

**STOREFRONT FOR COMMUNITY DESIGN WELCOMES NEW EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR AND 6PIC DIRECTOR**

RICHMOND, VA (January 14, 2021) – Storefront for Community Design (Storefront) welcomes Shawn Balon to be the Executive Director of the organization and Kai Banks as the Director of the Highland Park Six Points Innovation Center (6PIC).



Shawn Balon has worked in the design, education, and non-profit sectors throughout the U.S. Prior to joining Storefront for Community Design, his work as a landscape architect and urban designer provided experience domestically and internationally combining graphic communications, conceptual design, community engagement, master planning, and project management. At the American Society of Landscape Architects, Shawn developed and managed the career discovery and diversity strategic work plan increasing awareness of design career opportunities to youth. At the George Washington University and Reynolds Community College he served as adjunct professor where he taught technical and drawing courses. Shawn graduated from Clemson University with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture Degree and received a Master of Science in Urban Design Degree from the University of Texas at Austin. *“I appreciate the board’s confidence in me, and I’m thrilled to have the opportunity to lead such a great organization. It will take innovative and purposeful solutions to create a path for Storefront for Community Design to continue addressing the challenges in our communities, and I look forward to advancing my efforts to focus on the importance of participatory design to honor differences, challenge injustices, and create vibrant neighborhoods,”* said Balon.



Kai Banks is joining Storefront for Community Design as Director of the Highland Park Six Points Innovation Center (6PIC) to develop equitable and culturally responsive strategies in conjunction with the community and other partners. She is currently attending Virginia Commonwealth University pursuing her Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science with a Non-Profit Management minor. Banks is an AmeriCorps (ACES) Action for Enhancement Services Alum. During her term with ACES, she served as a co-conspirator for several non-profit organizations including The Relationship Foundation of Virginia, Girls for a Change, Higher Achievement, and the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club under the strengthening families’ initiative. She is a trained facilitator on an array of topics such as conflict resolution, trauma, social change, food access, and healthy relationships. Most recently, as an Outreach Specialist for the Richmond Food Justice Alliance her efforts have been focused on inclusive community engagement around healthy food access and policy. *“I am honored to join Storefront for Community Design as Director of the Highland Park Six Points Innovation Center (6PIC) to develop equitable and culturally responsive strategies in conjunction with the community and other partners. I am committed to bridging the gap for marginalized communities by listening to their needs and providing education, opportunity, and resources so they can accomplish their goals,”* said Banks.

About Storefront for Community Design

As a true labor of love for the City of Richmond, Storefront was founded on Valentines Day, 2011. As we celebrate our 10th anniversary this year, we reflect upon the progress we've made to assist in creating more equitable communities. At Storefront, we believe design, when guided by community priorities, has the power to offer tangible solutions to community challenges. We will continue to provide a space for stakeholders to gather and engage in bold and difficult conversations with the goal of creating new models of leadership and community engagement around neighborhood development.

Storefront for Community Design is a non-profit design center in the center of Richmond, Virginia. We operate three main community-based program branches: Youth Empowerment, Affordable Design Assistance, and Community Advocacy. Learn more about each branch and our partnerships in Richmond below. To learn more about who we are, how we work, and what we've done, visit <http://www.storefrontrichmond.org/>.

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