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CHINATOWN ENERGY LITERACY CAMPAIGN

COMBATING GREEN GENTRIFICATION

ENVISIONING SOMERVILLE'S NEW URBAN FARM

SEE YOU IN THE FUTURE

Sasaki Foundation

2022-2023
Design Grants
Research

Sasaki
Foundation

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Introduction

The Hideo Sasaki Foundation is named after Hideo Sasaki, a pioneer of modern design, a landscape architect, a leader, and an educator who articulated—and proved—the value of interdisciplinary design while breaking down the traditional barriers between practice and teaching.



Since its founding in 2000, the Sasaki Foundation has awarded more than $610,000 for those interested in pursuing focused research initiatives that foster diversity and equity in the design field and that connect young people to design education, mentorship, and resources.

2022 Design Grants cohort working at 110 Chauncy | Sasaki

The Hideo Sasaki Foundation was established by Sasaki, a multidisciplinary design firm founded by Hideo. It includes a bequest from Hideo's family and friends to continue his legacy of advancing rigorous research within an interdisciplinary approach to design, and supporting design education. At the intersection of research, practice, education, and community-driven processes, the Hideo Sasaki Foundation is committed to advancing the value of design, inviting diverse partners to co-create change.

The Hideo Sasaki Foundation builds its values on more than six decades of work by Hideo Sasaki, with a current focus on the following priority areas.

Research and Grants

Large-scale, complex challenges require cross-disciplinary thinking. That's why the Hideo 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

Informed and engaged residents are central ingredients of a successful community. That's why the Hideo Sasaki Foundation hosts public programs that amplify a diversity of voices and address socially relevant topics as we work toward systemic change. Our public programs engage civic leaders, educators, economists, and technologists to connect design and community-driven action.

Design Education

A thriving design industry relies on a pipeline of diverse, talented, and passionate practitioners who infuse new ideas and disrupt established patterns. That's why the Hideo Sasaki Foundation hosts design education programs for youth, providing them with opportunities to discover and explore careers in design. Our work advances diversity and inclusivity in the next generation of design professionals. A more equitable design industry requires a workforce that reflects a diversity of lived experiences, to the benefit of all.

Grants Process

In 2022, The Hideo Sasaki Foundation launched a call for proposals for our fourth annual Design Grants competition. We received a near record 20 applications representing 52 organizations and institutions, 9 Boston communities, 3 Greater Boston cities, and 5 Gateway Cities. Finalists pitched their ideas to win grant money and access to design expertise. The four winning teams spent ten months working on projects that promote equity in design.



THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

In 2022, the Hideo Sasaki Foundation focused on proactive approaches to climate adaptation, housing, transit, community building, and health and wellbeing, under the theme of Shared Voices: Charting a Course for Community Action, issuing a call for proposals to find projects that engaged with communities in Greater Boston and the Gateway Cities.

The challenges in addressing environmental resilience, displacement, affordable housing, access to mobility choices, meaningful public engagement, and other social equity considerations in planning and design are so broad and complex, they require a shared approach to facilitate all the necessary conversations and deliver actionable solutions. Most of these challenges faced by Boston communities are not limited to local neighborhoods—their effects are felt and shared across the Commonwealth and beyond. Multiple futures are at stake, and we can make a difference by acting now.

Proactive Approaches to Climate Adaptation

Responses to extreme heat, stormwater and flash flooding, and coastal and river flooding

In cities like Boston, climate change issues, especially environments with the urban heat island effect and flooding, disproportionately impact communities of color and low-income communities.

- What is your vision for a collaborative approach to mitigate the impacts of climate change?
- Are you doing something to increase climate resilience in your community that can scale to greater impact?

New Models for Housing

Strategies to improve housing affordability, promote a more diverse housing stock, and address gentrification and displacement

Like many cities, Boston's housing shortage requires innovative approaches to planning and design. Displacement of families, caused by economic and environmental forces, is exacerbated by the limited supply of affordable, family-oriented housing units.

- What is your innovative solution to provide better access to affordable housing and improve public health for more people?
- How are you strengthening existing networks in your community, as displacement increases?

Innovation in Transit and Access to Mobility Choices

Design strategies and solutions for challenges to reliable transit

Strengthening public-private partnerships, expanding transportation choices, and leveraging technology can provide greater access to transportation options by eliminating barriers. Greater Boston's local mobility networks and regional systems have tremendous potential to improve accessibility and safety for users. Methods for leveraging private-sector innovation to increase transportation access for all communities present a powerful opportunity.

- What actions can improve your community's mobility choices and transportation access, particularly in communities of color and low-income communities?
- How could better access to technology improve mobility for your community?

Creative Community Building

Themes of collective memory and community storytelling, investment in historic neighborhood fabric, and local business development

Designing and planning for our Greater Boston communities can extend beyond the concept of placemaking to include the idea of placekeeping—the preservation of local identity through strengthening social bonds, celebrating neighborhood history, and developing strategies for enhancing neighborhood retail, food, and health services.

- How do we preserve cultural identity while reinvigorating the social and economic well-being of a given community?
- How can we build local capacity for economic development and promote local entrepreneurship?
- How can we better leverage technology, and what opportunities do we have to create tools for better decision making and more equitable connectivity?

Innovation in Health and Wellbeing

Efforts to enhance community health through the built environment

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how important equitable access to outdoor spaces and creative reuse of the public realm are to our collective community health. Co-designing innovative solutions can allow our communities to begin to create a more just and fair built environment in cities across Greater Boston.

- How can your community expand access to open space and the public realm to allow for greater health and wellness?
- How might we positively impact access to health and wellness opportunities?

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Design

We seek proposals that utilize interdisciplinary thinking to challenge the status quo. We support design ideas that actively engage and contribute to communities. Winning teams will have actionable ideas. Proposals will be judged on both creativity and feasibility, and should address resilience and equity through the lens of one of the five topics.

Equity

We seek proposals that benefit historically underrepresented communities through strategies aimed at eliminating systemic barriers. Winning teams will show how their projects will meet the unique needs of a community through a high level of collaboration with community representatives.

Inclusion

We value diverse perspectives and seek to find inclusive processes that make space for dialogue and difference. We especially encourage proposals from women; transgender, genderqueer, or gender non-conforming individuals; members of racial or ethnic minorities; and individuals with physical and/or intellectual disabilities.

Innovation

We seek proposals that foster innovation, creativity, and interdisciplinary approaches to design. Special attention will be given to teams that propose forward-thinking, rather than reactive, concepts and ideas.

Impact

We seek proposals that can produce positive impacts within the communities they serve. Winning projects will exhibit scalability or replicability across other communities with similar characteristics.

PITCH NIGHT

At Pitch Night 2022, which took place May 25 at Lamplighter CX in Cambridge, MA, the Sasaki Foundation Design Grants finalists pitched their ideas for projects that address creative community building, new models for housing, transit access, health and wellbeing, and climate adaptation. The nearly 70 attendees included designers, entrepreneurs, investors, civic leaders, and corporate and nonprofit leaders, and represented more than 38 organizations.

> We had a fantastic jury, representing a wide range of life experiences and Boston area organizations: Boston Harbor Now, the Boston Housing Authority, Groundwork USA, Powerful Pathways, and Tufts University, who evaluated the teams on the design, equity, inclusion, innovation, and impact of their ideas.
>
> **Elaine Minjy Limmer**
> *Design Grants Jury Chair and Vice-chair of the Sasaki Foundation Board of Trustees*

Both jurors and Sasaki Foundation board members participated in the review process of teams' proposals and pitches.

2022 Design Grants Pitch Night | Lamplighter, CX

2022 Design Grants Jury



Elaine Minjy Limmer | City of Denver (Jury Chair)

Elaine serves as the Downtown Denver Senior Parks Planner with the City of Denver. As vice chair of the Hideo Sasaki Foundation Board of Trustees, she brings her diverse experience related to community engagement and communications strategy in a variety of planning projects. Elaine is committed to a people-centered approach to planning, and believes that empowering a diversity of voices is critical to creating more inclusive communities.



Julian Agyeman | Tufts University

Julian is a Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning and Fletcher Professor of Rhetoric and Debate at Tufts University. He is the originator of the concept of just sustainabilities, which explores the intersecting goals of social justice and environmental sustainability, defined as "the need to ensure a better quality of life for all, now and into the future, in a just and equitable manner, whilst living within the limits of supporting ecosystems."



Alice Brown | Boston Harbor Now

Alice is the Chief of Planning and Policy at Boston Harbor Now. Her work primarily focuses on activating and improving public spaces and expanding mobility choices along and across Boston Harbor. She works to promote and expand water transportation options, including the development of business plans for new ferry routes; to enhance and develop park amenities on the islands, including an action plan for Peddocks Island; and to ensure a more equitable and resilient Harborwalk.



Nicholas Kelly | Boston Housing Authority

Nick is Director of Innovation and Research at the Boston Housing Authority. He is a researcher, policymaker, and advocate working on public policy and housing policy, with a particular focus on fair housing and urban politics. In his research, he develops and evaluates new policy tools to address racial inequality in housing. He also serves as a lecturer at Northeastern University, and as a consultant and advocate on housing issues in Greater Boston and around the country.



Allentza Michel | Powerful Pathways

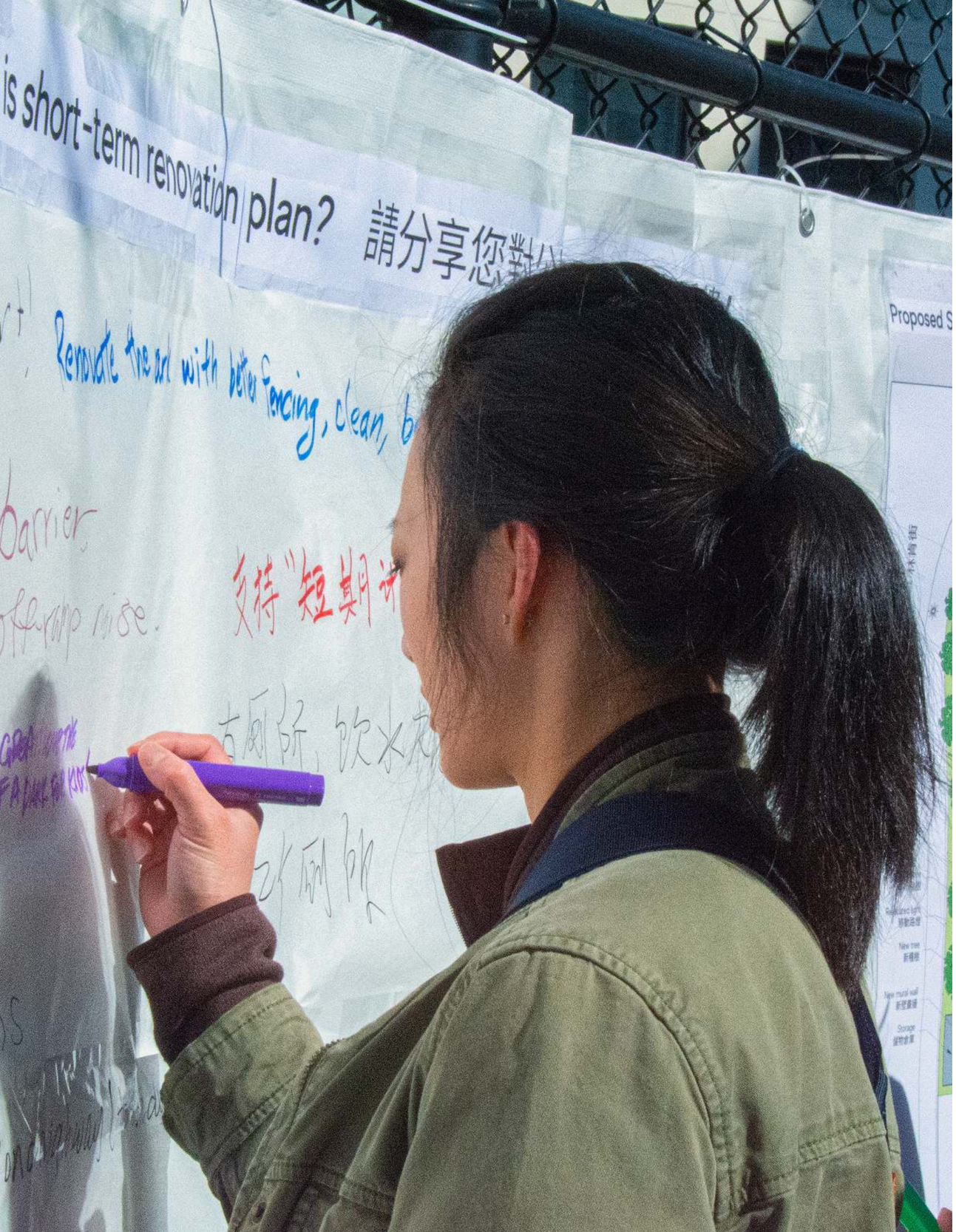
Allentza, founder of Powerful Pathways, is an urban planner, artist, policy advocate, and researcher with a background in community organizing. Her 20 years of diverse experience across community economic development, education, food security, public health, and transportation inform her current work in civic design, community and organizational development, and social equity.



Cate Mingoya | Groundwork USA

Cate is the Chief Officer of Climate Resilience and Land Use for Groundwork USA. In this role, she leads Groundwork USA's climate resilience initiatives and provides technical assistance and support to nationwide brownfield remediation projects.

2022 Design Grants Teams



Chinatown community member attending a neighborhood event gives input on open space and green infrastructure designs for Reggie Wong Park, a new community-oriented park, and green space next to the future Chinatown Library | Chinatown Energy Literacy Campaign

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chinatown Power, Inc., Chinatown Community Land Trust, and Climable crafted an energy literacy campaign tailored to Boston's Chinatown. It includes a suite of educational materials covering energy resilience as well as environmental justice and public health risks, written in plain, easy-to-understand language in both English and Written Chinese.

Chinatown Energy Literacy Campaign

Lydia Lowe, Franny Xi Wu, Sari Kayyali, Maisy Rohrer, Caroline Fraser

This project complements ongoing work around energy democracy, climate resilience, heat mitigation, and open space in Chinatown. This includes advocating for community governance and improvements for Reggie Wong Park, a new community-oriented park in Parcel 25 development, and green space next to the future Chinatown Library. It also includes the development of a community-owned, clean energy virtual microgrid in Chinatown. A microgrid is typically a series of interconnected buildings that share a local energy generation source. In Chinatown, rather than interconnecting buildings, the project is installing solar panels and battery storage in buildings around Chinatown and coordinating their loads together virtually. This design will provide resilience and democratic decision-making control, as well as cost savings and improved comfort, to residents of the participating buildings.

This literacy campaign provides necessary background information and vocabulary around environmental justice issues in the community and contextualizes the need for and benefits of a community microgrid. This will empower residents to provide input on the design of the microgrid and to get involved in work addressing heat mitigation, open space, and green infrastructure. The campaign will be shared on social media, and live on the Chinatown Power website that is under development with the Hideo Sasaki Foundation's support.



Chinatown community members attending an environmental justice workshop give input on energy-related questions and microgrid design.| Chinatown Energy Literacy Campaign

OUTREACH

9

of 10 energy literacy campaign reels were ready for distribution as of June 2023

OUTREACH

1

Chinatown Power website was developed to publish later in 2023

OUTREACH

4

small focus groups and one larger educational workshop taught residents about energy, decarbonization, and resilience

ENGAGEMENT

30

Chinatown residents learned environmental justice conceptsand provided open space planning input

COMMUNITY

Chinatown Power, Chinatown Community Land Trust, and Climable's work impacts the community members of Boston's Chinatown neighborhood. According to 2020 census data, analyzed by the State of Massachusetts, the median income across census blocks in Chinatown ranges from $17,132 to $37,918, the racial and ethnic makeup of the community ranges from 64.4 percent to 94.2 percent minority residents, and language isolation across the census blocks in the neighborhood range from 37.3 percent to 70.4 percent of residents.[1] The racial and ethnic demographics breakdown further as follows: 59.9 percent of Chinatown residents identify as Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander alone; 26.6 percent identify as white; 6.7 percent identify as Hispanic or Latino; 4.2 percent identify as Black; and those identifying as other races or multiple races make up 2.7 percent.[2]

STAKEHOLDERS

Beyond community members, additional stakeholders impacted include four affordable housing developers who are partnered with the Chinatown microgrid, and other Chinatown environmental justice and health funders, including the Barr Foundation and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

IMPACT

The project team anticipates that the short and medium-term impacts of this work will be greater participation in community environmental and energy discussions, leading to increased community input in the design of open space and green infrastructure in the public domain, the microgrid, and how it will serve the community. These impacts will be indicated by increased workshop attendance, heightened engagement during discussions, and increased community input. The team will be able to track the effectiveness of communications and outreach through website analytics as well, such as traffic volume, number of pages visited, and time spent on the site.

The project also has a few potential long-term impacts. The environmental and energy literacy materials will empower residents to not only engage in environmental discussions and open space and microgrid decision-making, but also to get involved in advocacy for environmental laws, regulations, and policies that will benefit their homes and neighborhood. Additionally, the informative and powerful nature of the content on the Chinatown Power website will be strong enough to attract potential future employees and board members of Chinatown Power—a public benefit company created to oversee development and eventually management of the microgrid—as well as potential future funders of the initiative.

1 These data were obtained from https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-2020-environmental-justice-populations.

2 These data were calculated from raw data from "2020 Census for Boston," Boston Planning & Development Agency, City of Boston, 2021, https://data.boston.gov/dataset/7846ff3b-b738-47a3-a57e-19de2c753220/resource/5800a0a2-6acd-41a3-9fe0-1bf7b038750d/download/boston-neighborhood-data.csv.



Chinatown Community Land Trust and Chinatown Power team members discuss clean energy, utility bills, and community planning at a community environmental justice workshop.| Chinatown Energy Literacy Campaign

AWARENESS AND VISIBILITY

While most of the community served—Boston's Chinatown—is currently unaware of this specific project, many are aware of the microgrid initiative and the open space and green infrastructure planning work that this project supports. The team anticipates that the literacy campaign will have a large impact on the community, generating further enthusiasm in the microgrid and community environmental work through expanded awareness and enhanced contextual knowledge. A portion of the materials developed for the literacy campaign were used during an informational community teaching session by Chinatown Power and Chinatown Community Land Trust, in which they successfully served as a helpful educational tool on microgrids and the importance of open and green space. The team therefore expects the full dissemination of the literacy campaign to have a similarly positive impact community-wide. The impact will be visible across summer 2023, into the fall, and beyond as the materials are strategically released on social media and messaging platforms popular in the neighborhood, and utilized for resident engagement efforts related to the community initiatives.

COMMUNITY MILESTONES

The patchwork of various efforts the team accomplished over the 2022 grant period have built up awareness and activity across community members and organizations around environmental justice and community resilience. This patchwork includes efforts to engage community members through focus groups, where the team learned which topics residents felt were important to understand in regards to environmental justice and community resilience. This informed the topics covered in the literacy campaign and an educational workshop held in spring 2023.









Trees and Open Space energy literacy campaign reel | Chinatown Energy Literacy Campaign



Today's Problems, Tomorrow's Solutions | Chinatown Energy Literacy Campaign in partnership with Sasaki

ALIGNMENT WITH THE FOUNDATION

This project leveraged the power of (graphic) design to distill energy jargon and complex environmental concepts into plain, everyday language in both English and Written Chinese. Through these efforts, the team drew upon design's power to enact change. The design of the literacy campaign materials supports community members' understanding of the complex intersections between the energy system, the environmental injustices with which Chinatown is burdened, and numerous impacts to health and wellbeing. This understanding will generate change by empowering the Chinatown community to take ownership over resilience by providing input on the design of the clean energy, community-based microgrid, and open space and green infrastructure planning.

NEXT STEPS

The team will continue to build on the momentum of this project and enhance the reach of its benefits by circulating the environmental and energy literacy campaign materials on social media platforms popular among both English and Chinese speakers, and promoting the Chinatown Power website within the community whenever possible, for the foreseeable future. The information covered in the literacy materials will continue to be relevant for the community during the launch of the microgrid project over the next two to three years, and beyond. Indeed, many of the topics will endure indefinitely. The website, planned for publication in fall 2023, will act as a repository for the materials and for additional resources on emergency preparation, accessing services during power outages, health information, and more. In anticipation of the website's launch, the team will conduct a social media campaign to uplift the forthcoming website, renewing engagement with the literacy materials.

Continued engagement with the materials and the website will heighten awareness within the community about fighting for local environmental justice, climate resilience, and energy equity. In turn, this will lead to widespread awareness of the benefits that the resilient microgrid and improved open space and green infrastructure will deliver for the community. In short, all next steps will be in service of achieving the team's end goal: to generate support for the microgrid and other environmental justice work by encouraging increased community input and building interest in participation.



Reggie Wong Park Day | Chinatown Community Land Trust

SPONSOR ORGANIZATIONS

Chinatown Power, Inc. is a public benefit corporation in Boston's Chinatown neighborhood working to create clean energy and community resilience.

Chinatown Community Land Trust works to stabilize the future of Chinatown as a neighborhood for working class families and a regional hub for the Greater Boston Chinese community. They work for community control of the land, development without displacement, permanently affordable housing, and shared neighborhood spaces, consistent with the vision of the Chinatown Master Plan.

Climable is a woman-led nonprofit in Cambridge, MA, with a mission to make climate science and clean energy understandable and actionable for everyone. Climable's end goals are energy democracy (public participation in the energy transition) and climate resilience (improved avenues for anticipating, preparing for, and responding to climate disasters).

STAY CONNECTED

www.chinatownpower.com

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www.chinatownclt.org

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RESEARCH TEAM



Lydia Lowe

Lydia Lowe is the Executive Director of Chinatown Community Land Trust (Chinatown CLT) and president of Chinatown Power. She leads Chinatown CLT's environmental justice planning and advocacy work, and provides oversight to the microgrid planning. She worked with the project team on reviewing energy literacy materials and seeking input from community residents.



Franny Xi Wu

Franny Xi Wu is the outgoing Assistant Director of Chinatown Community Land Trust, who is transitioning to graduate study at MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning. She has worked on environmental justice educational workshops, open space advocacy, and translation and development of Chinese language materials.



Sari Kayyali | team contact

Sari Kayyali is the Microgrid Manager for Chinatown Power and GreenRoots. He oversees community microgrid projects in Chinatown and Chelsea. His responsibilities involve coordinating with contractors, building owners, and residents, and reviewing designs, cost estimates, and schedules. He advised on the technical aspects of the energy literacy materials.



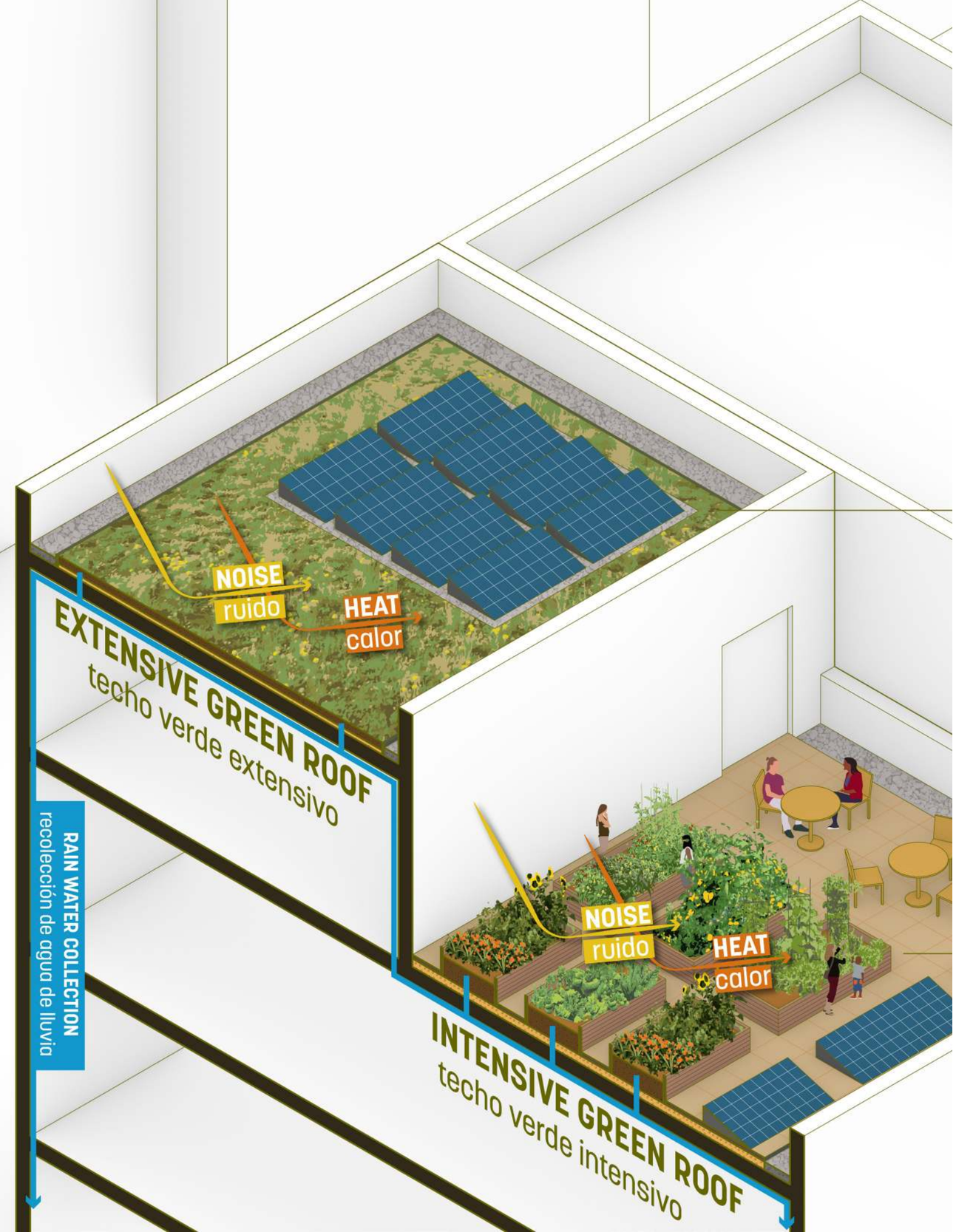
Maisy Rohrer

Maisy Rohrer is the Program Manager at Climable. In this role, she leads numerous projects with colleagues and collaborates with partner organizations. Maisy acted as Climable's point of contact for the Chaintown Energy Literacy Campaign, collaboratively building out a suite of literacy materials and a Chinatown Power website.



Caroline Fraser

Caroline Fraser is the Research Co-op at Climable and a student at Northeastern University. She works alongside permanent staff on Climable projects including clean community microgrids, literacy campaigns, and outreach initiatives. Caroline helped develop energy literacy materials and provided quality control, while managing the process of reviewing materials with the team.



How do we make our city greener and healthier for residents without displacing those who call it home? This question frames Combating Green Gentrification, a collaboration between GreenRoots and Comunidades Enraizadas Community Land Trust, two resident-led organizations in Chelsea, MA, exploring the potential for green roofs on community land trust (CLT) homes.

Combating Green Gentrification

Bianca Bowman, Caroline Ellenbird, Jacqueline Segovia, Ana Vanegas

Chelsea is a low-income, immigrant, environmental justice community facing increasing development pressures. Lack of green space negatively impacts residents of Chelsea in many ways, including poor air quality, high rates of asthma, greater flood risk from impervious surfaces, higher temperatures in hot months, and limited access to open space. Green roofs have the potential to address all of these issues. However they are costly to install, require maintenance, and can increase the value and appeal of a home, making them less accessible to low-income homeowners and potentially displacing existing residents. What would it take to install them on permanently affordable homes? What are the options, costs, and benefits for homeowners? Are they desirable to future CLT homeowners?

The project team researched green roofs, developed interactive materials to share with community members, and engaged the community in conversations about green roofs on CLT homes with an enthusiastic initial response. The team will continue to engage with community members and explore implementation with partners, funders, and green roof professionals. A pilot green roof on a CLT home will inform future efforts to realize this green infrastructure strategy in Chelsea through a framework of social, environmental, and economic justice.

Combating Green Gentrification graphic | Combating Green Gentrification in partnership with Sasaki



Comunidades Enraizadas Community Land Trust Members Meeting, January 2023 | Combating Green Gentrification

COMMUNITY

The Combating Green Gentrification project directly impacted residents of Chelsea, MA, an environmental justice community that is majority immigrant, majority non-English-speaking households, and majority low- and middle-income households. In Chelsea, 79 percent of residents are Latinx, Black, Asian, and/or multi-racial, and 60 to 75 percent are foreign-born.[1] Of households in Chelsea, 45.4 percent have an annual income of less than $50,000. In Chelsea, 59.3 percent of the population speaks Spanish, 5.2 percent speak other Indo-European languages, 2.5 percent speak Asian and Pacific Islander languages, and 2.8 percent speak other languages.

Indirectly, Combating Green Gentrification can impact residents of other similar communities, as it is an exploratory project that could be implemented elsewhere.

STAKEHOLDERS

The main project stakeholders are members of GreenRoots, an environmental justice organization dedicated to improving and enhancing the urban environment and public health in Chelsea and surrounding communities, and Comunidades Enraizadas, a CLT created by a group of primarily Latina immigrants living in Chelsea with the mission to obtain and permanently secure land for the use and benefit of the community so that low-income people, regardless of their immigration status, can achieve long-term housing stability and be stewards of the land. Habitat for Humanity, who Comunidades Enraizadas is working with to build new housing, is a stakeholder and housing collaborator who, during the project, became aware of the team's possible interest in installing a green roof. The team also made new connections with a green roof company, ReCover, who shared resources and data.

1 The 2010 census identified 45 percent of Chelsea's population to be foreign-born. Of those who have immigrated and made Chelsea their home, many are undocumented. Researchers at Boston Indicators estimate 15 to 20 percent of the state's foreign-born population is undercounted in the census. Chelsea Public Schools estimates this percentage to be higher, at about 25 to 30 percent undercounted.

IMPACT

The project increased understanding of the advantages and challenges of green roofs within the two organizations and in the community. The project also created materials to use in seeking funding and support in implementing infrastructure for green roofs on CLT homes.

Continuing their efforts, the team will seek funding and support for green roofs on permanently affordable homes in Chelsea, with the ultimate goal of green roofs installed on permanently affordable homes throughout Chelsea. This goal will benefit homeowners through energy savings, better insulation, and longer-lasting roofs, and benefit the community by reducing the urban heat island effect, improving stormwater management, creating wildlife habitat, and filtering pollutants and carbon dioxide. These solutions are available for other communities dealing with similar challenges to implement as we strive towards more equitable cities. The team is also interested in the potential of the project for future changes to policies and programs.

AWARENESS AND VISIBILITY

The project's outreach efforts have created an increased community awareness. The team introduced green roofs to the Chelsea community at two community outreach events. The team collected community members' responses and as of June 2023 the team has received 24 responses. The team also presented information about green roofs at two Comunidades Enraizadas meetings and one GreenRoots meeting, and collected feedback from CLT members about green roof concerns and interests.

OUTREACH

5

community outreach events and presentations took place

ENGAGEMENT

24

community members provided responses

ALIGNMENT WITH THE FOUNDATION

Combating Green Gentrification addresses both social equity and environmental resilience and the interactions between them. Environmental resilience is critical in an environmental justice community like Chelsea, which faces heat island impacts and has little green space. Yet projects such as green roofs are seen as unrealistic luxuries for affordable housing and low-income communities. And when they are implemented, they become desirable amenities that can make homes and neighborhoods less affordable.

Social justice also has to do with access to information and, as in the Hideo Sasaki Foundation mission statement, access to design. Many people the team spoke with in the community did not know about green roofs and their potential benefits and costs. As the team did outreach they found that people are interested and enthusiastic about green roofs. Despite being a new concept, community members easily understood the benefits of green roofs and were excited about the possibilities.

NEXT STEPS

As of June 2023, the team is confident there is enough support in the community they serve for installing green roofs on CLT homes and would like to pursue it. They will use the materials they created and the information they learned during the course of their grant to pitch green roofs to their partners, potential funders, and green roof professionals.



Outreach at Mill Creek, May 2023 | Combating Green Gentrification

SPONSOR ORGANIZATIONS

GreenRoots works to achieve environmental justice and greater quality of life through collective action, unity, education and youth leadership across neighborhoods and communities. GreenRoots is a community-based organization dedicated to improving and enhancing the urban environment and public health in Chelsea and surrounding communities. They do so through deep community engagement and empowerment, youth leadership, and implementation of innovative projects and campaigns.

Comunidades Enraizadas Community Land Trust is a community land trust created by a group of primarily Latina immigrants living in Chelsea, MA. Their mission is to obtain and permanently secure land for the use and benefit of the community so that low-income people, regardless of their immigration status, can achieve long-term housing stability and be stewards of the land. They support housing which is resident-controlled and affordable, including cooperatives, home ownership, rental housing, and other land uses that further their goal of rooting the community in place and ending displacement.

STAY CONNECTED

www.greenrootsej.org

GreenRootsEJ

www.ceclt.org

ComunidadesEnraizadas

RESEARCH TEAM



Bianca Bowman | team contact

Bianca is the Manager of Organizing at GreenRoots. She is a passionate advocate for connection between all people to our local environments. Bianca loves hearing about the experiences of other Latin Americans through her position at GreenRoots, and contributing to more green space, open space, and climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. She enjoys hiking, camping, being in places with trees, and eating her way around the Boston area.



Jacqueline Segovia

Jacqueline Segovia is a Climate Justice Fellow at GreenRoots. She first understood her passion for environmental justice when she faced a cultural shock after moving to the United States from El Salvador. Jacqueline enjoys reading, knitting, and spending time with her dog.



Caroline Ellenbird | team contact

Caroline is the Director at Comunidades Enraizadas Community Land Trust, where she collaborates closely with the board of directors and members to realize the dream of community land ownership and accessible homeownership. Caroline is a Chelsea resident and long-time educator and activist with a master's degree in city planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



Ana Vanegas

Ana Vanegas is a dedicated and passionate community organizer in Chelsea and serves on the Comunidades Enraizadas Community Land Trust Board of Directors. She immigrated from Guatemala in 1997. Ana works in the Chelsea Public Schools and at the First Congregational Church in Chelsea, serves as a trustee for the Chelsea Public Library, and volunteers with the GreenRoots urban farm.



Envisioning Somerville's New Urban Farm

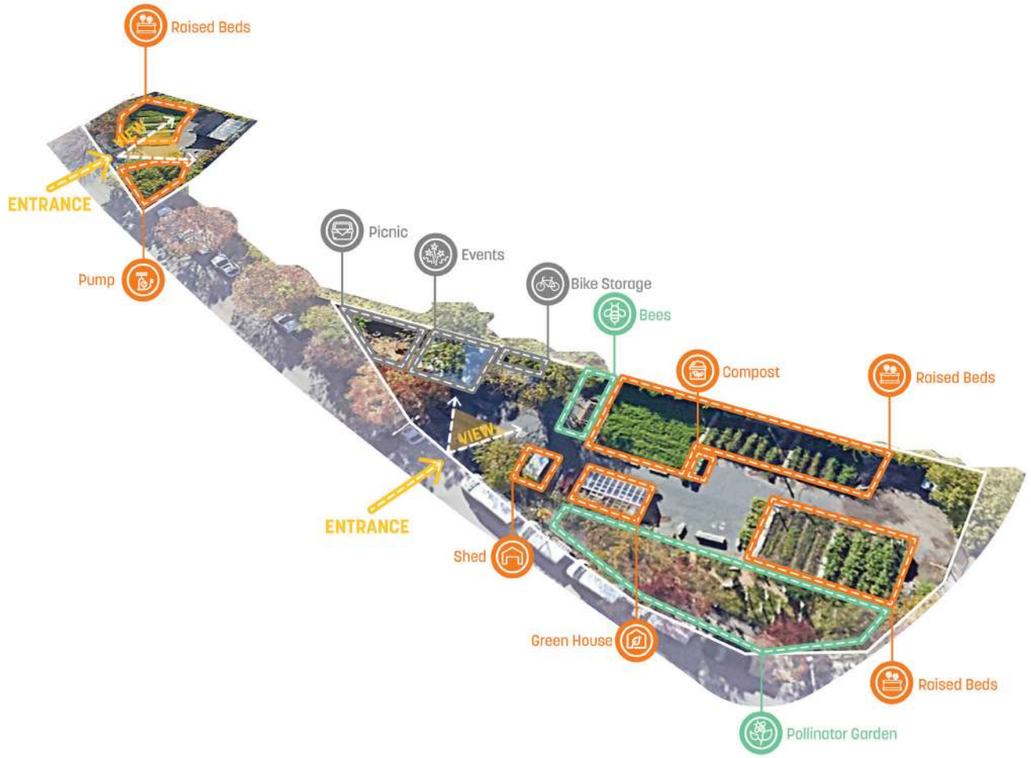
Geri Medina, Juliana Soltys, Jessie DeLano, Emily Reckard-Mota

Envisioning Somerville's New Urban Farm was created to help Groundwork Somerville address a challenge they are facing as a small organization in a neighborhood that's rapidly developing. After 12 years of stewarding the land at their current location, their urban farm will be displaced by new development. They have support from the City of Somerville, MA, and the primary developer to move nearby, but the process has been challenging with no clear timeline and many stakeholders involved. Through the support of the Hideo Sasaki Foundation, Groundwork Somerville will be able to present, and advocate for, their vision of a new farm space to key decision-makers and stakeholders.

This project conducted a site analysis of two potential future farm sites, compiled a detailed list of current elements of the farm, and outlined new features that could contribute to Groundwork Somerville's overall effectiveness and organizational impact through careful planning and creative design.

The team envisioned well-designed raised beds, a greenhouse, and added infrastructure, like a wash station, for the health and safety of their staff, youth, and volunteers. If given an accessible space, they have the potential to offer a fully-functional market space to sell their food and to educate the community on their programs. This added space can also be used to host community events and workshops. Thanks to this project, Groundwork Somerville will be able to co-envision a new farm with the community to retain a sense of ownership and critical involvement.

A Bountiful Future graphic | Envisioning Somerville's New Urban Farm in partnership with Sasaki



Current South Street Farm site assessment | Envisioning Somerville's New Urban Farm in partnership with Sasaki

DESIGN

2

potential farm sites were analyzed to identify a final recommendation

OUTREACH

1000

community survey responses are targeted for collection from 2024 through 2025

ENGAGEMENT

20+

youth employed and trained annually

ENGAGEMENT

3000

pounds of produce targeted to be grown annually at the future farm site

COMMUNITY

Somerville is experiencing significant change as its residents seek to live, work, play, and raise families in the community. As Somerville's appeal and economic infrastructure strengthen, so do inequities in health and food access—often along racial lines. People of color make up 60 percent of the population, and primarily live in residential areas near highways that are often polluted. Three state highways and two commuter lines traverse the city, creating barriers to food access as many residents do not drive and instead depend on substandard bus service or must cross dangerous intersections to access grocery stores and open spaces. The youth poverty rate in Somerville is 26.4 percent compared to 12 percent statewide, while 64 percent of youth in Somerville Public Schools are eligible for free and reduced price lunch. Youth in Somerville need more meaningful jobs and training, and families need better access to food. Groundwork Somerville meets the most pressing needs of the community, ensuring no one is left behind.

STAKEHOLDERS

Groundwork Somerville has maintained a partnership with the City of Somerville for more than 23 years. The organization has worked to create a more equitable city in partnership with the following City of Somerville departments:

- Somerville Redevelopment Authority
- Public Space and Urban Forestry Division
- Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development
- Mayor's Office
- Department of Racial and Social Justice
- Office of Food Access and Healthy Communities
- Planning, Preservation, and Zoning Division

As owners and developers of the land, Boynton Yards is the primary leader in the redesign of the area where Groundwork Somerville's current farm sits. Their commitment to green space and community aligns with the goal of this project to create a sustainable and long lasting home for Groundwork Somerville. Finally, community supporters are also important stakeholders in this project.

IMPACT

The funding provided in this grant sustained Groundwork Somerville during a challenging time, and provided the capacity to envision and plan for a new chapter in their community impact story. The organization is now empowered to embrace the next step of manifesting their farm redesign vision to better serve the community.

This project was also selected for the Hideo Sasaki Foundation's 2023 Summer Exploratory Experience in Design (SEED) program for high school interns, providing additional perspectives on the redesign of Somerville's only urban farm and broadening the awareness of Groundwork Somerville.

With support from Sasaki design experts, the project team delivered the following foundational elements to support continued advocacy around relocation of Groundwork Somerville's farm in conversation with developers and other stakeholders, the youth they serve, and the Somerville community.

- Site location analysis
- Square footage analysis
- Shade study
- Hideo Sasaki Foundation SEED intern redesign input
- Wash station designed by MIT students
- Planned community input survey
- Initial design sketches
- Other funding sources



More space needed

Proposed new space

A more organized structure integrating production, education, and ecology to better serve the community. | Envisioning Somerville's New Urban Farm in partnership with Sasaki

Though Groundwork Somerville is years out from a final site, this project has enabled the team to create a strategic plan on how to incorporate the community in the next steps of the design process, and ultimately, the selection process of the final design. This project also will help Boynton Yards and the City of Somerville come to a durable solution for the city's only farm.

Ultimately, the long-term impact of the project is completion of a fully functioning urban farm with the following features:

- Enough growing square footage to produce 3,000 pounds of food annually
- An outdoor produce wash station
- An accessible community gathering space
- Outdoor kitchen space
- Potential market space for direct produce sales
- Space to provide for expanded field trip and educational opportunities

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Groundwork Somerville's South Street Farm has been in its current location since 2011, and has deep roots within the community. Somerville youth have spent hours harvesting on the farm, learning about environmental justice, and becoming engaged in civil service in this space. Through programming and food distribution, Groundwork Somerville also reaches low-income residents and residents of color in Somerville. Through their Mobile Market program, they eliminate accessibility barriers for residents in the Mystic Housing Community by bringing produce directly to their doors. They also provide summer youth employment to Somerville High School students—most of whom identify as students of color.

PROJECT VISIBILITY

Community members had expressed concern around the uncertainty of South Street Farm's future. With little information available and the plans constantly evolving, Groundwork Somerville had not been able to communicate a certain future as an organization and a farm. Thanks to the Design Grants, the team has been able to create, and articulate, a vision of what a new space can offer and that ensures they move forward as an organization that has deep community roots. This project has served as a catalyst for advocating for their needs in a new farm and community space. They hope for full fruition of this vision, noting the Hideo Sasaki Foundation and Sasaki have provided the crucial first step.

COMMUNITY MILESTONES

As an organization, Groundwork Somerville is helping the city reach its SomerVision 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update[1] goals and their School Gardens program was featured in the plan's public report.

The Cambridge Health Alliance 2022 Regional Wellbeing Report[2] listed Groundwork Somerville's World Crops program as a good example of how to "create new jobs that are culturally relevant and capitalize on the expertise and knowledge of diverse communities." Beginning in 2020, Groundwork Somerville crafted a plan to grow and harvest nutrient-dense crops alongside urban agriculture experts and their distribution partners. They are now growing a mix of foods that give families access to lots of nutrients as well as supplemental foods that are frequently requested. The end result is that instead of growing small numbers of many types of veggies solely for educational purposes, they are now growing fewer varieties at a larger scale in order to increase access to healthy options for more food-insecure neighbors.

After being delayed due to the pandemic, Groundwork Somerville has secured funding to begin management of the existing community garden at the Mystic Housing Development. This helps the organization increase their presence in the community, provide growing space and workshops for community members, and employ a long-time supporter of the World Crops program to serve as their representative.

1 *City of Somerville, MA. https://www.somervision2040.com/*

2 *Cambridge Health Alliance. https://www.challiance.org/file%20library/about%20cha/community%20health%20improvement/community%20health%20data%20and%20reports/2022%20cha%20wellbeing%20report%20translations%20(files)/2022-cha-regional-wellbeing-report-chna-executive-summary.pdf*



Youth working at the South Street Farm | Groundwork Somerville



Food Access Triangle graphic | Envisioning Somerville's New Urban Farm in partnership with Sasaki

ALIGNMENT WITH THE FOUNDATION

This project aligns with the Hideo Sasaki Foundation's mission by centering equity and environmental resilience. Groundwork Somerville envisions a new farm space that is designed to be accessible to the communities in which they have deep roots, serves the organization's needs, allows for more community engagement, and increases their ability to produce more affordable food for greater community impact.

NEXT STEPS

Through partnerships, board involvement, and volunteers, Groundwork Somerville has been able to get ahead of potential pitfalls associated with the nature of seasonal work, and build toward sustained funding. The City of Somerville has been a great advocate and supporter of Groundwork Somerville's envisioned new farm space, in addition to providing funding opportunities to realize their vision. Most recently, the City of Somerville awarded $147,000 in ARPA funds to build and sustain capacity at the organizational level. Through Groundwork Somerville's parent organization, Groundwork USA, they are also accessing opportunities and additional funding to implement climate safe initiatives in Somerville. These funding sources will allow the organization capacity to maintain a new space, hire additional staff, and maintain or expand their educational programs with strong community engagement.

In the long term, as Somerville's Green Line extension continues to develop, Groundwork Somerville's new farm space will be situated in a highly-trafficked area of the city, allowing them to reach more audiences, such as institutions, businesses, and new residents, which may provide new sponsorship opportunities, volunteers, and partnerships. With the resources created through this project, the team will be better able to present the plan for community feedback. Through a planned community survey effort conducted by the Green Team, Groundwork Somerville's youth employment and leadership program, they will engage the community in the design and development of the new farm site. As creating a more equitable city is a core element of their mission, they plan to extensively collect feedback on the proposals and ensure they are meeting the community needs.

South Street Farm | Groundwork Somerville



South Street Farm produce | Groundwork Somerville

SPONSOR ORGANIZATION

Groundwork Somerville, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, has been "changing places and changing lives" in Somerville, Massachusetts, since 2000. Their mission is to cultivate the next generation of environmental leaders to grow a greener and more equitable Somerville. Through youth empowerment, urban farming, equitable food access, and community engagement, Groundwork sows the seeds of a healthy community.

STAY CONNECTED

www.groundworksomerville.org

@gwsomerville

GroundworkSomerville

@groundworksomerville7214

RESEARCH TEAM



Geri Medina, MPH | team contact

Geri Medina, MPH, works for Health Resources in Action, a public health institute in Boston, and serves as a board member and the Community Engagement Committee Chair for Groundwork Somerville. She leads multiple environmental health-based projects, and has past experience volunteering with urban agriculture organizations before joining the GWS board. She most values GWS's commitment to environmental justice, youth empowerment, and community engagement.



Juliana Soltys

Juliana Soltys, a past employee of Groundwork Somerville, brings a diverse background in community-centered design, education, and sustainable farming. Juliana graduated from RISD with a master's degree in industrial design. Her thesis work focused on the intersection of reintegration and agriculture. She is passionate about racial justice, grassroots initiatives, and working with youth.



Jessie DeLano

Jessie DeLano is an Assistant Director in Executive Education at Harvard Kennedy School and serves as the Board President at Groundwork Somerville. She has more than eight years of experience in research, nonprofit development, and higher education administration. Jessie grew up on a farm in Southeastern Minnesota, which sparked an early passion for sustainability and a love for nature



Emily Reckard-Mota

Emily Reckard-Mota is the Program Director at Groundwork Somerville. She has a background in community engagement, youth education, and sustainable agriculture. In her current position, she manages South Street Farm along with the youth education programs and community engagement that takes place on the farm.



See You in the Future timeline graphic | See You in the Future

See You in the Future

Melissa Q. Teng, Sabrina Dorsainvil, Stephen Walter, George Halfkenny, Evvy Diego

See You In The Future is a place-based storytelling and art project with the residents, workers, and visitors of a stigmatized informal area of Boston known as Mass. and Cass. The team is motivated by the fact that these residents were being written out of the future in the City of Boston's latest neighborhood plan, by the criminalization and dispossession of this complex community where people have developed unsung care and survival practices, and by the relationships they have with folks on the ground, rooted in deep listening, building trust, and committing to co-creation as best as they can.

The team uses storytelling, public art, and design research to advocate for this complex community's needs and to learn what spatial justice means in this context. Over the grant period, they have hosted regular arts workshops at a local community center; listened to and recorded stories with staff, guests, service providers, and advocates; started a participatory mural at the local men's shelter paid by the Boston Public Health Commission; and begun a partnership with the Boston Society for Architecture to formalize and share their design methods and approach.

It is clear that neighborhoods live in us as much as we live in them, so this community art and storytelling project lays the foundation for a more intentional approach to designing the future of Mass. and Cass.

OUTREACH

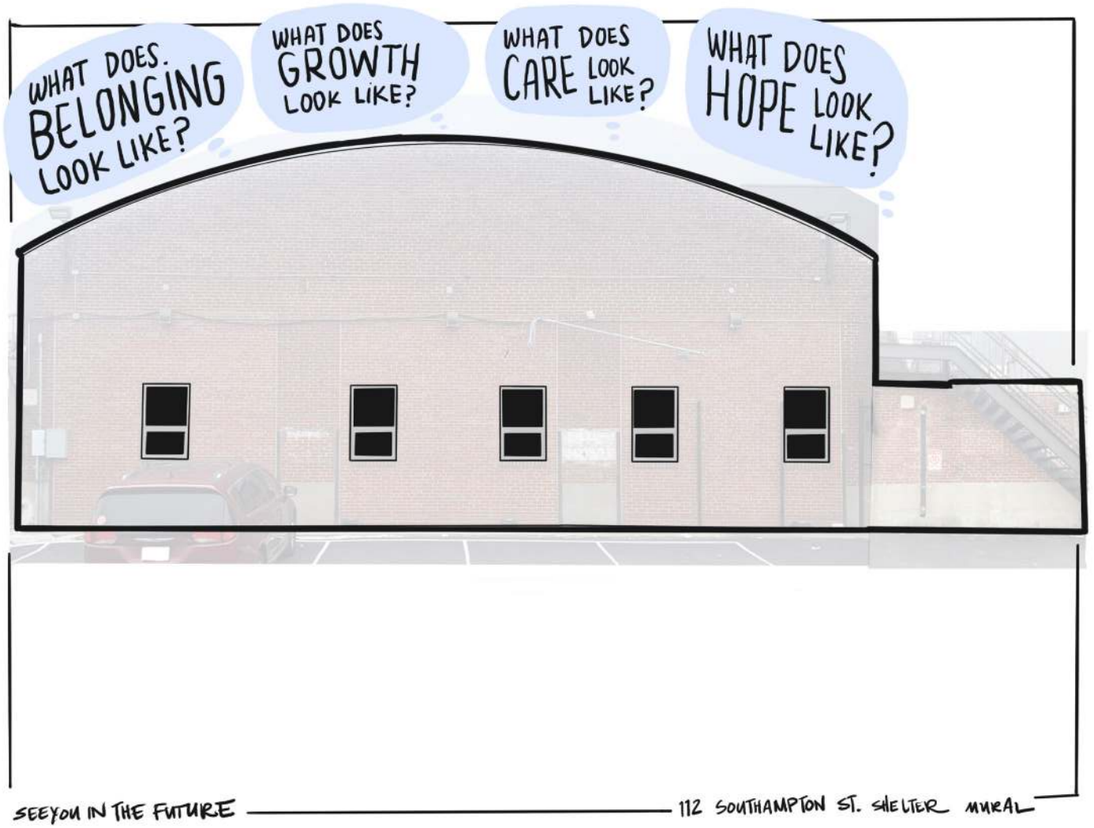
19

arts workshops at the Engagement Center

ENGAGEMENT

13

one-on-one long form recorded interviews with guests and staff of the Engagement Center



Southampton Street Shelter Mural Worksheet | See You in the Future

COMMUNITY

The team does not ask community members to disclose their personal information and do not recruit individuals based on demographics, so the following is from observations and anecdotes shared with the team.

Many community members with whom the project team works are people who live in or visit Mass. and Cass, who are unhoused or staying in shelters or transitional temporary housing, with many waiting for permanent housing options. They often have lived experience of incarceration and going through the criminal justice system. Many participants are using recovery or drug maintenance treatment programs, receiving medical treatment for physical and/or mental disabilities, and participating in social welfare programs. Folks range in age from 18 to 70 years old (estimated). Participants are often parents, unemployed or underemployed, immigrants, people of color, young queer folks, and/or have lived through violence and abuse.

The team often engages outreach and service provider staff in local organizations as well as activists, who sometimes come to this work from related lived experiences and who are often people of color. For the See You in the Future mural work, the team is working with high school students from Boston Arts Academy, the city's only public high school for the visual and performing arts.

STAKEHOLDERS

The project's additional funders are the Public Art for Spatial Justice team from the New England Foundation for the Arts; the Collective Futures Fund, administered by the Tufts University Art Galleries and part of the Regional Regranting Program of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; the Priscilla King Gray Public Service Center (PKG Center) at MIT; the Kresge Foundation; and the Innovation team from the Boston Society for Architecture.

Through the team's storytelling work, team members developed partnerships with the Boston Healthcare for the Homeless Program and the Massachusetts chapters of the National Union for the Homeless and Poor People's Campaign. The Housing = Health team served as project mentors around community engagement.

Through the team's mural work, they began a formal partnership with the Boston Public Health Commission, which manages the men's shelter at 112 Southampton Street, as well as with the Boston Arts Academy and the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture.

IMPACT

The short term impact of the project has been in providing the team with space to further develop and visualize a spatial critique and reflection of the evolution of public space in Mass. and Cass. With support from the Hideo Sasaki Foundation, the team was able to design a timeline showing how media narratives affect place and space, which has been useful in the team's presentations and an exhibit. They have also had the funding resources to prioritize the relationship building that has made way for the project's next phase of work with the Boston Public Health Commission.

The long-term impact of the project will be in the team's relationship to the built environment and applying their learning to physical space.

ENGAGEMENT

100

individuals engaged

ENGAGEMENT

30

meaningful conversations



See You in the Future graphic | See You in the Future

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

The project team has a regular presence in the Engagement Center, the only low threshold day shelter operated by the City of Boston, and have held 19 arts workshops as of June 2023. They have built evolving relationships with guests and staff that are expanding to broader storytelling opportunities.

The team hosts the weekly arts workshops at the Engagement Center on the same day at the same time, and always offer guests options so they can participate on their own terms. The team designs each workshop and activity taking into account how and why we tell stories and create art, and with the aim of giving community members control over their outward-facing stories. Each workshop is a way to tell, share, and listen to stories through art. The team hopes that the output of each workshop adds color to the Engagement Center space, brings joy to staff and guests, and is a wonder-inspiring way to share stories.

At each workshop, community members have the following opportunites to engage:

- A more involved creative activity involving telling a personal story, if guests would like to engage and stay for longer
- A low-barrier expressive activity (e.g. coloring books, origami, collaging), for guests who just want to hang out and chat or not
- A multilingual space to just talk and be heard
- A separate optional space to record an audio story

A few regulars come to workshops almost every week and have begun to help the team set up the table. This setup has always aimed to emphasize beauty, joy, and hope through colors, fresh flowers (which the team always gives to guests or staff after), and snacks. In May 2023, the team added a table cloth where they collaged different artistic artifacts created by guests during previous workshops, as a passive way for guests to feel seen and welcome, and have a sense of ownership of the workshop table.

The team plans to move toward creating a mural together at the nearby Southampton Street Shelter and, hopefully, the parking lot between the Engagement Center and the shelter.

PROJECT VISIBILITY

An important partnership that emerged was one with the Massachusetts chapter of the Poor People's Campaign. Three team members were invited to attend the official Poor People's Campaign delegation to Washington to share their work and advocate to Congress for changes in harm reduction, housing, and incarceration policies.

The Boston Art Review included the project in a special issue of their publication,[1] created in partnership with Collective Futures Fund.

The project team was selected as one of five groups in the initial cohort of the Boston Society for Architecture's Innovation program.[2] Through their growing partnership, the Boston Society for Architecture is now providing the team with space, funding, mentorship, and labor.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE FOUNDATION

The See You in the Future project aligns with the Hideo Sasaki Foundation's mission through it's community focus and emphasis on social equity. The project is a fully community-led design in a community where access to design has been limited.

Empowering the community at Mass. and Cass, the project seeks to create public spaces that affirm the inherent worth of unhoused and recovery communities and work to repair histories of disinvestment and policing.

NEXT STEPS

With additional funding and support, the team is preparing for a series of public events to share back the stories they have gathered as well as the historical and spatial research they have been conducting.

In summer 2023, the team plans to facilitate a series of trauma-informed mapping workshops and interviews of the intersection's care infrastructure. They have recorded and transcribed more than 10 long-form interviews and as of June 2023 are currently coding them to assemble into an online platform to share publicly.

The team is moving toward creating a mural with community members at the nearby Southampton Street Shelter and, hopefully, the parking lot between the Engagement Center and the shelter. After working to build trust, better understand the state of community, and facilitate relationships between community members, the team plans to conduct a series of peer-led circles for community conversations around Mass. and Cass starting in late July or August 2023.

The team is also planning a block party for fall 2023. This event will celebrate the completion of the planned mural, and will be a time where people can hear the stories the team has collected over time. The event will include music and an open mic for those who want to share poetry live. It will also be an opportunity to invite the greater public, including policy makers, to see the space and to see what its people are capable of when given the tools of care.

The team is continuing their storytelling and sharing efforts. They are looking toward more sustainable ways to continue their weekly engagement in the area and expanding the potential collaborators and volunteers involved in the work. While arts and making have been foundational elements of their work, they are finally in place to strategically influence public space in the near term through public art. The team's hope is to find a series of ways to effectively honor the stories they have heard and foster additional arts-based interventions and strategic policy decisions around the future for the area.



recording space | See You in the Future

1 Boston Art Review in partnership with Collective Futures Fund. https://issuu.com/bostonartreview/docs/bar_issue_cff_final_file-11.22_small/24

2 Boston Society for Architecture. https://www.architects.org/news/bsa-commits-to-all-five-innovation-prototypes



Art workshop set up | See You in the Future

STAY CONNECTED

www.seeyouinthefuture.org

RESEARCH TEAM

Melissa Q. Teng | team contact

Melissa Q. Teng is a Chinese American social practice + multimedia artist and writer living in Boston. She is always interested in building up people's creative voices and in how groups come together to bend the world around them. She often uses participatory design, research, and storytelling methods.

Sabrina Dorsainvil

Sabrina Dorsainvil is a public artist, illustrator, and civic designer. She previously served as the Director of Civic Design for the City of Boston's Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics and is currently a member of Agncy. Sabrina explores possibilities in our approaches to public health, civic participation, care, the built environment, and the celebration of our humanity.

Stephen Walter

Stephen Walter has worked with organizations like the Red Cross, the UN, and the Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics. He believes democratic care only becomes real when the design conditions exist for people to find their own freedoms—their own capacities to BEGIN something new that has never existed in the past.

George Halfkenny

A Boston native, George Halfkenny works to repair the harms of incarceration and addiction in individual lives and the community. As a Certified Peer Specialist, he serves as the Director of Outreach at Kiva Centers, where he advocates for access to housing, employment, and other supports for formerly incarcerated people. He is the co-founder of THRIVE Communities in Lowell, MA, has led Restorative Justice circles and workshops, and is working on a memoir.

Evvy Diego

Evvy Diego is an artist and writer from Boston. Moved by experience with mental illnesses, she joined See You in The Future as a Spanish translator and workshop organizer. Through her work, she helps fight the stigma and dehumanization that the mentally ill, unhoused, and drug-using communities face.



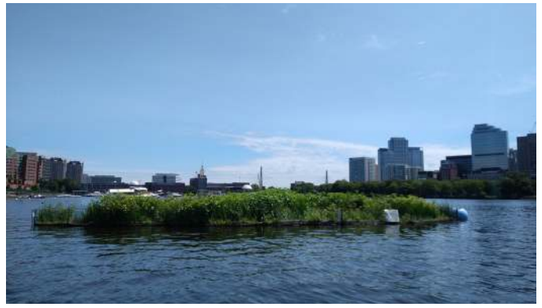
See You in the Future team | See You in the Future, photographer: Maia Erslev

Design Grants Alumni

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 upland solutions. In-stream interventions like floating wetlands offer a complementary strategy that can absorb and remove nutrients from the water, increase biodiversity, support local ecological changes, and provide other co-benefits, like additional green space.

In June 2020, in partnership with MassDCR, the team installed the floating wetland in the Charles River in Cambridge downriver of the Longfellow Bridge. The team then spent three summers collecting data to understand the wetland's impact on the local ecology. Team member Max Rome concluded research for the pilot stage of the project with his doctoral dissertation at Northeastern University, *From Water Quality to River Health (2022)*.



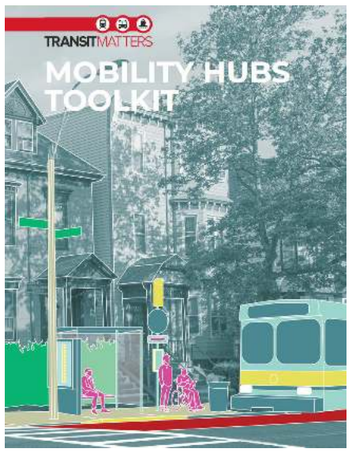
Conceptual rendering by Perkins&Will, courtesy Charles River Conservancy

In 2023, the Charles River Conservancy publicly shared the research results at an event co-hosted with the MIT Museum and released a comprehensive report: *Lessons Learned from the Charles River's First Floating Wetland*.

Throughout the project, the CRC has used the wetland to engage youth and the community in understanding the ecology of the river and ways that we can all help make it a healthy and vibrant ecosystem. For the project's next phase, the CRC is working with public and private partners to realize a floating wetland expansion in the Broad Canal, as well as other feasible locations in the Charles River basin, to harness the full benefits that floating wetlands can provide.

The report is available at thecharles.org/floating-wetlands.

East Boston Mobility Hubs



East Boston Mobility Hubs, a 2019 Community Grants winner, was seeking to address East Boston's unique mobility challenges by designing a prototype mobility hub: a place that connects different modes of transportation with accessible and user-friendly infrastructure and improves the transit experience, adding vibrancy, safety, and legibility to the public realm.

In February 2023, TransitMatters released the Mobility Hubs Toolkit. This toolkit is targeted for community organizations and members, rather than planners and technical experts. It provides a description of each element of a mobility hub, as well as its benefits and any considerations, such as cost and equity. The toolkit intends to empower communities to implement relatively low-cost solutions that can be scaled to fit an individual community's needs.

The toolkit is available at transitmatters.org/mobility-hubs.

Columbia Road Gender and Mobility Initiative

The Columbia Road Gender and Mobility Initiative, a 2020 Design Grants winner, sits at the intersection between research, advocacy, and design. This project sought to understand the mobility limitations that stem from gender inequities and gendered experiences on the streets. The team examined how gender-disaggregated data can reveal mobility and design factors that address female, non-binary, and trans people's needs and experiences.

In May 2022, the team released the booklet Gender Affirming and Inclusive Community Engagement Strategies, summarizing strategies the team learned over 18 months working on gender-inclusive community engagement. The document includes tips and lessons so we can all contribute to planning engagement processes that make people of any gender feel comfortable.

The booklet is available in both English and Spanish at gendermobility.com/resources



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} 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 2022, G{Code} was granted 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, allowing the organization to expand their reach and range of intiatives. G{Code} also received $300,000 from the state-funded Community Empowerment and Reinvestment Grant Program as a community-led program building leadership, collaboration, and capacity at the local level.

In 2023, G{Code} will double the capacity of their Intro to Web Dev program, formerly known as Intro to G{Code}. The shift from two annual cohorts to four is in response to the community's overwhelming interest: they receive 500+ applications for 25 available seats in each cohort. G{Code} also piloted a new Intro to Data Analytics program to provide foundational knowledge and practical skills in the field of data analytics.

In fall 2023, G{Code} will launch a new website and the G{Code} Full Stack campaign to raise funds to renovate 43 Hutchings Street in Roxbury into a state-of-the-art tech center that combines training with housing for G{Code} fellows.

Learn more and get involved at thegcodehouse.com.



The future G{Code} House location, Roxbury, MA

2023 Design Grants Teams

ACTION GRANT

EarlyEducatorSpace 2.0:
Reimagining Public Housing with Childcare in Mind

Kimberly Lucas, Taylor Cain

EarlyEducatorSpace 2.0 from the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) is a unique opportunity to bring together family childcare providers, families, neighbors, and affordable housing property managers in a way that expands access to childcare, creates opportunities for economic mobility for public housing residents, and enhances affordable housing spaces. In three design sessions, participants will reimagine and codesign common green space in one BHA development as a site inclusive of care for young children.



ACTION GRANT

Survival Guide to Living and Staying in Roxbury

Armani White, Lauren Miller, Kai Palmer-Dunning

The Survival Guide to Living and Staying in Roxbury from Reclaim Roxbury is both a storytelling and practical information project on the current and past fights for community land development, how to develop land, and how to apply for rental and homeownership opportunities. Roxbury is a rapidly gentrifying, predominantly Black, working-class community in Boston. The multimodal document will serve as a conversation starter within the community, to help connect people to advocacy resources and share their own stories. The guide will help with creative community building, using art and storytelling to enhance community planning.



2023 Design Grants Pitch Night at 110 Chauncy | Sasaki

DISCOVERY GRANT

Building Food Resilience

through Urban Container Gardening from the Comfort of Home

Magdalena la Battaglia, Elsa Flores, Ana Martinez

The Harborkeepers proposes Building Food Resilience through Urban Container Gardening from the Comfort of Home, addressing food waste and food resiliency challenges in East Boston through a series of educational and problem-solving workshops and activities focused on growing food in limited urban housing spaces, such as people's homes, terraces, or even inside from their window sills, as a way to address that people in densely populated urban communities may not have access to local community urban gardens or yards to grow their own fresh and healthy produce.



DISCOVERY GRANT

Improving Open Space in Chinatown

Lydia Lowe, Kathryn Friedman, Sari Kayyali, Heang Rubin

Chinatown Community Land Trust (CLT) seeks to improve and expand open space in Chinatown, Boston's densest and hottest neighborhood. Chinatown CLT will engage designers in supporting community planning efforts to secure community governance and improvements for Reggie Wong Park, to advocate for a new community-oriented park in Parcel 25 development, and, longer term, to advance the vision for a green space next to the future Chinatown Library. Chinatown CLT is also part of the Chinatown HOPE initiative, which is focused on moving the Phillips Square public space into a second phase community design process.



DISCOVERY GRANT

Movement Training and Cultural Center: Envisioning Hope

Vanny Huot, Carlos Saavedra, Rodrigo Saavedra

The Ayni Institute is an organization rooted in the working class, immigrant, BIPOC communities and Indigenous wisdom. Boston's rapid gentrification and the pandemic have displaced the organization and impacted its ability to train leaders in social change. To address this, the Ayni Institute committed to jointly buy a building with Neighbors United for a Better East Boston (NUBE). Recently, the partnership raised funds to purchase a 4,500 square foot building in Revere with the capacity to house trainings and a cultural center, and serve as a regional movement hub, providing inclusive and strategic meeting space for movement leaders.



A Look Ahead



SHARED VOICES:
CHARTING A COURSE FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

In 2022, the Hideo Sasaki Foundation's Design Grants program continued with a focus on advancing design as a tool for building more equitable and resilient communities. The active research projects accomplished by the four teams in the program's fourth cohort offer innovative solutions to address clean energy, green infrastructure, food justice, and care infrastructure, with an ongoing impact in Greater Boston and beyond.

The Hideo Sasaki Foundation has developed a research agenda based on the mission of promoting equity in design, which has allowed us to maintain a leadership position in contributing to the design industry and local communities. Through the Design Grants program, we aim to test new models and projects that can meaningfully work within communities, in Greater Boston and beyond.

"The work our fourth Design Grants cohort was able to accomplish is impressive and inspiring. In just ten months, all four teams have already made a visible impact in their communities. And they are poised to further their impact in the coming months and years. We are excited to continue to co-create change through our growing research community," said Mary Anne Ocampo, Sasaki principal and Hideo Sasaki Foundation Board Chair.

The Hideo Sasaki Foundation was thrilled with the response to the 2023 call for proposals, with a theme of Shared Voices: Charting a Course for Community Action. This theme recognizes that multiple futures are at stake, and we can make a difference by acting now.

The Hideo Sasaki Foundation invited eight teams to present at Pitch Night 2023, and awarded Design Grants to five: EarlyEducatorSpace 2.0: Reimagining Public Housing with Childcare in Mind (Boston); Survival Guide to Living and Staying in Roxbury; Building Food Resilience through Urban Container Gardening from the Comfort of Home (East Boston); Improving Open Space in Chinatown; and Movement Training and Cultural Center: Envisioning Hope (Revere).

"We're excited to welcome these new teams tackling projects that will empower communities within Massachusetts. We also look forward to exploring new ways to support our Design Grants cohort as we continue to improve and expand the Design Grants program," says Elaine Limmer, Hideo Sasaki Foundation Board Vice-chair and Design Grants Jury Chair.

As we move forward, the Hideo Sasaki Foundation Design Grants program will continue to bring new, local solutions to global challenges, empowering our communities and creating lasting change through the power of design.

2023 Design Grants Call for Proposals | Sasaki Foundation



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2022-2023 Design Grants Volunteers

Raj Adi Raman
Armin Akhavan
Becky Blizard
Phillip Bruso
Julia Carlton MacKay
Timothy Gale
Ken Goulding
Kongyun He
Yilun Hong
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