



DESIGN SESSION PROCEDURE

March 2016

The Design Session program facilitates informal consultations (each, a “Session”) wherein professional designers (each, a “Session Designer”) provide nonprofits, businesses, and individuals with conceptual ideas for design-related projects (each, a “Project”) on a volunteer basis. This community service is offered through Storefront for Community Design (“Storefront”).

INTERVIEW

When a request is submitted, Storefront conducts an interview with the Client to manage expectations.

RESEARCH

Storefront will compile any relevant public information about the Project. The Client should provide images, and if applicable, design work completed for the Project to-date. When Project requests involve real property (land and buildings), Clients should demonstrate some degree of site control.

SCOPE

Storefront will work with the Client to identify the scope of the Project and determine the degree of community input needed to move forward with a conceptual plan. Projects deemed to have significant community impact may require a survey or petition.

BUDGET & TIMELINE

Knowledge of the budget and timeline helps Storefront determine the most appropriate assistance strategy. Generally, successful Projects have a relatively flexible timeline and established budget or fundraising plan. This program is powered by volunteers and is generally not suited for highly time-sensitive requests. Storefront adds value to Projects through donated services, but does not fundraise for Clients.

VERIFICATION

To participate in Design Session, nonprofits may be asked for a letter of determination or annual budget; businesses may be asked for their business license and annual revenue; and civic associations may be asked for their budget and a vote.

Storefront for Community Design

205 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

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RECRUIT

Storefront works with the Client to move forward through one of three tracks of assistance.

SESSION DESIGNER

Session Designers demonstrate qualifications in a design field and offer conceptual guidance for Projects on a volunteer basis. After publicizing an opportunity, Storefront assigns Projects to Session Designers according to availability and compatibility. Storefront will ensure that the Session Designer has access to Project information, including the original request and the Session Designer Agreement. Session Designers represent Storefront and agree to refrain from solicitation of Clients for private services before and during the Session.

MOB STUDIO

Clients with requests that work within semester timelines (generally, January – May or September – December) may become a client of the Middle of Broad studio (mOb), a service learning course of Virginia Commonwealth University's School of the Arts (VCUarts). Under the guidance of a professional mentor and faculty, VCUarts design students take on 13 - 15 Projects per semester in interdisciplinary teams. When working with mOb, a Project leader handles communication with limited involvement of Storefront. mOb is not a design-build studio. Successful Projects may be invited to continue beyond one academic semester.

DIRECTORY FOR DESIGN COMMUNITY

The Directory is an informal listing of firms that make up Storefront's growing volunteer base of nearly 120 architects, interior designers, graphic designers, landscape architects, and planners. Storefront refers Clients to the Directory when the level of assistance should be initiated by a private practice; when a Client would like to maintain a dialogue with Storefront, but can afford to hire a professional designer to initiate a Project; or when Projects have hit an impasse and need a push beyond conceptual assistance.

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THE SESSION

Storefront facilitates Sessions on a pay-what-you-can basis to generate a conceptual design deliverable.

COORDINATION

Storefront coordinates a time for the Session Designer to meet the Client at our studio or on-site. The Storefront-facilitated Session is intended to expand awareness of options for a Project, and is not a contract for professional services.

COMMUNICATION

Storefront should be copied on all communication between the Client and Session Designer for the duration of the Project facilitated by Storefront. If the Client wishes to retain the Session Designer for services beyond the Session (i.e., generating construction documents or delivering brand assets), this transition should be clearly communicated to Storefront.

PROJECT DELIVERY

Storefront will prepare a recap of the Session, summarizing the meeting and outlining next steps. Design deliverables may be completed during or after the consultation and may include a diagram or sketch, action plan, or list of products. Deliverables should stay within the conceptual realm, and be sent to the Program for vetting by Storefront's Design Session Committee.

FEES

After the Session, Clients are asked to contribute on a pay-what-you can basis. These donations will be used to underwrite the program in exchange for the Session.

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POST-SESSION

After completing a Session, Storefront strives to maintain a dialog about the status of projects.

HOW TO CONTINUE ENGAGING STOREFRONT

Storefront understands that many Projects have several moving parts, and require stewardship over a period of time exceeding that of a Session. Clients may continue to engage Storefront and its Session Designers with reasonable frequency. At the same time, Storefront will not render services that surpass the conceptual phase of a project. When Projects that originate in a Session reach a point that works within a semester timeline, Clients may be encouraged to work with mOb.

HOW TO SECURE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AFTER A SESSION

If the Client wishes to retain the Session Designer for services beyond the Session (generating construction documents, or creating a logo for example), this transition should be clearly communicated to Storefront. These agreements are strictly between the Session Designer and the Client. Clients are also encouraged to use Storefront's Directory for Design Community as a resource to further projects initiated during a Session.

ADVOCACY

Clients are encouraged to keep Storefront informed of Project progress. Storefront's growing social media presence and downtown office may be used as platforms to promote the visibility of community-initiated projects. When appropriate, Storefront can also form strategic partnerships with other nonprofits to further Projects.

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