Strategic Planning For Collaborative Preservation Services in New Orleans: Final Report
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Executive Summary

Tulane University received funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services in late 2014 to study the need for establishment of collaborative preservation and conservation services in the New Orleans area. The initial driver of the project was a need expressed by some of the city’s larger institutions for in-house conservation, but the planning process identified a variety of different needs which were held more commonly across institutions, and steps that need to be taken to lay the groundwork before a conservation lab can be established.

Goals of the project included increasing awareness of shared preservation needs in the city and region, documentation of those needs, and providing education for local cultural heritage institutions on the possibilities for preservation and conservation services and facilities. The main focus of the project was the development of this strategic plan for establishing collaborative preservation services to address the identified preservation and conservation needs.

The methodology for the project included holding institutional interviews, a focus group, and a town hall meeting to gather information on preservation needs from as wide a constituency of New Orleans cultural heritage institutions as possible. A Project Planning Team was established, and the team travelled to exemplar preservation project sites and service providers, followed by visits from national experts from the sites/service providers to New Orleans organizations.

During the interviews, focus group, and town hall meetings, the consultant and Planning Team discovered that many organizations in New Orleans still need disaster plans and other preservation policies, need instruction in environmental monitoring and control, and would like to expand their digital and digital preservation activities, but they lack the funding, staff, space, and equipment to address these needs. Working together collaboratively to address these concerns can help the cultural heritage community in New Orleans to immediately begin moving forward in conquering needs that currently seem to many to be almost on an “overwhelming scale” due to the “high per capita of important historic materials” in the city and region.

By the conclusion of the project, the Planning Team had established six strategies/projects on which to move forward:

1. Establishment of a New Orleans Preservation Coalition to provide local institutions a continuing “community” approach to address preservation needs
2. Development of subject-based humanities grant projects that can provide models of collaboration for New Orleans cultural heritage institutions
3. Establishment of a New Orleans Alliance for Response initiative to assist in disaster planning and response
4. Establishment of a Center for Preservation Services
5. Establishment of an Audiovisual Preservation Center
6. Establishment of a Collaborative Book and Paper Conservation Laboratory

The report below details the process, research findings, and strategies developed during the project.
Background

In September, 2014, Tulane University received an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) National Leadership Grant to study the potential for establishment of collaborative preservation and conservation services in the New Orleans area.

The grant builds on the significant preservation needs of libraries, archives, museums and other cultural heritage organizations identified in an IMLS-funded “Connecting to Collections” statewide preservation survey in 2011. One of the key findings of that survey project was that few Louisiana institutions have in-house preservation, conservation, or collections care staff.

The host institution for the grant, Tulane University, had identified needs for in-house conservation expertise, but realized the costs and resources that are needed to build a conservation lab for a single institution are large. To answer Tulane’s conservation needs, and those of other institutions within the city, the grant has a central purpose to investigate collaborative, sustainable options for establishing conservation and preservation services in the area.

Goals of the project include increasing awareness of shared preservation needs in the city and region, documentation of those needs, and providing education for local cultural heritage institutions on the possibilities for preservation and conservation services and facilities. The main focus of the project is a strategic plan for establishing collaborative preservation services to address the identified preservation and conservation needs. It is hoped that the methodology utilized in the project and resulting service offerings will serve as a model for other areas of the country needing to develop preservation services.

Process/Methodology

The first phase of the project, performed November 10-12, 2014, was a qualitative needs assessment of New Orleans-area cultural heritage institutions. Subsequent project activities include establishing a project planning team of nine representatives of local libraries, archives, and museums; institutional tours at model institutions by the planning team, and visits by consultants specializing in collaborative conservation, audiovisual preservation, and fundraising for preservation.

The methodology for the project, developed by Lead Consultant Tom Clareson, Senior Consultant for Digital & Preservation Services, LYRASIS, and Principal Investigator Annie Peterson of Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, is quite wide in scope, and has resulted in a wide variety of findings.

In Phase 1 of the project, Qualitative Needs Assessment, Clareson held interviews with several key organizations in the New Orleans area to determine their greatest preservation needs. Additionally, a focus group was held with a variety of library, archives, and museum representatives from New Orleans and other nearby Louisiana institutions. Finally, the initial findings of the interview and focus group portions of the project were presented at a Town Hall meeting, where participants were able to provide feedback on the findings so far, and suggest new ideas on their institutional needs and preservation concerns they saw in the region. Overall, 55 participants representing 22 institutions participated in the interviews, focus group, or town hall meeting.
Additionally during this initial phase of the project, Peterson established a Project Planning Team, with nine members from the institutions which had gone through the interview process, and who are key stakeholders in future preservation activities to be held in the region. Project team members are:

- Chris Harter, Director of Library and Reference Services, Amistad Research Center
- Emilie Leumas, Director / Archivist, Archdiocese of New Orleans
- Rachel Lyons, Archivist, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation Archive
- Greg Lambousy, Director of Exhibits and Interpretive Services, Louisiana State Museum
- Trish Nugent, Special Collections and Archives Coordinator, Loyola University
- Lindsey Barnes, Senior Archivist / Digital Projects Manager, National World War II Museum
- Yvonne Loiselle, Archivist, New Orleans Public Library
- Darcy McKinnon, Executive Director, New Orleans Video Access Center (NOVAC)
- Annie Peterson, Preservation Librarian, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University

While these types of activities, conducted by wide-ranging organization types, are often part of strategic planning initiatives, it is the steps in Phase 2 which have had the greatest effect and will help to ensure movement forward in future preservation activities. The activities have helped to educate representatives from the New Orleans cultural heritage community on preservation issues, and what is possible working collaboratively with adequate funding and support, and have served to build a community among local cultural heritage institutions, increasing mutual awareness of preservation challenges. Phase 2 activities included:

- A monthly program of visits by Planning Team members to each others’ institutions, to determine needs and build a united understanding of preservation concerns across different types of local institutions.
- Visits by planning team members to the organizations of three of the project consultants: The Preservation Lab, a collaboration of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County and the University of Cincinnati Libraries; George Blood Audio/Video; and the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts (CCAHA). Additionally, the Planning Team members visited the Conservation Lab at The Ohio State University. These visits served to show planning team participants models for collaborative conservation, collaborative audiovisual preservation, and preservation field services (information, education, consulting, and fundraising).
- Finally, the Project Consultants made visits to New Orleans institutions to gauge conditions at the Planning Team members’ home organizations.

The report below synthesizes the findings from the initial needs assessments, consultants’ findings, and from inter-institutional discussions by the Planning Team members. By the end of the process, the members of the Planning Team had agreed upon a series of activities and services to establish, and recommendations for those services are one of the final sections of the report.

**Initial Onsite Visit Findings**

During the interviews, focus group, and town hall meeting in November, 2014, Clareson and Peterson gained a great deal of useful information on the preservation needs of New Orleans institutions. In addition, participants in the meetings learned about some national best practices in collaborative preservation from the consultant and project director.
Participants in the series of discussion forums were concerned by the lack of funding, staffing, appropriate storage, and preservation in the area. Also, many organizations found, through their discussions, that they were unaware of existing resources for preservation in the New Orleans region, a finding that follows closely with the need for preservation education in the area. Finally, because of a large number of cultural heritage collections in the city (a “high per capita of important historical materials,” according to one participant), collection stewards in the region feel that the job of preservation is almost on an “overwhelming scale.”

Key findings across all of the meetings included:

- While some of the organizations have current disaster plans, others need to create or update their plans. Practice of the plans and hands-on disaster response training were needs identified across all groups.
- The groups were very interested in collaborative disaster planning and response activities, including the Alliance for Response, a national program that brings together cultural heritage staff with emergency managers and first responders in cities and states across the U.S.
- In addition to disaster plans, other preservation policies are needed at some institutions, including collection development policies, comprehensive preservation policies, and digital collection development policies. Sharing examples of good policies from New Orleans institutions and even best practices nationally could help to answer these needs. As of summer 2015, sharing of preservation-related policies among New Orleans’ cultural heritage institutions had already begun on a limited scale.
- Environmental monitoring activities and programs are underway at some of the institutions that participated in the November meetings, but education on this topic, and potentially making available environmental monitoring “loaner kits” in the region, would be helpful to all institutions.
- Digitization and digital preservation activities are growing in importance for New Orleans cultural heritage institutions. In particular, digitization of audio/video/film materials seems to be a topic of high interest across many organizations.
- The list of “problem collection formats” between the interviews, focus groups, and town hall meeting was wide-ranging, but participants in all three groups saw concerns with sound, video, film, digital, textile, furniture, and archival collections.
- Many organizations were outsourcing materials for conservation treatment, and local/area conservators were being utilized in most cases, except audiovisual and film materials, where some organizations are using national-level resources.
- Lack of staff and lack of funding for preservation were barriers seen across all of the groups; lack of space and equipment for training and a lack of training were additional shared concerns among several of the groups.
- In addition to collaboration on disaster planning and recovery, sharing preservation policy documents, collaborative grant projects, collaboration on digital and digital preservation projects, potential shared storage facilities, and training on preservation and digital projects open to all area cultural heritage institutions were seen as important future activities.
Findings from External Consultants

In addition to lead project consultant Tom Clareson, the team of national consultants on the project included Holly Prochaska, Head, Preservation Services & Lab in Cincinnati, George Blood, President of George Blood Audio/Video in Philadelphia, and Lee Price, Director of Development at the CCAHA in Philadelphia.

Key findings from each of the consultants are excerpted below, and have been adapted into the Strategic Planning Process.

Prochaska Collaborative Lab Consultation

Holly Prochaska visited the institutions on the planning team that are heaviest on book and paper holdings: New Orleans Public Library, National WWII Museum, Archives of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, Tulane University, and the Louisiana State Museum. Four out of five institutions are working with 3rd party conservators on a regular basis. However, the amount of work the institutions are able to subcontract is not sufficient to keep up with the backlog of materials needing stabilization or in-depth treatments. Barriers to increasing conservation with 3rd party conservators are clearly related to funding realities, not the inability of contractors to take on more work, nor an absence of clear priorities for treatment by the intuitions.

The use of contractors for conservation has a long history in New Orleans, and the pool of reputable professional conservators appears to be adequate. How potential partner institutions therefore would utilize a collaborative lab was not initially clear to all the partners. An oft voiced perspective was that individual single item treatment needs, as they can be afforded, are being met. However, larger preservation concerns such as storage, housing, policies and basic preservation training needs are not being addressed. The partners expressed confidence in the recommendations and work of their contract conservators, but desire more collaboration and consensus on how to provide adequate preservation environments for their collections.

While touring the collection holdings of the potential partners the need for a thorough collection assessment was apparent. Quantifying the needs of the collections in terms of repair, housing, storage, and overall facilities assessment has the potential to illustrate a path forward in institutional preservation planning as well as better outlining the role of a collaborative lab. An assessment would provide concrete suggestions on projects that would have a greater impact on the stability and longevity of the collections than the current single item conservation approach.

Though not a collection assessment, the institutional visits conducted by the consultant did clearly present projects that could be more easily managed by an appropriately staffed and supplied lab. A few examples include using polyethylene book jackets to “quarantine” red rot books, replacing acidic enclosures with archival enclosures, suggesting solutions for safely shelving oversized materials, modifying off the shelf enclosures with Ethafoam and Volara to create custom enclosures, and creating inexpensive cradles for reading room and exhibit use.

The above examples have the following things in common, they require expertise in determining the appropriate treatment (considering reversibility, economy, the level of skill required to perform the task, and the availability of supplies and equipment), offer a large quick win for collections stability,
and in many cases do not require the skill of a conservator but rather a trained conservation technician. Additionally many of the items in need of single item conservation, especially in the New Orleans Public Library Archives, are arguably “medium-rare” and though they should be evaluated by a conservator the treatment could be executed by a trained conservation technician.

While all the partners shared a desire to participate in the formation of a collaborative lab, evident in their full participation in this stage of the IMLS grant, not all have available resources to contribute to a lab – funding, staffing, equipment, or space. The reality is that to make a successful partnership, one or two partners must be able to contribute equally to the venture. Of the planning partners, Tulane University, Louisiana State Museum, and the WWII Museum seem to have the most potential to contribute resources and have governing bodies that support and value collaboration.

Tulane University, the lead on this project, can provide much to a collaborative lab: expertise from the Preservation Librarian Annie Peterson, equipment (book and paper), a physical space, a supply budget, and funding repurposed from 3rd party work. The Louisiana State Museum can contribute interns and expertise on establishing internship programs, expertise in exhibition prep, funding repurposed from 3rd party work, and a physical space. The WWII Museum has expertise in exhibit prep, funding, potentially the availability of space in an under construction building, and a board interested in expanding services and donor opportunities. All three institutions have very large and diverse holdings that could immediately benefit from centralized preservation planning and single item treatment. All three realize the importance of collaboration to move forward on large initiatives, obtain grant and donor funding, and attract new audiences.

As mentioned throughout, the collections held by the nine partners are diverse. All conservation specialties are needed, but the size of the collections, curatorial importance, and collection conditions warrant a phased approach. Ideally institutional collaborators’ collection assessments would inform phasing, but shared needs of book and paper, audio visual, and photograph conservation seem evident from the institutional tours and dialog with the partners.

Considering the expertise of the organizing partner, the available equipment and supplies, and the preponderance of documentary heritage in the New Orleans and Gulf Coast area, starting with book and paper conservation seems like a prudent first step. Additionally, the capability of book and paper labs to produce custom enclosures for objects would provide further collection care support to the museum and archive partners. Expanding into photographic conservation would require additional expertise, but the foundations of the lab and much of the equipment needed would lend itself to a logical next step.

The team environment of a collaborative lab allows for two distinct advantages over 3rd party conservation:

1. Working with the curators of the collections, the use and rarity of the object can be determined so that after the conservator’s treatment proposal is approved, the treatment can be assigned to the conservator or the conservation technician as appropriate.

2. The knowledge and skill that the conservator has can be shared with the technicians, ever advancing their skills and growing the lab.

In practical terms this leads to a cost saving. Materials that are medium-rare can be treated by skilled but less financially compensated staff, freeing the conservator up for more difficult or complicated treatments with the intuition’s treasures. In the collaborative team environment the
workflow is determined by the needs of the object, the level of the object’s use, the best person for the job, the most cost effective manner, and the quickest turnaround time. There is not this flexibility with 3rd party conservation as many of these variables are unknown.

New Orleans has a community of conservators that are well respected and experts in their fields. By establishing a collaborative lab the partners seek to perform single item treatments in a more economical way and to expand their capacity for special projects focused on long term preventative preservation. However, the need for 3rd party work will remain as a beginning lab would not have the necessary expertise for all areas of conservation. Additionally, with a small staff it may not be feasible to take on a rush project for one institution that would take dozens of hours to complete, thus reducing the output for the other partner. Lastly, as mention above, consideration of workflow are based on the needs of the object, the level of the object’s use, the best person for the job, the most cost effective manner, and the quickest turnaround time. This mental calculation will lead to known 3rd party collaborators on occasion.

There are many variables that the partners will need to come to agreement on before committing to a collaboration, among them funding, staffing, and administrative structure. This will all need to be clearly laid out in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The collaborative lab created by the University of Cincinnati and the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County opted for this type of agreement because it does not bind the two institutions together into a legal partnership, making the agreement easy for either party to dissolve if necessary, and it requires no renewal. The agreement stands as long as both parties are satisfied.

Joining together and sharing the costs of staffing, equipping, and infrastructure for a collaborative preservation lab in New Orleans provides the best opportunity for success in the culturally rich but financially challenged area. Establishing the lab will allow for economic efficiencies in single item conservation by allowing the curators and conservators work together to determine the right treatment by the right staff member. The lab will also assist with long term preventative preservation projects that will slow the deterioration of materials and the need for future treatment.

The collaborative lab however, at least initially, cannot meet the needs of those institutions that are not a fully participating partner. To meet the needs of the broader cultural heritage community will require a broad consortium of volunteers. One possible model, The Ohio Preservation Council, serves as a coalition of preservationists, conservators, librarians, archivists, curators, records managers, the institutions they represent, and other concerned citizens who recognize the serious threat to documentary heritage. The Council's mission is to provide a network for preservation education and to support preservation activities within the state of Ohio.

The need for long-term, organized, collaborative preservation services in New Orleans is apparent from discussions and site-visits with the partners and by the condition of many of the holdings. Stewardship of the documentary heritage and historical artifacts of New Orleans is a role that each partner takes with the upmost seriousness. Each partner has found a way to improve the conditions of their collections with what resources they have available. What has been accomplished individually is admirable, but a new model must be found that is more efficient and that makes preservation a daily activity, not a special event with a one-time financial allotment. The collaborative model pools resources, expertise, and provides an innovative model of service. A lab created under a team model also has the capacity to grow and expand services, reacting to the needs of the surrounding community and the experiences and skills of trained staff.
The institutions clearly have the desire to improve the conditions of their collections and the strategic planning sessions have clarified to the partners how a lab might operate and provide services that would lead to improved collection stability. Garnering more concrete support at the administrative level is the next step and I believe the 9 partners are ready, willing, and able advocates.

George Blood Audiovisual Preservation Consultation

Consultant George Blood noted during his visits to New Orleans Planning Team member institutions in April, 2015 that “a strong community spirit and collaborative tone has developed.” Blood’s specialization is preservation and digitization of audiovisual materials, so he visited institutions with AV-heavy collections: Tulane University, New Orleans Video Access Center, the Jazz and Heritage Archive, and Amistad Research Center.

Following his April visit, Blood stated that “there is a general awareness of the needs for better care and processing of audiovisual collections. Every institution struggles to provide proper environmental storage for their audiovisual media. Indeed, there is a struggle with all archival media storage among the partners. This is especially troubling giving the high humidity and temperatures of the region. Within the partners there is a wide range of environmental storage conditions. In addition, basic processing and organization of collections ranges “from above average to barely adequate. This reflects the staffing available and the core mission of these institutions.”

An important portion of future preservation programmatic activities in New Orleans is the need for an audiovisual preservation lab. Blood notes “NOVAC serves a diverse community of program producers, with the handling, organization and processing of archival holdings well outside their core mission. While NOVAC staff are unfamiliar with archival practices, they have years of experience with audiovisual media. Knowledge of legacy media is a challenge to acquire. The retirement and death of people familiar with old audiovisual equipment and formats is a great concern within the (overall) A/V preservation community. Archival processing is still taught and staff with that knowledge is readily available, including in the great New Orleans area, especially on the project (planning) team. There is an opportunity at NOVAC to build audiovisual preservation services on their foundation of existing knowledge, informed by input from information professionals.”

According to Blood, audiovisual media are “different from most holdings in libraries and archives due to their ‘machine dependency’. There are over 70 different video formats, and 50 different audio formats on physical carriers (as opposed to many more file formats and codecs in the digital domain). Most require a specific machine to recover the information stored on the carrier. Within the field of audiovisual preservation there is general consensus there is only 10-15 years before many formats become completely inaccessible due to this problem of obsolescence\(^1\). Though some formats may be accessible for a longer period, there is no doubt the end will come during the lives of everyone working on the project team, and likely before their retirement.

Blood had several recommendations for all of the institutions involved in the project and for New Orleans institutions in general:

- Install environmental monitoring to collect baseline. Use this information to advocate for improved climate control and monitor the results.

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• Consider ways in which storage could be consolidated and the buying power of a larger group might drive down the cost for all. One option is for the consortium to contract for offsite storage together. Another option is to consolidate holdings at one institution, such as the existing Tulane/Amistad storage facility, and use the fees from the other institutions to upgrade HVAC systems for all. Both options incur operating expenses, and the second a capital cost, though that might be funded externally. Damage to collections due to poor storage environments, especially when there is mold growth, significantly shortens the life expectancy of the materials, and raises the cost of access and digitization by requiring expensive conservation treatment prior to handling.

• Perform basic archival processing of audiovisual collections. Many tasks are easily performed by volunteers, including removing record-safety tabs, applying hold down tape to loose ends of reels, dusting media, orienting properly (tape should be stored on end, film stored laying down), and basic rehousing.

• Create or expand disaster plans at each institution to cover audiovisual media.

• Research deeds of gifts, consent forms and rights options; then meet with institutional council to prepare boilerplate submission forms. These forms will necessarily different between research institutions, such as Tulane, Amistad and Loyola, from creators such as Jazz and Heritage Archive and NOVAC.

• Upgrade playback and digitization equipment systematically, with a focus on improving quality and reliability, rather than adding range of formats that can be played.

• Identify local technical experience to improve setup, care and servicing of existing equipment. Though Parker Dinkins, who has worked extensive with the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation Archive is now retired, he may be willing to help, either directly or to identify someone else.

• Define the scope of digitization that will be performed in-house then focus on learning how to optimize reproduction and capture of those formats.

Additional recommendations from Blood pertain to building audiovisual digitization capacity. These are general recommendations applicable for both in-house and consortial arrangements. There are five levels of audiovisual digitization possible:

1) each institution builds or expands internally,

2) each institution outsources,

3) the consortium outsources collectively with larger buying power,

4) members of the consortium build audiovisual digitization facilities capable of meeting the needs of the group – whether all under one roof, or one institution each handling audio, video and film, or

5) some combination, such as in-house capacity for quick patron-access combined with larger-scale outsourcing or a consortium facility.

It is common for institutions to have modest in-house capacity, but to outsource large projects. Some institutions outsource both projects and patron-access.
Price Fundraising Strategies Consultation

In the team meeting and at the site visits, Price and the Planning Team discussed fundraising possibilities for five potential strategies. The institutions represented at the meetings and site visits appeared to be very enthusiastic about all five of these strategies.

1. Develop subject-based humanities grant projects that can provide models of collaboration for New Orleans cultural institutions
2. Establish a New Orleans Alliance for Response
3. Establish a Center for Preservation Services
4. Establish an Audiovisual Preservation Center
5. Establish a Collaborative Book and Paper Conservation Laboratory

With each of these strategies, it will be important to designate an institution responsible for taking the lead. While Tulane is the leader of this planning initiative, it will not necessarily be the best institution to serve as the lead institution on several of these proposed strategies. Strategies should be led by institutions that have stability and the internal resources needed to support them, as well as strong self-interest in seeing the strategy succeed.

In addition to the five strategic initiatives identified above, Price emphasized the need to continue to explore strategies for collaborative approaches to other important areas, including processing and cataloging, textile conservation, painting conservation, and objects conservation.

After the initial team meeting, Price met with Emilie Leumas (Archdiocese of New Orleans Office of Archives) and Christopher Harter (Amistad Research Center), followed by site visits to the New Orleans Video Access Center, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library at Tulane University, the National World War II Museum, Loyola University Special Collections, the City Archives at the New Orleans Public Library, and the Louisiana State Museum.

At each of these meetings, Price explored the special interests of each of the institutions that have potential for driving their involvement in preservation projects. Also, he discussed their institution’s history of fundraising for both preservation and conservation projects. All participants stressed that New Orleans funding sources are limited and often overwhelmed by very demanding needs from other sectors, particularly health and human services. Existing funding sources appear to have particular interest in projects that are very community-oriented and have strong education components. Compared to comparable-sized cities, there are relatively few large corporations or foundations. New Orleans can boast of a sizeable number of potentially generous major donors.

Representatives from the Archdiocese of New Orleans Office of Archives, the National World War II Museum, Special Collections and Archives at Loyola University, the Louisiana State Museum, and the Louisiana Division/City Archives at the New Orleans Public Library expressed interest in supporting initiatives that could increase the overall best practices of collecting institutions in the region through education programs, such as could be provided by a Center for Preservation Services. Division heads at Howard-Tilton Memorial Library at Tulane University supported the idea of collaborative preservation projects, as demonstrated by their willingness to take the lead on the current planning project.

Discussions at the New Orleans Video Access Center (NOVAC) centered on their strong interest in establishing an internal audiovisual reformatting center. They are prepared to commit staff time and resources toward fundraising, with an immediate goal of raising sufficient funds to hire a
preservation technician with the expertise to use existing equipment for reformatting projects. Christopher Harter at the Amistad Research Center said that their greatest need is for a local center for audiovisual preservation and they welcome the proposed expansion of NOVAC. At the World War II Museum, there was mention of many queries coming to the museum from people in the region looking for consultation advice on preserving audiovisual material in private collections.

There was general interest in collaborative projects based on themes such as the current “Free People of Color in Louisiana” project. The upcoming 300th anniversary celebration in 2018 of the founding of New Orleans could offer opportunities for preservation and conservation projects centered on the city’s earliest historic documents. The Archdiocese of New Orleans Office of Archives, the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library at Tulane University, the Louisiana State Museum, and Special Collections and Archives at Loyola University have Colonial-era documents that could benefit from funding for a special 300th anniversary collaborative project.

While the idea of a collaborative book and paper conservation laboratory is supported by all members of the team, none of the institutions is currently prepared to take the lead on a large capital project of this kind, requiring significant investments in personnel time and resources.

**Strategic Initiatives**

Because of the exceptionally-productive work the Planning Team has completed during this initial one-year IMLS Planning Grant, it is strongly suggested that the group continues to meet to build and implement the necessary preservation services for the region. This Planning Team/Preservation Council could continue to meet as a standalone initiative, or as part of an existing group such as the Greater New Orleans Archivists.

In the June, 2015 meeting of the Planning Group with Lead Consultant Tom Clareson, it was decided that in addition to establishing a Preservation Council to continue the momentum of the planning team, the service areas originally suggested by Price were the most important initiatives to develop. The initiative profiles below include a description of the initiative; information on implementation time period; funding issues; resourcing/human resource support needed to move the initiative forward; and additional notes on the initiatives. For some of the larger initiatives, full business plans need to be developed. Initiatives are listed in chronological order of how the Planning Team and Lead Consultant felt they should be implemented to continue current momentum and to provide some collaborative service models as soon as possible.
I. Project Name: New Orleans Preservation Coalition

Description: Establish a preservation organization in New Orleans to continue the community that the Planning Team built. The organization may be a part of the Greater New Orleans Archivists (GNOA), or a separate entity entirely, dependent upon further discussions with the planning team and GNOA.

Needs Addressed: Organization to allow information-sharing, basic education, and activity coordination to address preservation needs from institutions throughout the city.

Implementation Time Period: Establish in early 2016

Funding needed: None, initially. Time commitments needed from members of planning team.

Potential Funding Sources: Membership fees from individuals and institutions.

Local Resource Team: Peterson, lead. All nine planning team partners to start. Develop planning teams/subgroups to focus on each strategic initiative in this plan.

Fundraising Plan: As the Project Planning Team completes this strategic planning project, the nine institutions that have spearheaded the work to date should continue to work together, having already proven their effectiveness as a team. Renamed the New Orleans Preservation Coalition, they can continue to maintain leadership responsibilities for moving forward on the six strategic initiatives detailed in this plan.

In order to effectively launch the New Orleans Preservation Coalition, the new organization should initially meet to determine leadership, optimum size of the Coalition Board, and any gaps in representation of the New Orleans cultural community on the Coalition. During its first year, the New Orleans Preservation Coalition should adopt a mission statement and a short-term strategic plan. While the plan can be short (two- to five-pages may be sufficient), it should contain measurable goals, a timetable for implementation, and assigned responsibilities for identified tasks. If feasible, an outside facilitator is often helpful in leading a retreat and subsequently preparing these documents. If an outside facilitator is not available, the group should internally assign responsibilities for leading the retreat and the writing of the documents. In preparation for the retreat, participants should be encouraged to study the websites of the Ohio Preservation Council and the North Carolina Preservation Consortium as potential aspirational models. Following the retreat, the New Orleans Preservation Coalition should establish a regular meeting schedule, with probably no more than four official meetings annually.

During these first-year meetings, the New Orleans Preservation Coalition should make decisions regarding its institutional status, examining options to function as an independent advisory group, or as a committee operating within the Greater New Orleans Archivists or a similar parent organization, or as an independent organization with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. If the organization is functioning purely as an advisory group, providing planning and encouragement to initiatives that are centered at existing institutions, there may be little need to pursue nonprofit status. However, if the strategic plan recommends that the New Orleans Preservation Coalition take leadership responsibilities for the fundraising of any of the initiatives, the Coalition should immediately begin plans for attaining 501(c)(3) status or establishing its status within a larger nonprofit parent organization.
If the New Orleans Preservation Coalition chooses to operate as an advisory group, the organization should be able to function with—at most—very minimal overhead, probably low enough to be covered by annual membership fees or dues. If the organization receives nonprofit status, it would be able to fundraise for initiatives (such as those recommended in this plan) through grant writing, corporate requests, or individual requests.
II. Project Name: Collaborative Grant Development

Description: Develop subject-based humanities grant projects that can provide models of collaboration for New Orleans cultural institutions and support both preservation and access. Develop further collaborative grant proposals to fund projects outlined in this strategic plan. Pursue opportunities for writing preservation, such as conservation treatment, preservation quality AV reformatting, and more, into grant-funded projects supporting access.

Needs Addressed: Lack of staff and lack of funding for preservation were barriers seen across all of the groups involved in Phase I. A coordinated approach to developing grants for preservation will address the funding issue across institutions and avoid duplication of work. Funding agencies and foundations are currently very interested in collaborative, multi-institutional grant proposals.

Implementation Time Period: Immediate, and already happening to some extent with projects described above and Planning Team representatives providing support letters for NOVAC. A Preservation Assistance Grant was submitted to support collaborative disaster preparedness and response training.

Fundraising Plan: The New Orleans Preservation Coalition can encourage New Orleans cultural institutions to launch collaborative projects that support long-term goals for preservation and access of important cultural collections within the city. For promotional and fundraising reasons, these projects are best strategically planned as supplements to upcoming large scale events or as commemorations of important anniversaries. In most cases, planning and fundraising should begin several years in advance of the event or anniversary.

Fundraising for collaborative projects should be led by an institution thoroughly involved in the project, with strong staff and Board commitment toward project success, and with personnel time and resources available to be committed toward fundraising and project development. Usually organizations like the New Orleans Preservation Coalition are not appropriate to serve as the lead organization on this type of campaign, although they can provide supplementary assistance and connections.

Louisiana State University’s “Free People of Color in Louisiana” project, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, is an excellent model as it involved funding for processing and digitization for collections at LSU, the Louisiana State Museum, the New Orleans Public Library, the Historic New Orleans Collection, and Tulane University. The project was primarily funded through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), with additional funding from each of the participating partners.

Currently, four federal programs offer major funding opportunities specifically targeted for collection preservation and accessibility projects: 1) The NEH Humanities Collections and Reference Resources grant category provides funding for preservation and accessibility (this was the NEH category that funded the “Free People of Color in Louisiana” project), 2) the Institute of Museum and Library Services offers grants for collection stewardship through its Museums for America category, 3) the National Archives and Records Administration offers grants for preservation, arrangement, and digital dissemination of historical records of
national significance, and 4) the National Endowment for the Arts offers grants for collection stewardship of art collections through its Art Works category.

None of these federal programs will fully fund a large-scale collaborative project. All require some degree of matching support, with all matching funds to be raised from non-federal sources. In some cases, in-kind support of personnel time is allowable for a portion of the match. Before committing to the time and resources needed to develop and submit a federal proposal, the collaborating organizations should commit to a plan to raise the matching funds from both local and in-kind sources. While the lead organization will ultimately be responsible for raising the funding, the collaborating organizations and the New Orleans Preservation Coalition should be encouraged to accept supplementary fundraising responsibilities that demonstrate their commitment toward the success of the project.

The upcoming 300th anniversary celebration of the founding of New Orleans currently presents opportunities for exactly this kind of fundraising. While the year of the celebration is 2018, this type of large-scale collaborative project can be tagged as an anniversary project even if it is a multi-year project that starts late in the year, with the launch of the project capitalizing on its anniversary status. As they are of more recent vintage, collaborative projects for preserving audiovisual collections can be designed to capitalize on 10-year, 25-year, 50-year, 75-year, and 100-year anniversaries.

Whenever possible, testimonials should be collected from academics and writers concerning the historic importance of targeted collections. These testimonials are extremely valuable in establishing good will and buy-in, as well as for strengthening grant, corporate, and individual requests.

**Funding Needed:** No additional funding needed; Planning Team members need to consider collaborative aspects of grants their institution is developing and strategically invite other local institutions with similar needs and collections to join in grant. Time commitments needed from partner institutions.

**Potential Funding Sources:** National Endowment for the Humanities/Humanities Collections and Reference Resources grants for projects; Institute of Museum and Library Services; Local, State, and National Foundation Grants.

**Local Resource Team:** Representatives of all nine Planning Team partners at start. After a Preservation Coalition is established (see Phase I), it may coordinate preservation-related grants in New Orleans area.

**National Resource Team:** Lee Price, CCAHA (Lead); Tom Clareson, LYRASIS; Sandy Nyberg, Grants Officer, LYRASIS (tentative)
III. Project Name: New Orleans Alliance for Response

Description: Establish a New Orleans Alliance for Response, based upon the Alliance for Response model formerly led by Heritage Preservation and currently managed by the Foundation for the American Institute for Conservation (FAIC). Bring together cultural heritage and emergency management professions at the local level, where virtually all initial disaster response occurs.

Launched in 2003, Alliance for Response is a series of one-day forums designed to link key cultural heritage and emergency response representatives, leading to new partnerships and local projects. Alliance for Response fosters cooperation among cultural organizations, influences local planning efforts, and enhances the protection of cultural and historic resources. Several cooperative disaster networks have formed in the regions where Alliance for Response forums have been held.

Several of the institutions on the planning team do not currently have written disaster plans that specifically address their collections, so there is a clear need for increasing disaster preparedness in the participating institutions and then growing that collaboration to other local institutions. Adequate preparation is especially crucial in the New Orleans area given its vulnerability to natural disasters.

Needs Addressed: In Phase I of the project, only some organizations had current, up-to-date disaster plans. Practice and hands-on disaster response training needs were identified across all institutions. Coordinated disaster planning and response activities in New Orleans are critical, with the damage and destruction that the city and many cultural heritage institutions have been through before. Communicating the importance of planning and preparedness before a disaster, and collaborative work on development of disaster plans for those institutions that do not currently have them may help to reduce damage to collections in minor, major, and area-wide disasters. Coordination with Emergency personnel can help institutions be ready when disaster personnel need to respond to future incidents.

Implementation Time Period: Calendar 2016

Funding Needed: $10,000 or less to start

Potential Funding Sources: National Endowment for the Humanities Preservation Assistance Grant proposal for $6000 has already been submitted and group will know about grant award by 12/31/15 or earlier. Additional funding (or funding if NEH grant not received) can come from national corporate preservation vendors, local corporations, local and state foundations.

Fundraising Plan: The nine organizations of the Project Planning Team are currently leading a strategy to launch a New Orleans Alliance for Response through a nine-month project to bring disaster preparedness and response workshops to the New Orleans area. The nine participating organizations have agreed to serve as the founding members for this new Alliance for Response Network for New Orleans. To launch the program, Tulane University Library served as the lead organization on an application to the National Endowment for the Humanities through their Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions category in April 2015. Grant awards will be announced in December 2015.
The Project Planning Team is committed to moving ahead with the formation of the New Orleans Alliance for Response regardless of the success of the pending grant request. Given the complete overlap between members, it might be best to initially consider the New Orleans Alliance for Response as an initiative of the New Orleans Preservation Coalition, with meetings of the groups planned in tandem.

FAIC, the national organization managing the Alliance for Response program, can offer valuable assistance in registering a name for promotional activities through a website and Facebook page. The new Alliance for Response Network should formally organize with adoption of a written mission statement and goals, as well as membership guidelines. Development of a mailing list should not only include New Orleans cultural organizations but also City of New Orleans Division representatives (Police, Fire, etc.).

There is no required organizational structure for Alliance for Response networks. As there are already more than twenty Alliance for Response networks operating throughout the country, the members should consider identifying model programs in areas with similar emergency concerns in order to research their organizational structures and activities. Operating nearby, the Mississippi Alliance for Response may offer a particularly suitable model, perhaps warranting a visit to observe one of their meetings.

NEH Preservation Assistance Grants are ideal for funding the type of activities often undertaken by Alliance for Response networks. Since these programs are so focused upon the real and immediate needs of local institutions, the most likely prospects for additional funding are local foundations, corporations, individuals, and civic organizations. Public speaking opportunities on the disaster response needs of the cultural community can be effective in building public support. If individual members of the Coalition become publicly involved in fundraising, they should exercise appropriate caution by keeping their own organizations fully informed about their involvement in order to avoid any potential conflicts.

**Local Resource Team:** Peterson, Lambousy, Leumas

**National Resource Team:** Tom Clareson, LYRASIS (Lead); Dyani Feige, CCAHA; Alliance for Response representatives at the Foundation for the American Institute for Conservation (FAIC).

**Additional Notes:**

- Work with FAIC staff to secure local group’s name for website, Facebook, and other future uses.
- Attend and observe Mississippi Alliance for Response meeting in late 2015/early 2016 to learn how local efforts work.
- Develop mission and goals for local AFR effort
- Plan initiative kickoff meeting or “Forum” for calendar 2016.
- Define topics for quarterly meetings after initial Forum including insurance, “mini-surveys” at member institutions for disaster vulnerability, etc.
- Invite City of New Orleans Divisions representatives (Police, Fire)
IV.  **Project Name: New Orleans Center for Preservation Services**

**Description:** Service to provide preservation and digital information; preservation and digital workshops; free or inexpensive preservation needs assessment surveys; disaster planning assistance (writing disaster plans, reviewing plans, providing templates); assistance developing preservation-related grant proposals; environmental monitoring consultation and equipment loaning.

**Needs Addressed:** National preservation services are available for some level of assistance, but more specific, localized, embedded services are needed to better serve New Orleans institutions, and serve their needs more quickly, efficiently, and economically.

This service can help to address the lack of funding among New Orleans cultural heritage institutions for preservation services by providing more economical assistance and eliminating the need to pay travel costs to national services; this type of activity can also help to assist cultural heritage institution staff who have inadequate staff time to devote to preservation. Many of the needs identified in Phase I would be addressed through establishing local, affordable preservation services.

**Implementation Time Period:** Submit grant between September 2015 and July 2016; begin implementation between September 2016 and January 2017.

**Funding Needed:** Approximately $100,000/year ($70,000 salary and benefits; $30,000 space/equipment/supplies/local travel funding) – this figure could be less if initial staff started at part-time level. Also need to secure funding so that local preservation needs assessments can be subsidized to the point where they are low-cost or free (see CCAHA’s Subsidized Grant Service model, which provides low-cost surveys in the Philadelphia and Southeast Pennsylvania area and a few national low-cost surveys each year). Full business plan is needed.

**Potential Funding Sources:** IMLS 21st Century Librarian Grants; National Endowment for the Humanities Education and Training Grants; Pooled Institutional Funding; Louisiana Foundation grants from Noel Foundation, McIlheny Foundation, or others.

**Fundraising Plan:** Maintaining the momentum established through this planning project, the New Orleans Preservation Coalition can move quickly to fund a three-year demonstration project in New Orleans, offering workshops and surveys to cultural institutions while building the infrastructure necessary to maintain an independently-operated preservation center. Through existing partnerships with LYRASIS and the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts, the New Orleans Preservation Coalition can establish programs quickly in New Orleans, while simultaneously training a local consultant to provide long-term management for the programs and activities. In order to establish a local center, the New Orleans Preservation Coalition should invest in business planning, as well as Board of Directors recruitment and development. The consultant would be positioned to serve as the first staff person of the fledgling organization. As funder of the current planning grant, the Institute of Museum and Library Services should be approached as a potential funder for the demonstration project, perhaps through an implementation grant through the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program.
When establishing the New Orleans Center for Preservation Services, the new Board of Directors should consider organizational structuring based either on the WESTPAS model (a loose model where staff and resource needs are kept to a minimum through extensive use of consultants) or the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts model (adapting their professionally-staffed Preservation Services Department as a stand-alone model). The WESTPAS model would require a higher level of volunteer commitment for ongoing fundraising and management, although that commitment could come from consultants rather than Board members. It will also be important to establish the boundaries of the initial area of service, as well as the degree of interest in considering opportunities to expand to serve other underserved Gulf Coast communities from Galveston, Texas to the Florida panhandle.

The new Board of Directors of the New Orleans Center for Preservation Services will need to quickly invest in both business planning and strategic planning in order to commit to strategies to establish a sustainable organization with the resources needed to serve the region. The first priority should be to identify funding sources to maintain one part-time or full-time employee to manage educational programs, survey assistance, emergency planning, and fundraising. The Board of Directors should consider all traditional fundraising sources (individuals, foundations, corporations, civic associations, etc.). While the Board should research opportunities to identify funding to subsidize educational programs and survey activities, they should also create a fee schedule to offer these services to the community as potential earned income generators.

As the New Orleans Center for Preservation Services becomes established, the organization should intentionally position itself to be eligible for funding through the “Preservation and Access Education and Training” grant category of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

**Local Resource Team:** Peterson, Nugent, Leumas.

**National Resource Team:** LYRASIS Digital and Preservation Services staff; CCAHA Preservation Field Services Staff.
V. Project Name: Audiovisual Reformatting Center

Description: Develop services including audiovisual preservation education programs; audiovisual production services; audiovisual collection preservation assessments; preservation planning assistance; transfer services.

Needs Addressed: Assistance with, and education/information on the preservation of audiovisual collections was one of the key needs expressed most by institutions in the interviews, focus groups, and town hall meeting.

Implementation Time Period: Could start in Calendar 2016 if applied-for grant funding is received, or state and regional foundation funding is pursued.

Funding Needed: $150,000 or more per year to support equipment and staff assigned to project.

Potential Funding Sources: National Endowment for the Humanities Grant (Humanities Collections and Reference Resources Foundations Grant, $46,000) submitted July 15, 2015 by NOVAC could be start. Consider IMLS and state and regional foundation grants. Also investigate state and local business incubator grants. A full business plan needs to be developed.

Fundraising Plan: The Project Planning Team identified the New Orleans Video Access Center (NOVAC) as an organization with a potential for establishing a New Orleans-based audiovisual reformatting center as a new internal department. NOVAC is very well-established in the city as a community base for filmmakers and other media creators, with ties to many cultural heritage institutions and academic institutions. They already possess some equipment for video reformatting and have space on-site available to support the service. The Project Planning Team has strongly encouraged NOVAC to move in this direction in order to meet a very real need in New Orleans for greater local access to this type of service.

As the Project Planning Team reforms as the New Orleans Preservation Coalition, they should maintain their strong support for the establishment of an audiovisual reformatting department at NOVAC. The Coalition can actively support NOVAC in the early stages of establishing this department by aggressively promoting the service throughout the New Orleans cultural community. Information regarding available grant opportunities for audiovisual reformatting should be disseminated to all known collecting institutions in the region. Several federal grants for digitization are available, including the new “Common Heritage” grant category at the National Endowment for the Humanities.

NOVAC can endeavor to fully fund the new department through a mix of traditional nonprofit fundraising sources (individuals, foundations, corporations, etc.) as well as through marketing to individuals and business to encourage the use of fee-based services, creating an effective earned income revenue stream. For this type of community project, state and local business incubator grants are often useful in expanding existing businesses to fill identified service gaps. In addition, NOVAC can support local nonprofits in applying for funding for grants for digitization and reformatting of their audiovisual collection items.

If NOVAC decides not to pursue an expansion into audiovisual reformatting, the New Orleans Preservation Coalition should research other options, including encouragement of the
opening of a branch office of an existing professional reformatting service in New Orleans, a collaborative effort by two or more larger cultural institutions to create a shared audiovisual center, or the development of a new stand-alone nonprofit or for-profit center. The New Orleans Preservation Coalition could offer to assist any of these efforts with fundraising, promotion, or recruitment.

**Local Resource Team:** McKinnon, Peterson

**National Resource Team:** George Blood (advisory role); Mona Jimenez (NYU); Linda Tadic (NYU/Audiovisual Archive Network).
VI. **Project Name: Conservation Services Center**

**Description:** Establish in-house conservation services for two or more institutions, following the Cincinnati lab model.

**Needs Addressed:** Large-scale, long-term conservation needs of New Orleans’ largest and most complex cultural heritage institutions and their collections.

**Implementation Time Period:** 5-7 years in future

**Funding Needed:** $250,000-plus per year; full business planning needed.

**Potential Funding Sources:** National Endowment for the Humanities; Mellon Foundation

**Fundraising Plan:** The establishment of a paper conservation laboratory in New Orleans, perhaps with additional abilities to offer painting, textile, or object conservation, was identified as a long-term goal by the Project Planning Team. There were concerns raised that much groundwork still needs to be laid at the area’s collecting institutions, especially in providing preservation needs assessment surveys and collection surveys. The establishment of a New Orleans Center for Preservation Services (Project IV. in this plan) would directly address these concerns, ideally preparing the area for a regional conservation laboratory. On the timeline accepted by the Project Planning Team, the New Orleans Preservation Coalition would move forward with the first five strategic initiatives described in this plan, with a commitment to revisit the proposal to establish a paper conservation laboratory in approximately five years. At that time, a survey could be distributed among New Orleans collecting institutions to gauge the level of need for the new facility.

The Project Planning Team visited two conservation center models for replication, the Preservation Lab in Cincinnati and the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts (CCAHA) in Philadelphia. The Preservation Lab is a collaborative venture supported jointly by the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County and the University of Cincinnati Libraries. These two Cincinnati institutions have adopted an innovative weighted system to determine a fair division of work for each of the institutions annually within the lab, as well as a portion of time available to outside organizations for contracted services (conservation treatment and preservation services) which contribute toward overhead. CCAHA is a nonprofit conservation laboratory that specializes in conservation treatment of paper-based artifacts. It is funded through a combination of contributed income, primarily derived from foundation and government support, and earned income. Both the Preservation Lab and CCAHA have realized success with their differing organizational and funding structures.

In order to pursue the Preservation Lab model, the New Orleans Preservation Coalition would need to identify a minimum of two large institutions prepared to commit personnel and resources toward raising all necessary funding. Some of the participating institutions on the Project Planning Team—namely Tulane University, Loyola University, the World War II Museum, the New Orleans Public Library, and the Louisiana State Museum—have the infrastructure in place to embrace projects of this size. However, these are large and complex institutions with many other competing priorities. Two committed leaders would have to emerge in order for this model to move forward. If these leaders are identified, the New Orleans Preservation Coalition should be prepared to assist them in any way requested.
In order to establish a conservation laboratory based on the CCAHA model, the New Orleans Preservation Coalition would need to work with consultants to establish a startup (including construction or retrofitting costs for the laboratory facility) and operating budget for the proposed center. Following this, they would embark upon a consultant-managed feasibility study to determine the area’s capacity to financially support and sustain the proposed plans. The feasibility study would present plans for either building a conservation laboratory or retrofitting an existing building, along with drafts of the mission and long-term goals of the center, to potential funders, including foundation staff, government representatives, and community leaders.

If the feasibility study indicated that sufficient funding would be available for both start-up and ongoing operating expenses, the New Orleans Preservation Coalition could work to establish the new nonprofit organization and assist with fundraising, promotion, and recruitment. Generally, projects of this kind receive funding from city, state or federal government programs; private foundations; corporate and business sources; and major donors with a history of contributing toward cultural and civic programs. In most cases, a professional fundraising consultant—or a firm specializing in managing nonprofit capital campaigns—should be hired to manage the capital campaign.

**Local Resource Team:** Peterson

**National Resource Team:** Holly Prochaska, CCAHA management; interested members of the Association of Regional Conservation Centers (ARCC).

**Additional Notes:**

- Other steps, including preservation needs assessment, prioritizing for conservation, learning how to work with conservators, communicating preservation needs to institutions’ administrations, are crucial before a conservation lab can be established at any of the institutions on the planning team
- Existing capabilities may suffice for many of the planning team member’s immediate needs
- The need is for in-house expertise, so that a conservator is actually on staff for institutions, *not for increased outsourcing capabilities*
- Planning Team felt this cannot be the number one priority; get other services off the ground first.
- Utilize existing capabilities now – local conservators; national conservation services providers.