# SHAPING THE FUTURE

## Sam Fox School Strategic Plan

### Leadership in Sustainable Practices

The Sam Fox School shapes the future of the built environment through resilient design solutions, a commitment to environmental justice locally and globally, dissemination of creative work that promotes awareness and action around climate and environment, and the education of sustainable design leaders.

## Progress Fall 2024

**New Director of Sustainable Design and Environmental Justice**
Linda C. Samuels, professor and chair of urban design at the Sam Fox School at WashU, has been named the inaugural director of sustainable design and environmental justice at the school. Among Samuels' first priorities is to build a collaborative network across the school and broader university to address the global climate crisis and environmental equity. That work will include partnering with leadership to prioritize climate resiliency, healthy environments, and equitable urban systems as foundational to the school's academic mindset. She will also expand curricular and research collaborations throughout the school and engage with partners across the university, St. Louis, and the Midwest.

***Seeds: Containers of a World to Come***
The Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum is hosting the exhibtion, Seeds: Containers of a World to Come, February 21-July 28, 2025 in the Barney A. Ebsworth Gallery. At a moment when ecological concerns are becoming increasingly urgent, the exhibition brings into dialogue work by ten contemporary artists whose research-based practices are defined by sustained inquiry into plant-human-land relations. Seeds are the first link in the food chain, the embodiment of biological and cultural diversity, and the repository of life's future evolution. Cultivated by humans for millennia, seed varieties carry with them local histories as well as histories of migration and survival, bridging cultures, territories, and time periods. The exhibition aims to spark imaginative responses through encounters with visually arresting artworks that reflect on and reframe our understanding of current environmental challenges and our connection to the natural world.

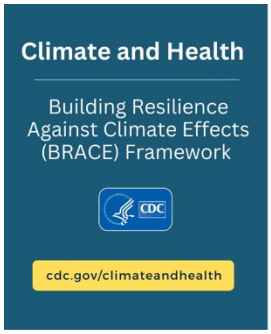
**WashU Mini City: A Testing Platform for a More Resilient Urban Environment**
Led by faculty Constance Vale and Eugene Vorbeychik, the WashU Mini City is a platform providing a novel and low-cost physical environment to study autonomous vehicles to improve reliability and safety. The platform is a 3,000-sq ft scale model of an urban neighborhood. Through a new partnership with the WashU Center for Environment, the Mini City is being used to bring ecologists, public health professionals, environmental engineers, and others together to explore how the platform can answer questions of interest in their own fields. The goal is to use the Mini City platform to coalesce interdisciplinary efforts that lead to the co-development of autonomous vehicles and a more resilient urban environment in which they operate.

**A More Sustainable Sam Fox School**
In partnership with the Washington University Office of Sustainability, the Sam Fox School hosted an intern, Allison Greathouse, the summer of 2024 to help begin a more formal review of school operations. Partnering with facilities and administration, she focused initial efforts on green events (sustainable food options, waste streams) and waste signage and placement. She interviewed event coordinators, program staff, instructional technologists, and other campus partners to provide a baseline assessment of needs and opportunities, as well as initial steps that can be taken to reduce the school's operational impact.

**Here & Next Center-Scale Pilot Funding**
Here & Next pilot funding includes a track for multi-school, multi-faculty projects that have potential to position WashU as a leader in the region, the nation, and the globe. These University Research Initiatives (URI) are highly competitive and provide access to multi-year funding for teams to establish partnerships and preliminary work that accelerates their competitiveness for large-scale federal funding. Fashion faculty Mary Ruppert-Stroescu is working with colleagues in the McKelvey School of Engineering to lead EnviroTex: Advancing Interdisciplinary Solutions in Textile Design to Adoption, which leverages strengths in synthetic biology, materials science, and sustainable fashion design to develop renewable, bio-derived, and biodegradable next-generation textile applications.

## Future Directions & Opportunities

**Here & Next Seed Funding – New Directions**
Architecture faculty Catalina Freixas is partnering with Professor Rodrigo Reis of Public Health on a pilot project submitted to the Burroughs Wellcome Fund's Climate Change and Human Health Seed Grant program. The project seeks to adopt the CDC Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) framework through a community-engaged process in four coastal U.S. cities. The goal is for cities to support buildings and urban environments that positively impacting human health.





**Focused Summer Urban Design Curriculum**
The Global Urbanism summer studio focuses on teaching students to design for climate vulnerable mega-cities in partnership with international firms and their communities. Students conduct in-depth field work and explore the physical, spatial results of social, historical, and environmental forces over time. The design work is informed by qualitative and quantitative research methodologies with a lens on climate change, migration, and adaptation and goals of resilience and environmental justice.