



**TISHMAN
ENVIRONMENT
AND DESIGN
CENTER**

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2020-2023**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At a time when the impacts of climate catastrophe and environmental destruction, like the recent global health pandemic, are affecting frontline and fenceline communities disproportionately all over the world, it is of utmost importance that we build on the successes of our previous strategic plan and activate our entire New School community to respond to the climate emergency.

MISSION

The Tishman Environment and Design Center integrates bold design, policy and social justice approaches to tackle the climate crisis and advance environmental justice.

VISION

We are a collaborative resource center and hub for environmental justice organizations, designers, policy makers, students and faculty that supports and advances bold environmental and climate justice action and movement building in accordance with the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing. We will advance more equitable and just sustainability policies within the University and we will be leaders in the fight for climate justice.

Since 2015, the Tishman Center has led a wide range of events, programs and initiatives - engaging over 4,300 students, faculty, staff and members of the public. In response to a survey that went out to stakeholders, 76% of respondents stated that the Tishman Center was effective at promoting sustainability on campus. The Center has also successfully collaborated with over 20 partner organizations that are working directly on

a variety of environmental and climate justice issues. These external partnerships have produced relevant research and technical assistance for advocates and policy makers, public programming and networking, as well as student and faculty engagement and learning opportunities. This is a strong base to build upon for our next three-year 2020-2023 strategic plan. We have also expanded our work with the launch of a newly funded initiative focused on supporting movement building for environmental justice leaders across the nation. This new Environmental Justice Movement Fellowship will position our center as a critical hub for innovation and allyship in the environmental and climate justice movements. This program will place us at the forefront of social movement impact at a time when the knowledge and efforts of frontline movements will be urgently needed.

Over the next three years, the Center will focus on deepening our efforts to leverage the passion, experience and creativity of the New School community to confront the climate emergency while continuing to ground our work in the principles of environmental justice. After completing an outside evaluation of the prior strategic plan and reflecting on the challenges and opportunities ahead, two goals emerged. These goals will expand upon the work completed under the previous plan and build on past successes. The 2020 - 2023 Strategic Plan is organized according to two overarching goals:

1. *Serve as a resource center and hub for movement building and climate and environmental justice research, design and interdisciplinary practice.* The Tishman Center offers support in the form of a movement building fellowship, interdisciplinary research and practice, as well as design and policy expertise. The Center works with a wide range of groups including community-based organizations, environmental and climate justice coalitions and networks, advocates and policymakers. Our work is guided by the Jemez Principles with an emphasis on critical, participatory research and the co-production of inclusive, bottom-up approaches that amplify the knowledge of frontline and environmental justice communities.

2. *Mobilize students, staff, faculty and our broader community to take action on the root causes of the climate crisis and concomitant social and environmental injustices.* The Center does this in a variety of ways: leading efforts on an inclusive Climate Emergency Action Plan; creating opportunities for staff, students, faculty and our larger community to learn about and act on environmental justice and climate change; sharing best practices; and experimenting with programming and practices that invite innovation, transdisciplinarity, design thinking and solidarity with frontline communities.



PROCESS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This strategic plan reflects in-depth discussions with the staff and leadership of the center and key stakeholders that have taken place over the last two years. It also incorporates feedback from the evaluation of the last strategic plan. The updated Mission and Vision Statements were adopted in Spring 2019 and directly shape the key goals that will advance the vision.

The strategic plan is guided by the following principles, perspectives and focus areas:

- The Center is committed to adherence to the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing. These principles include inclusivity, solidarity, mutuality, emphasis on bottom up organizing, letting people speak for themselves, building just relationships and a commitment to self transformation. We will also share these principles with our university community and partners in order to advance the adoption of the principles beyond our center.
- The Center's initiatives are grounded in the practice and principles of a **Just Transition**. These principles mean having both a healthy economy and a clean environment grounded in justice and equity and will be a transition away from an exploitative fossil-fuel based economy to a healthy, regenerative economy. A just transition prioritizes and is led by impacted workers and fenceline and frontline communities.¹
- The Tishman Center collaborates with a broad community in mind, including: **New School students, faculty, staff; the New York City region, and partner organizations**. These partner groups include environmental justice and climate justice organizations; local community-based organizations; public sector policymakers, and

¹ For more information on the Just Transition framework, <https://movementgeneration.org/movement-generation-just-transition-framework-resources/> and <http://jtalliance.org/what-is-just-transition/>



INTRODUCTION

leaders in the private and philanthropic sectors. Other key populations that the Tishman Center will engage are **New School leadership, alumni, and prospective students.**

This strategic plan will serve as a guide for the Tishman Center's initiatives over the next three years (2020-2023). The goals outlined in this strategic plan were developed with input from an external assessment conducted on the 2016 - 2019 Strategic Plan. Additionally, insights and feedback from New School leadership, affiliated faculty, students, and community partners were integral to the creation of this updated strategic plan.

The 2019 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change made it clear there is a closing window to act before the crisis reaches catastrophic levels. Furthermore, those least responsible for climate change - frontline communities, communities of color, poor and Indigenous communities - around the world will be most impacted and are already suffering devastating effects. Climate change and inequality are intimately linked to the same systems of human and ecological exploitation. In short, climate change is among the most pressing social justice issues that the New School can tackle. The climate emergency thus falls squarely under the continuum of social justice commitments that we, as an institution, are positioned to advance through creative and groundbreaking scholarship, pedagogy and practice. In order to substantively address these crises, we need a radically collective redesign of the systems and industries that exploit and destroy human and natural ecosystems. The Tishman Center recognizes this urgency and developed this strategic plan in direct response to these crises.

The Tishman Center's projects and programming in the short term will be focused on four key issue areas where we have particular expertise: **(1) Indigeneity, (2) Climate, (3) Waste and (4) Infrastructure.** The Center will pilot an innovative **Environmental Justice Movement Fellowship** focused on social movement innovations that can rapidly advance a more just and transformative climate agenda on a national and global scale. Thus, **movement impact** and **Just Transition** will be key focus areas. The Center will lead efforts with faculty and administrative partners on developing and implementing an inclusive, university-wide **Climate Emergency Action Plan**, to be used to foster a culture change of sustainability actions rooted in environmental and climate justice at the New School. We will remain open to special opportunities that may arise outside these major theme areas. The strategic plan **will be a dynamic, iterative guide.** We will revisit it regularly and make adjustments as needed.





GOAL 1

Serve as a resource center and hub for movement building and climate and environmental justice research, design and interdisciplinary practice.

The Tishman Center offers support in the form of a movement building program, interdisciplinary research and practice, as well as design and policy expertise. The Center works with a wide range of groups including community-based and grassroots organizations, environmental and climate justice coalitions and networks, advocates and policymakers. Our work is guided by the Jemez Principles with an emphasis on critical, participatory research and the co-production of inclusive, bottom-up approaches that amplify the knowledge of frontline and environmental justice communities.

Over the next three years, the Tishman Center will co-create and implement a new leadership fellowship for leaders and activists in the environmental justice (EJ) movement. This fellowship will amplify equitable and meaningful actions that address the root causes and intersectionality of inequality, environmental destruction and climate change. The EJ movement is centered on low-income communities and communities of color disproportionately impacted by pollution and climate change. The Fellowship will create a pipeline of EJ leaders generating, testing and scaling innovative ideas to disrupt current exploitative systems and create systemic change.

In addition to the creation of a new Fellowship, the Tishman Center will continue partnering with and supporting grassroots EJ organizations and scholars around the country.

A major strength of the education provided by The New School lies in experiential and

practice-based learning opportunities for our students. The Tishman Center's engagement with the environmental justice movement provides opportunities for students and faculty to learn through practical work with complex issues on the ground. It also provides communities with access to university resources that can be leveraged for community-led goals.

OUTCOMES

1. The Tishman Center helps build the capacity of the environmental justice movement to respond to the climate crisis and implement a shared vision of Just Transition.

2. The Tishman Center contributes to tangible, positive change in the communities in which we partner and helps advance climate and environmental justice goals.

3. The Tishman Center contributes to advancing equitable and just environmental policies and practices in our focus areas.

STRATEGIES

- Launch the Environmental Justice Movement Fellowship and create a pipeline of EJ leaders ready to develop innovative and disruptive strategies to advance a more transformative climate agenda.
- Develop collaborative projects with faculty and community organizations seeking assistance on environmental justice projects in their communities.
- Fund faculty research that directly benefits organizations seeking to explore or implement environmental justice projects on the ground or which supports EJ, climate or sustainability efforts or initiatives on campus.
- Fund student research to support student ideas and learning related to sustainability or EJ/CJ activities in their communities or on campus. Encourage group projects and support from expert faculty.
- Provide technical support and convening capabilities to environmental justice or grassroots organizations as requested.
- Develop and execute model agreements grounded in the Jemez and environmental justice principles.

ASSESSMENTS

- Create and track benchmark outcomes for the EJ Fellowship including the number of Fellows, the number of their projects created and implemented and the number of organizations and communities participating.

- Assess benchmark outcomes and timelines with community partners for co-produced, project-based work.
- Assess how faculty research funded by the Tishman Center is disseminated to and used by partner organizations.
- Evaluate if the relationship reflects the Jemez Principles through surveys with partner organizations and the continuation of projects after the grant period has ended. Evaluate the usefulness of technical assistance materials for partner groups.
- Measure the level of partners' satisfaction.
- Disseminate and measure the impact and number of white papers, press releases, articles, webinars, and meetings with stakeholders, undertaken by the Tishman Center, our affiliated faculty, and visiting scholars.

4. The Tishman Center will amplify and support the work of environmental justice communities by leveraging the research, resources, and engagement of New School faculty, students, and staff.

STRATEGIES

- Secure funding streams for research and collaboration with community partners.
- Collaboratively develop projects that serve the needs of community partners/the EJ movement.

ASSESSMENTS

- Measure dollars raised and philanthropic relationships developed.
- Evaluate the impact of co-produced materials and research on external partners and communities.



GOAL 2

Mobilize students, staff, faculty and our broader community to take action on the root causes of the climate crisis and concomitant environmental injustices.

The Tishman Center will mobilize our community by: leading efforts in the creation of a new, inclusive Climate Emergency Action Plan; creating opportunities for staff, students, faculty and our larger community to learn about and act on environmental justice and climate change; sharing best practices; and experimenting with programming and practices that invite innovation, interdisciplinarity, design thinking and solidarity with frontline communities and that broaden university sustainability practices.

The Tishman Center is committed to working with students, staff and faculty as well as our community here in the New York City region and beyond, to act on climate change, and do our part to **educate and mobilize our own community** towards solidarity with frontline groups. We must act with the urgency that the climate crisis demands to ensure that students are prepared to tackle a world in crisis. Our faculty must be well-versed in how to communicate the pressing issues of environmental and climate justice, and how to work equitably with frontline and fenceline communities. This includes understanding concepts inherent in the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organization with an emphasis on inclusivity, solidarity and letting people speak for themselves. Finally, our staff must be well-informed on how their actions can support the fight against climate change.

The Center will help lead efforts to **create a new comprehensive and inclusive Climate Emergency Action Plan in line with our values of social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion to galvanize our community.** The Center will act as a convener for a variety

of stakeholders within and outside the university to ensure the adoption of an ambitious climate agenda. The Climate Emergency Action Plan will be a living document that is able to respond to the demands of the climate crisis and will be rooted in environmental justice. The Action Plan will be aligned with intersecting social justice initiatives of the university and with the vision of a more diverse, inclusive, publicly engaged and equitable university.

The Center will continue to **support scholarship, praxis, teaching and research** focused on climate and environmental justice while providing tangible opportunities for the campus to take actions on climate change within and outside of the institution. The Center will continue to explore opportunities for curricular innovations, platforms, and pathways that encourage learning, applied research and deepening knowledge, particularly utilizing the focus perspectives of **Design, Policy, Social Justice, and Interdisciplinarity** that are the core of the Center's expertise.

In addition, the Tishman Center will **collaborate with departments across campus to implement, measure, and promote sustainable practices** that produce more equitable outcomes at The New School. Where appropriate, outcomes of these collaborative efforts will be incorporated in the Climate Emergency Action Plan. We will collaborate in particular with Buildings, Dining, Housing and Residence Life, Social Justice Initiatives, and the Parsons Making Center, among others, to develop aligned messaging and opportunities to promote sustainable and equitable practices on and off campus.

OUTCOMES

1. The New School develops and implements an updated Climate Emergency Action Plan that is driven by the Climate Emergency Declaration by 2021. The center will serve as a convener and lead efforts in the development of the Climate Emergency Action Plan to help ensure that the plan is actionable, inclusive and well aligned with broader social justice and equity goals of the university.

STRATEGIES

- **Awareness/Engagement:** Disseminate information about guiding principles, actions, programming and sustainability initiatives on campus through blogs, social and digital media, events and programming.
- **Awareness/Engagement:** Develop ways for students, faculty and staff to engage in sustainability and climate justice actions that are tangible, benefit the campus community and have real-world impacts.
- **Action/Policy:** Convene stakeholders to contribute to and help implement the University's Climate Emergency Action Plan. Work across stakeholder groups to ascer-

ASSESSMENT

- Demonstrate students, staff and faculty increased awareness of environmental justice and sustainability issues through surveys and other evaluation tools.
- Track and report on actions taken across the university in regards to the Climate Emergency Action Plan and lead adjustments as needed in response to the changing climate crisis over time.

2. The New School community will be more knowledgeable about and committed to act on climate and environmental justice.

STRATEGY

- **Action/Policy:** Support scholarship and activities that address critical environmental issues generated by the impacts of climate change and other environmental threats to community well-being and social justice. Examples include faculty and student research support grants and annual visiting scholars.
- **Curriculum/Learning:** Support the expansion of curricular resources and learning opportunities related to environmental and sustainability topics, in particular the key areas of focus and expertise of the center: movement building, Indigeneity, climate, waste and infrastructure. Use public spaces, installations and performances at The New School to facilitate public conversations about promoting environmental justice and sustainability on campus and in the external community.
- **Awareness/Engagement:** Host public and internal events to share the work being done on campus and highlight key thought leaders and issues at the intersection of design, policy and social justice and to amplify the work of community partners.
- **Awareness/Engagement:** Act as a facilitator for student, staff and faculty groups to put on their own events about EJ and sustainability

ASSESSMENTS

- Document course collaborations on Tishman Center projects, as well as the number of students and faculty engaged.
- Assess the social impact and learning outcomes of Tishman Center-funded student and faculty research support grants.

3. Institutionalize Good as New and other sustainability practices that align with the university's Climate Emergency Action Plan and commitment to social and climate justice.

STRATEGIES

- **Action/Policy:** Collaborate with university departments to create, expand, improve and promote more sustainable practices university-wide.
- **Action/Policy:** Collaborate with procurement to incorporate better practices and sources for supplies, materials and services that are more sustainable.
- **Awareness/Engagement:** Educate and engage students, faculty and staff on university sustainability practices.

ASSESSMENTS

- Promote and collaborate with university departments around specific sustainability initiatives like material reuse and reduction of waste.
- Measure the number of students, faculty, and staff engaged in sustainability activities at various points of interaction, such as orientation, public events, and internal meetings related to climate change and environmental justice.

For more information...

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