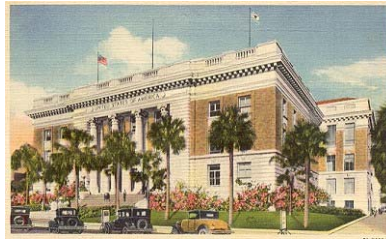


** IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT **



AIA Member:

We are excited to share the news that the AIA Tampa Bay board has approached the City of Tampa about leading an effort to bring new life to the now empty historic Federal Courthouse building in downtown Tampa. Mayor Iorio has agreed to allow the chapter to take 6 months to assess the cost of renovation, find funding sources, identify tenants and to create a business plan to operate the building long term. The chapter is currently awaiting the final letter of intent from the City and we expect to have the 'go-ahead' by November 1st.

The idea is to create *The Center for the Built Environment* to serve as home to AIA Tampa Bay along with many other organizations related to the built-environment. Chapter leaders have been brainstorming for many months about possible uses and ways to pay for the renovations. One idea is to bring in a university with an architecture program to have an Urban Design curriculum in the building. Other associations related to A/E/C will be invited to have their headquarters in the building. This would allow for the various groups to share spaces such as classroom and meeting space, a larger event area - possibly in one of the courtrooms. The spaces could also be rented out for private functions to generate revenue. Also, there would likely be a museum type space for exhibits and displays. Another idea is to have a Design Center in the building where manufacturers have products on display so designers can preview a variety of products in one location. Other possible tenants include a restaurant or private club, a reprographics company and a construction bookstore. The possibilities are endless and are about to be explored more in-depth.

To fund the project the committee is looking at grants, tax credits and the donation of services from the a/e/c community. The remaining costs would likely be covered by a construction loan which could then be paid back with rental income from tenants. The committee will be calling upon a wide variety of a/e/c related businesses that have built successful companies in Tampa with the hope that they will see this as a great way to give back to the community while realizing a tangible result. Donors will be recognized in some way within *The Center*.

This news may not be news to you! There was an article in the [St. Pete Times](#) and the Tampa Tribune today sharing the news. We would have preferred to share the news with our membership before it became public knowledge. Unfortunately, we were unable to share any information prior to the Mayor accepting our proposal. We are still waiting for the final letter of intent from the City and expect to have soon.

We are very excited about this effort as it is in line with our mission to be The Voice of Architecture – Dedicated to our Members and the Quality of the Built Environment. We are confident that if this plan comes to fruition, it will shine a bright light on the value of planning, design, construction and architecture within our community.

Stay tuned! We will be keeping you informed as things progress.

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