

Big Tent

Professional Group Pre-Event Packet

Big Tent Workshop Date:

Friday, 10 September, 2010
8:30 am to 12:00 pm

Location:

New School of Architecture
1249 F Street, San Diego, CA



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Big Tent Sponsorship & Design

The design of the Big Tent event and the enclosed pre-event materials include contributions from the Big Tent planning committee and others. The overall process is designed and guided by Sterling Insights, a local strategic planning consultancy.

Howard Blackson	Stephen Haase
Phil Bona	Brooke Peterson
Pat Caughey	Mike Stepner
Jack Carpenter	John Ziebarth

Organizing Bodies:

Convener	San Diego Architectural Foundation
Sponsor	San Diego Council of Design Professionals
Hosting Venue	New School of Architecture & Design

For information about using this packet with your group:

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Please RSVP to info@sdarchitecture.org
with the name of your delegate(s) by September 2, 2010.

1 *Introduction & Welcome*

August 4, 2010

We are pleased to invite your group to participate in a “Big Tent” effort launched in 2010 by a group of passionate colleagues. It is sponsored by the Council of Design Professionals (CDP) and co-hosted by the San Diego Architectural Foundation (SDAF).

Our goals for this effort are threefold:

- Creating a vision for collaboration among members of the design community.
- Articulating a short list of high priority issues that, when solved, will be fundamental to the sustainable prosperity of the San Diego region.
- Developing the principles and priorities to organize the design community for effective collaboration and action.

Some background:

The 2009 Orchids & Onions program, hosted by the San Diego Architectural Foundation, carried the theme, [“Keep Calm and Carry On”](#). That theme was selected to reflect our current national and local economic situation; and draw focus to our local planning situation as well. In follow-up, this year’s Orchids & Onions theme is “Outlook: Opportunity!”, the objective to encourage taking this time to step back and again reflect on the question that we, as San Diegans, often ask about our region—“What do we want to be when we grow up?”

Clearly, the recession has diminished available resources to tackle issues relating to the future of the region while, at the same time, magnifying the need and occasion to do so. There are a number of organizations doing this individually – both governmental and nongovernmental – and now, more than ever, it is time to enter into a proactive, collaborative process. By working together we can have a greater impact on the issues. The recession is providing the opportunity to review where we are, where we have been, and where we want to go; but we need to set guidelines, principles, and policies that can guide us during the economic recovery.

The 2015 Balboa Park centennial provides an excellent opportunity to discuss these issues. In his article [“Where to Begin?”](#), published in the *San Diego Union Tribune* on September 14, 2008, Roger Showley wrote: *“In this campaign season, the button, the bumper sticker spell out in a few words the hopes and dreams of voters and society as a whole: Change - Leadership - Support Our Kids, Yes on Schools. But at a time of economic uncertainty, it is difficult to dream big when you’re worried about your job, grocery bill, and filling the gas tank.”*

“But, San Diego is beginning to talk about celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Panama-California Exposition in 2015, an occasion that could provide the impetus to complete all sorts of projects sitting on the shelf – a new airport, cruise ship terminal, opera house, stadium, sports arena, not to mention rebuilt sewer and water systems, expanded public transit lines, affordable housing developments in infill locations.”

Whether these are the right projects or not is not the question. Rather, can we, as the community directly involved in the creation of San Diego’s built environment, organize to address the many issues and opportunities facing our region?

The “Big Tent” Workshop

The “Big Tent” workshop has been scheduled for **Friday, September 10, 2010** from 8:30 a.m. to noon, at the New School of Architecture + Design, 1249 F Street. The purpose of the conference is to marshal the resources of organizations that are concerned with the built environment in order to address the many daunting city planning issues facing our community, to determine how we can open the lines of communication, and work together to resolve those issues.

By studying the enclosed materials and using the small group activities outlined in the packet, collectively we will make great progress toward those goals. The information and activities are intended to guide your group to develop its position and message on the above three goals through self-directed learning and dialogue.

Between 25 and 50 delegates of the design professionals’ community will attend the Big Tent Workshop. Each delegate will have been sent by a different association or group within the design community; up to 2 per association (see the packet for more details). This effort is focused on professional associations in our field, and we anticipate casting a wider net to engage interested individual practitioners in future rounds of this work.

The workshop process was co-developed by a team of interested colleagues and will be facilitated by Joe Sterling of Sterling Insights, an organization that has been involved in community development and strategic planning efforts in the San Diego region for nearly twenty years. To learn more about its services and track record, visit www.SterlingInsights.com.

We are looking forward to, and appreciate your participation and community spirit. In joining us at this exciting event, you will be helping to determine how, collectively, we can be most effective in addressing the built environment issues besetting our community. We will be contacting you shortly to answer questions and to help you and your group make the most of these materials in preparation for the Big Tent workshop.

**Please RSVP to info@sdarchitecture.org
with the name of your delegate(s) by September 2, 2010.**

Warmly,

Big Tent Workshop Team

Mike Stepner (SDAF)

Jack Carpenter (CDP)

Phil Bona (Urban Design Council)

Howard Blackson (CDP)

John Ziebarth (CDP)

Stephen Haase (Citizens Coordinate for Century 3)

Pat Caughey (ASLA)

Brooke Peterson (American Planning Association)

“The built environment shapes the world; the world shapes our ideas; our ideas shape the built environment.” - Architecture Boston

*“Economics, urban planning, ecology are only the means. Happiness is the goal.”
- Enrique Penalosa*

2 Big Tent Outcomes

COLLABORATION: A Vision for working better together

- We will have improved our ability as a professional community to respond to opportunities
- We will have a framework for our various professional groups to collaborate
- We will have found solutions to the common things that keep us from working together
- We will have increased our collective credibility in our region

FOCUS: We are aligned on the most important and urgent issues in the region

- We will have articulated a short list of high priority issues that, when solved, will be fundamental to the sustainable prosperity of the San Diego region. These will be our most important and most urgent focus topics for the region that our professional community can agree to, and which we are uniquely qualified to address.

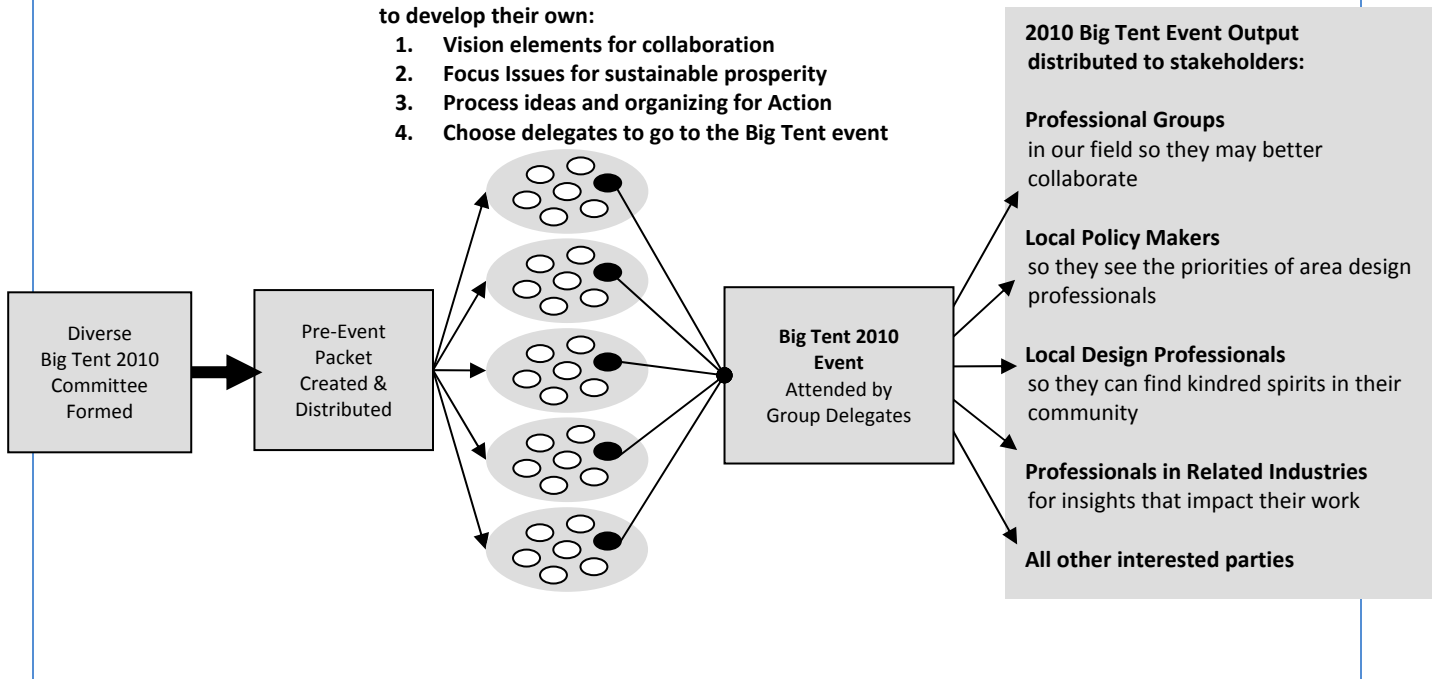
PROCESS: We have a plan and organization for implementing action steps

- By the conclusion of the Big Tent, we will have principles and priorities for organizing the design community for effective collaboration and action.
- Action items will go back with the Big Tent workshop team and professional groups for implementation.
- Key stakeholders in the region will be briefed in detail on the event outcomes so that they can understand and support our professional community's priorities and intentions.

3 How Big Tent Works

Pre-Event Meetings: groups meet prior to Big Tent to develop their own:

1. Vision elements for collaboration
2. Focus Issues for sustainable prosperity
3. Process ideas and organizing for Action
4. Choose delegates to go to the Big Tent event



4 *Instructions for Your Pre-Event Meeting*

Overview

Please conduct a pre-event meeting to prepare for the Big Tent event. The following are a series of simple but carefully structured exercises for your group to do together. All of the invited groups have been given the same instructions. These activities are designed to guide you through a structured conversation about the future. It will yield a set of vision elements and priorities you can bring to the Big Tent event. This process includes brainstorming about what your group can do to bring to life more of your vision for the San Diego region and your professional community.

Similar processes have been used successfully with all kinds of civic groups, corporate organizations and non-profits. If you follow the instructions, you'll be amazed at what your group discovers. Have fun with it!

Meeting Duration

- It can be done in less than two hours.
But, once you get started your group won't want to stop!

Materials

- Print copies of this packet for all of your group members. You will want a couple sets of the worksheets on pages 10, 11, and 12.
- A flip chart and markers is handy if you have them

Roles

- One person to facilitate the process and keep time
- Everybody else is a participant

Timing

The following timing works well for up to 10 participants. Timing may be longer or shorter with more or fewer participants. For details, see the written instructions for each step.

Step	Duration	Activity
1.	5 min.	Introduction & Ground Rules
2.	20 min.	Individual Vision Exercise
3.	40 min.	Share-a-Vision (individuals share with small group)
4.	30 min.	Identify themes and complete templates Select delegates to go to Big Tent Adjourn

Step 1. *Pre-Event Meeting Ground Rules*

Welcome to your Pre-Event Meeting for the Big Tent. Your work will feed into a larger “Big Tent” event that will bring together the work of all invited groups.

Meeting Ground Rules:

1. **This is about the future of your profession and how it is conducted in the San Diego Region.** You are here to envision a successful future for your professional community – one that includes a robust local economy, a vibrant social life, and a healthy environment.

The goal is to imagine all these things coming together so that the San Diego Region gets better with each generation. It’s not just about economics. It’s not just about the environment, the cities or the buildings. It’s not just about social or political life. It’s about how they all work together.

2. **Trust the process.** You are applying a proven process that has been used for solving complex challenges. Follow the instructions. You won’t have enough time or information to work out all the details. This activity is about getting a good dialogue going and getting your best thinking out. **“Good enough for now”** is the best attitude for this exercise.
3. **Discovery vs. Debate.** This activity is more about discovering what we collectively imagine and feel than it is about debating who is right or wrong. Ask questions to understand others better.
4. **Monitor your airtime.** Make sure everyone has an opportunity to be heard within the time your group has allotted for the meeting.
5. **Choose a facilitator and allow him or her to do the job.** Their job will be to provide instructions, and monitor the time so that you move through the whole process effectively. It’s very important to complete each step. Please help them do the job by starting and stopping when they tell you to.

Here comes the Individual Vision Exercise!

Respond to the scenario and questions on the following page. This is an individual activity to give you time to collect your thoughts. If you take more than 20 minutes to do this exercise you’re working too hard! Write and draw your responses. You will have 4 minutes to report your responses to your colleagues in your pre-event meeting.

Step 2.
Individual Vision Exercise

Respond to the Following Scenario:

It's August 2015 and you have been showing a visiting colleague around the San Diego region and attending a conference together for your industry. Your visitor is very observant and points out all the great things about the region and how influential the design professionals community has become. As your visitor talks with your colleagues, everyone describes how much improved in the last five years. There is a genuine sense of positive momentum. Cynicism about San Diego's ability to collaborate, envision, plan, design and implement for sustainable prosperity is all but vanished. Life for design professionals in 2015 is good despite a long economic recovery.

Below are some of the questions your visitor has asked. Write and draw as many of your responses as you can. You'll have 4 minutes to share your work your group.

- What kinds of design jobs, services, and projects is the San Diego region famous for in 2015?
- By 2015, what have become the run-of-the-mill collaborations among the design professionals community that were difficult at best back in 2010?
- How have you and your organization/practice benefited from collaborating?
- What were the most important attributes of successful collaborations (what separated the ones you loved from the ones you hated)?
- From 2010 through 2015, the design professionals community helped generate breakthroughs on many issues fundamental to sustainable prosperity in the San Diego region. Describe the most important one:
 - Issue (Descriptive Title):
 - Benefits of Solution:
 - Greatest Challenges:
 - Role of Design Professionals:
- From 2010 through 2015, the design professionals community organized and coordinated its combined resources to make breakthroughs happen. How?
- What kinds of coordination made it possible for the region's design professionals community to act on many more opportunities than prior to 2010?
- Describe the infrastructure of 2015 (physical places, online resources, entities) that support collaboration in the design professionals community.
- What were the first two organizing elements from the items above to be put in place?

Step 3. Share-a-Vision

How to Share your work:

The next step is to take turns sharing your work with the others at your meeting. The reports will go quickly if you each take a turn sharing your responses. You'll need a time keeper to ensure each person keeps to 4 minutes max. Show your pictures, speak your words, let your colleagues know how wonderful it is in 2015 and why.

How to listen to each person's report:

Listen to each report carefully. Try to understand how your tablemates are envisioning a wonderful future in the San Diego region. Ask questions for clarification only. Listen for themes among the different reports. There will be time later to discuss the different themes and ideas that each person produced.

Consolidate your group's responses into the worksheets:

Select one or more persons who will scribe for your meeting. Use the worksheets below to capture the various responses your team produced in the individual vision exercise.

You will have a total of 40 minutes for all the reports at your meeting.

Step 4. Identify Themes and Complete Worksheets

Dialogue:

Talk about what you heard in your reports. This activity is NOT about getting everyone to agree, but simply to bring all the individual reports together. After you've filled in the blanks on the three worksheets (on the following pages), note the similarities, the differences, and any surprises.

Synthesize:

Synthesize your group's responses to the questions in the worksheets into a clear message for each question. This will comprise your group's report at the Big Tent event.

Delegate:

Choose a member of your group to present your message at Big Tent.

You will have a total of 30 minutes to do this activity.

WORKSHEET: VISION OF COLLABORATION

What kinds of design jobs, services, and projects is the San Diego region famous for in 2015?

By 2015, what have become the run-of-the-mill collaborations among the design professionals community that were difficult at best in 2010?

How have you and your organization/practice benefited from collaborating?

What were the most important attributes of successful collaborations (what separated the ones you loved from the ones you hated)?

WORKSHEET: FOCUS ISSUES

From 2010 through 2015, the design professionals community helped generate breakthroughs on issues fundamental to sustainable prosperity in the San Diego region. Describe each one.

Issue #1 Descriptive Title _____

Benefit of Solution:

Greatest Challenge:

Role of Design Professionals:

Issue #2 Descriptive Title _____

Benefit of Solution:

Greatest Challenge:

Role of Design Professionals:

Issue #3 Descriptive Title _____

Benefit of Solution:

Greatest Challenge:

Role of Design Professionals:

WORKSHEET: ORGANIZING FOR ACTION

From 2010 through 2015, the design professionals community organized and coordinated its combined resources to make breakthroughs happen. How?

What kinds of coordination made it possible for the region's design professionals community to act on many more opportunities than prior to 2010?

Describe the infrastructure of 2015 (physical places, online resources, entities) that support collaboration in the design professionals community.

What were the first two organizing elements from the items above to be put in place?

5 *Invitees & How the 2010 List was Developed*

This first Big Tent event is intended to bring together the various associations in San Diego's design professionals community. Our goal is to have a representation from every major group at the Big Tent event.

In subsequent Big Tent events, we expect to cast the net of inclusion more widely in the San Diego region to engage all professional design firms, their principals and practitioners.

For this year's activity, the following associations and groups are participating.

Professional Groups & Associations

American Institute of Graphic Arts
San Diego Council of Design Professionals
American Society of Landscape Architects
American Planning Association - SD
San Diego Architectural Foundation

American Institute of Architects - SD

- Committee on the Environment
- Urban Planning Committee

Lambda Alpha International - SD
Urban Land Institute - SD

Other Key Stakeholders

Citizens Coordinate for Century 3

Sustainable San Diego
Walk San Diego