

## **FORMCities:** addressing the urban divide

### **COMPETITION BRIEF**

To rethink the future of mid-size cities, and their role in the overlapping economic and environmental challenges that the 21st century brings, Mississippi State University's Jackson Community Design Center (JCDC) will host a design competition and symposium focused on the inherent challenges and immense potential for socioeconomic and environmental reconciliation by addressing barriers created by an urban divide.

**FORMCities** calls for design proposals to address the negative impacts of urban forms and transportation thoroughfares which have created visual, physical, and psychological, barriers that have sorted cities along the lines of race, income, and class.

### **What is a mid size city?**

For the purpose of **FORMCities**, a mid size city is any metropolitan statistical area with a population of a minimum of 100,000 and a maximum of 1,000,000 people in the city proper and the surrounding suburban municipalities.

### **Why the mid size city?**

Mid size cities are under developed and under designed globally. Cities of this size seldom reach the agenda of entities working to develop solutions to the problems we face today. It is easy to overlook the role that cities like these might play in contributing to, mitigating, or possibly solving these issues. On one hand, 'green' or 'sustainable' minded organizations focus attention on rural, suburban, and small town developments of limited scope where results are easily measured. On the other hand, organizations dedicated to urban development tend to privilege large metropolitan areas, transportation, and the role of federal funding in debates on economic recovery. In between, the mid-size city is all but forgotten; therefore, this design competition seeks to **(a) look at existing barriers in mid-size cities, (b) think about how these barriers can be redesigned, and (c) critique whether and how this redesign can influence the future of the mid-size city.**

### **Which mid size city?**

**FORMCities'** design problem can be addressed in any mid size city exhibiting a significant visual, physical, and/or socioeconomic barrier.

### **Site Requirements**

A case study city must be chosen and a site can be anywhere within the urban environment, but it must contain a tangible divide in which a noticeably different socioeconomic situation exists on either side of the barrier.

### **Case Study: Jackson, MS**

An example of this phenomenon occurs in Jackson, MS. Jackson, like many mid-size cities, is split by a barrier that is both physical and symbolic. Train tracks elevated on a viaduct cut the city into two vastly different areas: an eastern side containing a central business district in rebirth with historically stable neighborhoods, and a west side containing abandoned buildings, failing infrastructure, and despite substantial investment, lagging development and unstable neighborhoods. With an income and property value differential of approximately three to one across this barrier, the citizens of either side live lives of vastly different opportunities. The view across perpetuates misunderstanding, prejudice, and failures for

the city as a whole. This specific site in Jackson is an eligible site for proposals, but not required. For any site chosen, comparable barriers should exist.

## **Proposals**

### **Proposal Brief**

Each proposal must be accompanied by a document, not to exceed 1 (A3) page, that explains the existing urban conditions of the chosen site.

### **Boards**

Teams are to submit (2) 20" x 30" boards that contain images, drawings, and text to represent the existing conditions, proposed design intervention, and the projections of chosen site for the year 2100.

Elaboration on tactics for implementation will strengthen a proposal, such as targeted policy change, or economic feasibility. Consider how technology, social evolution, and environmental predictions could effect the development of the proposal.

**Please do not put any identifying information on the boards.** Include a copy of your registration form in the mailing package. A number will be issued to each entry and the identity of the entries will be kept confidential until after the judging has taken place.

**Boards must be mounted and mailed to:  
Jackson Community Design Center  
509 East Capitol Street  
Jackson, MS 39201 USA**

Teams that produce winning entries and notable projects will be asked to submit digital versions of the final boards in .jpg and .pdf formats.

## **Criteria for Eligibility / Restrictions**

### **Eligibility**

There will be both a student category and a professional category. Teams are not limited by number, there is no age limit, and interdisciplinary teams are encouraged.

### **Restrictions**

Those not eligible to participate:  
-Employees of the Jackson Community Design Center  
-Anyone directly involved with the competition steering committee or the formation of the competition guidelines

### **Registration**

All teams must register by the official registration date utilizing the **Registration Form**.

Registration form should be emailed to [FORMCities\\_competition@gmail.com](mailto:FORMCities_competition@gmail.com). **Registration forms and payments must be received via the web or postmarked by August 15, 2010.**

The registration fees are \$60 for a professional team and \$35 for student teams.

Payments for registration can be made by a check or money order by mailed to the Jackson Community Design Center, 509 E Capitol Street, Jackson, MS 39201, USA. Payment by credit card through our website will be available soon.

## **Schedule**

February 2010 Competition Announced

March 15, 2010 Website Launched / Registration Opens

**August 15, 2010 Registration Closes**

October 30, 2010 Submission Deadline

November 6, 2010 Prize Winners Announced

Winter 2010 – Spring 2011 Traveling Exhibition of Winning Entries

Spring 2011 Competition Summary Publication

## **Awards**

The jury/symposium will be held in Jackson, MS on November 5-6, 2010 and will combine a public conference with the judging and awards ceremony for the competition. Prize monies totaling \$5000 will be awarded at the discretion of the Jury.

Finalists and notable projects will be chosen at the beginning of the symposium and displayed in the exhibition space by the end of the first day. The number of finalists and notable projects to be displayed will depend on the judges' discretion and number of responses. Winners will be announced after the final keynote lecture and will launch the reception. Each of these recognized entries will be featured on the competition website and a nationally distributed post competition publication and included in the traveling exhibition.

## **Jury**

The jury is to be announced soon.

## **Sponsors**

Mississippi State University :: College of Architecture, Art + Design :: Robert V.M. & Freda Harrison Lecture Series :: Jackson State University Department of Urban and Regional Planning :: Mississippi Arts Commission :: Greater Jackson Arts Council :: Entergy MS