JESSICA LAX
Director of Strategic Initiatives
Van Alen Institute
OUR MISSION + BELIEFS

At Van Alen Institute, we believe design can transform cities, landscapes, and regions to improve people’s lives.

We collaborate with communities, scholars, policymakers, and professionals on local and global initiatives that rigorously investigate the most pressing social, cultural, and ecological challenges of tomorrow.

Building on more than a century of experience, we develop cross-disciplinary research, provocative public programs, and inventive design competitions.
STRATEGIC PROGRAMS
FOUR-STEP PROJECT MODEL

“Competitions are great for getting ideas. Traditionally, a government hires one firm to come up with one solution to a problem they’ve already defined. By doing things that way, you’re potentially missing out on lots of interesting new ideas.”

- Amy Chester, Managing Director, Rebuild by Design in The Guardian
REBUILD BY DESIGN

How do we rebuild coastal cities of the future?
JUSTICE IN DESIGN

How can we create designs that are healthier and more respectful to those in jail and the surrounding communities?
KEEPING CURRENT
KEEPING CURRENT

Location
Miami, Florida

Goal
Create visionary but implementable/replicable design interventions

INSTITUTE
ADVISORS

Christina De Concini
Director, Government Affairs, World Resources Institute

Nicole Hernandez Hammer
Biologist and Environmental Justice Advocate

Stuart Kennedy
Consultant, Sub-Culture

Jesse Keenan (Project Advisor Chair),
Faculty of Architecture, Harvard Graduate School of Design

Caroline Lewis
Founder, The Cleo Institute

David Martin
President, Terra

Jayantha Obeysekera
Research Professor and Director,
Sea Level Solutions Center at
Florida International University
INTERVIEWS

Spoke with over 100 individuals in government, for-profit, non-profit sector as well as community members.

• No more ideas competitions!

• Need to bring in
  – University of Miami
  – University of Florida
  – Florida Atlantic University
  – Florida International University
Compiled information from interviews and convening.

What should future designs and infrastructure make sure to incorporate?

- Invest in stormwater management systems that have long-term benefits
- Change building codes to reduce the impacts of flooding
- Invest in public transportation and raised roadways
- Use parks as a way to mitigate flooding
IDEATE
CITY OF MIAMI

Create a climate adaptive park with replicable solutions for river and coastal conditions

Collaborators & Participants:

• City of Miami
  – Resilience Team
  – Planning Department
  – Procurement
• Urban Impact Lab
• Project Outreach Team
• Peer Review Group
• Design Team
“We hope that along with these projects, Miami’s resilience bond will become a catalyst for greater private sector investment and innovation in climate adaptation. We also hope it will spur similar initiatives in coastal cities around the globe.”

-Francis Suarez
Mayor of Miami
NORTH MIAMI

Develop a master plan and demonstration project for repetitive loss properties

Collaborators & Participants:

• City of North Miami
  – Community Planning and Development
  – Public Works
  – Parks Department
  – Procurement Office
• Urban Impact Lab
• Design Team
• Project Outreach Team
• Jury
IMPLEMENT
CITY OF MIAMI

VISIONING IDEAS

1. PARK EXPANSION
2. MIAMI RIVER
3. DETROIT WATERSHED
4. GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
5. BIO-SWALE
6. LIVING SHORELINE
7. RAISED LAWNS
8. WATER TAXI
9. KAYAK LAUNCH RAMP

INSTITUTE
LOLA
CUMMINS / CEDERBERG
ESCIENCES
TOZET STUDIO
CURTIS + ROGERS DESIGN STUDIO
CITY OF MIAMI

“South Florida is taking climate change seriously and working with Van Alen to bring the best minds to the table for how to protect our cities and citizens. Van Alen’s Resource Guide pulls together best practices and recommendations for how to plan, design, build, and maintain stronger, safer buildings, infrastructure, and landscapes to better serve everyone living in our coastal communities.”

-Jane Gilbert, City of Miami Chief Resilience Officer
The City of North Miami is working now to identify three more sites in District 1 [to redesign into parks].

-Scott Galvin, Council member of District 1 in North Miami.
CLIMATE DESIGN LAB
Two 3-Week Paid Summer High School Program

- Climate Education
- Design Thinking
- Lectures from over 20 Climate Leaders
“It’s been absolutely pivotal in shaping my future, and it’s helped light a fire in me that I thought I lost a few years ago.”

-Climate Design Lab 2018 Student
FESTIVAL

Three day festival to activate the public to advocate for climate adaptive solutions to climate change

• Showcasing innovative resilient designs

• Climate art pop-up, interactive installations, music in performances from local artists

• Exchange information between youth, and climate leaders
DESIGN THINKING WORKSHOP

• How might we encourage building innovation given the complexity and pace of regulatory change?

• How might we increase the government’s capacity to get climate adaptive designs built faster?

• How might we enable responsive communication between government, developers, and communities?
NEXT STEPS
THANK YOU