WHILE THE YEAR BROUGHT MANY UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES,

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE SUMMER OF RACIAL RECKONING

HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR WORK IN HARNESSING THE POWER OF DESIGN THINKING TO

PROMOTE EQUITY AND EMPOWER LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

Sasaki Foundation

2020 Annual Report

Sasaki
Foundation

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Letter from the Executive Director



2020 SEED site visit | Sasaki

In 2020, the Sasaki Foundation celebrated our 20th anniversary. While the year brought many unexpected challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic and the summer of racial reckoning highlighted the importance of our work in harnessing the power of design thinking to promote equity and empower local communities. Thanks to generous donors, thoughtful partners, and engaged research teams, we were able to adapt, deliver on our mission, and celebrate impact in the communities we serve.

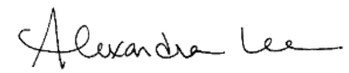
Leading with research and experimentation, the Sasaki Foundation saw our second research cohort accomplish their projects, despite the pandemic requiring a shift to virtual community outreach and remote work. We published their results, and selected our third research cohort. This cohort began work remotely, leveraging Sasaki's design expertise through virtual channels.

Through the lens of community learning and engagement, the Sasaki Foundation hosted virtual events that fostered deep and meaningful conversations on activation of the public realm, climate resilience, redlining and affordable housing policies, mobility through the lens of equity, and more. We also celebrated our 20th anniversary with a conversation between Dr. Karilyn Crockett, Chief of Equity for the City of Boston, and Mary Anne Ocampo, Sasaki Foundation board chair and principal at Sasaki, who discussed important issues on city making, civic dialogue and engagement, and building a more equitable Boston.

With an eye towards professional practice and growth, we once again partnered with American Student Assistance to continue our youth programming. In light of the pandemic, we were able to adapt to virtual platforms. This allowed us to translate our high school internship into an online curriculum, free and available to all students interested in exploring a career in design.

Of particular significance was the Mobility Innovator, a year-long research initiative to address mobility challenges in the Boston region through the lenses of resiliency and equity. The project, funded by the Barr Foundation and in partnership with Sasaki, utilized community engagement to explore the challenges of mobility access in the Gateway Cities of Lynn and Malden, partnered with City Form Lab at MIT in a research studio that culminated in a report on commuter rail access, and in 2021 will sponsor two MIT events focused on mobility. These events will connect local low-income communities, communities of color, MIT researchers, and other key stakeholders.

These highlights of the past year are outlined in the following report, and new initiatives are underway. Please consider getting involved with the Sasaki Foundation—as a research team, as a program partner, or as a donor—and help support this important work of providing access to design for communities that need it the most.



Alexandra Lee
Executive Director

People

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The Sasaki Ambassadors volunteer their time and effort in all areas of our work.
Our success relies on their commitment to and belief in our mission.

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In partnership with MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning, the Sasaki Foundation benefited from three interns: Tess McCann, Thito Wisambodhi, and Alex Boccon-Gibod. Their hard work supported our Summer Exploratory Experience in Design (SEED) program, Mobility Innovator initiative, and forthcoming Density Atlas work—thank you!

Mission Statement



Through research, programs, and partnerships, the Sasaki Foundation takes an interdisciplinary approach to tackling global challenges. Using design thinking—the iterative practice of understanding, innovating, prototyping, testing, and implementing—the Sasaki Foundation supports approaches that bridge the physical environment, community and social needs, policies and governance, and economic forces that shape communities.

2019-2020 Design Mentorship Program | Sasaki

Priorities

We believe design has the power to address the most urgent challenges facing us, from social equity to environmental resilience. Design is an agent of change. And yet, access to design—for communities who need it the most—is often limited. From our unique position at the intersection of research, practice, and community, the Sasaki Foundation leverages design to tackle these challenges and more—especially for communities that are disproportionately vulnerable to them.

Making meaningful and lasting change requires designers to blur the boundaries that separate practice and research, academia and industry, the profession and the public. Making change requires designers to embrace vastly different points of view. Above all, making change requires collective impact. At the intersection of research, practice, and community, the Sasaki Foundation is committed to advancing the value of design, inviting diverse partners to co-create change.

The Sasaki Foundation's strategic objectives translate its vision into a more focused, actionable set of outcomes. We focus on the following three key priority areas: Research and Experimentation, Community Learning and Engagement, and Professional Practice and Growth.

Our intent is to test new models and projects that can work within communities and then scale to other communities with similar characteristics. Our research agendas, public programming approaches, and design education objectives are all developed through the lens of equity in design.



The Hideo Sasaki Foundation is named for Hideo Sasaki, an internationally renowned landscape architect who was admired for his teaching, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary approach to design.

Rentify Chinatown, 2019 Design Grants team | Rentify Chinatown

RESEARCH AND EXPERIMENTATION

Large-scale, complex challenges require cross-disciplinary thinking. That's why the Sasaki Foundation convenes experts and innovators from all backgrounds. Our research programs focus on bringing issues of inequity in design to the forefront. This means supporting active research projects that center on inclusion and collaboration with communities who have historically been removed from the design process. Advancing interdisciplinary design research is in service to building more equitable cities and communities.

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

Informed and engaged residents are the central ingredients of a successful community. The Sasaki Foundation invests in ideas and strategies that engage community members in the design process—and contribute meaningfully to its outcomes. To that end, we work with civic leaders, educators, economists, and technologists to connect design and community-driven action through public programming.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND GROWTH

A thriving design industry relies on a pipeline of diverse, talented, and passionate practitioners who infuse new ideas and disrupt established patterns. The Sasaki Foundation supports professional organizations and initiatives that prepare such future leaders. We also advocate for innovative design practice, seeking ways to cross discipline boundaries and amplify impact. Of special interest are educational programs that advance diversity and inclusivity in the next generation of design professionals.

The Sasaki Foundation emphasizes resiliency, as it relates to challenges that adversely impact communities, including the following:

Proactive Approaches to Climate Adaptation
We support responses to climate change issues, which, especially in environments with the urban heat island effect and flooding, disproportionately impact communities of color and low-income communities.

New Models for Housing
We support strategies to improve housing affordability, promote a more diverse housing stock, and address gentrification and displacement.

Innovation in Transit and Access to Mobility Choices
We support design strategies and solutions to address existing challenges to reliable transit; strengthen public-private partnerships in expanding transportation choices; and leverage technology to provide greater access to transportation options by eliminating barriers.

Creative Community Building
We support projects and organizations on themes of collective memory and community storytelling, investment in historic neighborhood fabric, and local business development.



2019-2020 Design Mentorship Program | Sasaki

IMPACT: Research & Experimentation

The Sasaki Foundation issues an annual call for proposals seeking projects that engage with communities in the Gateway Cities, Metro West, and Greater Boston. Seeking interdisciplinary, creative approaches to test new design concepts in these communities, proposals are evaluated through the lens of our strategic focus areas—Proactive Approaches to Climate Adaptation, New Models for Housing, Innovation in Transit and Access to Mobility Choices, and Creative Community Building—and based on the criteria of design, equity, inclusion, innovation, and impact. Grants include access to design expertise from Sasaki professionals.

In 2019, Sasaki Foundation Design Grants finalists pitched their ideas to a jury that represented design, transit, housing, and environmental organizations. The Sasaki Foundation selected the following three grant recipients who completed their projects in June 2020.

- Designing Shelters for Dignity
- Energy Shift Boston
- Rentify Chinatown

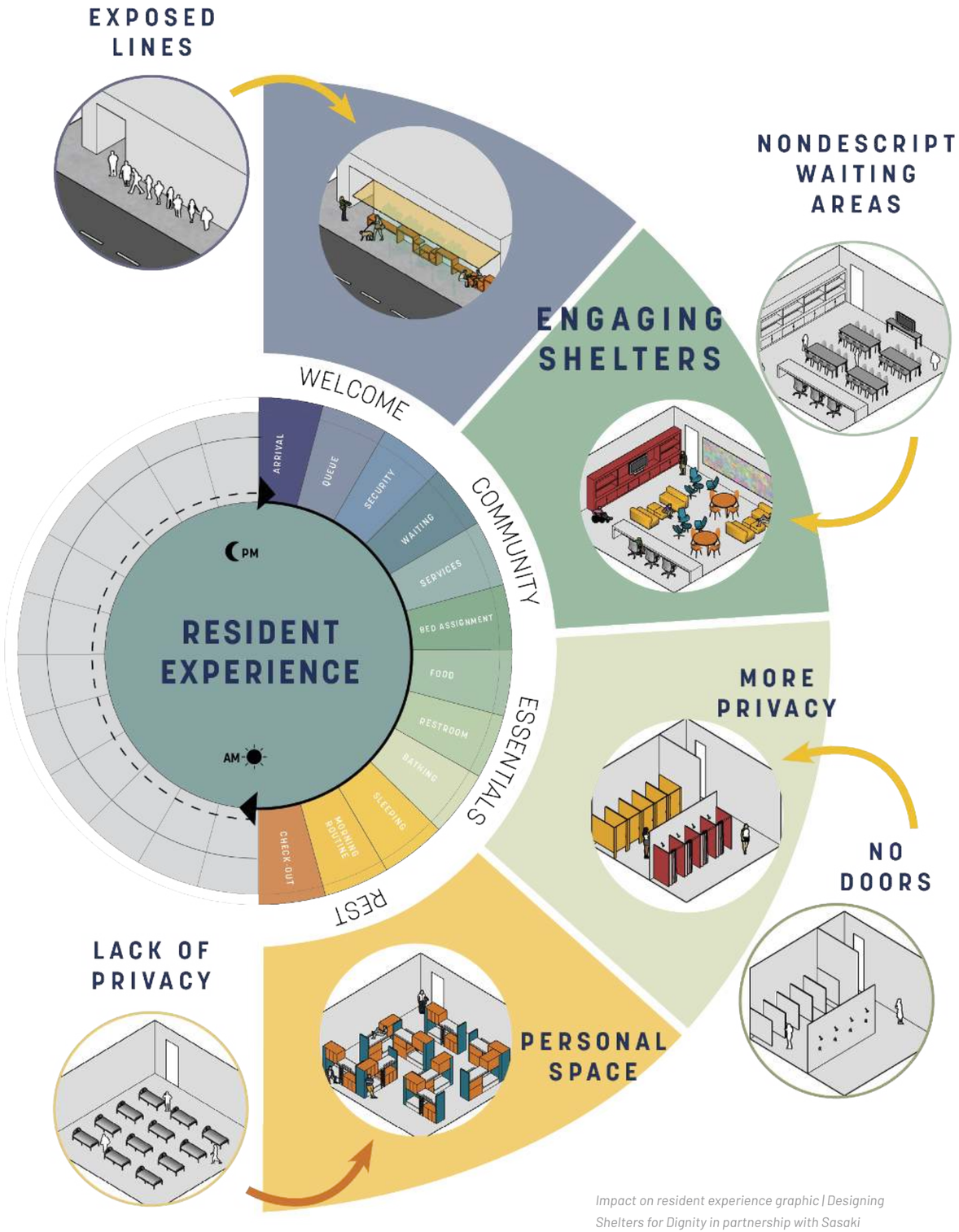
In 2019, the Sasaki Foundation also awarded Community Grants to two additional finalists, to participate alongside the research cohort with a shared goal of creating change through the power of design.

- East Boston Mobility Hubs
- Knitting the Alewife: from Vulnerable to Vibrant

Their complete reports are available in the Sasaki Foundation 2019-2020 Design Grants Research publication available at sasakifoundation.org.



2019 Design Grants cohort working in the Incubator at Sasaki | Sasaki



Impact on resident experience graphic | Designing Shelters for Dignity in partnership with Sasaki

2019-2020 DESIGN GRANTS RECIPIENT

Designing Shelters for Dignity

Laila Fozouni, Elena Clarke

While Designing Shelters for Dignity believes everyone has the fundamental right to stable housing, the team acknowledges this will take a massive cultural shift and in the meantime many without housing are suffering in dehumanizing and degrading shelter conditions.

Physical designs of many emergency homeless shelters strip guests of dignity and privacy, and send the message to people without housing that they are not valued by society. The team believes changing the design of these spaces through input from shelter operators, staff, and guests can significantly improve the well-being of individuals sleeping in homeless shelters, at very little cost.

The Designing Shelters for Dignity team designed low-cost, nonstructural physical modifications to shelter spaces that can be easily fabricated and installed in emergency shelter spaces. The team focused attention on four main areas of shelters: the entrance where people queue, the waiting areas and common spaces, the restrooms, and the sleeping areas.

Possible modifications in these spaces include modifying the queue to decrease stigma and exposure to bad weather. They also include making common spaces more vibrant and welcoming, installing physical barriers between beds to increase the sense of privacy and safety, and modifying bathroom doors to protect the dignity of guests while ensuring safety during the addiction epidemic. Through advocacy efforts, the team has worked and will continue to work to promote these design modifications in the hope that they will serve as a model for new design standards implemented across multiple shelters.



2019-2020 DESIGN GRANTS RECIPIENT

Energy Shift Boston

Nathan Phillips, Mary Brady, Ania Carmargo, Rickie Harvey, Audrey Schulman, Zeyneb Magavi, Keeley Bombard, Olivia Ruzzi

Energy Shift Boston applied lessons learned from the 2018 Merrimack Valley Gas Disaster to pilot how communities can proactively develop resilience to energy system failures. The team engaged diverse communities across District 6 of Boston to identify and work with more than 100 households to screen their capacity to temporarily shift to electric heating and cooking in the event of a protracted gas outage, as occurred in the 2018 Merrimack Valley gas disaster.

Through the Energy Shift Boston project, the team discovered that the very starting point for an investigation of the ability of households to use temporary electric heating and cooking appliances—the main household electric service amperage—is both widely recorded and yet not readily accessible to emergency responders or city planners.

The key impact of this project is raising the opportunity for cities and towns to take advantage of discovering this data gap and to act to bring this crucial, simple piece of household information—for disaster resilience and long-term climate action—into a readily accessible manner. Moreover, because energy shift is a societal shift— in that short-term or long-term electrification of cooking and heating requires education and community engagement—this project has successfully piloted a grassroots, community-driven process for a transition to safer, cleaner, and more sustainable energy systems for all.

Energy Shift Boston concept graphic | Energy Shift Boston in partnership with Sasaki



Chinatown Historical Trail map | Rentify Chinatown

2019-2020 DESIGN GRANTS RECIPIENT

Rentify Chinatown

Tianyu Su, Weiyi Cao, Zhuangyuan Fan, Ruichen Ni, Helena Rong, Juncheng Yang

Understanding Boston's Chinatown is at risk of gentrification and displacement, which exacerbates the loss of identity and memory, Rentify Chinatown aims to leverage the joint power of data analytics, digital tools, and in-depth interviews to document and explain the place-based identity of Chinatown.

Boston's Chinatown is both home and the cultural and service hub for local communities as well as Chinese and Chinese American communities in outlying towns. The Rentify Chinatown team has created a shared database of quantitative and qualitative data for Boston's Chinatown community organizations. At the same time, the team offers insights about local identity challenges and opportunities in the neighborhood.

In order to achieve these goals, with the help of community organizations including Chinatown Community Land Trust and Chinatown Progressive Association, Rentify Chinatown first collected historical information such as maps, numbers, and stories about the development and evolution of Chinatown. The team leveraged the data collected to create the Chinatown Historical Trail map, which featured significant places carrying the neighborhood's identity. Then, to better understand how people visited and utilized Chinatown places, the team collaborated with their project partners and identified the patterns of people's visits to Chinatown and how this valued Chinatown as a service and cultural hub. The team also developed WOW Chinatown, a crowdsourcing mapping tool embedded in WeChat—the messaging application widely used among Chinatown residents. In early 2021 (delayed due to COVID-19), the Rentify Chinatown research team, along with Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center and Pao Art Center, will introduce this tool to residents and their friends and families, encouraging individuals to identify, post, and share their memories and sentiments about specific locations in Chinatown.

Combining this historical information, quantitative data, and personal perspectives, the team shared the layered results that document the identity of Boston's Chinatown as an essential cultural and service hub, featured by a series of critical destinations. To preserve this significant identity, the team will document and exhibit those vanished locations online while advocating to protect the still existing places and physical structures.

Additional project funding provided by:

Barr Foundation

East Boston Mobility Hubs

Kirstie Hostetter, Matthew Petersen, Alex Yamron

The Mobility Hubs Toolkit, a TransitMatters project intended for local and national distribution and use, explains mobility hubs, their benefits, and the various structural elements that can make up a mobility hub. For each element, the toolkit will include information on siting requirements, expected cost magnitude, who is the likely implementer of that piece of infrastructure, and examples. The toolkit also will walk readers through next steps if they would like to advocate for mobility hubs in their own neighborhoods. It will be written and presented to capture the interest of a non-technical audience, focusing on community organizations and members. The toolkit will engage its audience by creating a vision, using illustrative user stories and mobility hub images to bring the benefits and possibilities of mobility hubs to life.

The team intends to contextualize the toolkit in today's realities by including a prologue that describes why mobility hubs lie at the center of sustainable mobility, racial justice, and economic recovery. The toolkit will highlight how the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and protests against police violence have made the need for modal choice and freedom of mobility more urgent than ever, and preview how mobility hubs help accomplish those goals by providing clear, actionable information about the modes available, and gathering those modes of transport all in one place. Additionally, when done well, the process of evaluating a site for a mobility hub guides people through a process of thinking about how different community members move through and reside in a space, which can reveal other inequities or safety concerns to address.

The toolkit will serve as an intellectual anchor for the team's work promoting sustainable mobility in East Boston, Somerville, and Everett, and hopefully as a resource for advocates in these communities and elsewhere. While completing the research and writing, the team has been working to support city leaders who want to build mobility hubs in their cities and engage other community groups. The toolkit will advance the conversation across the region about what mobility hubs are and why they are necessary, just as TransitMatters advanced the conversation about Regional Rail.



Mobility hub illustration | East Boston Mobility Hubs

Knitting the Alewife: from Vulnerable to Vibrant

Doug Brown, Sarah Howard, Patricia Schroeder Loheed, Steven Nutter

Collective resilience touches every aspect of our shared lives and is only possible when owned and enacted by the people of the place in partnership with professionals, nonprofits, and government representatives. Knitting the Alewife is building a resilience learning community of community actors, municipal and state governments, university researchers, and local and regional nonprofits. The goals are to collaboratively understand and steward the Alewife as an eco-social system, find shared meaning in climate data, explore and evaluate alternative futures, and co-implement knitting projects across borders and boundaries of all kinds.

The project focuses on how to build the missing social and political infrastructure and frameworks that can support co-creation by all. Without these, design projects can be rooted in Power Over* techniques without realizing the full potential that leads to true resiliency in a Power With process.

Creation of the following supported this process:

- An Alewife cross-boundary housing study and visualization to inform resilient stewardship of the whole system by all
- Resilient whole-systems mapping and communication materials to co-create across boundaries
- A reframing of working design methods to enable community actors, government, and professionals to co-construct knowledge and action about resilience together across boundaries, to transform Power Over to Power With, towards greater spatial justice.

**Power Over is systemic injustice in which dominant cultural norms, behaviors, values, and identities are privileged in professional and everyday practice. Power With prioritizes mutualism and co-creation. (Concept from Patricia Evans)*



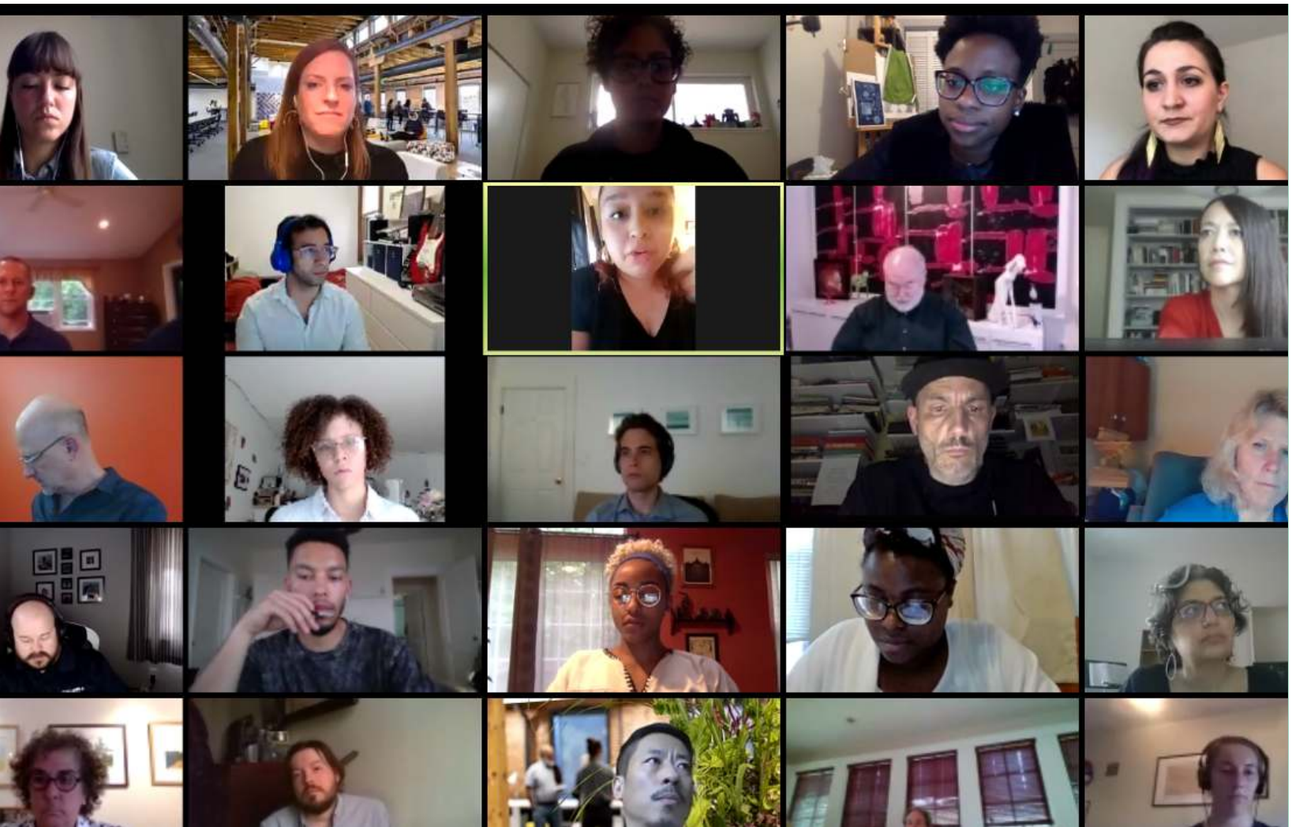
Menotomy Manor (Arlington Housing Authority) case study flood risk due to sea level rise | Knitting the Alewife

In 2020, 12 teams made of 33 individuals responded to the call for proposals, representing 45 organizations and institutions, 8 Boston communities, 21 Greater Boston cities, and 5 Gateway Cities.

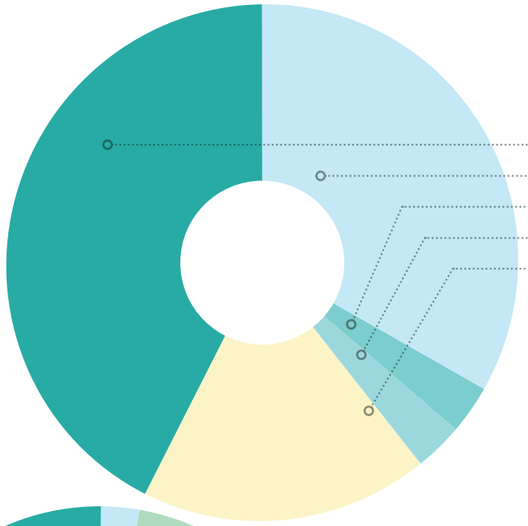
PITCH NIGHT 2020

At Pitch Night 2020, a virtual event sponsored by Columbia, the Sasaki Foundation Design Grants finalists pitched their ideas for projects that address climate adaptation, new models for housing, transit access, and creative community building. The 135 attendees included designers, entrepreneurs, investors, civic leaders, and corporate and nonprofit leaders, and represented more than 70 organizations.

2020 Design Grants Pitch Night | Sasaki

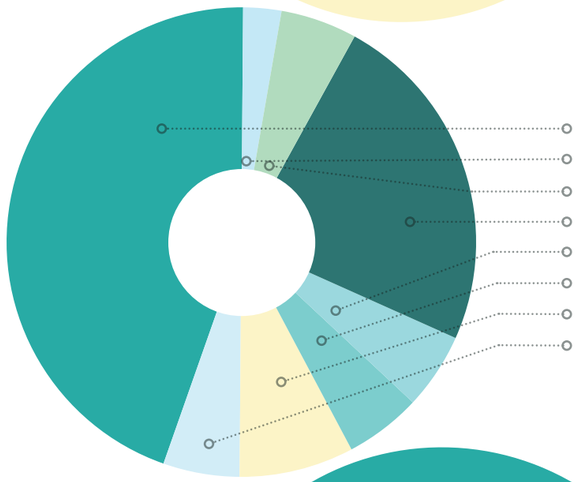


2020 CALL FOR PROPOSALS RESPONSES



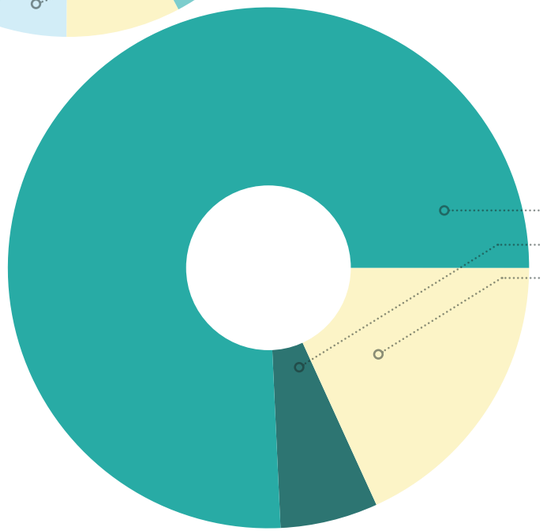
GENDER

42%	Cisgender Women
33%	Cisgender Men
3%	Gender Queer/Non-conforming
3%	Not Listed
18%	Prefer not to answer



ETHNIC DIVERSITY

52%	White
3%	American Indian/Alaska Native
6%	Asian
27%	Black/African American
6%	Hispanic, Latino, Spanish
6%	Middle Eastern/North African
9%	Other
6%	Prefer not to answer



DISABILITIES

76%	No
6%	Yes
18%	Prefer not to answer

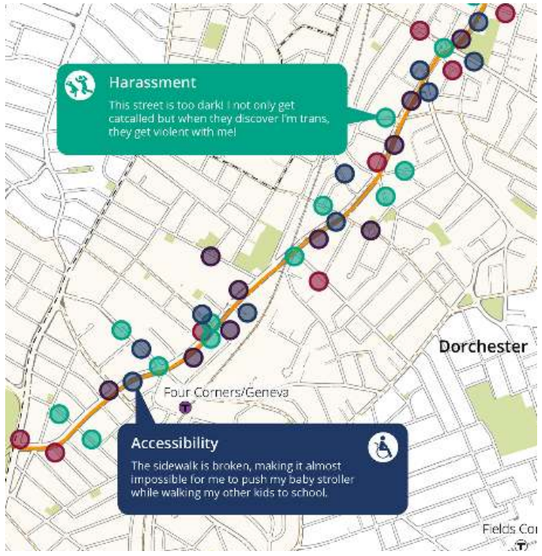
The Sasaki Foundation issued the Design Grants 2020 call for proposals under the theme of Shared Futures: Charting a Course for Action. This theme recognizes that multiple futures are at stake, and we can make a difference by acting now and as a collective.

Recipients of the 2020-2021 Design Grants and Community Grants are as follows:

Columbia Road Gender and Mobility Initiative

Maria de la Luz Lobos Martinez, Ambar Johnson, Kristiana Lachiusa, Dychell Reeves, Denise Roman

The Columbia Road Gender and Mobility Initiative explores the mobility limitations that stem from gender inequities, particularly the gendered experiences of streets. The redevelopment of the Columbia Road corridor provides an opportunity to address the structural problems emerging from the gender data gap that exists in city planning and for meaningful public engagement on the corridor's renovation. Accordingly, this initiative will amplify women and gender-expansive silenced voices and help them to have a better mobility experience through gender-specific participatory processes that elevate the perceptions of women and non-binary people in an aim to co-design cities that are legitimately for all.



Economic Development: Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Co-creation, and Design

Neil McCullagh, Taylor Perkins, Keyna Samuel, Charles Vlahakis

Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation in Partnership with the Corcoran Center for Real Estate and Urban Action will apply design and design principles to answer the primary research and action question: what is a healthy mix of retail and small business for the neighborhood, and co-generate a community-grounded strategy to support and promote local business that will strengthen the community, improve economic mobility, and advance quality of life for all residents.



The Mattapan Mapping Project

Allentza Michel, Barry Fradkin, Laurie Goldman, Cecley Hill, Lily Song

The pace of urban redevelopment and population growth in the Greater Boston area places residents of historically underinvested, racialized, low-income neighborhoods at risk of displacement. The multi-layered drivers of displacement make data—both quantitative and qualitative—hard to aggregate and track. Therefore, it remains unclear as to which policies could allow for neighborhood improvements without posing displacement pressures on the most vulnerable residents. The Mattapan Mapping Project combines nuanced demographic statistics, land use trends, and audio and video media on an online interactive platform to inform strategies by policymakers, activist scholars, and residents to confront displacement.



Charles River Floating Wetland

The Charles River Floating Wetland, a 2018 Design Grants winner, explores an ecological intervention to reduce harmful algal blooms in the Charles, which threaten the river's health and limit the feasibility of swimming. Reducing nutrient pollution remains a vital method for preventing blooms, but this approach depends on increasingly complex solutions. Ecological interventions, like the floating wetland, offer an alternative and complementary strategy. Experiments have shown that for water bodies like the Charles, algal blooms can be understood as a symptom of a broken food chain. The project aims to strengthen the missing link—zooplankton populations—by providing additional wetland habitat.

In June 2020, in partnership with MassDCR, the team installed the floating wetland in the Charles River in Cambridge downriver of the Longfellow Bridge. During the island's two-year installation, a Northeastern research group will collect data to understand if adding additional habitat has the hypothesized outcome on the local food chain. The Charles River Conservancy will use the wetland to help the public understand the ecology of the river and ways that we can help make it a healthy and vibrant ecosystem.

Learn more at thecharles.org/floating-wetlands.



Charles River Floating Wetland Installation, June 29, 2020 | Sasaki

ECHO

ECHO (Expanding Choice in Housing Opportunities), a 2018 Design Grants winner, is a new tool designed to help improve the housing search process for low-income families in Greater Boston and around the country. Low-income families, especially families of color, often face significant barriers to living in their neighborhood of choice, including overt racism, steering by some brokers to segregated areas, a lack of information on neighborhood options and transit accessibility, and unaffordable rents. As a new housing search tool that provides customized information on communities and affordable housing, ECHO helps overcome these barriers.

ECHO was originally designed to serve Section 8 voucher holders in the Greater Boston area. In particular, the tool was designed as an effort by the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) to affirmatively further fair housing in the region, meaning taking steps, in meeting the requirements of federal regulations, to lower barriers to low-income families accessing a greater variety of neighborhoods, as well as investing in low-income communities in Boston. Since then the team has expanded ECHO's features to help serve low-income families without vouchers who are struggling to find affordable housing in and around Boston. They are continuing to improve upon the tool so that it can be helpful for anyone searching for affordable housing in Massachusetts and beyond.

Learn more at the new website, echosearch.org.

G{Code}

G{Code}, a 2018 Design Grants winner, is working towards equity and social justice by providing young female and non-binary people of color interested in pursuing careers in tech with foundational needs such as housing, inclusive communities, quality education, and expanded access to economic opportunity. Boston is a city of great opportunity but also geographic and demographic inequity. This drastically impacts young female and non-binary people of color: while many programs benefit them during their high school years, post-high school options are limited. G{Code} programming empowers those who are aging out of other services to explore their next steps and pursue careers as change makers in the tech industry.

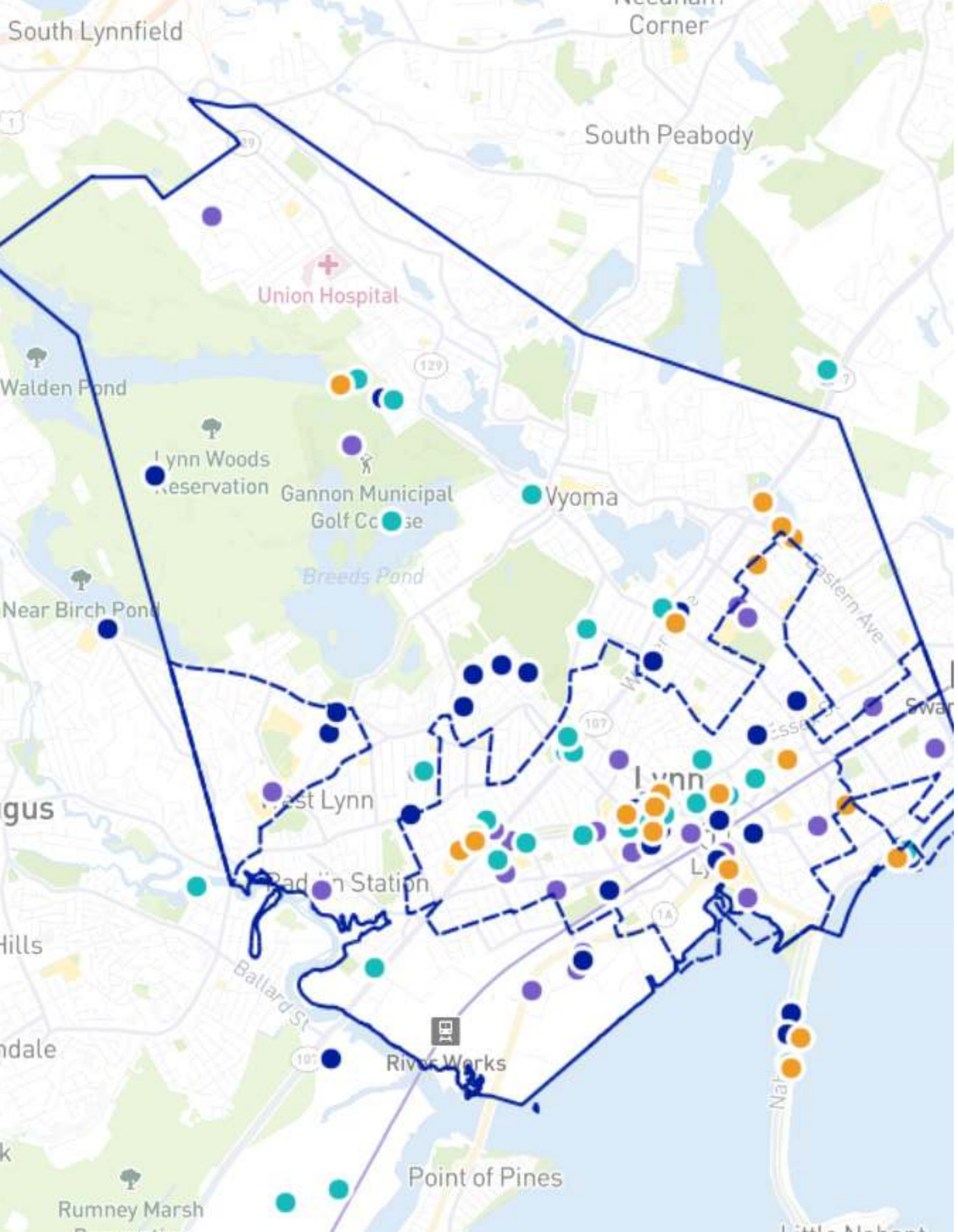
In spring 2020, G{Code} launched Intro to G{Code}. This course is a free 10-week program designed to give female and non-binary people of color between the ages of 18 to 25 first exposure to coding to uncover interest and aptitude in tech in a supportive, inclusive, and safe environment. In fall 2020, G{Code} welcomed the second cohort in a virtual capacity due to COVID, and will continue to run the course twice a year. Several graduates from the first cohort have already transitioned to careers in the tech industry.



Intro to G{Code} spring 2020 cohort | Corban Swain

Through a crowdfunding campaign, G{Code} raised $50,000 in preparation for their two-year program, and in November 2020, Bridgette Wallace, G{Code} founder, was selected for the American Express "100 for 100" program. The program, created by American Express in partnership with IFundWomen of Color, will provide 100 Black women entrepreneurs with grants of $25,000 and 100 days of business resources.

Learn more and get involved at thegcodehouse.com.



MOBILITY INNOVATOR

The Mobility Innovator was a year-long initiative to address mobility challenges in the Boston region through the lenses of resiliency and equity. The project, funded by the Barr Foundation and in partnership with Sasaki, sought to understand how to better connect communities of color and low-income communities to jobs, social networks, daily needs, and amenities by improving and augmenting existing and emerging transportation networks. It explored how to better leverage technology to identify gaps in current mobility options, including bike and pedestrian pattern analysis and public safety of mobility choices. The project also investigated how amenity-oriented development can achieve a higher share of retail, food, service, entertainment, and social trips on foot.

get [t]here website | Sasaki

The Mobility Innovator initiative is funded by a generous grant from the Barr Foundation, whose mission is to invest in human, natural, and creative potential, serving as thoughtful stewards and catalysts. Founded in 1997 and based in Boston, Barr focuses regionally, and selectively engages nationally, in projects in the arts and culture, climate, and education sectors.

The Mobility Innovator initiative is in partnership with Sasaki. For over sixty years, Sasaki has brought together the best of architecture, interior design, planning and urban design, space planning, landscape architecture, and civil engineering to shape the places in which we live. Out of their Boston, Denver, and Shanghai offices they are defining the contours of place and redefining what's possible along the way. Today, they are a diverse practice of over 300 professionals who share a singular passion for creating authentic, equitable, and inspiring places.

Barr Foundation

SASAKI

get [t]here

The Sasaki Foundation, in partnership with Sasaki, created get [t]here. This website explores the challenges of mobility access in Gateway Cities around Greater Boston, specifically in Lynn and Malden. Through an interactive survey circulated in fall 2020, get [t]here provided community members an opportunity to express their mobility priorities and observe how projects and policies can support their needs. The team summarized the results of these needs in an online story map that indicates which priorities, projects, and policies could be most impactful to each community. The team then overlaid existing datasets to the online map to highlight potential strategies and opportunities for improving those conditions. We hope this tool can align expressed needs with investment opportunities and muster the political will to equitably invest in mobility infrastructure in communities that have historically lacked, or been denied, quality mobility infrastructure.

Explore the research at visualizations.sasaki.com/get-there/.

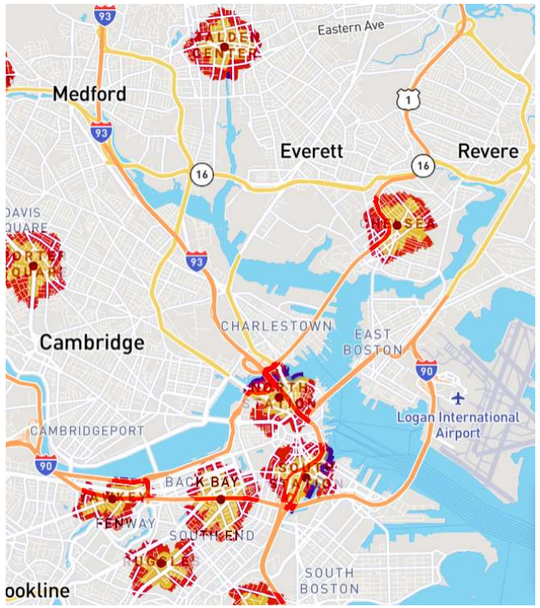


get [t]here website | Sasaki

Transit Access

The Sasaki Foundation partnered with Andres Svetsuk of the City Form Lab at MIT to research commuter rail access in Greater Boston. The research team compared measured and perceived distances to the nearest station for both pedestrians and bicycles. The research shows how these distances can substantially differ, affected by factors like traffic, grade change, and amenities. The report, *Transit Access: Improving Walking and Biking to Commuter Rail Stations in Greater Boston*, presents four policy options and explores how each scenario could reduce perceived distance, improving access to residents, jobs, and development opportunities in the commuter rail system as a whole.

Explore the interactive map and download the report at boston.transit-access.com.



Transit Access interactive map | City Form Lab at MIT

Mobility Equity Symposium and Mobility Summit

Due to the impacts of COVID-19, a portion of the Mobility Innovator was delayed into 2021. The Sasaki Foundation will partner with the MIT Mobility Initiative to host two community conversations with academic researchers, community members, and city leaders to address mobility and equity in Gateway Cities as part of the Mobility Initiative's Mobility Equity Symposium in summer 2021 and Mobility Summit in fall 2021. These events will serve as an opportunity to exchange research on projects pertinent to the communities involved and offer a platform for the communities themselves to share their challenges and needs.

IMPACT: Community Learning & Engagement

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sasaki Foundation was still able to carry out an impactful year of programming. A successful shift to virtual programming in March 2020 allowed us to still host the majority of events we had planned for our 20th anniversary year. In addition to fostering these meaningful conversations, we virtually welcomed a new Design Grants cohort, connecting them to Sasaki resources and expertise, as well as our extended network of academic, professional, and community partners. The shift to virtual also catalyzed the creation of an online curriculum introducing young students to the world of design, based on our Summer Exploratory Experience in Design internship for high school students.

Our continued strong partnership with Sasaki, a world-renowned design firm, provided needed support as we moved all of our programming to virtual platforms. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sasaki Foundation programming took place in the Incubator at Sasaki: a flexible research studio and shared workspace hosted as a joint venture between Sasaki and the Sasaki Foundation. As steward and curator of the Incubator, the Sasaki Foundation activated the space with public programs, facilitated research initiatives, and invited new people to the mix—while Sasaki offered its expertise and resources as a global design firm motivated by working with our neighbors to co-create change. Despite the shift to virtual, Sasaki has continued to provide the same level of support and access to the Sasaki Foundation, allowing our programming to remain successful.

Adapting to the pandemic has expanded our reach and allowed us to explore new possibilities while still carrying out the purpose of the Incubator. While we look forward to collaborating in person again, we are grateful for the support of Sasaki and all our partners as we adapted our efforts to the challenges of 2020.

305K+

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

up from 213K+ in 2019

2020 PROGRAMS SPEAKERS

Zhanina Boyadzhieva, Leers Weinzapfel Associates

Elizabeth Christoforetti, Supernormal and Harvard GSD

Juliet Chun, Leers Weinzapfel Associates

Dr. Tracy A. Corley, MassINC

Dr. Karilyn Crockett, City of Boston Chief of Equity

Amy Dain, Dain Research

Ryan Edwards, MASARY Studios

Kara Elliott-Ortega, City of Boston Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture

Anda French, French 2D, PLLC

Kelly Haigh, designLAB architects

Jarred Johnson, TransitMatters

Jesse Kanson-Benanav, Abundant Housing MA

Mayor Tom McGee, City of Lynn

Allentza Michel, Powerful Pathways

Gretchen Rabinkin, Boston Society of Landscape Architects

Ashley Rao, Leers Weinzapfel Associates

Andres Sevtsuk, City Form Lab at MIT

Ellen Shakespear, Spaceus

Katie Sullivan, Boylston Properties

Aaron Toffler, Boston Harbor Now

Bridgette Wallace, G{Code}



Speaker Series: Activating the Public Realm



February 12, 2020
This lively panel discussion explored how different components of a public space—art installations, programming, the natural environment, and more—can shape positive experiences.

Black History Month



February 25, 2020
This celebratory event offered networking, refreshments, music, and a presentation highlighting history and culture in honor of Black History Month.

Girl UNinterrupted: Trends from Coast to Coast



March 3, 2020
Community Grants team Girl UNinterrupted hosted a presentation and panel discussion highlighting gaps in the design profession for young designers and ideas for how to minimize them.

Speaker Series: Climate Resilience in 2020 and Beyond



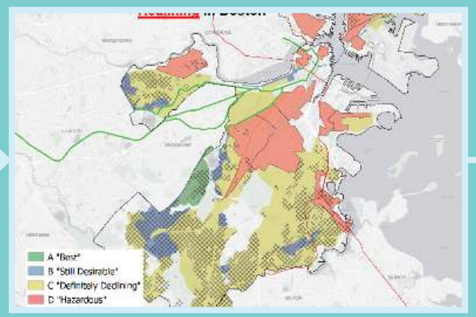
May 20, 2020
This panel discussed how communities could adapt, reorganize, and evolve to be as prepared as possible for future impacts of climate change.

Pitch Night sponsored by Columbia



June 3, 2020
Sasaki Foundation Design Grants finalists pitched their ideas, explaining how their proposed innovations will leverage design to address issues of resiliency and equity in communities.

Speaker Series: Redlining, Housing Policies, and More



October 1, 2020
A panel of housing experts from the Greater Boston area discussed redlining, affordable housing policies, and more.

Co-creating Equitable Cities: A Conversation with Chief Crockett



October 22, 2020
Celebrating the Sasaki Foundation's 20-year anniversary, Dr. Karilyn Crockett and Mary Anne Ocampo discussed city making, civic dialogue and engagement, and building a more equitable Boston.

Speaker Series: Uneven Access: Mobility Through the Lens of Equity



November 19, 2020
A panel discussion showcased the collaborative research initiative Mobility Innovator, an effort that investigates equitable approaches to mobility for Greater Boston.

IMPACT: Professional Practice & Growth



In summer 2020, the Sasaki Foundation held the third annual Summer Exploratory Experience in Design (SEED) program, a six-week paid internship for students from Greater Boston high schools that is structured holistically around introducing young students to the world of design. The program is an intensive deep dive into collaborative project work, with Sasaki designers leading workshops and lessons with students each week. Due to COVID-19, the program took place virtually, incorporating a few in-person outdoor site visits using social distancing.

In response to national conversations surrounding returning to school during a pandemic, the students were tasked with designing a mobile classroom. Following guidelines set by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, students worked in teams to create temporary classrooms in their neighborhoods of Somerville and Mattapan that would be safe for learning while social distancing.

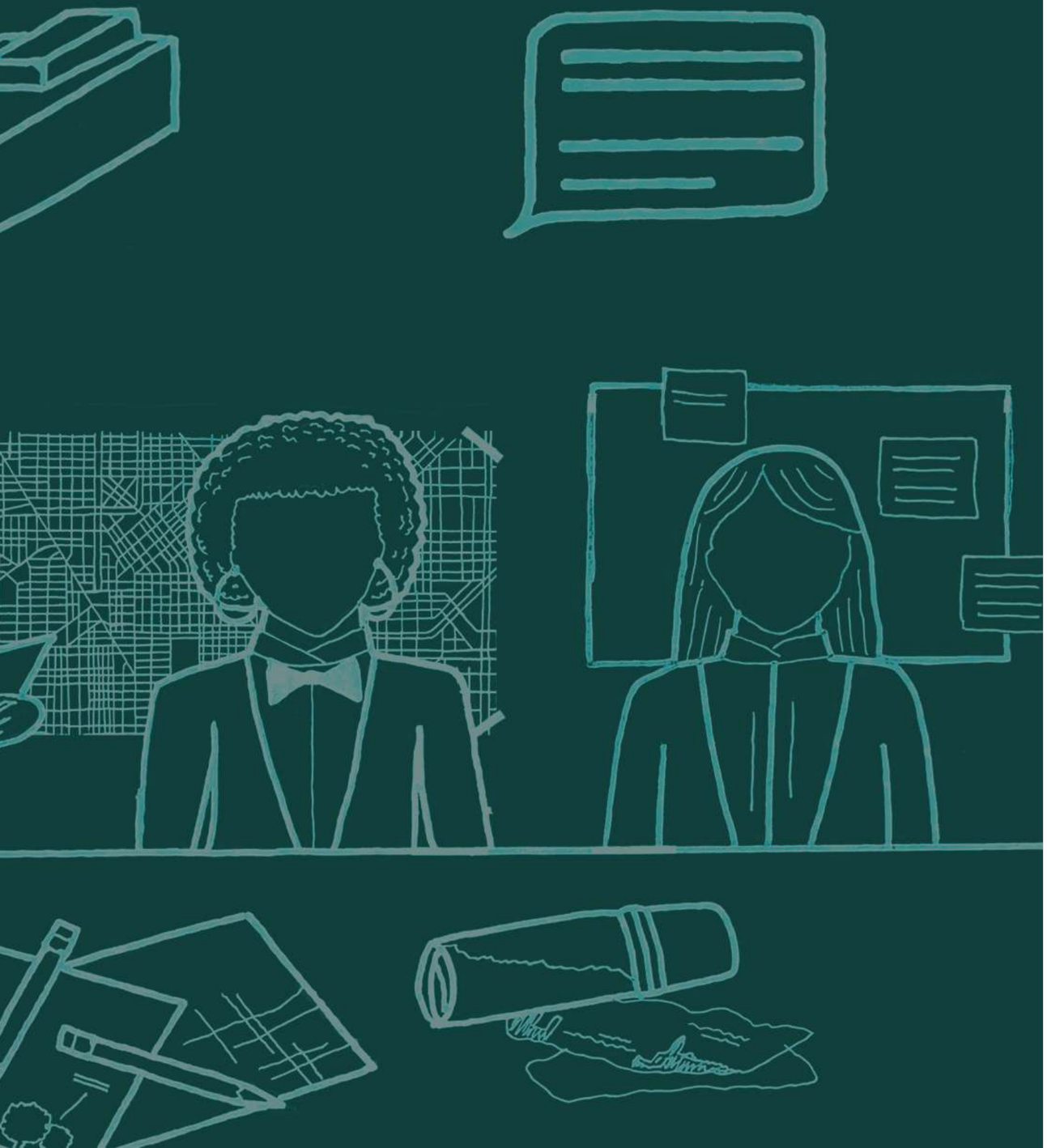
The students worked alongside Sasaki designers Meredith McCarthy, Madelyn Albright, Diane Athaide, Chanwoo Kim, Elaine Limmer, Breeze Outlaw, Emily Parris, Ponnapa Prakkamakul, Robert Sugar, and Lanmuzhi Yang, who served as mentors throughout the program by sharing their expertise in their practice. Each week, the mentors led the students through workshops that introduced them to various design concepts—from urban planning, to architecture, to storytelling—and applied them to their mobile classroom designs.

Students presented their mobile classrooms virtually to individuals from Sasaki, American Student Assistance (ASA), and Boston-area civic offices. The mobile classroom designs went above and beyond; from their overall designs to the functionality and aesthetics of their classrooms, students fully grasped the design challenge presented to them over the summer and impressed all the guest critics with their effective presentations. Most importantly, students learned how to tackle a design project from start to finish while practicing an interdisciplinary approach to design, similar to the way Sasaki's global practice operates.

"The students were so impressive with what they've learned in a matter of weeks, and hearing what these four young adults took away from this program was extremely moving!" said Krystal Windley, a representative from ASA. "It's not only having exposure to the design field, but the confidence they carry with them to pursue a field they might've thought was out of their reach."

> "This is one of the best decisions I've ever made in my entire life because I know now I really want to go into design."
> —2020 SEED intern

2020 SEED site visit | Sasaki



Since the 2020 SEED program took place virtually due to COVID-19, the Sasaki Foundation took advantage of this format to collect content and videos to form the basis for an online curriculum. This online curriculum enables students to explore the fields of architecture, interior design, planning and urban design, and landscape architecture, learning about the questions designers ask and the tools they use. The curriculum also includes interviews with design professionals, and opportunities to practice common design techniques and tools.

We launched the first iteration of the curriculum in fall 2020, beta testing it with alumni from our high school SEED program and middle school Design Mentorship Program. We anticipate the curriculum will not only provide students nationwide with an easily accessible introduction to careers in design, but also serve as a local recruiting tool for future SEED students.

Access the online curriculum at sasakifoundation.org/seed-online.

The Sasaki Foundation 2020 SEED, SEED online, and Design Mentorship programs are in partnership with ASA, who for over 60 years has focused on helping students pursue a college degree by partnering with hundreds of colleges and universities to help students and alumni manage their student loans and maintain financial wellness. With ASA's mission of helping students know themselves, know their options, and make informed decisions to achieve their education and career goals, the Sasaki Foundation's partnership with ASA was instrumental in making the desired impact. We are grateful for ASA's support as we build upon our design education initiatives, expand the talent pipeline, and advance inclusivity in the next generation of design professionals.

American Student Assistance®

SEED online curriculum graphic | Sasaki



During the 2019-2020 school year, the Sasaki Foundation conducted the inaugural Design Mentorship Program, a monthly after-school program providing local middle school students with the opportunity to discover what is possible through the field of design. The program includes hands-on skills guided by Sasaki designers, and understanding of broad design concepts. This program has the potential to chart the course for students' education and career paths. Students are beginning to explore their interests in the field of design, and by the end of the academic year are better exposed and more uniquely positioned to assess the future opportunities available to them.

In the program's inaugural year, eighth grade students from Watertown Middle School received extensive exposure to the field of design. (Due to the pandemic, in March 2020 the program shifted from the Incubator at Sasaki to a virtual platform.) Led by architectural designer Emily Parris, Sasaki mentors Madelyn Albright, Lorena Brambila, Sarah Bush, Julia Carlton MacKay, Jill Dixon, Eileen Gainfort, John Gilbert, Marlene Mendez, Nuith Morales, David Morgan, Gretchen Neeley, Breeze Outlaw, Ashley Pelletier, Daniel Pryor, Pankti Sanganee, Kira Sargent, Kartiki Sharma, Kara Slocum, Elaine Stokes, Robert Sugar, Carlos Torres, Lanmuzhi Yang, and Ben Zunkeler worked with students on varying design activities, such as group sketching, modeling, scaling, virtual reality, and more. Students enjoyed learning about the world of design and applying these principles to envisioning their ideal learning environment, while also channeling their own creativity and ideas.

"It was exciting to see the students jump right in; their collaboration and ability to problem solve creatively was inspiring. We saw their design communication skills grow, and for many, their interests in particular aspects of design became more apparent as the sessions went on."
—Emily Parris, Sasaki mentor

2019-2020 Design Mentorship Program | Sasaki

Support

Thank you to our donors, industry partners, and sponsors who have joined us in our efforts to advance the value of design and co-create change to shape the built environment. Your support continues to help us fund grants, sponsor programming, and explore innovations in the design field.

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2020 PARTNERSHIPS

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American Student Assistance (ASA)
Barr Foundation
Bethel AME Church, Jamaica Plain
Beyond Walls
Boston Area Research Institute (BARI)
Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC)
Boston College
Boston District 6 City Councilor Matt O'Malley
Boston Green Ribbon Commission
Boston Harbor Now
Boston Housing Authority (BHA)
Boston Private Industry Council (PIC)
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City Form Lab at MIT
City of Boston
City of Boston Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture
City of Boston Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics (MONUM)
City of Lynn
City of Malden
Climate Advisor to the City of Boston Brenda Pike
Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation (CSNDC)
Columbia
Conveyal
Crimson Summer Academy at Harvard University
Dain Research
designLAB architects
East Boston Mobility Hubs
ECHO (Expanding Choice in Housing Opportunities)
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French 2D
G{Code}
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Girl UNinterrupted
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Massachusetts Arts Funders' Group
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
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MIT Mobility Initiative
MIT Solve
Mothers Out Front
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SafeGraph
San Francisco Chinatown
Sasaki
South Street Youth Center (SSYC)
StartHub
Supernormal
The Funders Network (TFN)
TransitMatters
Transportation for Massachusetts (T4MA)
United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley
UX Architecture Studio
WalkBoston
Watertown Public Schools
Wright Ostermier Landscape Architects (WOLA)
Local Unnamed Shelters (7)

The Sasaki Foundation thrives because of our 80+ partnerships with academia, industry and civic leaders, community organizations, and other nonprofits. The value of these relationships is made visible through our programming, events, and perhaps most importantly, through the co-creation of positive change in the communities in which we work.

A Look Ahead

A tumultuous past year leaves many unknowns as we look ahead to 2021, but the Sasaki Foundation will continue building on our program and research framework to develop new partnerships as we explore innovative solutions towards building more equitable cities and communities.

Through the Mobility Innovator initiative, we look forward to continuing our partnership with MIT as we host two community conversations addressing mobility and equity in Gateway Cities, which were delayed due to the pandemic. These events, part of MIT's Mobility Equity Symposium in summer 2021 and MIT's Mobility Summit in fall 2021, will provide an important opportunity to connect communities and research to make a meaningful impact. We also anticipate sharing the Mobility Innovator research through an even broader variety of channels, including the American Planning Association's National Planning Conference in summer 2021.

While the ongoing pandemic means our work in 2021 will remain virtual for now, our current Design Grants cohort is making great progress on their projects. We look forward to seeing their completed research, which directly impacts the communities of Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan, and we anticipate funding more impactful community work in 2021. Our programming calendar for 2021 contains an exciting new slate of virtual events, as we continue to foster important conversations. After successfully shifting our high school SEED internship to a virtual platform in summer 2020, we look forward to further improving the program in summer 2021. We also are expanding our reach through the online SEED curriculum, available to all students in Greater Boston and beyond, empowering the next generation through design thinking.

As the Sasaki Foundation grows and adapts to new challenges, we continue to set ambitious goals and generate a meaningful agenda of research, programs, and partnerships that increase our impact in communities throughout Greater Boston. We are a dynamic, nimble organization always striving to improve, and we hope you will reach out if you would like to work with us and contribute to this agenda.



Mary Anne Ocampo
Board of Trustees Chair

2019 Design Grants cohort working in the Incubator at Sasaki | Sasaki

Sasaki Foundation

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