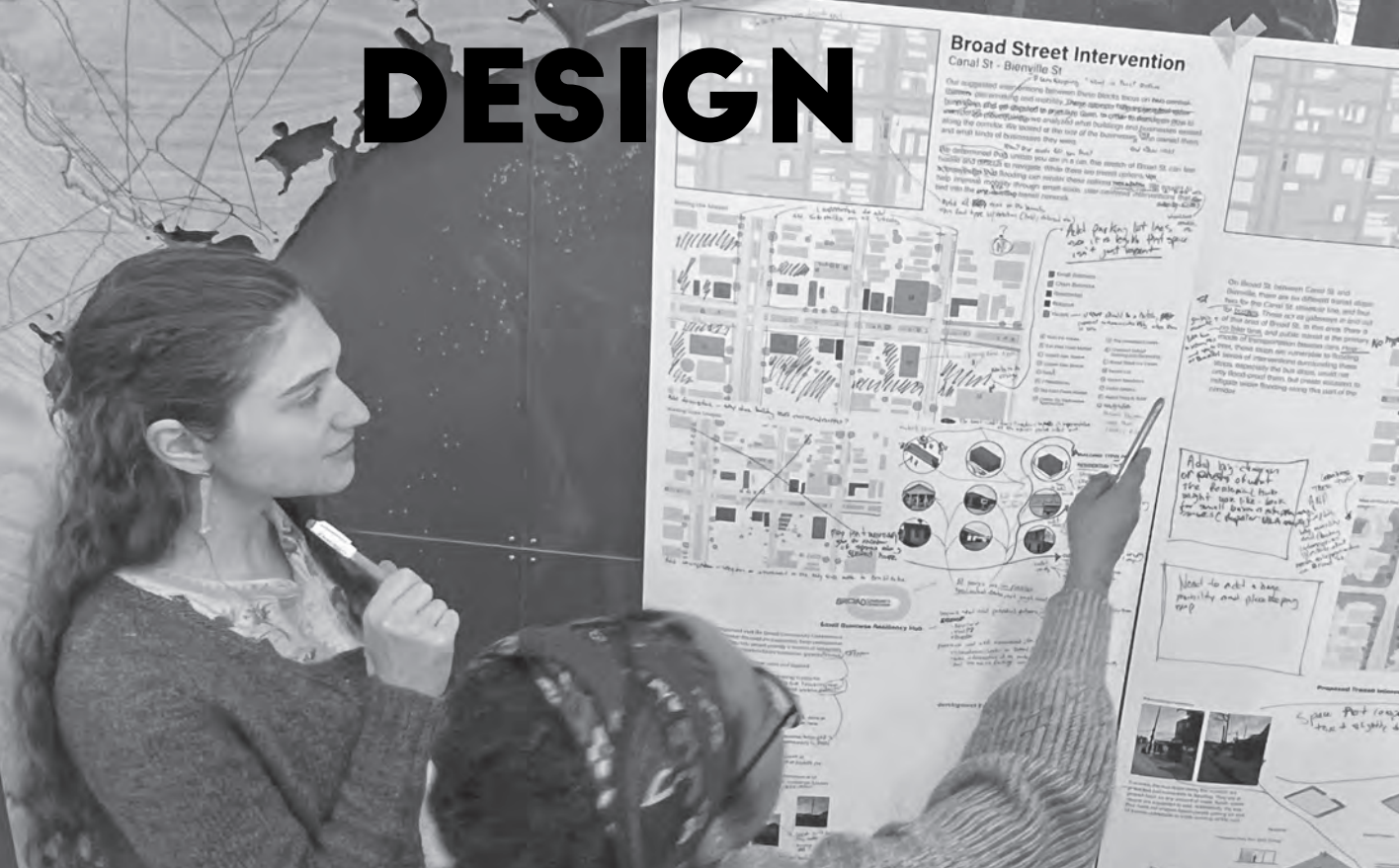
OFFICE EXPANSION + GROWTH STRATEGY

El Centro is a Louisiana-based non-profit whose mission is to empower the Hispanic community by providing training and advice on financial and business issues. With a growing professional staff, incubator businesses, and expanding public programming, the organization sought expansion possibilities within its current office building location and visioning exercises to outline future needs as it looks for a new location.

El Centro worked with Small Center throughout Spring 2025 to engage staff and partners regarding the proposed expansion. Schematic design options ranged from expansive visions requiring structural changes to simpler designs requiring less up-front investment, providing efficient layouts to expand seating, add natural light and ADA accessibility, and improve site conditions.



ENGAGED URBAN DESIGN



Seminar students worked with Broad Community Connections (BCC), met with local businesses along Broad Street, and used urban analysis to provide infrastructure and sustainability improvements along with creative ideas for cultural preservation, art, and economic development. Designs were based on field studies, in-class workshops, and community engagement.



Broad Street Intervention

Ursuline Ave - Esplanade Ave

Our proposal for Broad Street between Ursulines and Esplanade focuses on transforming unoccupied areas through permeable surfaces and neutral ground activation. By integrating porous pavers and green infrastructure, the project reduces rainwater runoff and mitigates flooding while revitalizing the area. Activating the neutral ground with flexible community spaces enhances resilience, fosters connections, and reimagines this central urban corridor.

MAGNOLIA

BLACK GEM WALNUT

Black Walnut Price: \$159.95

Magnolia Price: \$159.95

Benefits:

- Provides shade
- Soil retention
- Beautification
- Carbon sequestering
- Fast growing trees
- Can withstand moderate flooding

Calculations of concrete removal:
 (\$350 base fee) + (\$3.50 per sf x 165 sf = \$577.5) + (\$450 removal fee) = \$1,377.5

Cost of pavers:
 \$2.50 per sf x 165 sf = \$412.5

Cost of plants:
 \$159.95 x 5 trees = \$799.75

Total: \$2589.75

Presentation boards provided to Broad Community Connections for future engagement activities



Tree cover analysis (above); Proposed drainage, trees, and public art (below)





PORT ARTHUR, TX

CREATING A COMMUNITY HUB

Small Center's Engaged Urban Design Seminar worked with a non-profit in Port Arthur, Texas called CIDA, the Community In-Power Development Association. The project was tied to Assistant Professor Liz Camuti's landscape architecture research studio, which focused on larger-scale interventions in the Golden Triangle region while the seminar worked at the scale of the streetscape in the neighborhood of West Port Arthur. Students envisioned possible pedestrian, water management, and other public space improvements, with designs attempting to build new community amenities around existing assets including the community garden and clinic on W. 8th Street.



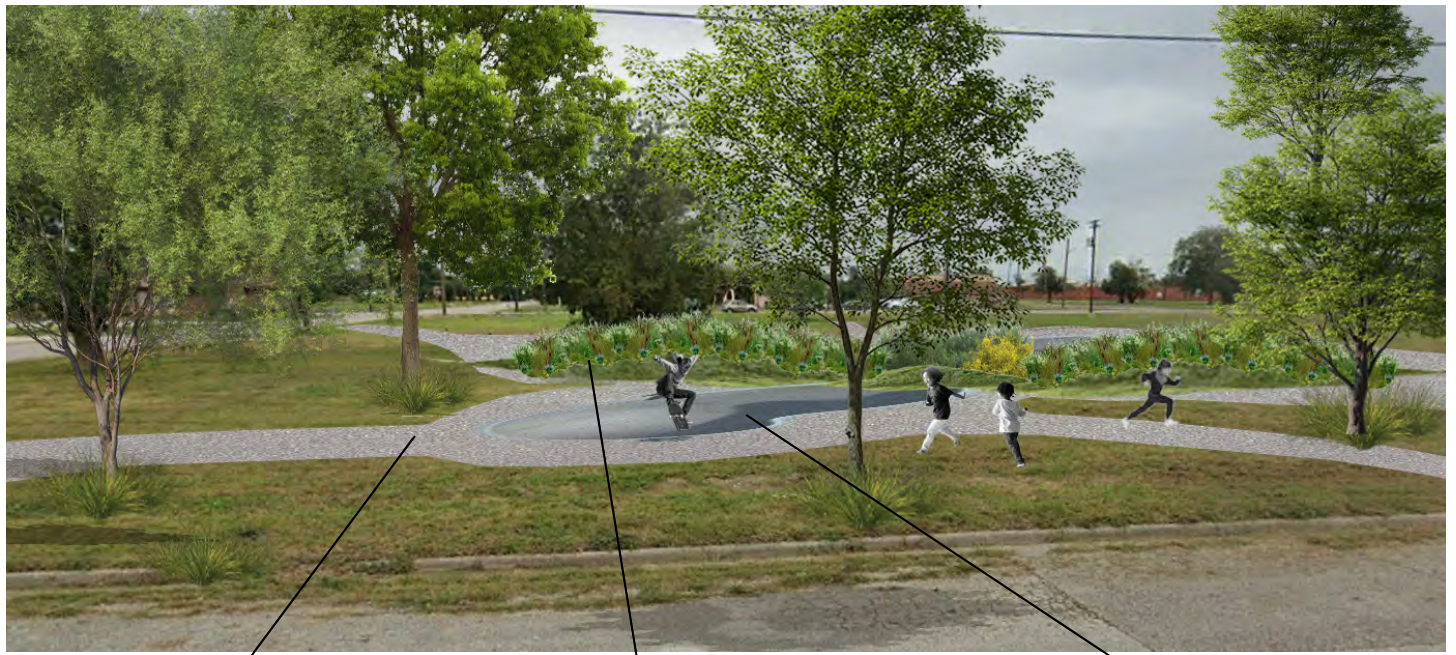
Community Garden

5 min. Walkability Radius

West Side Development Center

Clinic

Abraham Lincoln Middle School
Port Arthur Alt. Center



Permeable sidewalks which connect the church to the health center, W 8th St to Rev. Dr. Ransom Howard St., and Freeman Ave. to Rev. Raymond Scott Ave.

Flood resistant garden which minimizes the presence of stagnant water. Includes Native Grasses, Elderberry, Wildflowers, Scots Pine, Swamp Cypress)

Skate area uses a permeable material such as interlocking concrete pavers in order to prevent stagnant water and the presence of mosquitos



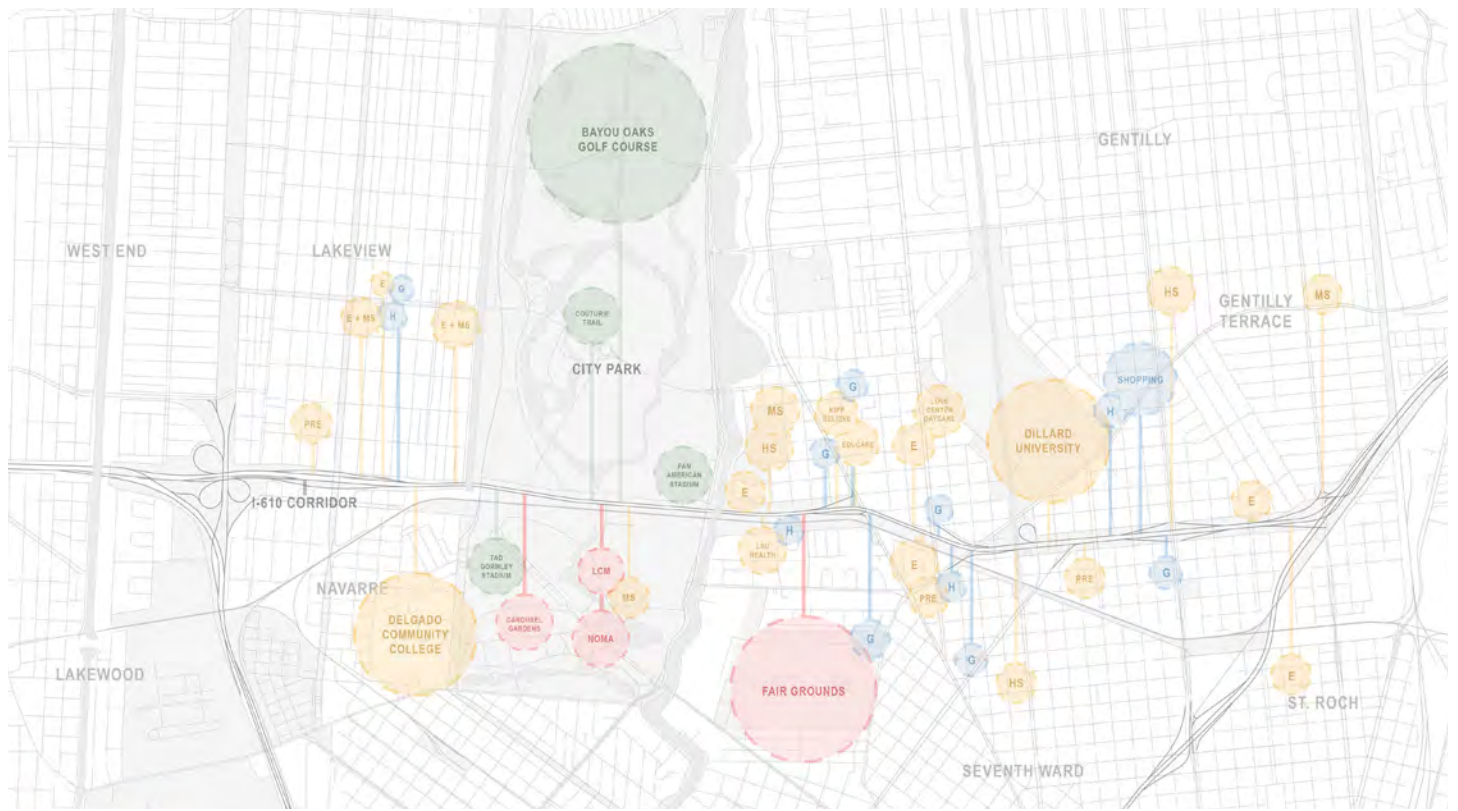


PUBLIC INTEREST DESIGN SEMINAR



Public Interest Design Seminar students used the master planning process for City Park as a real-time case study, meeting with Grow Dat leadership and Tulane alumnus Bahareh Javadi, who was helping lead the engagement effort for the local firm Concordia, and participating in the public meeting process. Students also helped urban farming non-profit Sprout imagine their new master plan along the Lafitte Greenway. Nearby, students also took on analysis and urban designs for the St. Bernard Ave. corridor on behalf of The Bayou District Foundation. Students imagined new connections with City Park, pop-up infrastructure to support local vendors, and redevelopment near and underneath the I-610 corridor.





Asset mapping and designing new public space under I-610 and along the St. Bernard Ave. corridor



REUSED CONCRETE RECREATION SPACE



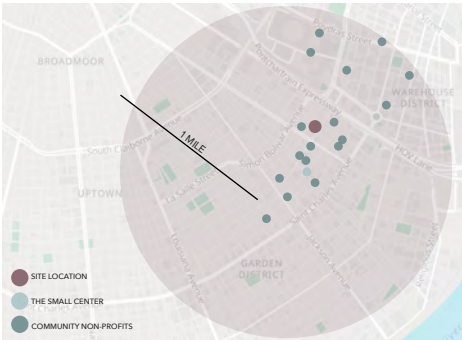
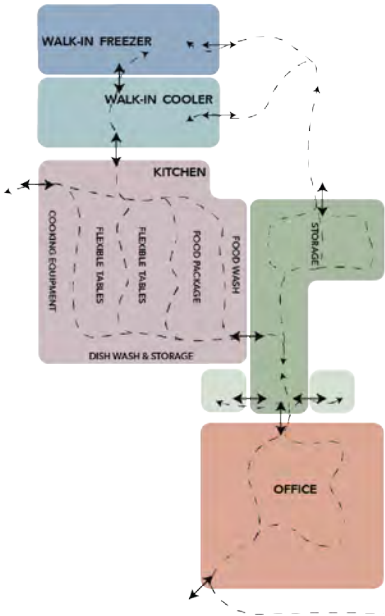
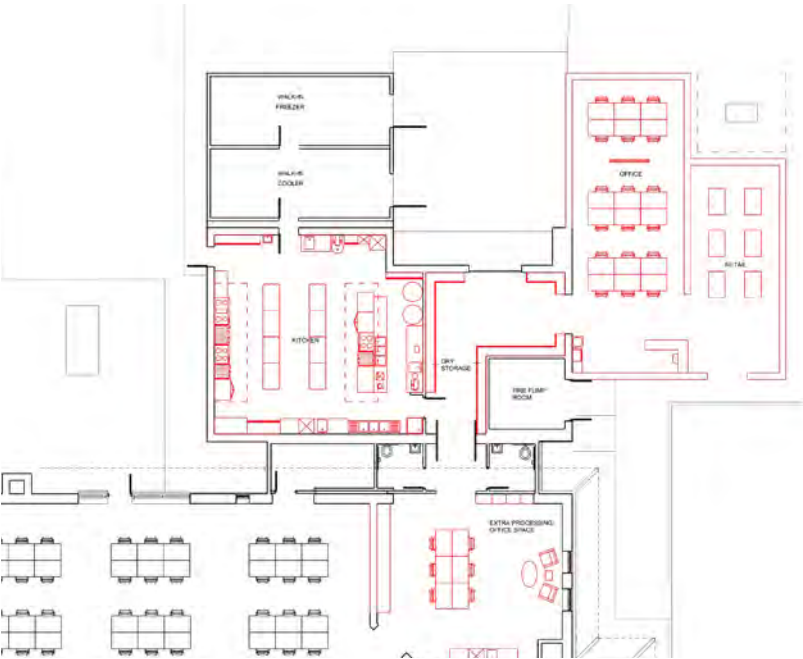
SUMMER FELLOWSHIP

Small Center's annual Public Interest Design Fellowship is an intensive 5-week paid internship opportunity for students enrolled in the Tulane School of Architecture and Built Environment to work on real-world projects with community-based organizations in New Orleans. This summer, fellows attended the Design Futures Forum and engaged with four key community partners to propel each of their projects forward. Fellows worked with Voice of the Experienced (VOTE), 1881 Institute, Lafitte Greenway Partnership, and the Central City Community Collaborative (C4), providing a range of schematic design options for both fundraising and implementation.



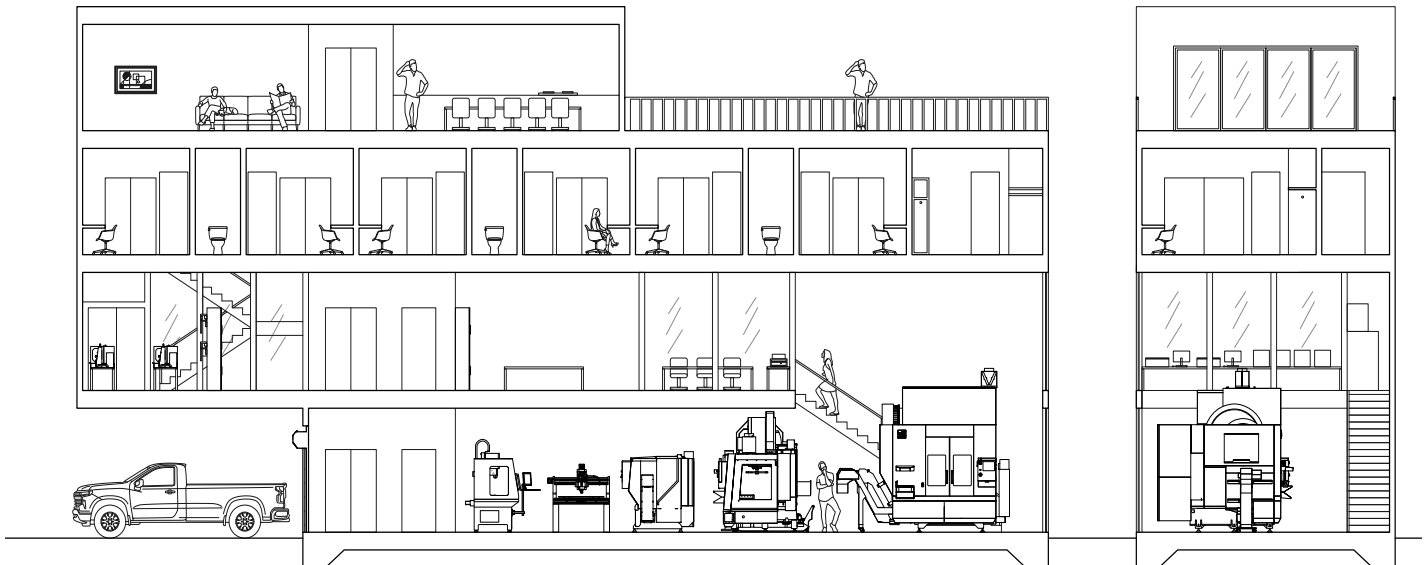
CENTRAL CITY COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE - C4

By combining the efforts of organizations including Market Umbrella, Recirculating Farms, Sprout NOLA, and Top Box Foods, the C4 partnership supports local farmers, enhances access to fresh food, and expands food justice initiatives across the city. C4 leaders asked Small Center to help plan and expand their new space in Central City. Summer fellows surveyed the property, considered office needs and the complex logistics of a community kitchen, and conducted research that will support Small Center’s Fall 2025 design build project, also in partnership with C4.



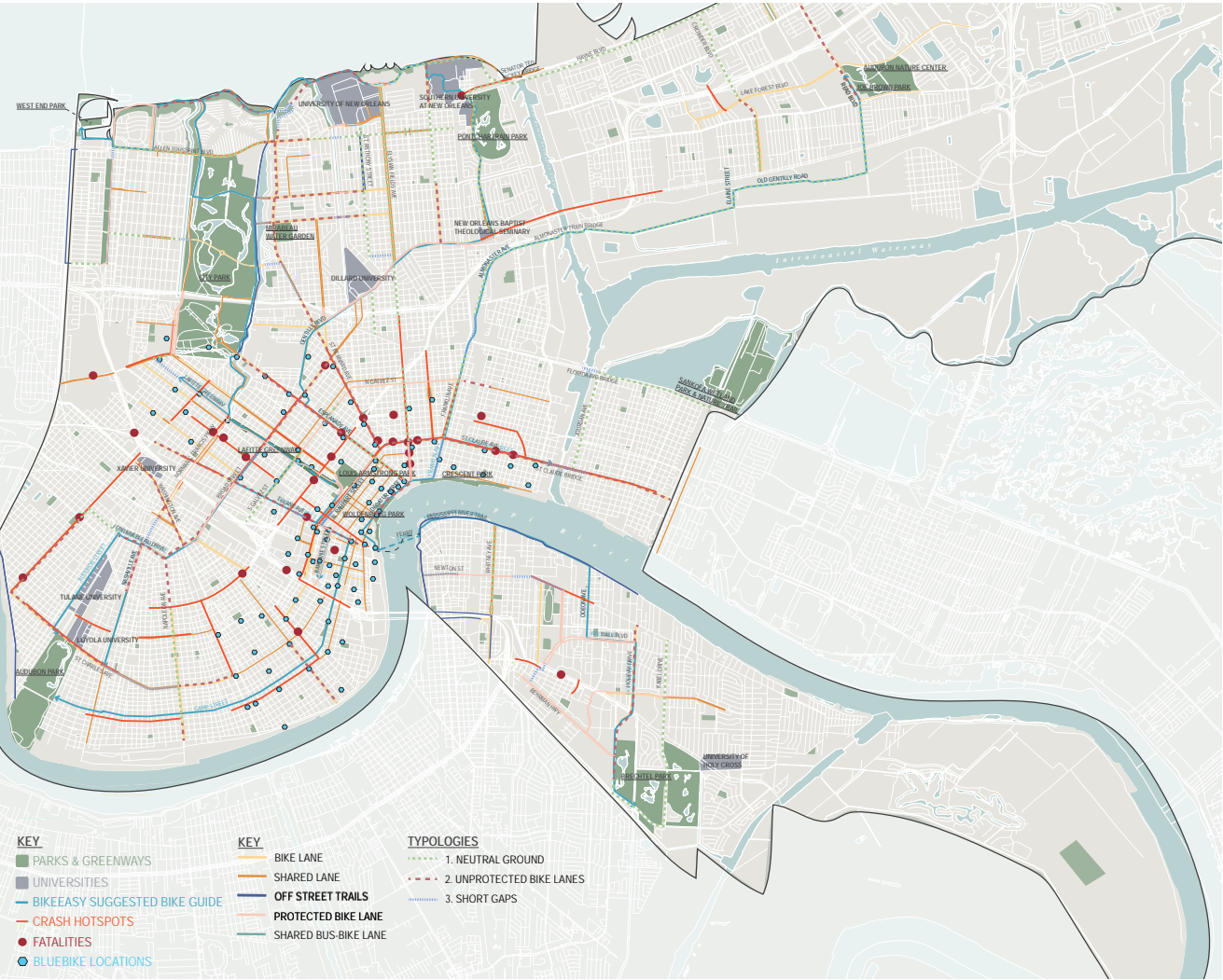
1881 INSTITUTE

1881 Institute is a workforce development program that helps young people and adults build skills for careers in advanced manufacturing and technology, focusing on supporting those who face barriers like being out of school, unemployed, or living with disabilities. The Institute is looking to renovate and expand its operations at 1241 Carondelet Street. Summer fellows surveyed the building and designed a near-total rebuild to accommodate a wood shop, metal shop, offices, and housing, ultimately reconfiguring the building to create flexible areas for training, study, and community gathering.



GREENWAY PLANNING

The Lafitte Greenway Partnership (LGP) is the official nonprofit organization dedicated to the Lafitte Greenway, a 2.6-mile linear park and multi-use trail connecting six historic New Orleans neighborhoods. LGP approached Small Center to assist in engaging with the broader community and its partners to create a greenway plan for the entire city. Summer fellows jumpstarted this project by gathering data, analyzing gaps in accessibility for pedestrians and bikers, and meeting with project partners. The team created early schematic possibilities for both new and redesigned greenways across New Orleans.



VOICE OF THE EXPERIENCED

VOTE (Voice of the Experienced) is a grassroots organization led by and for formerly incarcerated people, focused on building power through civic engagement, policy advocacy, and community organizing. VOTE's property at 4930 Washington Ave includes several buildings and outdoor spaces, and Small Center's summer fellows worked on a master plan to create spaces that work together seamlessly and are inviting to the community at large. Working with VOTE staff, the team also created visuals for possible exhibits featuring ongoing research and the organization's history.



PROJECT CREDITS

What Matters Here.!?

Project Lead: Liz Camuti, Gulf Coast Research Studio

Project Partners: Paris Cyan Cian, Giancarlo D'Agostaro, Adam Marcus, Patti Dunn, Daron Douglas, Jill Stoll, Marion Forbes, ricRACK, Nick Perrin, Virginia Hanusik

Students: Exhibit design - Corwin Almo, Emilia Bertoli, Ben Cornett, Kris Smith, Emmett Tanzer-Tragatsch, Sofia Vladimir; Exhibit content by students of Liz Camuti & Margarita Jover's Gulf Coast Research Studio 2023-24

Staff: Jose Cotto (lead), Ann Yoachim, Nick Jenisch, Emilie Taylor Welty, Ben Derlan, Brandon Surtain, Amy Lenkiewicz

Support: National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine Gulf Research Program

Engaged Urban Design Seminar

Project Partners: Broad Community Connections, CIDA

Students: Lindsay Bopp, Livi Bowers, Bella Davies, Charlotte Love, Corwin Almo, Jack Levine, Josh Warsaw, Walter Workman, Madeline Shade, Maddie Grenauer, Analiese De Saw, Lily Cummings, Paul Onu

Staff: Nick Jenisch & Dasjon Jordan (leads), Ann Yoachim, Jose Cotto, Emilie Taylor Welty, Ben Derlan

PID Seminar

Project Partners: Sprout New Orleans, Bayou District Foundation

Students: Bella Davies, MJ Lauand, Ronen Lavi, Ariel Levine, Madeline May, Alex Rich, Liz Small, Emmet Tanzer-Tragatsch, Bridget Tinnerino

Staff: Ann Yoachim & Nick Jenisch (leads), Emilie Taylor Welty, Amy Lenkiewicz, Ben Derlan, Brandon Surtain

Sprout Urban Farm Pavilion

Project Partners: Sprout New Orleans, New Orleans Recreation Department, Lafitte Greenway Partnership

Students: Alexa Trapani, Clara Quandt, Emma Lindley, Grace DeLaune, Rose Barnes, Charlotte Kelley, Daphne Vorel, Emily Brandt, Kayleigh Macumber, Sophia Lindahl, Analiese De Saw, Isabella Davies, Lindsay Bopp

Project Leads: John Coyle, Eric Lynn

Staff: Nick Jenisch (lead), Ann Yoachim, Emilie Taylor Welty, Ben Derlan

Support: Sprout New Orleans

Summer Fellowship

Project Partners: Lafitte Greenway Partnership, Central City Community Collaborative (C4), 1881 Research Institute, Voice of the Experienced (VOTE)

Students: Saracen Lunn, Kunran Zhao, Clara Quandt, Paige Douglass, Ava Holzrichter

Staff: Brandon Surtain, Ann Yoachim, Nick Jenisch, Ben Derlan

Support: Eskew Dumez Ripple+

El Centro Expansion

Project Partners: El Centro

Staff: Sergi Serrat, Nick Jenisch, Ben Derlan (leads), Ann Yoachim, Nick Jenisch, Emilie Taylor Welty, Amy Lenkiewicz, Brandon Surtain

18th Ward Youth Center

Project Partner: The 18th Ward

Students: Yue Zhang

Staff: Ben Derlan & Nick Jenisch (leads), Ann Yoachim, Brandon Surtain, Emilie Taylor Welty, Amy Lenkiewicz

2024-25 HIGHLIGHTS

200+ STUDENTS ENGAGED

Design/Build Studio
Engaged Urban Design Seminar
Public Interest Design Seminar

What Matters Here Exhibit
Design Futures Forum

AWARDS

Rethinking the Future Award - Runner Up 2025
Sugar Roots Farm

AIA New Orleans Audience Choice Award 2025
Sprout Urban Farm Pavilion

Architecture Education & Research Fund Grant 2025
Recognition for student preparedness for professional practice

ACSA Design Build Award 2025
Sugar Roots Farm

Don Norman Design Award 2024
Recognition for Education in Humanity-Centered Design

RESEARCH / PRESENTATIONS / LEADERSHIP

// Book, Smallx20: Twenty Years of Community Engaged Design in New Orleans (w/Maggie Hansen) - NJ, AY, ETW

// ACSA National Conference 2025, Papers Presented - ETW

Materials of Abolition, Structures of Repair; Efficient, Resilient, Affordable – New Modes of Practice in New Orleans;
Sugar Roots Farm – Design Build Award Project Presentation

// Workshop Facilitator, ACSA Annual Meeting - ETW, AY, NJ

Design Build in the Swamp; Design, Affordability and Community: New Orleans Housing Across Scales;
University-Based Community Design Center Round Table: The Future of the Field Workshop

// Design Futures Forum; Host Committee - AY, Board Co-Chair - JC

// AIA New Orleans-School Representative - ETW

// Panelist: The Research University Civic Engagement Network; University of New Mexico (virtual) - AY

// Speaker - University of Miami-AY

// Art Exhibitions - Arthur Roger Gallery, Baton Rouge Gallery - BJS

// Exhibition Curator - “Treasures of Pointe Coupee,” Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge - BJS

// Book Chapters - ETW, AY

‘Leading with Design; Cultivating Urban Excellence’ Chapter on Parasite Skatepark by Anne-Marie Lubenau in the book Idea City; How to Make Boston More Livable, Equitable, and Resilient. Edited by David Gamble. Published by: University of Massachusetts Press, 2023

‘The Built Environment and Health: Partnering in New Orleans’ Chapter in an upcoming book by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Series; Advancing Health Equity. Chapter contribution by Ann Joachim and Emilie Taylor Welty. Expected publication date 2025.

**S M A L L
P R O J E C T S
L A R G E
I M P A C T S
G R A N D
A M B I T I O N S**

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