



MAKING THE SHIFT

The **2019 SHIFT Infrastructure/Architecture Challenge** asks the architecture profession to propose new ways to understand, create or support physical or social infrastructure that links communities. The goal is to show how architectural thinking promotes social equity, reduces isolation or embodies social justice, but the possibilities are limitless.

CASE STUDY: REBUILD BY DESIGN



One such project that could provide an example is **Rebuild by Design**, which began as a competition launched by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in response to 2012's **Hurricane Sandy**. The initiative, which brought together 10 interdisciplinary design teams to tackle the impact of storms on the Northeast, has since evolved into a new approach of problem-solving that brings together various local sectors (including government, business, non-profit and community organizations).

From disasters such as Hurricane Sandy to wildfires in British Columbia, the impacts of climate change are being felt worldwide. Rebuild by Design reimagines the way communities find solutions for these large-scale complex problems. Combining practices from government to business, Rebuild by Design provides an understanding of how overlapping environmental and human-made vulnerabilities leave cities and regions at risk. It shows that through collaboration, communities will grow stronger and be better

prepared for the challenges of tomorrow to “raise the bar for response, preparedness and resilience.”

Futurizing: Policy by Design

Building rules and processes are designed to protect health, safety and the environment—however, they don’t always foster innovation. Even as technology, engineering and architecture approaches advance, policies and procedural barriers can slow the overall building process. For example, a nonprofit group in California’s San Fernando Valley wanted to turn an empty lot into new housing for up to 25 homeless people. However, the developer needed a letter from a local lawmaker, which was turned down, halting the project.

In response to challenges such as this, the City of Los Angeles, in concert with Rebuild by Design, launched **Building Forward LA**—an effort to encourage building projects to integrate advancements and innovations in design, engineering and construction. This collaborative, interdisciplinary approach showcases Rebuild by Design’s commitment to communities, and to their future.

Community Collaboration

Rebuild by Design involves local communities in every initiative they launch. From local surveys and research to actively collaborating with local communities on designs and proposals, it strives to gain a full understanding of how climate change affects residents in their daily lives. This makes the impact of climate change more tangible on a human scale and allows for the development of realizable solutions. Resident-centred solutions are a main focus of Rebuild by Design projects and viewed as the key to success. Residents experience infrastructure problems and vulnerabilities within their communities every day and therefore are most familiar with what the local area needs.

Interdisciplinary Solutions

To further cement the best solutions possible, Rebuild by Design collaborates not only with community members, but also across government jurisdictions and key stakeholders. Approaching communities with an interdisciplinary approach leads to a better understanding of challenges and opportunities for the design teams; in turn, this helps them better address pressing concerns and ongoing issues within the community.

Dual-purpose Spaces

Rebuild by Design seeks to create spaces that are good not only for the environment long-term, but also for communities in the short-term. In **Athens**, Greece, Rebuild by Design partnered with the City of Athens, 100 resilient cities and four universities to develop a participatory process that will lead to a master plan and long-term stewardship of Lycabettus Hill.

Lycabettus Hill offers a massive green space that can be used by both residents and tourists, but it isn’t maintained or designed to reach its full potential. There are transportation, environmental and safety challenges, all of which can be improved. In response, Athens has formally announced the Lycabettus Program—a plan to revitalize the urban forest and central landmark. The first phase of implementation includes five priority projects and has a budget of 3 million euros focusing on flooding and erosion, replacing pathways and lighting and the reopening of a central café on the hill. The result is a solution that protects the area while also opening it to the public for relaxation and socializing. By creating proactive, dual-purpose spaces, Rebuild by Design ensures its work is not only useful in the future should a catastrophe occur, but also useful now.

Why is this a good example for SHIFT?

- Its core principles can be applied globally.
- It provokes interdisciplinary innovation and collaboration.
- The idea stresses the importance of community collaboration throughout the entire process.
- It addresses a societal need for policies to keep up with technology advancements.

Rebuild by Design's approach could serve to inspire other models, templates and processes that challenge certain policies in certain contexts. As a Shift 2019 Infrastructure/Architecture Challenge submission, the submission could include an array of localized case studies to support each mandate and explain how specific policies would be taken into account. In addition, each study could be supported by visuals supporting the overall themes and goals of Rebuild by Design.

CONTACT US

We'd love to hear from you! Whether you have questions you need answered or want to share stories or examples that relate to the infrastructure topic, please drop us a line at shiftchallenge@oaa.on.ca. **Remember: The deadline for submission is Monday, January 18.**

For more information about SHIFT Challenge, [click here](#).

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