



Urban 2016 excellence awards

the fact or state of excelling; superiority; eminence:

urban

adjective

Of, in, or belonging to a city

excellence

noun

1. The state, quality, or condition of excelling.
2. Of the very best kind or highest quality.
3. A special feature or quality that confers beauty, distinction, merit, perfection.
4. The quality of being exceptionally good of its kind: fitness, superbness.

WHAT ARE THE URBAN EXCELLENCE AWARDS?

A recognition of businesses, organizations, individuals, events and projects that have made significant contributions toward creating a unique, vibrant and diverse Downtown Tampa and have made a lasting, positive impact on our community.

An Awards Jury representing a cross-section of Downtown constituencies have selected Award Winners, honoring their

**leadership,
innovation, hard work,
talent and community spirit**

Award Jurors

Rich Linquanti, Chair - Carlton Fields Jordan Burt, Attorneys at Law

Keith Greminger - Kimley-Horn & Associates

Mickey Jacob - BDG Architects

Susie Nelson-Crowley - RE/MAX Metro

Kevin Plummer - Tampa Preparatory School

2016 URBAN EXCELLENCE AWARDS WINNERS

The Beach Tampa • Cass Street Cycle Track • Maryann Ferenc • Gasparilla International Film Festival
Historic Rialto Theatre Renovation • *Laura with Bun* Jaume Plensa Sculpture at Tampa Museum of Art
• Leadership Tampa Bay, *Before I Die Wall* • Perry Harvey Park • Pirate Water Taxi
• Straz Center, *Arts on the River* • Tampa Bay Veg Fest

Public Sector Project Award

Cass Street Cycle Track



Public sector projects can have a profound impact on way we experience downtowns. And, the Cass Street Cycle Track is a prime example of that. The cycle track emerged from the InVision Tampa strategic planning process for downtown along with the green, buffered bike lanes on Platt, Cleveland, and Brorein. The Cass Street Cycle Track is one of the first curb-protected two-way bike lanes in Florida. The cycle track provides a key connection to the Tampa Riverwalk and is an important east-west connector. Approximately three-quarters of a mile long, the city plans to extend the cycle track in both directions for increased connectivity. The League of American Bicyclists has also recognized this important initiative by designating the City of Tampa as a Bicycle-Friendly Community.

Private Sector Project Award

Pirate Water Taxi



Private investment creates some of the most dynamic growth in an urban core. That is certainly true of the Pirate Water Taxi. In recent years waterborne transport has become an integral part of the urban landscape in cities across the country. Increased interest in waterfront development, coupled with increased congestion on land-based transportation resources, has provided an opportunity for waterborne transport to play a significant role in urban mobility efforts. Troy Manthy, owner of Yacht StarShip Dining Cruises has made a significant investment in launching the Pirate Water Taxi service. With over 14 stops located along the Riverwalk, Channel District and Davis Island, the fleet of three 50-foot water taxis can accommodate up to 46 passengers. The pirate themed water taxis offer historical narration, and concessions for their guests and provide significant benefits to downtown and the Tampa Bay region.

Landmark Development Project Award

Perry Harvey Park



The \$6.9 million Perry Harvey Park renovation has created an iconic public space that pays tribute to the history of Tampa's African-American community. The entrance to the park features 13-to-15-foot-tall sculptures of a couple dancing The Twist next to an oversized jukebox which is wired for sound. Why The Twist? Because the 11-acre park sits over the old Central Avenue, once the beating heart of Tampa's black business and nightlife scene. Central Avenue attracted "Chitlin' Circuit" stars like Cab Calloway, Ella Fitzgerald, James Brown, Ray Charles and B.B. King. The story goes that Hank Ballard wrote The Twist after watching kids dance on Central Avenue. The park also has a "history walk" that memorializes places and

events along Central Avenue, a statue of Perry Harvey, Sr., a "Leaders Row" honoring prominent community figures and a lawn for concerts, art shows and other events. The artwork at Perry Harvey Park is unique and contextual. Four major artworks by four artists work together in an attempt to tell the full and complex story of the abundant contributions of the African American community and Historic Central Avenue.

Downtown Detail Award

Laura with Bun, Jaime Plensa Sculpture at Tampa Museum of Art



Public art transforms spaces and creates renewed excitement in the urban core. One of downtown's most exciting new additions is *Laura with Bun*. Completed in 2014, *Laura with Bun* is a monumental cast-iron sculpture based on an individual portrait. Like other important portrait-based sculptures by Jaime Plensa, *Laura with Bun* invites viewers to consider multiple aspects of beauty, individuality, and human nature. At 23-feet tall and more than 18,000 pounds, this artwork expresses both individual and universal traits on a grand and soaring scale. Museum Trustees, Patrons, Members, and the community, together with lead gifts from an anonymous donor, Celia and Jim Ferman, Penny and Jeff Vinik, and the Williams Family generously contributed funds to purchase the sculpture. *Laura with Bun* is located on the northwest corner of the Museum's footprint, adjacent to the Poe Parking Garage, providing free public access to excellence in art.

Downtown Experience Award

The Beach Tampa



This August the Vinik Family Foundation invited Tampa Bay to share in an interactive architectural installation that brought a beach to Tampa's downtown. Created by Snarkitecture, *The Beach Tampa* was a 15,000 square foot immersive environment featuring an "ocean" of 1.2 million recyclable white balls that created a sense of wonder and anticipation, while also recalling a boardwalk beach arcade. Open to the public at no cost, visitors parked for free at the South Regional Garage and each guest was treated to a free ice cream upon entry. Approximately 100,000 people attended *The Beach Tampa* with more than 10,000 of those people having never been to an AMALIE Arena event before. Visitors of all ages were able to go for a "swim", enjoy the

view from the water's edge, or stroll along the pier. *The Beach Tampa* was certainly a Downtown Experience to remember!

Activating Spaces Award

Straz Center, Arts on the River



The Straz Center is the largest presenting, producing and educating institution in the southeast. In 2015 the Center launched its Arts on the River Activation Initiative designed to bring free, ongoing, interactive creative exhibits, performances, permanent public art installations, cultural events and family experiences outdoors on the Straz campus along the Tampa Riverwalk. In 2015 and 2016, the Fin Harp, Musical Bench and Cube were installed to enhance and activate spaces for the general public. The Center also commissioned internationally acclaimed photographer Daniel Chauche to roam Tampa with his portable portrait studio. The result was the "Who We Are: Faces of Tampa" installation that ran from April thru October this year.

Starting this fall the Straz Center has also planned a series of events and activities that will continue to lift cultural vibrancy and create an exciting and playful pedestrian atmosphere around the Straz including Art on the Walk, Mirror Your City, Straz Live! In the Park and Straz Live! on the River. More than 600,000 people come to the Straz Center each year and now there's more reason than ever to visit!

Arts & Culture Award

Gasparilla International Film Festival



From the Opening Night Premiere at the Historic Tampa Theatre to the festival's culmination at Muvico Centro Ybor, there is no better way to experience film!

Now in its 11th year, the Gasparilla International Film Festival has emerged as an anchor event for Tampa – bringing the community together through a love of film and creating a powerful platform to showcase our city beyond the screen. The film festival has continued to stand out as one of Tampa's fastest growing event, with last year's festival capturing 15,000 attendees from more than 100 cities around the world. This year is expected to be even bigger with festivities spanning 8 days and encompassing 35 events and 150 films across 10 venues.

Historic Preservation Award

Historic Rialto Theatre Renovation



and add air conditioning. There are no large corporations or investors behind this project, just a determined couple, crazy enough to take a leap of faith on a neglected space, driven to improve the community and Tampa arts. As with any 92-year old building, the work may never be complete, but Hope and George are devoted to continue improving the space and keeping their doors open to the community for many years to come.

Built in 1924, The Rialto Theatre was a live stage theater supported by the Federal Theatre Project. It later became Holtsinger Motors for nearly 50 years. In 2013, when Hope Donnelly and George Carter of 8-Count Productions purchased the theater, it had long been shuttered. They secured roughly \$750,000 through the Small Business Administration to purchase and renovate the theater turning it into a mixed purpose arts and event space. In 2014 they were awarded a Hillsborough County Historic Preservation Challenge program grant, which afforded the opportunity to restore the brick façade

Juror's Choice Award

Tampa Bay Veg Fest



Bay Veg Fest has been listed as 1 of 10 must-attend veg fests in the nation by One Green Planet. Attendees come from as far away as Ohio, Illinois and Canada!

Presented by the grassroots non-profit Florida Voices for Animals, Tampa Bay Veg Fest is an annual, day-long vegan food festival promoting the benefits of a vegan diet for health and the environment. The event has both non-profit and commercial vendors, rescue groups with companion animals available for adoption, cooking demonstrations, a children's activity area, live music, local and national speakers, free food samples and lots of delicious vegan food available for purchase from local restaurant vendors. The goal of this popular and fun event is to educate people on the benefits of plant-based foods and how delicious and easy it can be to make compassionate choices in the foods we eat. Over 5,000 people attended this year's event.

Downtown Person of the Year Award

Maryann Ferenc



A passionate advocate for independent businesses, Maryann was involved in the downtown renaissance when she moved Mise en Place to Kennedy Boulevard at Grand Central Avenue with co-proprietor Chef Marty Blitz in 1992. Mise en Place is now Tampa's premier restaurant for Modern American cuisine, some 30 years later. A visible and powerful presence in Tampa and downtown, Maryann is linked to multiple community organizations, including Feeding America Tampa Bay, Taste of the NFL, the Tampa Independent Business Alliance and the Tampa Downtown Partnership. She served three terms on the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board which advises the Secretary of Commerce and the President. She also sits on the US Travel Association board, is past chair of Visit Tampa Bay and will be the 2017 chair of Visit Florida. She is the recipient of the eWomenNetwork of Tampa Bay's 2009 Women in Business Lifetime Achievement Award, 2011 Tampa Bay Business Journal Businesswoman of the Year award and the 2014 Gonzmart Family Ambassador of the Year.

People's Choice Award

Leadership Tampa Bay, *Before I Die Wall*



For the third year the Partnership opened up our awards program for a public vote to see what downtowners feel is the best of the best downtown has to offer. We received a tremendous response, with the Before I Die Wall running away with the prize. The Leadership Tampa Bay Class of 2016 brought the interactive public wall of art to several locations in Tampa and St. Pete this summer and it is currently on display on the Riverwalk in downtown Tampa. The Before I Die wall is an inspirational public art display that originated in New Orleans in 2011 and has become an international phenomenon with over 1,000 installations in more than 70 countries across the globe to date. The wall invites people to reflect on their lives and share

their personal aspirations in a public space. The result is truly inspiring!

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