

# RISE Revival of a Cultural Corridor

The 2015 *Barbara G. Laurie* NOMA Student Design Competition

**"Liquid architecture. It's like jazz - you improvise, you work together, you play off each other, you make something, they make something. And I think it's a way of trying to understand the city, and what might happen in the city."**

- Frank Gehry



## competition challenge

Welcome to the Big Easy! Home of the Bayou, the "Paris of the South", and the birth place of jazz. With the rise and fall of the Pontchartrain waters after Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans the "Crescent City" has quickly become a hotbed of controversy with opinionated concerns about the future development of the city. Aside from addressing the standard issues involving adaptive reuse, community based programs, health & wellness, housing, and sustainability, this year's Barbara G. Laurie NOMA Student Design Competition is also issuing a unique design challenge which focuses heavily on the remediation, replacement, and/or removal of existing failing infrastructure, a growing problem plaguing most American cities.

The focus area and site has been the subject of three major pushes in the last nine years since Katrina. The Claiborne Corridor Revitalization, the Lafitte Greenway, and the new Hospital sector. The first, and primary focus for this competition is the Claiborne Corridor Revitalization. The principal motivation is to eliminate or reduce the effects of the expressway which bifurcated this community over 60 years ago. There are currently several development and master planning proposals focused on N. Claiborne Ave. and the I-10 expressway. The site itself stretches along N. Claiborne Ave. between Orleans Ave and Esplanade Ave., and encompasses a span of six to eight city blocks. Student teams are required to pick one of two recently proposed scenarios addressing the corridor and back their choice with supportive research and programs built into their final design. The overall project requires entrants to carefully consider and respond to real world dilemmas architects and city planners face regarding community connectivity, adaptive reuse, gentrification, urban design, transportation, circulation, public open space, and sustainability, all while maintaining the current vision for the city of New Orleans.

Much like most cities in the early 50s the highways and byways that ripped through black communities were and are socially destructive. However, as destructive as a highway separating two halves' of a community can be, communities in general have a tendency to be resilient. Life goes on....and the community forms new traditions that help shape the cultural quality of a city. Within New Orleans, the Mardi Gras Injuns, which predates the Claiborne overpass, now congregate during Mardi Gras underneath the overpass and use its inherent acoustic qualities to resonate and amplify sound as they march through the community. Along Claiborne Avenue and in the Treme' there are significant landmarks that are relevant to, not only the city's history, but the nation's history as well. Congo Square, the St. Louis Cemetery and the African-American Museum are all national landmarks located within this community. The current push to revitalize this area has plenty of implications, many of which benefit its current constituents, but some that also have the potential to become contentious points rallied behind the gentrification of many historical neighborhoods throughout the city, leaving many parties involved worried about existing residents being displaced from one of the oldest African American communities in the United States.





# history & context

## The History of Claiborne Avenue

Minority communities and neighborhoods have long been target areas for larger development interests. New Orleans was no exception to the rule and in 1946 the Arterial Plan for New Orleans, directed by Robert Moses, marked the beginnings of the construction of Interstate-10, completed in 1968. The Interstate's construction started above North Claiborne Avenue in an effort to increase access in the Central Business District. The affects of its construction have been deleterious to the "Claiborne Corridor" and left the neighborhood divided and devoid of the light which once shined brightly.

Much opposition ensued during the initial stages of the project. Neighborhood groups naturally spoke against the project, while "civic boosters" argued the need for New Orleans to play a major role in the interstate system. Although the efforts were successful in stopping the development of the Riverfront expressway, the voices of those within the black communities representing the areas affected by the new Claiborne Expressway were drowned out and ignored. Prior to the development of the I-10 highway, Claiborne Avenue was a thriving arterial road of commerce and social activity. Named after the first American governor of Louisiana, Claiborne Avenue was established as a major thoroughfare in New Orleans stretching from Jefferson Parish to St. Bernard Parish. In the earlier days of its existence, Claiborne Avenue was primarily an unpaved street lined with what would become its signature oak trees. By the mid-1800s, growth and development along the corridor expanded as the surrounding population grew and the city expanded into the modern day flood areas that stretch along the riverfront to Lake Pontchartrain. At that time, Greek revival style homes lined the streets, with the areas around Esplanade Avenue attracting members of the aristocracy. Industrial buildings like the Crescent City Brewery could be found between Canal Street and Elysian Fields Avenue, and a canal was installed in the center of Claiborne Avenue to provide drainage for the area, along with a streetcar which was added in 1953.

During the 20th century Claiborne Avenue separated the racially segregated Storyville and Charity Hospital red-light neighborhoods from the more developed residential areas to the north. As the neighborhood shifted, North Claiborne Avenue became the area for social gatherings such as Mardi Gras celebrations and costuming as well as a major shopping district for African Americans living in the Treme', Central City, and Uptown regions. These areas include some of the oldest African American communities in the country and embrace historical landmarks such as the St. Louis Cemetery, Congo Square, and the African American museum.

In the early phases leading up to construction the iconic oak trees lining Claiborne Avenue were removed, along with the clearing of 500 homes, permanently replacing the once actively green streetscape with hard insurmountable concrete. It wasn't long before the district quickly declined and the quality of life for the neighborhood residents dropped as their neighborhood center disintegrated.

In its current state "The Claiborne expressway is an aging interstate that ... is nearing the end of its useful life and beginning to deteriorate ... [it] will require more frequent maintenance, and possibly reconstruction, to carry traffic safely." In a 2010 report executed by Smart Mobility Inc. and Waggonner & Ball Architects, it said, the Federal Highway Administration had found that several interchange ramps on the highway were deteriorating and needed more than \$50 million in repairs or replacement.





# competition brief

The 2015 Barbara G. Laurie NOMA Student Design Competition is primarily broken up into three components, all of which must be addressed in each competition entry. Each component tackles real world applications and issues associated with new development projects in underserved communities, and is designed to stretch student teams beyond the core principles and subject matter covered in academia. All submissions will be judged on the following core values: Cultural Expression (10), Design Excellence (10), Community Integration (15), Constructability (10), and Innovative Programs & Technology (10).

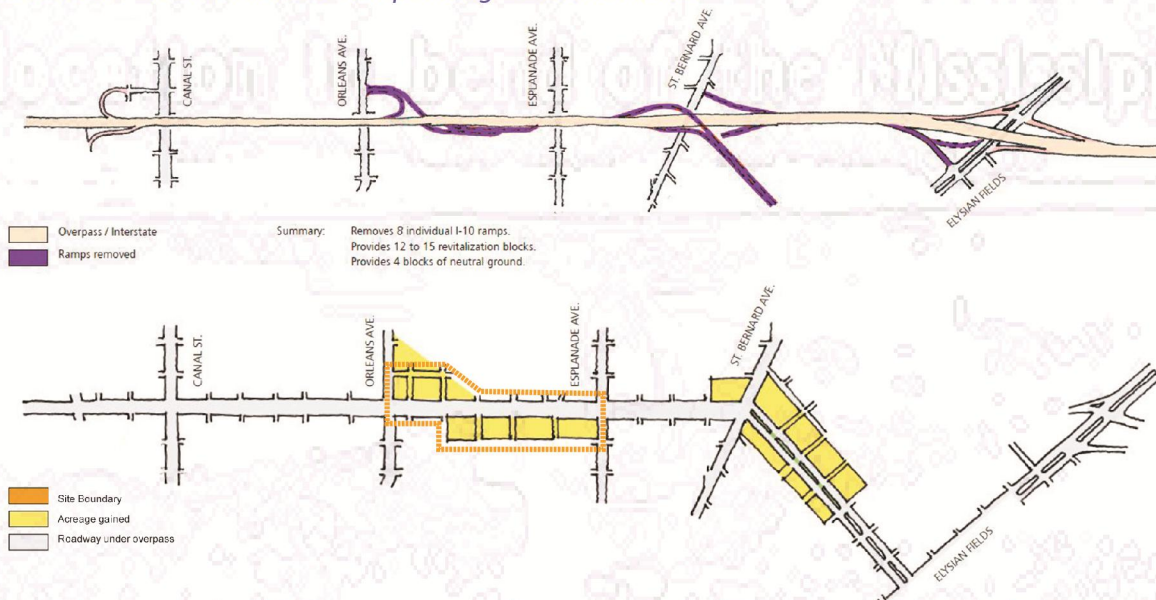
## Design challenge and directives:

- Select a Scenario and DEFEND IT
- New Community Based Facility & Programming
- Unified Streetscape and Landscape Design

## Select a Scenario and DEFEND IT

A recent study called the *Livable Claiborne Communities* was created after the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Dept. of Transportation (USDOT) jointly awarded a \$2 million dollar grant with the city of New Orleans to engage local architects and planners to develop multiple scenarios for the Claiborne Corridor. Two of those scenarios are given for this competition, requiring student teams to first decide whether or not keep the I-10 expressway over Claiborne Avenue. Both scenarios have evenly weighted pros and cons for community stakeholders to consider and should be carefully studied before moving forward with any design. Once a clear direction is made, student teams must develop a unified concept which convincingly supports the selected scenario.

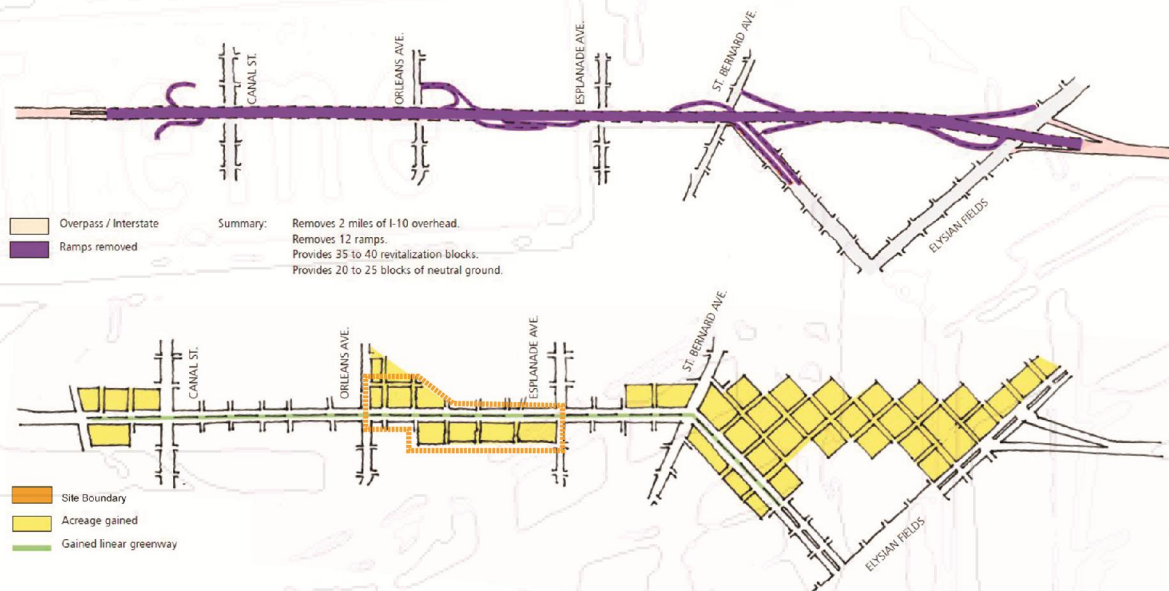
### Scenario 1: Partial Removal of Ramps Along Claiborne Avenue







### Scenario 2: Full Removal of Ramps and Overpass Along Claiborne Avenue



### New Community Based Facility & Programming

A new Community Based Facility is required on site and should be located within the 6-8 block span along North Claiborne Ave. between Orleans Ave. and Esplanade Ave. Based upon the selected scenario, its placement and connection to the corridor, overpass and community should compliment the overarching concept of the project. This new facility is intended to serve more of the community based programs for this area of the city and will become the heart of the neighborhood as it draws in local residents. Student teams should consider Maslow's hierarchy of needs when prioritizing a list of programs for the facility. From top to bottom they include shelter, food, healthcare, education, security, commerce, and civic space. The size and materials of the new facility will be left to individual teams to decide, but all are cautioned to consider the scale and materiality of the surrounding context. The facility itself can easily span multiple blocks, or fit securely within one block of the existing network of streets. It can be located on either side of N. Claiborne Ave., or tucked away underneath the freeway. In all cases student teams are encouraged to think outside the box and propose a coherent resolution to the overpass and surrounding failing infrastructure. Teams are also encouraged to consider various studies on urban revitalization within the area and along the Claiborne Corridor. Correlated plans, sections, 3D perspectives and details should be used to effectively convey the design intent.

### Unified Streetscape and Landscape Design

A unified streetscape and landscape design should be carefully executed along the Claiborne Corridor, stretching well beyond the boundaries of the site on each side. The relationships between pedestrian and vehicular circulation should be closely studied and reflect the constraints and opportunities of the selected scenario. Careful thought and planning should go into the landscape design that goes well beyond grass and trees along Claiborne Corridor. Integrated signage and street furniture along the corridor is highly encouraged.





# requirements

The Barbara G. Laurie NOMA Student Design Competition recently adopted a new format and schedule as it relates to the final presentations and awards taking place at the annual NOMA conference. Competing student teams are now vetted over the course of two days during the NOMA conference which covers a new three step deliberation process. This new process includes a private viewing for jurors, a public gallery showcase of all student work for all conference attendees and guests, and verbal presentations with Q&A in front of a live jury for select teams who qualify.

- A. Maximum of (4) 24" x 36" mounted boards, including: plans, sections, elevations, 3D views, design concepts, sustainable and accessible design integration.
- B. A brief 500-word essay should appear as part of the presentation boards describing the most important concepts of the design project. Keep in mind that the presentation should graphically convey the design solution as much as possible, and therefore it should not rely on the design essay for a basic understanding of the project.
- C. If selected, each team should be prepared to present their project to a live jury panel. Digital format presentations in PowerPoint, Prezi and PDF are acceptable. A projector will be available upon request for the verbal presentation and Q&A.
- D. (1) scaled model, maximum size 24" w x 36" l x 24" h.
- E. CD with photos of model & submitted boards in jpeg, tiff, or PDF format at a minimum resolution of 150 dpi.
- F. No school names may be included on the front of the boards. All contact information shall be placed on the back of the first board. Contact information for each team member, including email and telephone should also be included in doc or xls format.
- G. The final submission must be uploaded in (1) single (zip) file, not to exceed 15MB
- H. Each team will be allotted a maximum 10 minute verbal presentation, followed by questions from the jury. Each team is allowed a maximum of 3 team members to present.

# prizes

First Place: \$1,500  
 Second Place: \$1,000  
 Third Place: \$750

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 OLDEST  
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# schedule

- Public notification of the 2015 Barbara G. Laurie NOMA Student Design Competition: October 2nd, 2014
- Final submission of questions to Regional University Liaisons via email: Friday, September 25th, 2015
- Required notification of entry to your Regional University Liaison: Friday, October 2nd, 2015
- **Deadline** to submit all competition entries to your Regional University Liaison: **Friday, October 9th, 2015**
- Student teams are encouraged to send their entries directly to the Regional University Liaisons via email with file attachment (*if file size permits*), [www.wetransfer.com](http://www.wetransfer.com), or DropBox with a link to a private folder.  
**All competition entries uploaded after midnight for your respective school's region will be disqualified.**
- **Presentation Schedule: October 15th - 17th**  
All boards and presentation models must be delivered to the University Liaisons or NOMA conference host hotel no later than Thursday, October 15th, at 5:00pm. If the model and boards presented are significantly different than the images submitted the week prior, the team entry will be disqualified.  
  
A private jury review will be scheduled first thing on Friday morning, October 16th (*jury panel only*). Later that day a public gallery showcase of all student entries will be open to all conference attendees and guests. At that time the top 5 student teams moving forward to the next round with the highest tallied score will be announced.  
  
On Saturday, October 17th, each of the 5 student teams will get exactly 10 minutes to present their project to a live jury panel, followed by 10 of Q&A. Once all teams have presented the room will be emptied and the jurors will begin their deliberation. The competition winners will be announced later that evening at the final NOMA Awards Banquet.

# rules

- There is no entry or submission fee to participate in the competition.
- This competition is open to all NOMAS chapters. If your school is in the process of applying to become a NOMAS chapter your application must be received by Friday, September 25th, 2015.
- All team members must be financial (paid) members of NOMAS. This includes both National and Chapter dues.
- All student teams presenting must register for the entire duration of the NOMA conference.
- Only one entry per NOMAS chapter and/or school will be accepted.
- Given the multi-faceted problem outlined, multi-disciplinary project teams are encouraged. (*I.e. A well integrated team could consist of architects, urban planners, interior designers, landscape architect, etc.*)
- Each entry must be issued a written acknowledgement from your Regional University Liaison.
- A 2015 NOMAS Chapter Report must be submitted and approved before entries will be accepted. The Chapter Report requirement does not apply if you do not have a chapter on your campus.





## additional info



In 2013 the annual NOMA Student Design Competition was renamed in honor of Barbara G. Laurie, AIA, a life long friend, supporter, professor, mentor, and active member within the NOMA family.

An accomplished architect in her own right, Barbara dedicated her life to the education and mentorship of young students as a professor of architecture at Howard University. Drawing inspiration from her students, both in practice and at school, she consistently encouraged and pushed her students to realize their full potential.

Barbara G. Laurie, AIA, NOMA (Dec 5, 1961 - Feb 7, 2013)

It is recommended that this design competition be integrated into a formal design studio or an independent study in order to encourage a vital discussion of diversity, culture, universal access and sustainability within the study/practice of architecture.

Each team member may earn up to 40 core hours in each IDP training area 1-15 for completion and submission of a design competition entry outside of a recognized work setting or academic requirement. Please see [www.ncarb.org](http://www.ncarb.org) for information and requirements.

Upon receipt, all entries become the property of NOMA. NOMA reserves the right to publish drawings, written descriptions, photographs and the names of entrants, without issuing compensation.

The following websites can be useful when researching:

Livable Claiborne Communities Studies - NOLA.gov  
[www.nola.gov/livable-claiborne-communities](http://www.nola.gov/livable-claiborne-communities)

The Times - Picayune  
[http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2013/04/claiborne\\_avenue\\_study\\_looks\\_a\\_1.html](http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2013/04/claiborne_avenue_study_looks_a_1.html)

Are freeways doomed?  
[www.salon.com/2011/12/01/are\\_freeways\\_doomed](http://www.salon.com/2011/12/01/are_freeways_doomed)

SEED  
[www.seed-network.org](http://www.seed-network.org)

CONGRESS for NEW URBANISM  
[www.cnu.org](http://www.cnu.org)

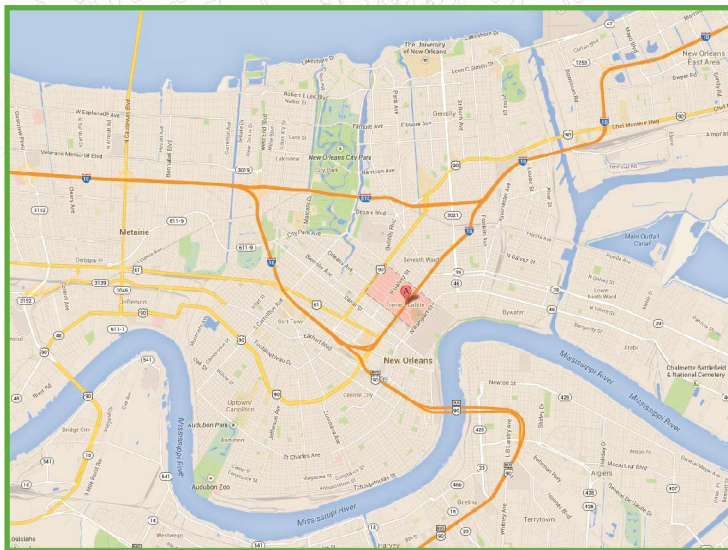
To submit competition entries and/or request additional information please contact one of the regional University Liaisons listed below:

Andrea Henderson, South Liaison: [southwestliaison@noma.net](mailto:southwestliaison@noma.net)  
 Jason Pugh, Midwest Liaison: [midwestliaison@noma.net](mailto:midwestliaison@noma.net)





# site & context



The site for this project is located near the heart of the city within the historic neighborhood district of Treme', right next to downtown New Orleans and the French Quarters. The portion of the I-10 expressway included in this study runs directly over North Claiborne Avenue and stretches between Canal Street and Elysian Fields.

The site itself is composed of a cluster of 6-8 blocks along the Claiborne Corridor, nestled between Orleans Ave. and Esplanade Ave. Within the allotted site boundaries student teams will find a gumbo mix of existing buildings, both occupied and vacant, open lots, community gardens, and surface parking lots. The proposed design will need to address these elements in a thoughtful and meticulous manner which is respectful of the local community and residents. The surrounding neighborhood outside the site boundaries consists of small residential development comprised of single family homes, scattered vacant lots, a few local and national historic landmarks, and strips of commercial corridors that feed into the city.

Students are reminded to consider the scale of the surrounding context with all proposed designs, as it pertains to the new Community Based Facility in order to tie back into the communal streetscape.

