



Designing the Green New Deal (GND) is a collaborative national initiative for designers to inform and advance GND policy ideas for decarbonization, justice, and jobs. Panelists use outcomes from the GND Superstudio to explore the complex intersection of policy and design and how designers can effect change.



Learning Outcomes

- Learn how design can advance policy ideas
- Learn how design projects can advance diversity, equity, and inclusion goals through both a design and policy lens.
- Explore outcomes and ideas from the GND Superstudio
- Understand how ASLA and others' policy work connects to the work of landscape architects and the Superstudio outputs

Speakers



Barbara Deutsch, FASLA
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Kate Orff, FASLA
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SCAPE Landscape
Architecture
New York, NY



Roxanne Blackwell, Hon. ASLA
Federal Government
Affairs Director
American Society of
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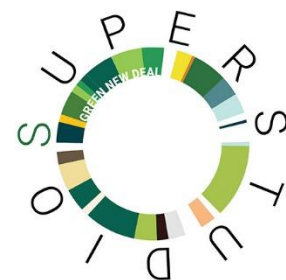
Billy Fleming, ASLA
Wilks Family Director
The McHarg Center
Philadelphia, PA

About the Superstudio

The Green New Deal Superstudio was a national open call and conversation about how the framework of the Green New Deal can be translated into design and planning projects, where they should take place, what will they look like, and who will they serve.

The Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF) in association with the Weitzman School of Design McHarg Center, the Center for Resilient Cities and Landscapes, the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), and the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA) invited designers to be part of a historic, national initiative to translate the core goals of the Green New Deal—decarbonization, justice, and jobs—into design and planning projects for their respective regions.

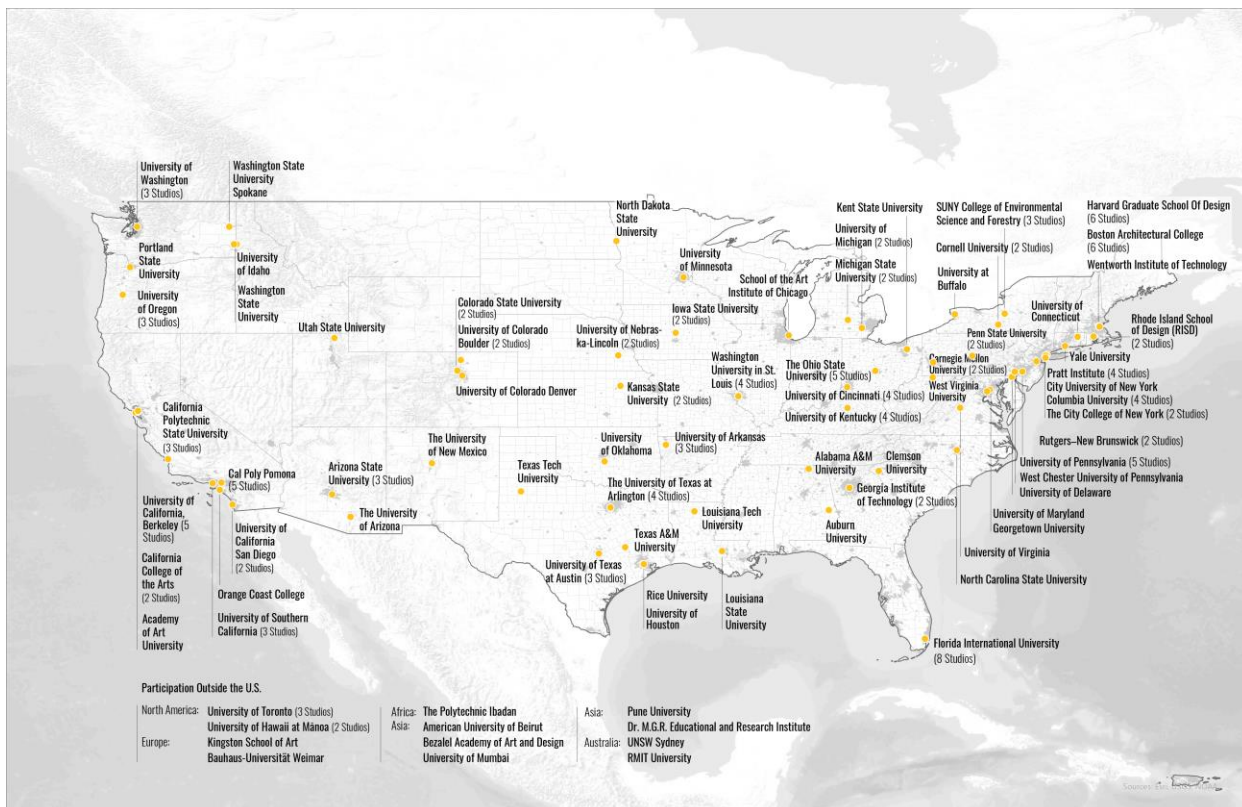
The Superstudio was an open call for designs that spatially manifest the principles and policy ideas of the Green New Deal with regional and local specificity. A national climate plan like the Green New Deal will be understood by most people through the landscapes, buildings, infrastructures, and public works agenda that it inspires. The Superstudio was a concerted effort to give form and visual clarity to the scale, scope, and pace of transformation that the Green New Deal implies.



The Superstudio ran from August 1, 2020 until June 30, 2021. Participation was open to all design schools, professional practices, individuals, and other design and planning related organizations. Some 670 projects were submitted by participating university courses, groups, and individuals.

All submitted materials were catalogued as part of the Green New Deal Superstudio archive on [JSTOR](#), where they will be freely accessible and select projects are featured on the Superstudio [site](#). The organizing partners will curate any subsequent publication and exhibition of the Superstudio deliverables and are utilizing various methods to showcase the work and ideas in ways that can support policy-makers and advocates to advance Green New Deal ideas and approaches.

To this end, the Superstudio will inform a national conversation on policy and design at a spring 2022 summit convened by the Landscape Architecture Foundation.



Map of Superstudio university participation. Many firms and individual practitioners also participated.

Session Outline

Barbara Deutsch

- Overview of the Designing the Green New Deal partnership and initiative including the Green New Deal Superstudio and LAF Summit
- Summary of participation and outputs/project submissions
- Role of ASLA as a partner for advocacy

Billy Fleming

- Green New Deal 101 (see Background below)
- Briefly introduce Billy's own studio work and how it connects to other projects in Superstudio and builds a body of cohesive knowledge with other studios' work

- Working off of the example projects, showing how these ideas could influence policy
- Explanation of how designers can support advocates to demystify the connection between policy and design by discussing own work/background and what goes into writing policy

Kate Orr

- Project examples from Superstudio submissions used to highlight different geographies and topics of interest under jobs, justice, decarbonization

Roxanne Blackwell

- ASLA Advocacy 101
- Connecting the Superstudio work to ASLA policy work
- What does ASLA do to affect policy?
- What does ASLA need from designers to take to the hill?

Barbara Deutsch and panelists

- Panel discussion and audience Q&A
- Outcomes and next steps



A very small sample of projects from the 669 Superstudio submissions

Background: What is the Green New Deal?

The New Deal is the central reference of the Green New Deal (described below), and offers important lessons for designers about what can suddenly become possible when the state is empowered as an activist force for good in the everyday lives of people. While it is often remembered as the genesis of Social Security and the mobilization ahead of World War II, the New Deal also transformed the built and natural environment of the United States, producing tens of thousands of projects of grand, regional-scale infrastructure projects such as the Appalachian Regional Trail alongside investments in community infrastructure projects like new public schools and libraries, sanitary sewer systems and farm-to-market roadways, state and local parks, soil and land remediation, public housing and infrastructure, and rural electrification. The New Deal was not perfect and required political compromise such as reinforced Jim Crow throughout the South. As Superstudio participants consider how to engage with the Green New Deal, it is vital to consider how such an agenda might restructure power in more egalitarian ways and similarly transform the built and natural environment around the goals of decarbonization justice, and job creation.

On February 7th, 2019, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14) and Senator Ed Markey (MA) introduced H.R. 109, a non-binding resolution “Recognizing the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal.” In it, they provide a framework for a “10-year national mobilization” that calls on Congress to pass legislation that:

- Builds resiliency against climate change-related disasters
- Repairs and upgrades the infrastructure of the United States (including universal access to clean water)
- Establishes a zero-emission energy standard
- Develops an energy-efficient and distributed ‘smart’ grid
- Upgrades every existing building to and requires that all new construction in the U.S. achieve maximum energy and water efficiency (among other standards)
- Reinvigorates federal industrial policy to guide the growth of a ‘clean manufacturing’ sector
- Works collaboratively with farmers and ranchers to lower agriculture-driven GHG emissions
- Overhauls the U.S. transportation system through the development of inter- and intra-city public transit
- Invests in conservation lands and other ‘low-tech’ carbon sequestration solutions that also enhance biodiversity
- Remediate or repurposes hazardous waste and abandoned sites
- Focuses on several other technology-driven emissions-reducing investments

It departs from prior sustainability and resilience-driven policy and design work by designing a program of ideas and political strategy aimed at merging the interests of blue-collar workers, climate activists, and frontline communities—what the resolution’s authors went on to call a “jobs, justice, and decarbonization agenda” that places communities facing historic and contemporary discrimination and disinvestment at the front of the line for what amounts to an investment-led strategy in the nation’s infrastructure, public works, and built environment.

In the press conference announcing the resolution, Ocasio-Cortez remarked that the public should view the non-binding resolution as a “Request for Proposals...we’ve defined the scope and where we want to go. Now, let’s assess where we are, how we get there, and collaborate on real projects.” Since then, a new body of policy development and economic research has emerged, headquartered at New Consensus, Data for Progress, the Sunrise Movement, the Roosevelt Institute, and the McHarg Center.

But the work accomplished to date on the Green New Deal has been focused on abstract, national-scale economic and political strategies. Little has dealt directly with the unprecedented scale, scope, and pace of physical landscape transformation that it implies. The Superstudio and Summit build toward a greater shared understanding of these strategies and of the work to be done. Because it connects social change with environmental change, and because it recalls the ambitious spirit of the original New Deal, the Green New Deal is the only set of ideas on the table that are scaled to the challenges that climate change now presents. If realized, the Green New Deal would revolutionize our systems of production and transform how, and in some cases where, we live. If realized, the Green New Deal would enable us to not only adapt to climate change, but also mitigate its root causes and, for the first time in American history, to do so in just ways. It is little wonder then that the Green New Deal has become a rallying cry for America's climate activists. It is now crucial that the institutions holding disproportionate shares of power put their resources to work fleshing out what this movement-led vision could mean for the future of America, while recognizing that meaningful change requires action at all levels.

Because of its potential and its importance, the Green New Deal should not be treated as a naïve utopian vision by either its political opponents or its proponents. There is no future that is completely perfect that we can build. But there is a better one than we're on track to realize, and the prospect of a Green New Deal demands critical, imaginative examination if it is to be the vehicle for a better future. The overlapping crises of climate change, economic and racial injustice, and global ecological collapse demand that this work is radically pragmatic—by that we mean that any “pragmatic” approach tackling these crises in a meaningful way will necessarily be radical.

A national climate plan like the Green New Deal will be understood by most people through the landscapes, buildings, infrastructures, and public works agenda that it inspires. Given the scope of these efforts, it is clear that designers will play a central role in project managing the nation's response to climate change both at the scale of the national plan and the built works through which Americans will experience this transition. This Superstudio was a concerted effort to give form and visual clarity to the scale, scope, and pace of transformation that the Green New Deal implies.

Resources

Billy Fleming, “Design and the Green New Deal,” *Places Journal*, April 2019.

<https://doi.org/10.22269/190416>

Landscape Architecture Foundation. Designing the Green New Deal, 2021.

<https://www.lafoundation.org/take-action/green-new-deal>