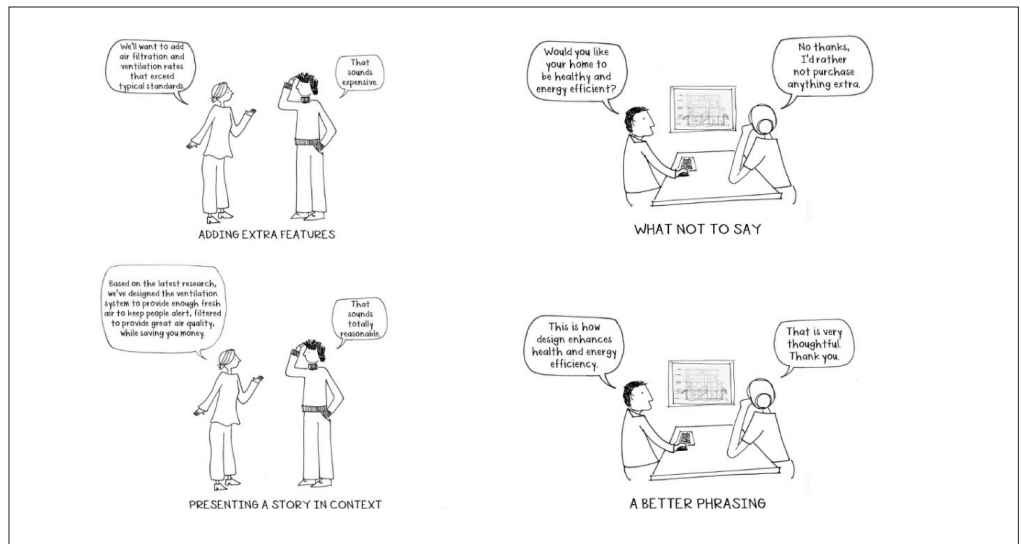


CLIMATE CORNER



[Zambrano, Helena, People Planet Design, 2023](#)

Climate Corner put into Action Ta(l)king Climate Design to our Clients

The Climate Responsive Design and Leadership (CRD&L) are a Study Group of the 2025 AIA Strategic Council, and we are sensitive to our membership's need for tools and information to respond to the rapidly evolving climate (and how good design can impact it).

“the climate future is now”... And our clients need to hear us.

Climate Corner: members putting it into action:

Our group this year dedicated itself to identify and curate this information that members and practitioners need to realize the vision of Design Excellence established by the Institute right away. Climate response is an urgent requirement of all architectural design—it is non-negotiable and cannot wait ten or even five years. We have addressed multiple relevant and important topics this year, through the 2-page format of Climate Corner; with the ultimate ideal of giving members access to engaging and easily relatable content that they can use to advocate and share with their clients and community groups.

All of the Climate-related topics we have covered this year affect almost every client's project in some way, and cost clients time, operational challenges, and money when these phenomena (heat island effect, water use, sufficiency, energy codes, resilience, and circularity) are not properly addressed in the final design solution.

We hope – with the right advocacy and engagement in the early phases of a project's life span – to give our members a platform to advocate for better project solutions. For our clients, at its core, this is just ‘good design’ – we can't ignore the client's fundamental needs for project resilience, sustainable and re-usable building materials, and good energy-efficient design as core metrics for the success of any project, not just those that might carry a ‘green’ or ‘sustainable’ label or certification.



Corey Squire's fantastic book ‘People Planet Design’ exemplifies and outlines a practical and client-friendly approach to messaging these principles to our communities as design professionals, aspiring to make our future better with good climate responsive design principles.

Many of the topics covered tie back to the AIA's Framework for Design Excellence, which outlines metrics and tools in more detail for firms to achieve better client outcomes with their projects. The topics were selected for their relevance to current practice, and to shed further light on criteria which could enhance future work on the Framework.

Importance of Communication:

“The simple but powerful tool that architects can leverage to move a project toward its full potential is communication. Often overlooked relative to its importance and rarely cultivated as an essential skill in design school, effective communication is one of only two things that can stand up against the deeply entrenched yet subpar way that things are typically done. The other is money, but whereas wealth can be wielded as a change agent only by a privileged few, the ability to win over hearts and minds through conversation alone is available to anyone with a bit of knowledge and intent. Developing the capacity and confidence to clearly and convincingly articulate a better world will pay dividends and is worth the effort. The principles for effective communication include crafting compelling narratives, being prepared to back up an idea with data, and maintaining a healthy skepticism about where reality is rock solid and which “truths” might reveal

themselves to be little more than a veneer.”¹



¹ [Squire, Corey, People Planet Design.](#)
[Image: Aloha 209 Affordable Housing Sustainability Visioning Charrette](#) Credit: Bora

What We’ve Learned Conclusion

Developing the monthly content for Climate Corner was truly a passion project for our group this year. Every member of our team was committed to the idea of taking the central governing ethos of the Strategic Council – that it is a future-focused, forward thinking, strategic representative body, and ‘inverting’ it for this year’s work – because we collectively believed that the members and clients needed this content (and this encouragement to advocate for excellent climate responsive design) right now. There could be nothing more strategic for us at this moment, than to help our members have these discussions and lend them our expertise and support. We hope it has been informative, and thank you to all of you who have engaged with it, we would relish the opportunity to further engage with AIA members to move the conversation forward with new content for next year.

Sincerely yours,

Climate Responsive Design Study Group – Gwen Fuertes, Matt Green, Timothy Lock, Corey Squire, Ben Ward, Jean Carroon, Kim Dowdell, Rebecca Fletcher, Richard Polk, Sheldon Pennoyer, Verity Frizzell, Gilberto Lozada Baez, Erin Agdinaoy, Ifreet Rahima, Juanita Libreros Foronda

Practical Relevancy

As architects, we often find that ecological performance can seem abstract or technical to clients. To bridge that gap, The Framework For Design Excellence provides a way of organizing findings into categories that connect directly to their goals for comfort, cost, durability, and well-being. By communicating in this way, we help clients see how their decisions about design and materials are inseparable from larger ecological systems. Inside practice, architects can seek to deploy the Framework to aid in this communication, or even use it as a jumping off point to expand to suit their clients needs. This approach allows architects to translate complexity into shared understanding—empowering clients to recognize that their aspirations for their building are already aligned with ecological priorities.



[Image: Community meeting for Oakland, CA Mosswood Park Masterplan](#) credit LMSa

In 2023 the Strategic Council Climate Group recognized a vanguard of “climate positive” practices truly embodying the spirit of the Framework by moving beyond its boundaries to advance sustainable design to meet their clients needs and add greater resilience to their practices. Our work this year seeks to provide easily adoptable approaches that help architects communicate design impacts with clarity, elevating both their practice and their influence in shaping resilient communities.

