Summary

“The session is a place to share practices, hopes and aspirations for the field is not exclusively for Transform 1012 North Main Street nor is it a pre-proposal meeting for The Fred Rouse Center. We seek that the outcome of this conversation will inspire the field and provide resources to make possible more equitable decision-making and engage more people in the work of the built environment.”

– Daniel Banks, Board Chair, Transform 1012 N. Main Street

“For a project that is really rooted in exploration and indeed almost an excavation of the history of a site, of a building, and ultimately in the community, we feel it’s important to reflect a set of values based on equity and inclusion. Our goal with this conversation again is the process of soliciting feedback and input from interested parties and ultimately using that input to help shape our solicitation and idea-gathering for the project. Then, we intend to use the values that our group holds in terms of the beliefs and the power of this community to shape the outcome as a work of architecture.”

– Ben Crawford, Chair, Building Committee, Transform 1012 N. Main Street

Transcribed Zoom Meeting

Here you may find the transcribed Zoom Meeting of the Redesigning the Design Competition. It includes the raw ideas as they were expressed during the meeting. Comments regarding technicalities such as screenshots, unmuting, taking attendance, etc. have been omitted.

Transcribed Zoom Meeting

Main Questions:

How does the design team generate a “living organism”? How do we define community and how can we incorporate it into the design? As someone who is not from the design/building world, what are the barriers to broader participation?

How do designers, planners, architects, and constructors develop a reciprocating relationship between the building and the community and vice versa? How can we better advertise opportunities so that they’re visible to a wide audience, so the "hunt" for opportunities is not part of the "competition"?
MAJOR IDEAS

"One way this could happen is an open competition in which participants advance through the competition based on their deliverables at different stages instead of a list of previous projects completed." – Dennis Chiessa

- Evaluating accessibility, availability, and distribution of resources.
  - Stipends are provided during each stage to support the process, not award a final product.
  - Level the playing field between established, well-resourced firms and younger up-and-coming practices and collaboratives.
    - Open competition where advancement is based on participants’ deliverables at different stages, not résumés.
    - Statements on design philosophy/principles are more important.
    - Provide opportunities and resources for all participants to visit the site, especially if they’re not local.
    - Selection panels in architecture also have to be balanced, diverse and include designers and community members.

"Seeking key personnel among a community not just as a representation of the community itself but as a design team member." – Bryan C. Lee, Jr.

- Curating the design team with inclusivity and community as guidance.
  - Move beyond including local expertise by inviting artists, and storytellers outside design.
  - Key personnel should represent the community itself as members of the design team.
  - How do designers, planners, architects, and constructors develop a reciprocating relationship between the community and the building and vice versa?
  - A series of community-based workshops or threads can offer a well-rounded understanding of the subject matter and the values in question to broaden participation.

"Emphasis on the process as a process of dismantling history, creating community, and establishing value-sets for the future." – April DeSimone

- Cultivate a studio culture that centers Equity as an everyday practice within a space that reflects these types of opportunities in accentuating them within these spaces.
- Divide the process into sub-parts.
  - Put forward statements of principles of community and what the process, their beliefs, and their values are as an opening call and first pass of the competition.
  - As different stages progress, narrowing the pool, more resources are made available for the ultimate finalist that then produces a full proposal.
- Create opportunities to elaborate on ideas that have been excluded by past processes by inquiring about participants’ process and how it is informed by the firm’s positionality and place in their inhabited communities.
- Test or acknowledge how people work in and with the community: How they treat people is really important when you’re asking people about the community.
  - Talk to social workers, nurses, doctors, and others to ground community relationships and what we mean by coalition building/creating a procurement process.
SELECTED FOLLOW-UP COMMENTS

- [Link to the Form]

- It’s a function of how much folks want to invest in the process of partnering -- whether that’s within a proposed team, within the selection committee(s), within the "community," etc.

- “Part of the process is consciously creating space...inclusive of the community of people and the...nature that we share and stand upon...inclusivity that focuses on health and well-being from a systems perspective...from carbon neutral to a form of construction that takes the environment in hand. A building within its community is a living being that is there to serve, teach, to hold. To be experienced. That is the level of equity I am committed to within the design community.”

- Create a cooperative model that is based on good faith (with the option to voluntarily step back to make room for those with lower resources) where all participating firms have a role in providing ideas for the project and the role of the AOR is simply to provide a shell for the assembly of ideas, putting in place a set of rules that make it practical. In selecting an Architect of Record firm, not only should the firm walk the talk (no woke-washing as Simone mentioned), but more importantly not have a 'Savior' mindset, which is rampant.

- Perhaps offer or enable support for teams that may have good ideas but lack design/construction experience - could offer to pair or matchmaking: Taking the strengths of multiple partners to create the ideal team that can design and is in touch and believes 100% in the project.

- A process that helps define "community" is critical. Particularly in communities where the voices are often co-opted by certain entities who hold the local power. Also, the Phase 0 work enhances an opportunity for learning the "why" of the project and the wider ecology.

- The challenge with RFQs lies in the assessment of portfolio and bench under the assumption of a "team" being proposed. If we eliminate the idea of a single team...we open up the conversation around strengths.

ORGANIZATIONS
This is an ongoing research document of Socially-Driven Architecture Firms that embrace sustainability and focus on the interaction between buildings and communities.

EXAMPLES
This is a list of examples of how architectural competitions take place traditionally. Here is a document offering a brief overview of the process.

NEXT STEPS
White Papers:

- Alternatives to White Papers:
  - Blogs (blogging)
  - Posters (Canva?)
  - Non-written forms such as images, and videos
  - Conversation Platform (Slack, blog-style chat, Discord)