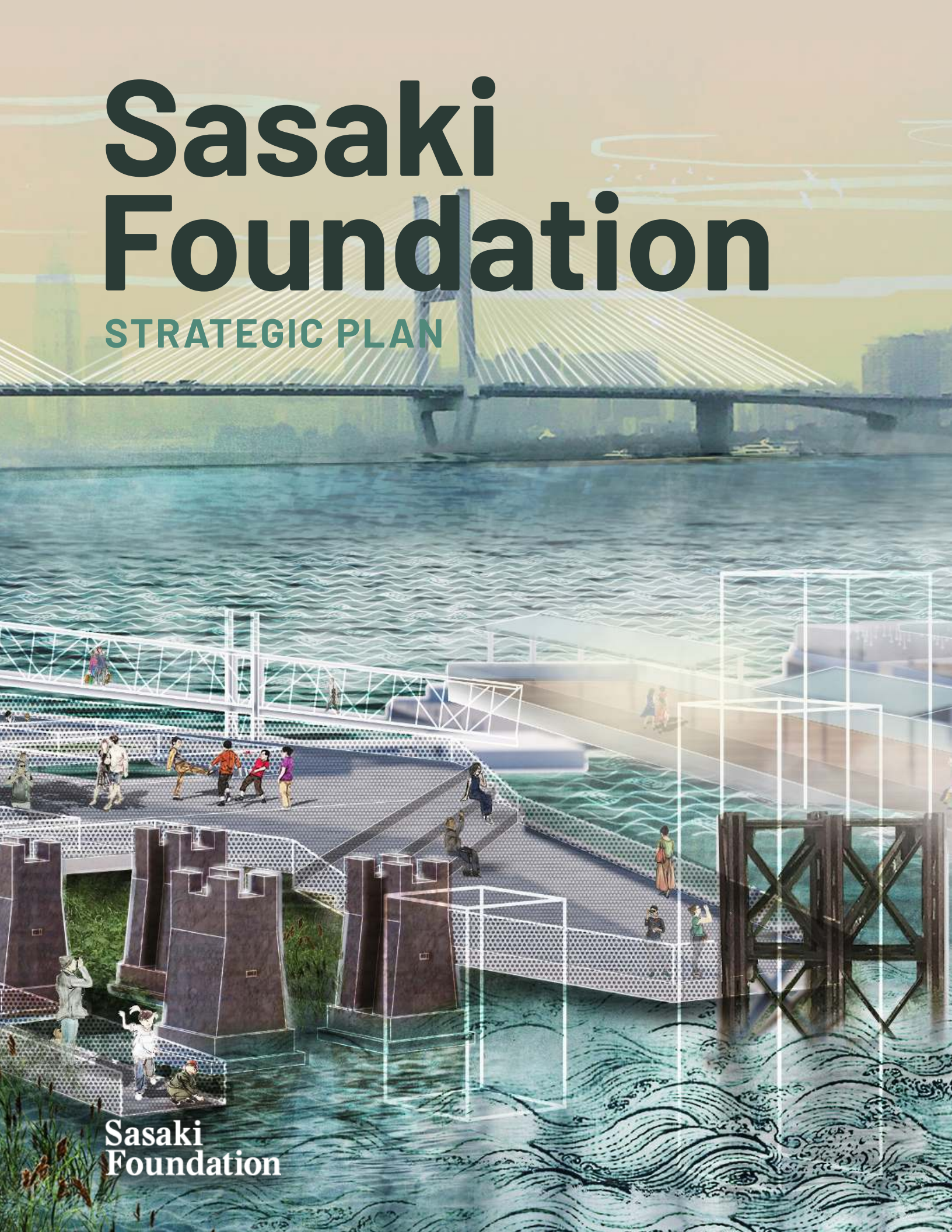
Sasaki Foundation

STRATEGIC PLAN



Sasaki Foundation

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Introduction

The Sasaki Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, was established with a bequest from Hideo Sasaki's family and friends to continue his legacy of advancing rigorous and challenging research in design. Since its founding in 2000, the Sasaki Foundation has awarded $385,000 for those interested in pursuing focused research initiatives that foster diversity and equity in the design field and connect young people to mentorship and resources.

The Sasaki Foundation is named after Hideo Sasaki, a pioneer of modern design and a practitioner, leader, and educator who articulated—and proved—the value of interdisciplinary design. Sasaki served as the Chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where his teaching demonstrated his maxim that, beyond academic or professional success, "contribution is the only value."

The Sasaki Foundation is located in Watertown, Massachusetts. It is governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees that comprises experts across the design continuum. In 2018, it established an Advisory Council, made up of members who represent the priority areas for the organization, including water, climate resilience, mobility, and community building. The individuals are recruited from local foundations, community organizations, academia, technology companies, and design firms.

The Foundation has historically been underwritten by corporate contributions from the firm Sasaki, as well as gifts from individuals. In 2017, the Board of Trustees announced the appointment of Alexandra Lee as the inaugural executive director of the Sasaki Foundation, following a nationwide search. Lee's hire represents a key milestone in the organization's history as it seeks to enhance its capacity and significantly increase its impact.

PLANNING PROCESS

In 2018, the Sasaki Foundation received funding from the Barr Foundation to begin its strategic planning process, and to explore its path forward. With input from the Board of Trustees, the Advisory Council, the Executive Director, other Sasaki staff, and numerous civic, non-profit, and other individuals, the Foundation has been able to develop a solid understanding of the design landscape, determine key trends in the Foundation's research areas, and identify needs for organizations working in these areas.

As part of its expanded focus, the Sasaki Foundation worked to better define its research agenda and supporting activities. The following strategic plan is based on research and multiple conversations with internal and external stakeholders, and it outlines the strategic priorities for the organization on which its day-to-day activities will be based.

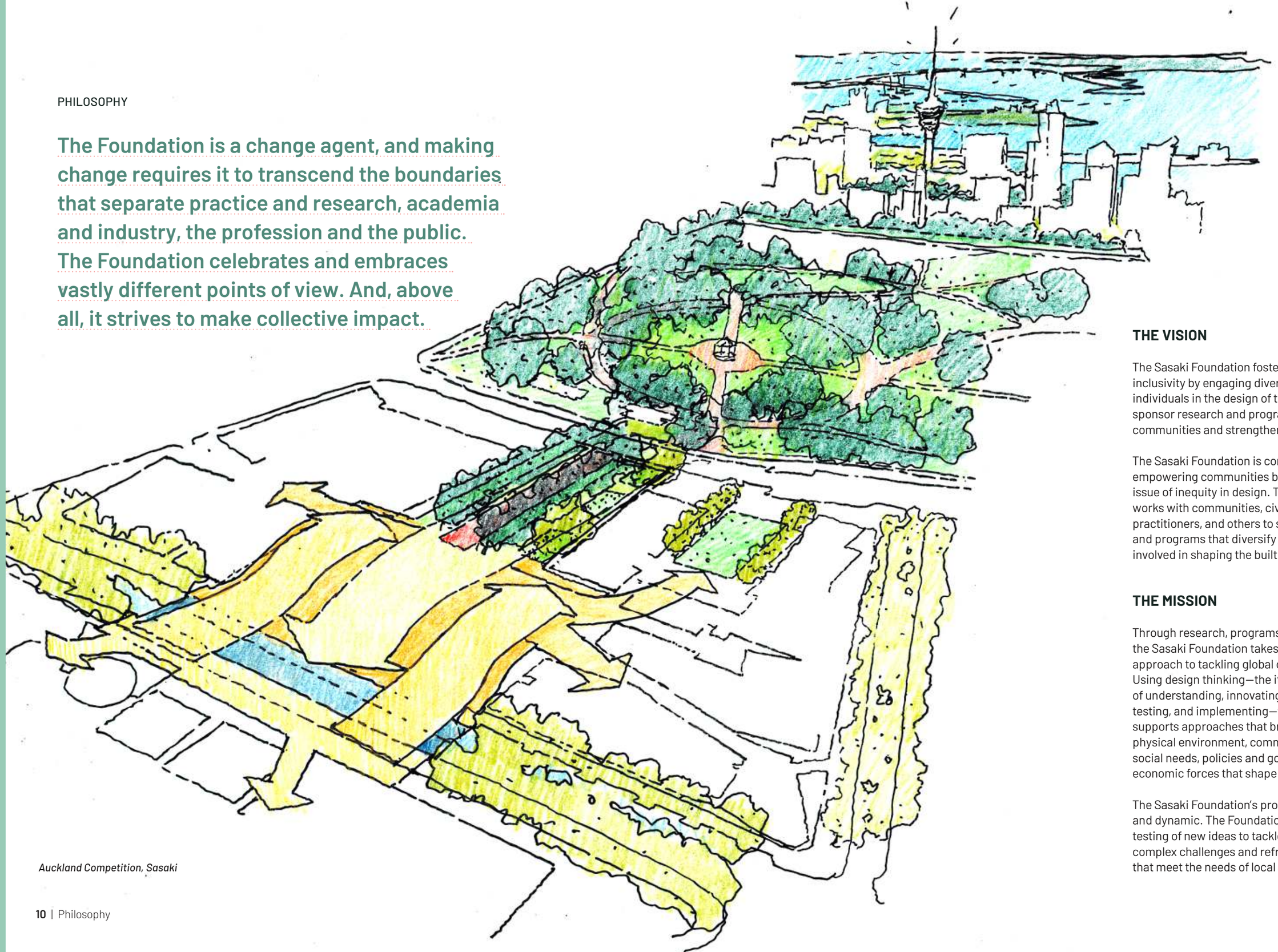


Roxbury Cultural District, Boston ▶

Philosophy

PHILOSOPHY

The Foundation is a change agent, and making change requires it to transcend the boundaries that separate practice and research, academia and industry, the profession and the public. The Foundation celebrates and embraces vastly different points of view. And, above all, it strives to make collective impact.



Auckland Competition, Sasaki

THE VISION

The Sasaki Foundation fosters equity and inclusivity by engaging diverse groups and individuals in the design of the environment. We sponsor research and programs that empower communities and strengthen education in design.

The Sasaki Foundation is committed to empowering communities by tackling the issue of inequity in design. The Foundation works with communities, civic leaders, practitioners, and others to support research and programs that diversify the voices involved in shaping the built environment.

THE MISSION

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 Foundation supports approaches that bridge the physical environment, community and social needs, policies and governance, and economic forces that shape communities.

The Sasaki Foundation's process is progressive and dynamic. The Foundation invests in the testing of new ideas to tackle large-scale, complex challenges and reframe them in ways that meet the needs of local communities.

THE SASAKI FOUNDATION'S APPROACH

Design has the power to address the most urgent challenges facing us today, from social equity to mobility to environmental resilience. Design is an agent of change. And yet, access to design—for communities that need it the most—is often limited. The Sasaki Foundation works to find new ideas and concepts that best meet the needs of constituents, and that are not just a return to the status quo.

The Foundation celebrates and embraces vastly different points of view. And, above all, it strives to make collective impact. At the intersection of research, practice, academia, and industry, the Sasaki Foundation is committed to advancing the social value of design, inviting diverse partners, and co-creating lasting, equitable change.



Pitch Night, Incubator at Sasaki ▶

Strategic Objectives & Key Focus Areas

SASAKI FOUNDATION PRIORITIES

OVERVIEW

VISION

Sasaki Foundation supports design initiatives that promote equity in order to strengthen and empower communities.

MISSION

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

The Sasaki Foundation strategic plan is a framework for prioritizing goals and implementing the Foundation's vision for the next three years. The Foundation's strategic objectives will be used to translate its vision into a more focused, actionable set of outcomes. Therefore, the Foundation has identified three key strategic objectives, upon which it will focus its efforts moving forward.

The three strategic objectives broadly include the following:

1.



1. RESEARCH & EXPERIMENTATION

Large-scale, complex challenges require cross-disciplinary thinking. That's why the Sasaki Foundation convenes experts and innovators from all backgrounds.

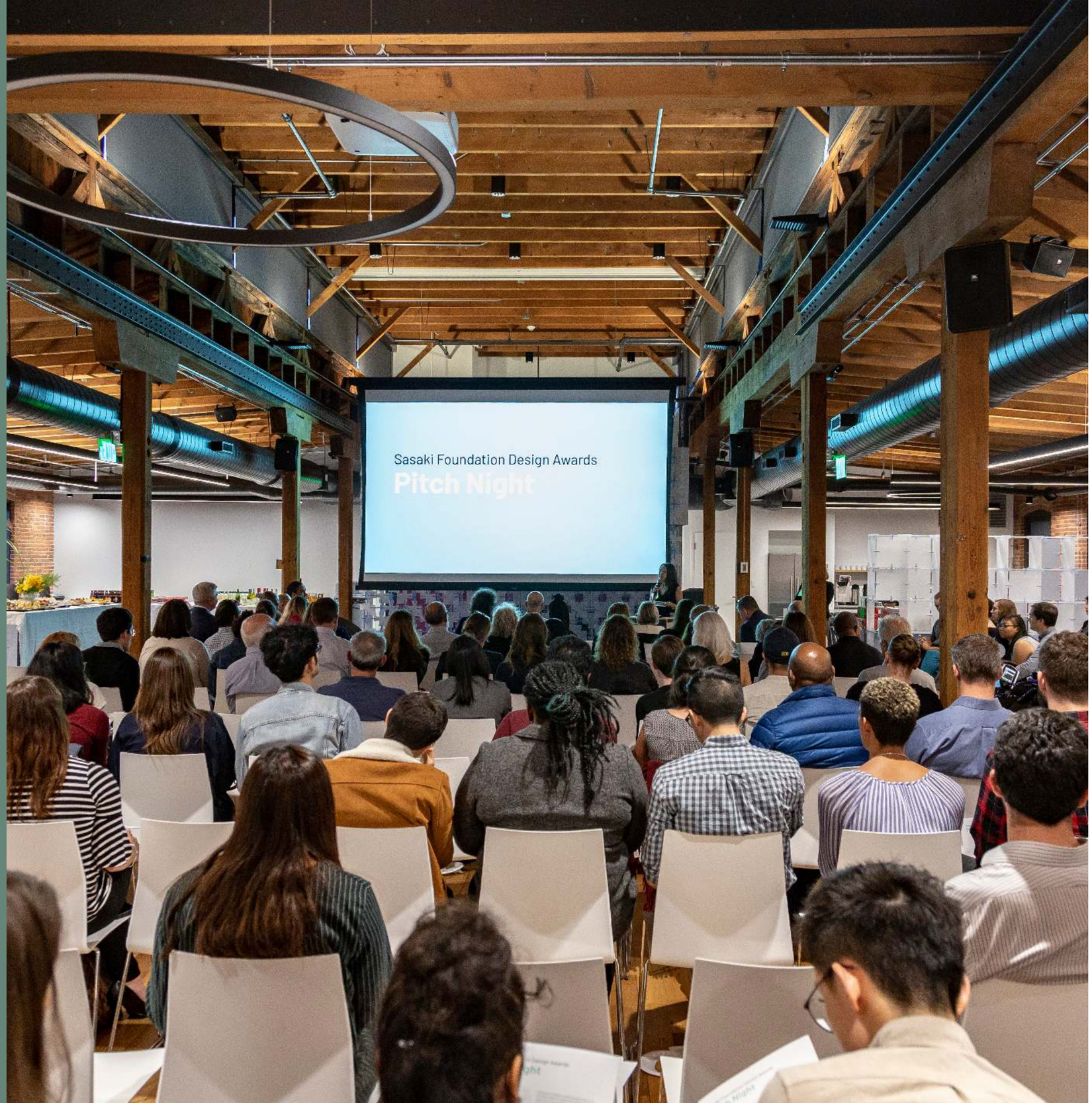
The Foundation's research and programs are focused on bringing issues of inequity in design to the forefront. In many cases, this means a focus on helping communities of color, and immigrant and low-income communities, who have historically been removed from the design process. These communities are often the ones who are most at risk, but who often find themselves without a voice at the table.

FOCUS FOR FIRST YEAR

A strong research agenda will allow the Sasaki Foundation to maintain its leadership position with regard to cutting-edge technologies and concepts within design. In the first year of the Foundation's work, it will focus on communities within Greater Boston, as well as Massachusetts Gateway Cities like Lowell, Worcester, and Lynn.

The Foundation's intent is to test new models and projects that can work within communities. It would hope these projects could then scale to other communities with similar characteristics. Any research agenda the Foundation creates must be developed through the lens of equity in design. For its first year, the Foundation will emphasize resiliency, as it relates to challenges that adversely impact communities, including the following:

- **Proactive Approaches to Climate Adaptation**
- **New Models for Housing**
-



THE SASAKI FOUNDATION DESIGN AWARDS

The Sasaki Foundation Design Awards provide a platform through which the Sasaki Foundation can help support and drive innovation within interdisciplinary teams from various sectors, while rooting these ideas in the communities we are looking to serve.

Each year, the Sasaki Foundation will announce new research topics that address the current trends in design and address inequities in those areas. Teams interested in submitting a design project can apply to the Sasaki Foundation Design Awards for cash grants and space at the Incubator at Sasaki. Judges will evaluate the teams based on each concept or project design, and whether the concepts meet the required focus on equity, alignment with the Foundation's research areas, innovation, and potential for impact. The Sasaki Foundation Design Awards will be the cornerstone of the Foundation's research agenda for the coming year.

In its pilot year (2018), the Foundation will focus on addressing questions of equity, with an emphasis on designing more resilient communities. The four topic areas for resilience research for the Sasaki Foundation Design Awards are outlined on the following pages.

Driving innovation with the Sasaki Foundation Design Awards

The Sasaki Foundation champions interdisciplinary approaches, testing new design concepts and projects that address complex issues. The Sasaki Foundation Design Awards support and drive innovation within interdisciplinary teams from various sectors, while rooting these ideas in communities. Each year, the Foundation announces new research topics that address the current trends in design and address inequities in those areas.

In 2018, the Foundation received more than 140 inquiries and approximately two dozen applications from teams representing Boston communities, Greater Boston cities,



1

Proactive Approaches to Climate Adaptation

The Foundation will focus its research in areas related to extreme heat, stormwater and flash flooding, and coastal and river flooding. In cities like Boston, these issues, especially the urban heat island effect and flood risk, disproportionately impact communities of color and low-income communities. The Sasaki Foundation is committed to exploring strategies for strengthening environmental and social resiliency in the face of major climatic events.

- How can investments in climate resilience do more to meet the environmental and social resilience needs of Greater Boston's neighborhoods?
- How can applicants collectively increase local awareness of resiliency, and inform systems-level approaches to climate risks and solutions?
- How can applicants model best practices for reducing carbon emissions, increasing building energy efficiency, and improving urban stormwater management?

2

New Models for Housing

The Foundation will support strategies to improve housing affordability, promote a more diverse housing stock, and address gentrification and displacement. Displacement of families, caused by economic and environmental forces, is exacerbated by the limited supply of affordable, family-oriented housing units. By simultaneously addressing the causes of displacement and developing new models for creating affordable family housing, the Foundation's focus is on promoting holistic housing solutions.

- How can applicants improve public health through new housing and community designs?
- How can design be used to help keep people in their homes and communities (e.g., community land trusts, zoning, accessory dwelling

Innovation in Transit and Access to Mobility Choices

The Sasaki Foundation will support design strategies and solutions for existing challenges to reliable transit, strengthening public-private partnerships in expanding transportation choice, and leveraging technology to provide greater access to transportation options by eliminating barriers.

Urban reinvestment in transportation in an era when people are attracted to transit-accessible, walkable, bikeable places can contribute to the rate of displacement among communities of color and low-income communities. Meanwhile, the proximity to reliable and affordable transportation choices is key to income mobility and increased access to jobs, education, and social networks. The Foundation will also support methods for leveraging private-sector innovation to increase access to transportation services for all communities.

- How do applicants propose to better connect communities of color and low income communities to transportation networks (car/ride/bike-share, bicycle lanes, rapid transit lines, on-demand transport, water transportation)?
- How can applicants' communities' better access technology to improve mobility?
- How can new transportation solutions help create resilient communities?

4

Creative Community Building

The Foundation will support projects and organizations on themes of collective memory and community storytelling, historic preservation, and local business development. The Foundation's interests 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 is authenticity maintained while reinvigorating the social and economic wellbeing of a given community?

Winning teams will become part of an annual cohort of non-profits, civic leaders, academics, researchers, design professionals, and others, all of whom are looking to collaborate to tackle some of the large-scale challenges facing cities and communities today. Team members will be from outside Sasaki, and will receive consulting support from Sasaki professionals.

To ensure the dissemination of the strategies generated through programs like the Sasaki Foundation Design Awards, awardees or grantees will commit to their projects being open source. The Foundation will work with winning teams to focus on the development of design-thinking methods and digital tools that can help stimulate communities' abilities to express themselves and their needs, with an emphasis on collaboration and co-production.

THE PERRY CHAPMAN RESEARCH PRIZE (SCUP)

The Sasaki Foundation sponsors the Perry Chapman Research Prize through the Society of College and University Planning (SCUP). The prize honors the memory of Perry Chapman, a landmark campus planner, for his commitment to integrated planning and interdisciplinary collaboration. The prize furthers the research, development, and dissemination of emerging knowledge to improve campus environments in support of their institutions' missions.

SASAKI INTERNAL RESEARCH GRANTS

The Sasaki Foundation will provide space and support to Sasaki designers who have been awarded with internal Sasaki research grants to study and develop concepts that directly overlap with the Foundation's research topic areas. These designers will be able to work alongside the cohort and will take advantage of the programs and events that are available within the Incubator. The research program will adapt and change a bit every year to allow for changes in community needs, as well as topics/issues of relevance for that time.

RESEARCH APPROACH

Key strategies for the research program will include the following:

Research Trends
The Foundation will create a continual feedback



To that end, the Foundation will work with civic leaders, educators, economists, and technologists to connect design and community-driven action.

As part of the strategic planning process, the Foundation has identified specific objectives with regard to engagement with its stakeholders.

Funders: How can the Foundation increase its donations, and diversify its funding base among its funders?

Non-profits & Social Enterprises: How can the

Discussing solutions to global challenges at MIT Solve

A primary focus for the Sasaki Foundation is outreach—to the design industry, to partners, and to local communities. With this in mind, the Foundation works closely with partners to host and cohost events that align with its mission and research agenda.

In spring 2018, the Foundation cohosted an event with MIT Solve. The event involved conversations with social entrepreneurs intent on tackling some of the world's biggest challenges: new models of sustainable food delivery to feed school children through novel kitchen models in schools; Zero Net Energy housing infrastructure in Standing Rock; improved nutrition in food deserts by providing people with skills to produce their own low-cost and sustainable source of protein; new programs for girls to learn tech and coding; and decentralized water and energy collection that produces water from the surrounding environment.



THE INCUBATOR AT SASAKI

The Incubator plays an important role at the Sasaki Foundation, in that it is the physical core of the organization. It is designed to be a co-working space, with paying tenants as well as companies and individuals who receive funding from the Sasaki Foundation and incubate within the center. With the Foundation's focus on promoting multidisciplinary approaches to design, the Incubator will sustain a mix of different types of tenants who support design, equity, and the Foundation's research areas. These tenants understand, and would benefit from, the opportunity to share thinking across the various sectors, and who have a lasting commitment to promoting design and equity.

An ideal mix of tenants will include a combination of the following: academics, civic leaders, non-profits, Sasaki Foundation Design Awards cohort members, Sasaki researchers, corporate partners, start-ups, entrepreneurs and design industry professionals. The Foundation's goal is to rotate new ideas through the Incubator, and its tenants are a reflection of its priorities and areas of interest.

FUNDERS

Having a diversified funding base will help strengthen the organization, so that the Sasaki Foundation can better weather economic challenges and so that it is not beholden to any one funder's influences or preferences.

The objective is to increase donations to the Sasaki Foundation to better support its programs and grant-making activities. Historically, the Foundation has been supported by Sasaki and a few individuals.

As part of the Foundation's strategic priorities, it will focus on diversifying its funding base to include donations from other types of entities, including corporations and foundations. In addition, the Foundation will build an inclusive donor base—one that will help strengthen the organization, but at the same time, help it foster a focus on equity in design.

The Foundation will focus on the following

Non-Profits & Social Enterprises
A strong network of allies, whether they are non-profits or for-profit social enterprises, will help broaden the reach of the Sasaki Foundation. A broader reach will help to minimize legwork for Foundation staff by helping to create a more robust pipeline of candidates for the Sasaki Foundation Design Awards and for additional grantees.

Non-profits and social enterprises are important partners for the Sasaki Foundation. They serve as community partners, helping to inform the Foundation about the needs of their constituents. They also specialize and work in its key focus areas, whether that is on the side of advocacy, convening, education, or training. In addition, they are the ones who can help the Foundation get its message out to those within their base who would benefit from the work that the Foundation does.

As part of the strategic priorities, the Sasaki Foundation will focus on building relationships with these entities and working with them to help build the Foundation's brand and increase awareness of the work that it does.

The key strategies that the Foundation will employ include the following:

Engagement
The Foundation will develop a comprehensive strategy to engage with non-profit and for-profit community partners. It will build relationships with non-profit and for-profit organizations that support its emphases on design, equity, and Sasaki's research areas.

In addition, the Foundation will develop programs, convenings, and events in collaboration with key organizations that further the Foundation's mission. It will partner with other organizations on events and programs that help to build brand awareness for the work that the Sasaki Foundation is doing.

Schenley Plaza, Sasaki

Grants
The Sasaki Foundation will develop evaluation criteria with regard to awarding grants to individuals, non-profit, and social enterprise organizations that support or complement the Sasaki Foundation's research focus areas, design, equity, or social justice. These evaluation criteria center on design, equity, inclusion, innovation and impact.

The Foundation will award interdisciplinary teams grants through the Sasaki Foundation Design Awards. In addition, the Foundation will provide one-time or multi-year grant awards to other organizations or programs that support its mission. These grant applications are evaluated by the Executive Director and the Board of Trustees. Grantees have the option of working within the Incubator at Sasaki.

As part of its grantmaking efforts, the Sasaki Foundation will develop impact metrics for its portfolio of grantees, as well as a process for reporting and tracking these metrics.

Civic & Community Leaders
Civic leaders are integral to understanding and meeting the needs of communities. As part of its strategic priorities, the Sasaki Foundation will work with civic and community leaders to help identify the needs of different communities throughout the region. Design is an iterative process. Creating a communication feedback loop with the communities in which the Foundation is trying to engage is key to its mission.

Incubator at Sasaki, Sasaki ▶

The Foundation's goal is to support programs that will help increase design thinking among municipal and civic leaders, to help them understand the role of design in placemaking, and to help them know how design can be better leveraged to meet the needs of their constituents.

The Sasaki Foundation will focus on the following key strategies:

Programs & Events
The Foundation will develop programs, in partnership with government entities and municipal and town leaders that help educate and promote design thinking among civic leaders.

Research
The Sasaki Foundation will supplement and work with municipal and government entities, like MONUM, MAPC, MassINC, and others, on their existing research programs. Through this process, the Foundation can leverage existing research activities to help drive thinking around design.

Outreach
The Sasaki Foundation will build relationships with town and city planners, municipal leaders, and regional stakeholders to help increase its brand awareness and impact.

Incubation
The Sasaki Foundation will provide space for town planners, civic leaders, and/or community leaders at the Incubator at Sasaki for certain periods of time, so they can work together to address mutual challenges that may impact their towns or region.

Sasaki Team Discussion, Sasaki ▶



A thriving design industry relies on this 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. The Foundation also advocates innovative design practice, seeking ways to cross disciplinary

Empowering young people through Girl UNinterrupted

The Sasaki Foundation is committed to developing a diverse pipeline of future designers. Through its own internship program, and its support of partner organizations, the Foundation aims to introduce students to design as a problem-solving tool, and empower young people who would not have otherwise considered the design industry as a viable career path. One example is the Foundation's support of Girl UNinterrupted, which seeks to bridge the gap between young female designers and leaders in the architecture field. Through surveys and interviews with prominent women principals from different generations, firms, and backgrounds, Girl UNinterrupted works to understand different perspectives, share best practices, and bring transparency to the architecture field. Its goal to collectively build a culture of equity in the architecture field aligns squarely with the Foundation's mission.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Foundation will continue to provide funding to support conferences and programs that promote and address issues of equity and social justice. In addition, the Foundation will provide grant awards to organizations that help to increase the pipeline of diverse candidates in the design industry.

The Foundation will also seek opportunities to provide financial support to organizations that work towards equity and social justice within the design profession (e.g., pay equity).

SPACE & RESOURCE SUPPORT

The Sasaki Foundation will incubate students and professionals within the Incubator at Sasaki in order to help bring diverse viewpoints to the everyday work being performed by the Foundation.

a formal partnership. In addition, these



Incubator at Sasaki, Sasaki ▶

The Path Ahead



CONCLUSION

The Strategic Plan set above is an ambitious plan with many actionable elements. The Foundation recognizes that not all things can be done at once, and that some phasing of the activities is required. Especially since it is in the early stages of development, the Sasaki Foundation must be adaptable and resilient in the face of change. It is important that it strike a balance between being opportunistic in the short-term with regard to funding and partnership opportunities, while staying true to its mission and those aspects that make it truly distinctive.

Since the Foundation is such a unique organization, it is essential to gauge the needs of its grantees, awardees, partners, collaborators, community residents, and funders, in order to provide the programs and services that they will require. In addition, the Foundation's needs to understand that its collective impact will take time, learning, and recalibration. Thus, this Strategic Plan should be treated as a living document, subject to course corrections along the way.

Annual progress assessments will be conducted on the Foundation's major strategic objectives, and success metrics will be tracked each year to look at its collective impact. In particular, the Foundation will focus on its three strategic priority areas: research and experimentation; learning and community engagement, and professional practice and growth. At the same time, the Foundation will focus on building its internal structure and resources, emphasizing organizational structure and alignment; leadership; diversified revenue streams; and an inclusive culture. Through the successful implementation of this plan, the Sasaki Foundation hopes to create sustained and continued growth that will allow it to further its impact and its support of design initiatives that will strengthen and empower our communities.



Sasaki Foundation

Contact
64 Pleasant Street
Watertown, MA 02474 USA
p: 617-923-7330
e: info@sasakifoundation.org
www.sasakifoundation.org