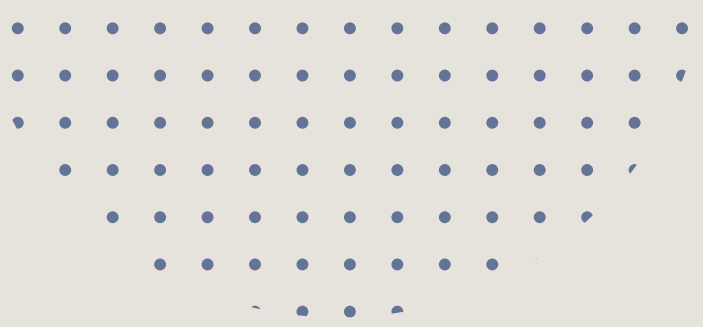


AIA Strategic Council

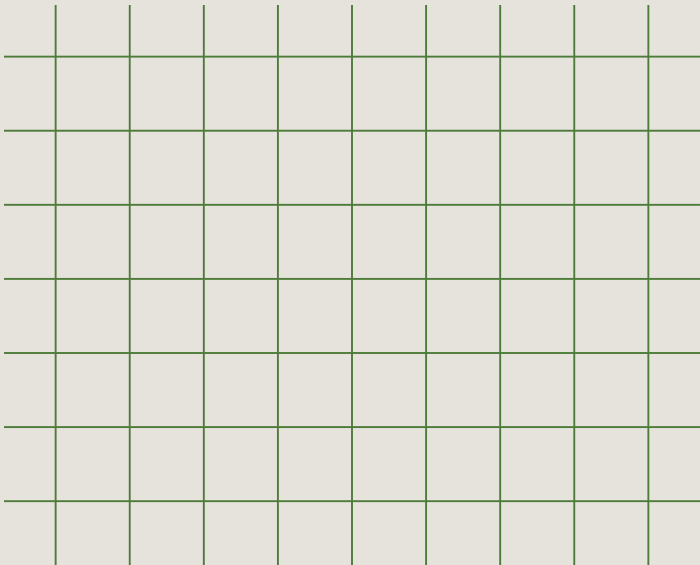
Year In Review 2025





From the Moderators

2025 Year In Review



Moderator
Jessica O'Donnell, AIA
Vice-Moderator
Abigail Brown, FAIA

2025 has been an incredible year, filled with many firsts for the Council as well as the continuation of essential work from 2024. We held a virtual Big Think in September 2024, inviting all AIA members to help inform our areas of study. In October 2024, we finalized study group topics and group members, enabling us to start our work before arriving at Governance Week in December. This early coordination and collaboration enabled us to start digging into meaningful details of each area of study during our time together in person.

Additional ‘firsts’ this year include incorporating AI imagery into our Monthly Council Reports and publishing the Climate Responsive Design & Leadership’s monthly Climate Corner communications aimed at providing easily digestible climate resources to AIA members. Our internal Equity Task Force worked with AIA Staff to advance previous recommendations from the 2024 Equity study group. Our areas of study looked outward to society but also investigated inwardly by focusing on the AIA and the Council itself. This included the ratification of a new internal Council leadership structure and will ensure continuity of leadership in the years ahead.

We continued improving our communication channels through broader distribution of our monthly Council reports throughout the AIA ecosystem. We renewed our intentional collaborations with the Young Architects Forum (YAF), National Associates Committee (NAC), and the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) by inviting representatives to participate in each Council study group.

The Council championed the AIA Artificial Intelligence Policy Resolution to help prepare AIA members for the evolving landscape of artificial intelligence (AI) by establishing clear policies and promoting responsible adoption of AI technologies. This Resolution was overwhelmingly approved by the delegates at the AIA25 Annual Business meeting.

We are proud of the work of the 2025 Council and know it will continue to drive meaningful progress within the AIA. We are deeply appreciative of the dedicated Councilors and liaisons who offered their insights and invested their time. Together, these collective efforts reflect a year of innovation, collaboration, and forward momentum that position the Council as a catalyst for meaningful change across the Institute and the profession.

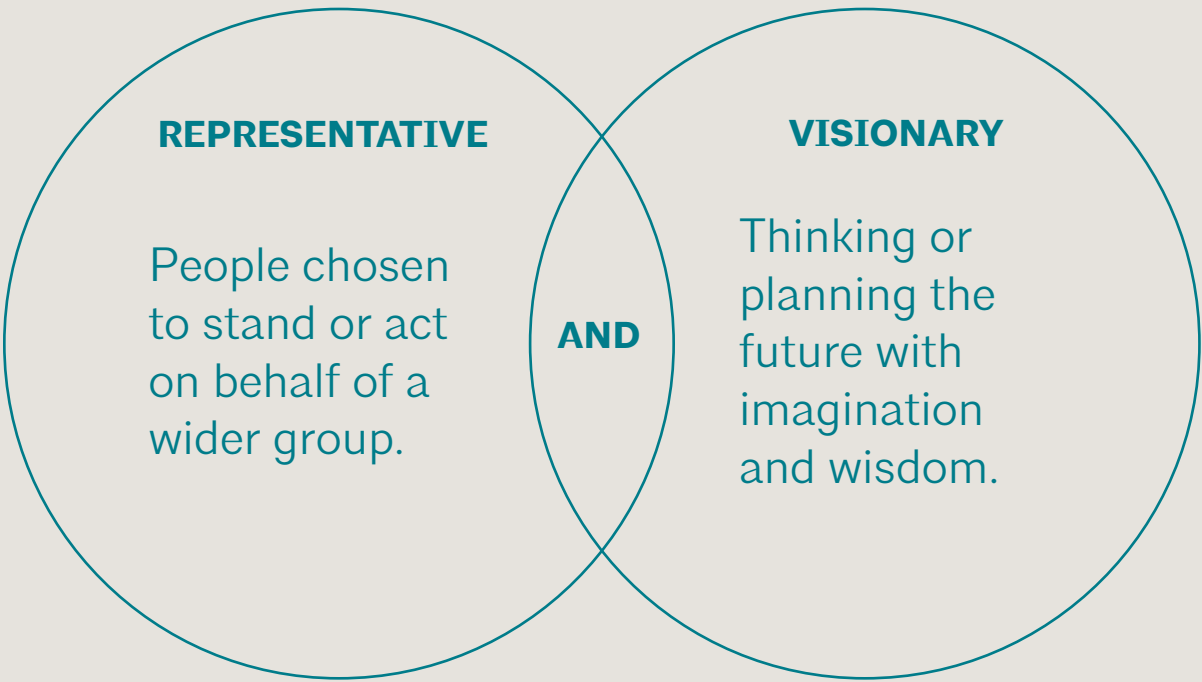
Sincerely,

Jessica O'Donnell

Abigail Brown

“The Strategic Council is both representative and visionary”

- Clarifying the Council Report, 2022



Contents

06	Council in Action <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2025 Councilors- 2025 Councilor Congratulations- Graphic Timeline- AIA Conference 2025- The Council at Work
18	Study Group Executive Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 10 Year Valuation & Future Blueprint- Architect of the Future- AIA of the Future- Resilient Practice Models- Digital Architecture- Connected Communities- Climate Responsive Design & Leadership
50	Special Initiatives + Collaborations <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Equity Task Force- AIA Architect Article Contributions- Future Focused Campaign- Collaborations- 2025 Resolutions
74	Appendix <ul style="list-style-type: none">- AIA Strategic Plan 2021-2025- Glossary of Acronyms

2025 Councilors



Ilya Azaroff, FAIA
2025 President-elect



Kimberly Dowdell, AIA
2024 Immediate Past President



Angie Brooks, FAIA
At-Large Representative
2025-2027



Andre Brumfield, Assoc. AIA
At-Large Representative
2023-2025



Jamie Crawley, AIA
At-Large Representative
2025-2027



Gwendolyn Fuentes, AIA
At-Large Representative
2023-2025



Gloria Kloter, AIA
At-Large Representative
2025-2027



Stephanie Leedom, AIA
At-Large Representative
2024-2026



Jessica O'Donnell, AIA
At-Large Representative
2024-2026



Ignacio Reyes, FAIA
At-Large Representative
2024-2026



Corey Squire, AIA
At-Large Representative
2024-2026



Laura Wake-Ramos, AIA
At-Large Representative
2024-2026



Saakshi Terway, Assoc. AIA
Associate
2025



Heather Wilson
CACE Representative
2025



Gilberto Baez, Assoc. AIA
Student Representative-AIAS
2025-2026















































Bruce Herrington, AIA
Alabama
2022-2025

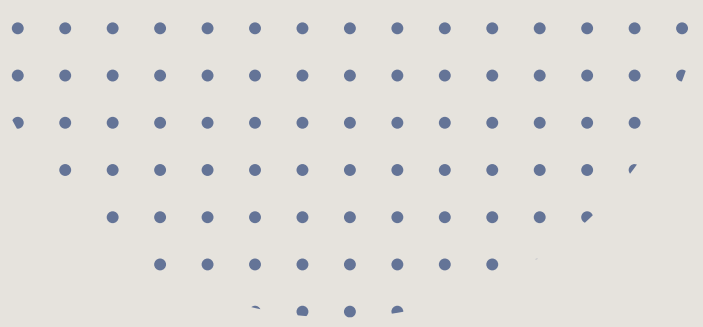


Ryan N. Morse, AIA
Alaska
2022-2025



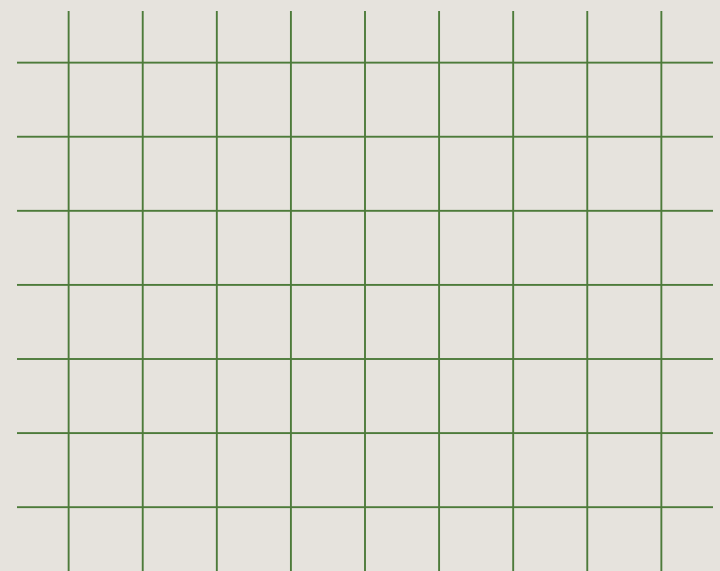
Kathy Hancox, AIA
Arizona
2023-2025

											
Randy Palculict, AIA Arkansas 2024-2026	Leah Bayer, AIA California 2023-2025	Scott Gaudineer, AIA California 2024-2026	Winston Thorne, AIA California 2025-2027	Sarah Broughton, FAIA Colorado 2024-2026	Paolo Campos, AIA Connecticut 2024-2026	Verity Frizzell, FAIA New Jersey 2023-2025	Steven Alano, AIA New Mexico 2025-2027	Peter R. Wehner, AIA New York 2023-2025	Ayo Yusef, Assoc. AIA New York 2023-2025	Matt Barnett, AIA North Carolina 2024-2026	Trevor Anderson, AIA North Dakota 2024-2026
											
Abigail Brown, FAIA Washington DC 2024-2026	Thomas Watts AIA Delaware 2025-2027	Stephen Panzarino, AIA Florida 2025-2027	Garfield L. Peart, FAIA Georgia 2023-2025	Jason J. DeMarco, AIA Hawaii 2023-2025	Leah McMillan, AIA Idaho 2025-2027	Hallie Crouch, Assoc. AIA Ohio 2024-2026	Mary E. Womble, AIA Oklahoma 2023-2025	Molly Jacobs, AIA Oregon 2025-2027	Marc Mondor, AIA Pennsylvania 2024-2026	Eugenio Ramirez, AIA Puerto Rico 2024-2026	Rebecca Fletcher, AIA Rhode Island 2025-2027
											
Leanne Meyer-Smith, AIA Illinois 2024-2026	Ashley Thornberry, AIA Indiana 2025-2027	Thierry Paret, FAIA International 2025-2027	Nathan Kalaher, AIA Iowa 2025-2027	Tony Rangel, AIA Kansas 2022-2026	Richard Polk, AIA Kentucky 2024-2025	Benjamin Ward, AIA South Carolina 2025-2027	Leap Chear, AIA South Dakota 2025-2027	Tillman Wheeler, FAIA Tennessee 2025-2027	Brien Graham, AIA Texas 2023-2025	Matt Green, AIA Texas 2024-2026	Peggy McDonough, AIA Utah 2025-2027
											
Rex Cabaniss, AIA Louisiana 2023-2025	Timothy Lock, AIA Maine 2022-2025	Michael Daly, AIA Maryland 2023-2025	Jean Carroon, FAIA Massachusetts 2023-2025	Patricia A. Boyle, AIA Michigan 2023-2025	Thomas Hysell, FAIA Minnesota 2025-2027	Nathalia Ellis, AIA Vermont 2025-2027	Robert Easter, FAIA Virginia 2023-2025	Matthew Hutchins, AIA Washington 2023-2025	Matthew Breakey, AIA West Virginia 2024-2026	Melissa Schulteis, Assoc. AIA Wisconsin 2023-2025	Lewis Miller, AIA Wyoming 2025-2027
											
Jeffrey S. Seabold, FAIA Mississippi 2023-2025	Galen Lif, AIA Missouri 2024-2026	Shannon Christensen, FAIA Montana 2024-2026	Greg Galbreath, AIA Nebraska 2023-2024	Wellbe Bartsma, AIA Nevada 2024-2026	Sheldon Pennoyer, AIA New Hampshire 2025-2027	Muza Conforti AIA Staff					



Congratulations!

2025 Honors & Awards Recipients



2025 AIA COLLEGE OF FELLOWS

AIA Fellows are recognized for their exceptional work and contributions to architecture and society. Less than 3% of AIA members hold the prestigious FAIA designation.

The Fellowship program was developed to elevate architects who have achieved a standard of excellence in the profession and made a significant contribution to architecture and society on a national level. Prospective candidates must have at least 10 years of AIA architect membership and demonstrated influence.

Garfield Peart, FAIA inspired by his military officer experience, Garfield Peart continues to serve society to reverse historically inequitable practices through the profession and his community leadership, manifesting his life-long commitment to uplift traditionally under-represented groups and individuals.

Jeff Seabold, FAIA has spent his career advocating strongly for a better South with every local, regional, and national organization's leadership role he has served in working to make a more responsible, sustainable, and equitable South.



Garfield L. Peart, FAIA
Georgia
2023-2025
Object Five



Jeffrey S. Seabold, FAIA
Mississippi
2023-2025
Object Three

2025 YOUNG ARCHITECTS AWARD

These early career architects have been recognized with the Young Architects Award for their exceptional leadership and significant contributions to the architecture profession, including environmental advocacy, increasing access to great design, and mentoring future architects.

Gloria Kloter, AIA

Widely celebrated as a catalyst for change, Gloria Kloter, AIA, champions immigrant architects, women, and young professionals through mentorship, advocacy, and leadership. From founding Glow Architects to authoring award-winning books, she consistently demonstrates how architecture can build not only spaces but stronger, more inclusive communities.

Corey Squire, AIA

Widely recognized as a visionary strategist and advocate, Corey Squire, AIA, has redefined the role of sustainability in architecture. From co-creating the AIA Framework for Design Excellence to helping firms across the country embed climate and equity into practice, Squire shows how purposeful design can reshape the world—and the profession—for the better.

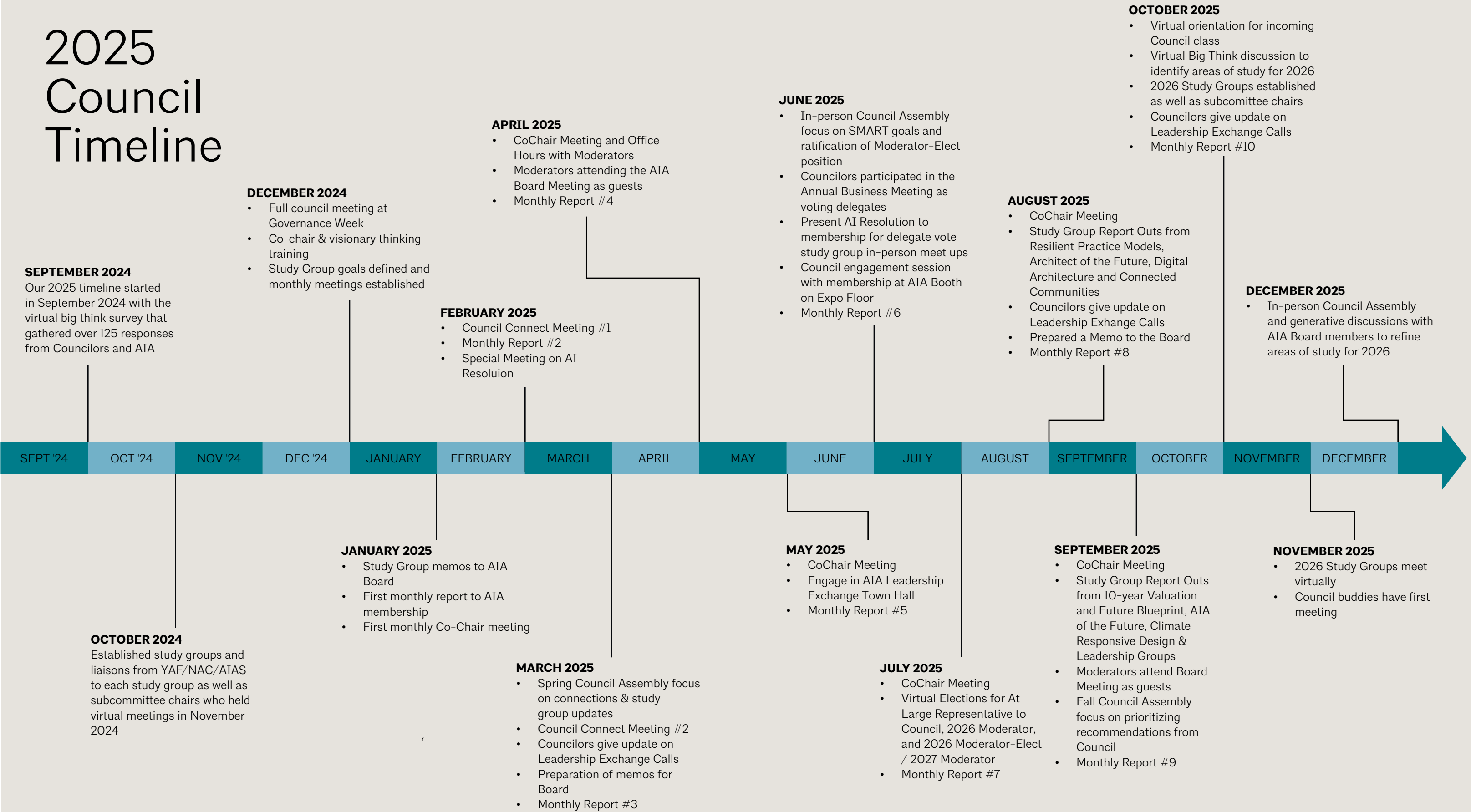


Gloria Kloter, AIA
At-Large Representative
2025-2027



Corey Squire, AIA
At-Large Representative
2024-2026

2025 Council Timeline



AIA25

Council on the Expo Floor

In 2025 there was a focus on sharing what the council does and communicating ongoing activities through monthly reports and social media posts. During AIA25, on Friday, June 6, 2025, we held informal Conversations with the Council at the AIA Booth on the Expo Floor. Each study group had representatives available to share where they were in their research efforts and gain insights from AIA members. Several groups even had short surveys for members to contribute to the research efforts in real time.

The Moderator and Vice Moderator were also on hand to help answer questions on pathways to join the Strategic Council, what the difference is between a State Representative and an At-Large Representative, and ways to get more information about the Council’s current efforts.

With the resounding positive feedback from this engagement session the Council is looking forward to continuing its broad communication efforts.



Strategic Council engagement on the AIA25 Expo Floor.

AIA25

Council Assembly



Councilors gather on the AIA25 Expo floor, at the Keynote presentations, and for a work session.

The Council at Work



Top: Council Interview at AIA25
Bottom: Council Assembly at AIA25
Right: Council Assembly via Zoom

The Council held four official Council Assemblies – two in person at Governance week in December, 2024 and at AIA25 in Boston, MA, in June. Virtual Assemblies were held in March and October via Zoom.

The work of the Council is primarily done within committees and study groups, which met monthly, bi-weekly or weekly, depending on their work. The co-chairs of all the study groups met monthly to update one another and coordinate their work. Once they finalized their research, the study groups each reported out to the full council during the months of August and September, using breakout sessions to glean feedback from other councilors before finalizing their reports.

Three Council committees – Best Practices, Elections, and Communications – are tasked with governance and operations of the Council. Each met at least monthly to organize the elections of the 2026 Moderator, 2026 Moderator-Elect and 2026-2028 Director At-Large to the Board, as well as three new 2026-2028 Councilors at Large. Communications managed weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual communication channels within the council and to the components and membership at large.

In addition, the Council instituted a "Council Connect" optional meet up session to allow councilors to informally discuss issues on their mind, get to know one another, and build community.

Best Practices Committee

Chair: Jeff Seabold, FAIA

Elections Subcommittee

Chair: Michael Daly, AIA
Shannon Christensen, FAIA

Communications Subcommittee

Co-Chair: Mary Womble, AIA
Co-Chair: Marc Mondor, AIA
Wellbe Bartsma, AIA
Andre Brumfield, Assoc. AIA
Brien Graham, AIA
Ashley Thornberry, AIA
Jessica O'Donnell, AIA
Saakshi Terway, Assoc. AIA



Study Group Executive Reports

20	10 Year Valuation & Future Blueprint
24	Architect of the Future
28	AIA of the Future
32	Resilient Practice Models
36	Digital Architecture
40	Connected Communities
44	Climate Responsive Design & Leadership

10 Year Valuation & Future Blueprint

Chair:
Matthew Barnett

Participants:
Garfield Peart
Gloria Kloter
Hallie Crouch
Jeff Seabold
Shannon Christensen
Tim Lock



*AI Image generated for discussion purposes only

Exploration & Intent

The 2025 Strategic Council 10-year Valuation and Future Blueprint Study Group was tasked with investigating the current governance structure of the AIA related to the Strategic Council and proposing enhancements to ensure its long-term effectiveness and relevance. After interviewing hundreds of past and current national leaders and component leadership, we arrived at the following conclusions. The central problem identified is that AIA's current governance model is struggling to keep pace with the dynamic nature of the architecture profession and the evolving needs of its members. This document summarizes our key findings and presents actionable recommendations to transition the AIA to a more agile, transparent, and collaborative co-governance model that prioritizes member representation and strategic alignment.

Key Findings

- **Finding 1: Siloed decision-making is hindering progress.** The current separation between the Leadership bodies, the Board and the Strategic Council, leads to a lack of transparency, redundant efforts, and a disconnect between strategic planning and member needs. This creates inefficiencies, duplication of effort, and slows the organization's ability to respond to pressing issues.
- **Finding 2: The Council's representational role is underutilized.** The Council's direct connection to the diverse AIA member base is a critical asset that is not being fully leveraged, particularly in strategic planning and decision-making processes. The "voice of the member" is not being effectively integrated into the highest levels of governance.
- **Finding 3: Ambiguous bylaws are creating confusion and inefficiency.** The lack of clear protocols and definitions in the current bylaws is a significant barrier to effective collaboration and accountability. This ambiguity makes it difficult to implement new initiatives and measure their success.
- **Finding 4: The overwhelming majority of the AIA Membership experiences the AIA through their local components.** The Strategic Council is the only member group that has representation from all the Components of the AIA.

Anticipated Future Trends

These findings collectively point to a critical need for a fundamental shift in how the Strategic Council fits within the AIA's governance model, and the specificity of the governance model itself. The future success of the organization depends on its ability to become more nimble, responsive, and member-centric. By removing silos through structured communication and fostering a culture of collaboration, the AIA can better anticipate and respond to the challenges and opportunities of the future. Utilizing the Strategic Council collaboratively as the representative body would reinforce member voice in governance. The proposed co-governance model will enable the AIA to operate with greater efficiency by defining responsibilities of each Leadership group (Board and Council), prioritizing time for strategic alignment, and establishing a unified sense of purpose.

Act Now

1. **Establish a joint Board and Council committee dedicated to aligning all work with the Strategic Plan.** This committee will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plan, ensuring that all initiatives are in service of the organization's long-term goals. It will also help to better connect the work of the Board of Directors to the work of the Strategic Council.
2. **Amend the Bylaws and/ or the Rules of the Board to formalize open communication channels between the Board and the Council.** These amendments should include clear timelines, protocols, and accountability measures to ensure a continuous and transparent flow of information. [See Goals for Enhancement to Council Toolkit, Section 5]
3. **Create a centralized research database for the institute.** This "one-stop-shop" will eliminate redundant research efforts, improve knowledge sharing, and provide a solid foundation for data-driven decision-making across the organization. This will also add value to the membership that currently struggles to connect with the research the AIA is producing.

Goals for Enhancement to Council Toolkit

The vision for the Council is to maintain its advisory and strategic role. The Council serves as the voice of AIA members with its direct connection to the Components and provides strategic direction to the AIA. Its current composition is effective as a direct connection to the diverse member base (demographic, firm size, component size, cultural, political, urban/rural, geographic). The goal is to eliminate decision-making silos between the Board and the Council. One proposal to achieve this is to have an equal number of high-level councilors (e.g., 15) participate with the Board (e.g., 15 members) in planning sessions. These participants would ideally be experienced leaders such as 3rd-year councilors or committee chairs. There is a belief that more than just the Moderator needs to be represented in these matters. The following section is our toolkit based on the research we conducted over the last year. These suggestions have been vetted by the entire Strategic Council as the best way to improve the Institute leadership structure through these actions and suggested changes.

A. Transparency and Collaboration

- Propose bylaw provisions to open formal communication channels between the Board and Council, which would include associated timelines, protocols, and accountability.
- The Board would formally, and in confidence, consult with the Council on matters requiring executive consideration of the members' voice.
- Propose that select Councilors, such as the Moderator and Moderator-Elect, become ex officio Board Members. The Moderator and Moderator-Elect would attend all board meetings and report back to the council on topics needing strategic advisory. Council work should be a standing agenda item for all Board meetings.
- Consider having At-Large Directors to the AIA Board who are elected by the Council serve as ex-officio members on the Strategic Council, representing the Council's voice.
- Establish bylaws provisions prescribing regular joint meetings between the Council and the Board.
- The Council shall take an equal leadership role with the Board in governance week, with more time dedicated

- to collaboration between the two bodies. The Council will maintain its role in voting for various awards in conjunction with the Board.
- The Council will share its annual reports' executive summary and recommendations at Governance Week in a joint session to improve the Institute's call to action and operational efficiencies.
- Align calendar between the Council, Board, and state components to provide a more efficient and nimble model of governance and leadership.

B. Efficiency in Communication

- The Council and Board will engage in joint planning sessions (virtual or retreat) to determine year-to-year strategic and operational priorities. These priorities will inform the budget, though the Council will not determine the budget.
- The Council should consider reducing the number of strategic topics studied each year to better align with the co-created strategic plan.
- In order to establish clarity on Council’s representational and not research-oriented role, AIA should develop a centralized database to house internal research for the Institute to help eliminate redundancy and align the work across all groups. This "one-stop shop" could be easily and consistently updated allowing leadership to know all the research that has been and is currently being conducted across the Institute. Aside from the value this will add to membership, this will also better inform leadership on directions to take for future planning.
- Council’s role in communicating directly to membership by being representative of membership will encourage better alignment with the Strategic Plan within the broader AIA ecosystem.

C. Leadership, Continuity, and Efficiency – Council

- The Council will continue to self-govern, but a 2/3 majority vote of the Council would be required to make governance changes. These changes would be documented in the Strategic Council's handbook.
- The timing of the Council's reports will coincide with the Board's budget timeline.
- A Leadership Training Initiative will be implemented.

- The Council, potentially senior leaders and chairs, will participate in planning and leading the Leadership Conference.

D. Strategic Plan Advocacy and Advancement

- The Council's main governance objective is to prepare and manage the Institute's Strategic Plan. The Council will oversee the preparation of the Strategic Plan every five years for adoption by the Board.
- In strategic planning years, the Council will forego other specific research topics to focus solely on the creation of the strategic plan, a process in which the Board will be included.
- Establish a joint Board and Council standing committee whose sole responsibility is Strategic Plan advancement, alignment, and compliance.
- The Council and Board will jointly determine and oversee the implementation of the strategic plan through their joint planning sessions and focus topics.

E. Eliminate ambiguous words in the Bylaws by creating specific and clear protocols for communication and actions related to the Board of Directors and the Strategic Council.

- The bylaws' ambiguous language needs to be reworked. For example, vague terms like "Engage" regarding Strategic Planning or "Review" regarding the Operating Plan and Budget need to be clarified with specific protocols for action.
- Establish clear rules and protocols for collaboration, such as how the Council may propose committees, ad hoc workgroups, and task forces, and how responses between leadership bodies should be handled.

F. What we are not proposing

- The Council is not becoming a 70+ person board that cannot make decisions.
- The Council is not taking on fiduciary or executive responsibilities.
- The Council will not work in isolation.
- The Council will not determine the budget.

Architect of the Future

Co Chairs:

Trevor Anderson
Tony Rangel

Participants:

Angela Brooks
Brien Graham
Eugenio Ramirez
Greg Galbreath
Kathy Hancox
Leah McMillian
Patricia Boyle

Randy Palculict
Steven Alano
Stephen Panzarino
Alex Oetzel (YAF)
Saakshi Terway (NAC)
Vivian Rendon (AIAS)



Architect persona image created via AI

Exploration & Intent

Architecture is not just about buildings—it’s about shaping communities and lives. We can optimize the business of architecture by not just designing buildings but embracing other spheres of influence and prioritizing them in our profession.

Societal well-being in the future will depend on our ability to step into the role of ‘change agents’, guiding solutions for cities/communities to provide adequate housing, showcasing how design enhances our urban environment and how we can best leverage public infrastructure dollars to protect the environment, human well-being and stable economies—especially in the face of future climate change and more frequent disasters. How do we create a bigger tent, focus our ability to make a greater societal impact and prepare the next generation? How do we demonstrate, through data, improved societal outcomes through the design of our public spaces?

Key Findings

After researching inspiring work of progressive architects and firms practicing today, our group used a persona development exercise to imagine a range of potential architects of the future. This process moved the conversation from broad disconnected ideas to synthesized future scenarios represented by fictional architects. The objective of this effort was not to predict in definitive terms what future architects would be, but to use the personas to anticipate new and evolving education, skills, experiences, and collaborations of future architects. The themes that emerged from the persona development exercise and analysis are in most cases not novel but are extensions of the forward-leaning work of architects practicing today.

- Design beyond buildings, Architects will continue to expand their role as integrators, designing, influencing and driving policy and legislation that impact society through the built environment. Architects will design for public engagement in nontraditional settings including extreme conditions – on earth and beyond – and digital immersive environments.
- Specialization, the complexity of the design and construction enterprise will continue to drive specialization in skills, tools, and delivery. Increased specialization will expand collaboration with a wider range of professionals including scientists, sociologists, doctors, researchers, fabricators, and technologists. Design will continue to be a networked and collaborative activity, with focus shifting away from individual authorship to collaborative creations.
- Public Service and Trust, Architects will continue to pursue genuine engagement and connection with their communities, rooted in empathy, advocacy, and respect. Validation of skills and ethics through licensure remains critical to establishing public trust and engagement.

Anticipated Future Trends

Using the themes, patterns, and overlaps from the persona development exercise, we created seven composite characters featured in a short video. The goal was to showcase the characters in a format that could be shared with others to provoke thought and feedback. To accomplish this, we used several AI tools to help make the characters feel accessible, visual and emotionally resonant. Importantly, the characters and script were driven by our group’s personas and inputs – the characters were not created by AI. The persona and character videos showed us that understanding the architect of the future is less about predictions and more about expanding what we already see as possible.

- Dr. Elora Quinn – Extraterrestrial Architect
- Emile Guerison – Digital Places Architect
- Julian Vega – Public Architect
- Naomi Harrell – Civic Futures Architect
- Jack Strand – Architect Builder
- Felix Alden – Architect Educator
- Kaia Ravindar – Autonomous Studio Architect

Through this exercise we come away with a few key thoughts. Architecture is evolving into a practice of care—one that fosters wellness through relational, regenerative design and embraces depth, intentionality, and slowness. It seeks to create spaces that are sensory, layered, and deeply rooted in place, while expanding its understanding of clients to include not only people but also non-human life, watersheds, ecosystems, and future generations. As a medium of connection, architecture underscores the enduring importance of physical space, even in an increasingly digital world. This shift also redefines architectural leadership, bringing together traditional services with the insights of policymakers, technologists, and community stewards, reflecting practices already emerging at the edges of the profession.

The practice of architecture is shifting from designing individual buildings to shaping societal change, demanding that architects act as problem solvers, advocates, and civic leaders. This evolution centers on embedding equity and inclusion in practice, advancing environmental stewardship through adaptive reuse and carbon-conscious design, and prioritizing public life by creating spaces that

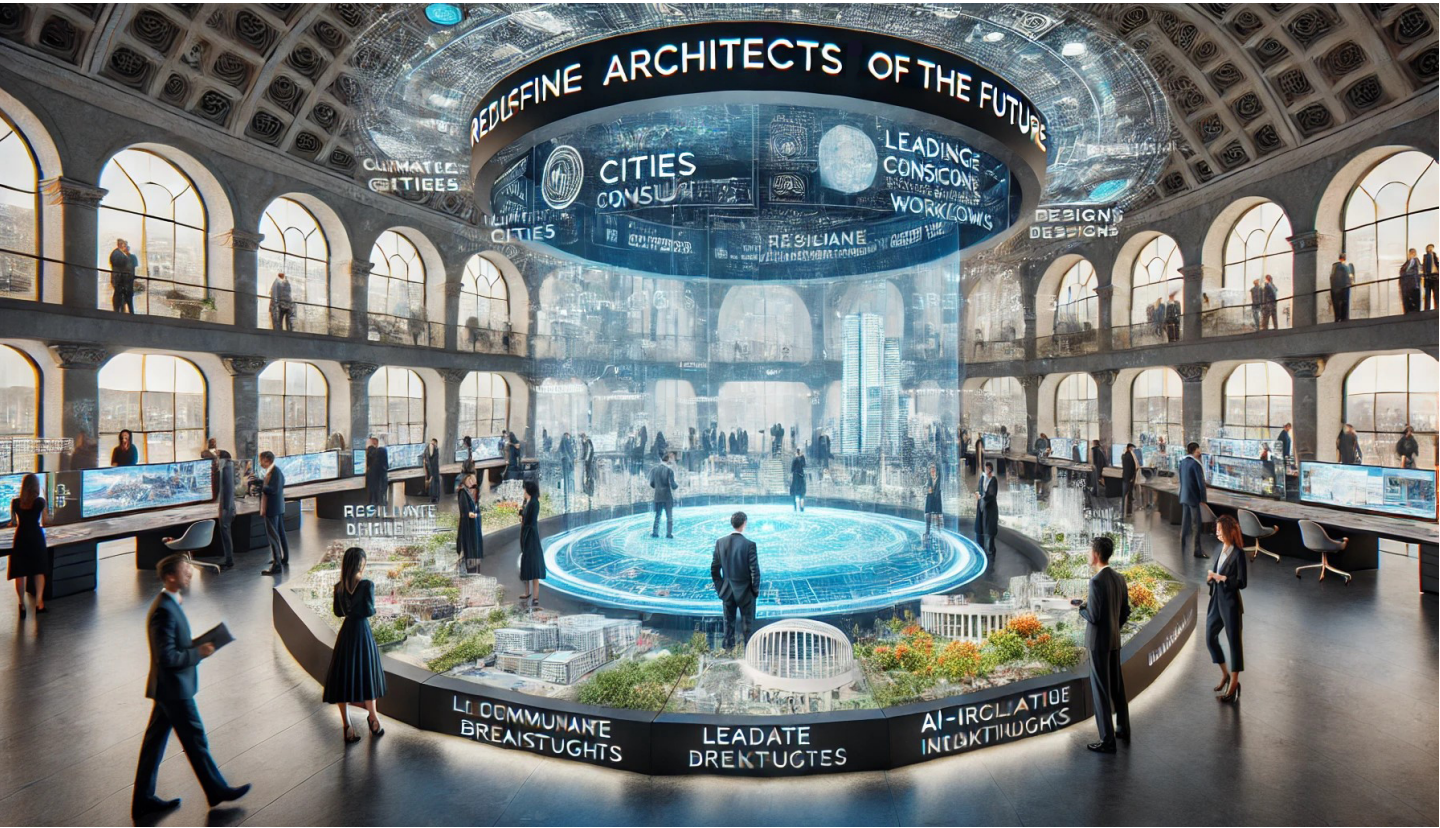
foster interaction, accessibility, and community vitality. By collaborating with policymakers, health experts, and stakeholders, architects can address urgent challenges such as housing, resilience, and climate change. Ultimately, the architect’s role is to weave equity, sustainability, and civic responsibility into a shared vision for thriving, resilient communities.

Act Now

- As architects risk losing relevance to other professions, the field must demonstrate its unique value while strengthening its future pipeline. This means engaging students early, aligning internships, and increasing visibility through volunteering and committee work. The AIA can lead by fostering connections, offering civic training, and supporting collaboration across programs that inspire the next generation. A section on the website dedicated to “the architect of the future”, would highlight those who elevate the profession currently while also becoming an instrument for creating those vital connections to the future generations.
- Architects can expand their impact by moving beyond building design to influence politics, government, urban design, landscape, and public benefit work. To support this, the profession must promote fair, balanced contracts with public institutions, adjust education and licensure pathways, and provide resources that enable interdisciplinary and nontraditional roles. Highlighting and supporting firms already leading in these areas, while creating tools and agreements that recognize architects as designers of systems—advancing housing, health, resilience, and civic life—will position the profession as transformative and future-focused.
- The future of architectural practice can be reframed as a form of care, where wellness, equity, and ecological health are central alongside performance and aesthetics. By embracing slowness and intentionality, architects can foster co-creative processes that

Act Now (continued)

prioritize meaning and accountability, extending design beneficiaries to include ecosystems, non-human life, and future generations. Architecture should also be strengthened as a medium of connection, supporting belonging, civic life, and community in an increasingly digital world. To meet these challenges, architects must be empowered as policymakers, advocates, and multidisciplinary leaders shaping systems at broad scales. The AIA can advance this shift by equipping members for civic service and policy engagement, advocating for specialized skills and pathways, expanding education and certification, and fostering partnerships for joint research. By evolving awards to honor collaboration and adapting licensure structures to reflect emerging practice, the AIA can ensure architects remain relevant, specialized, and impactful in shaping society.



*AI Image generated for discussion purposes only

AIA of the Future

Co Chairs:

Paolo Campos
Robert Easter

Participants:

Ashley Thornberry
Heather Wilson
Ignacio Reyes
Nathan Kalaher
Sarah Broughton
Scott Gaudineer

Thierry Paret
Winston Thorne
Chelsea Davidson (YAF)
Rachel Wiesbrook (NAC)
Hudson Meyn (AIAS)



*AI Image generated for discussion purposes only

Exploration & Intent

Our group’s charge is to expand the effectiveness and visibility of the member-centric Institute through existing and new partnerships; to provide members with the necessary resources to enhance their relevance; and to promote increased membership in the Institute, thereby advancing its mission and goals more effectively. As the Institute plans for a new Strategic Plan over the next 3-5 years and begins looking to the subsequent decades, the central question is what will come after 2030 and what themes from today will remain relevant then. This report outlines six recommended actions to be undertaken by the Council, the Board, AIA Staff, and CACE in the next three years.

Key Findings

- a) What AIA members value in the organization at the national vs state and local levels is different, yet compelling. These values need to be strongly emphasized and more aligned to complement each other.
- b) Other AEC organizations face similar challenges and opportunities regarding their memberships’ needs, demands, and resources. Opportunities may exist now or may arise in the future to learn from or mutually support each other more effectively.
- c) Internal stakeholder subgroups of the AIA, such as the Large Firm Round Table and CACE, have identified critical considerations for member services and management policies that can increase the efficacy and momentum of the Institute.
- d) Membership growth is a vital aspect of the Institute’s evolution. Rather than gatekeeping membership, grassroots efforts must continue to expand membership in a structure that amplifies our collective voice and impact beyond their current level, while keeping the architect member at the core.
- e) The expiring Strategic Plan had many laudable principles and imperatives. As 2030 looms, we must ask hard questions about what succeeded and what failed to reframe what it means to be an AIA member in the coming decades.

Anticipated Future Trends

- a) Proactively combating the threat of decreasing membership, which will reduce the Institute’s ability to provide resources, advocacy, and leadership of the architectural profession – and indeed, the built environment.
- b) Elevating the Strategic Council’s role in the Strategic Planning process, from selecting the planning consultant to more actively participating in the plan’s development.
- c) Heightened awareness and urgency towards the architect’s public imperative on Health, Safety, and Welfare as having beneficial and transformative impacts on humanity and the planet.
- d) Recognize the need to make the CEO transition phenomenon a governance practice rather than a practice of discovery and a scramble each time the organization experiences this challenge.

As of this writing, the AIA of the Future remains undefined, but strategic priorities are emerging that will help shape the Institute beyond 2030.

Act Now

- a) AIA shall formalize and strengthen relationships with other AEC organizations with shared values and mission alignment.
 - Formal MOUs with these entities (Board + EVP)
 - Group representation and liaising (Strategic Council, Knowledge Communities, CACE)
 - Joint event opportunities and resource sharing (KC’s and Staff)
- b) AIA shall create a task force charged with engaging constituents and stakeholders on an inclusive, tiered membership growth initiative.
 - This should not be a top-down exercise at the National level. Success will come from working in a bottom-up method to create a groundswell of support across components.
- c) The Strategic Council shall continue the AIA of the Future Workgroup in 2026 to understand the forthcoming Strategic Plan and further research into organizational membership, the benefits of membership, and collaborations with other organizations.
- d) AIA's next Strategic Plan should end in December 2029. The next Strategic Planning effort should begin in early 2028 and be comprehensive and transformative in scope, taking effect for 2030.
 - To ensure greater transparency and inclusivity, the Strategic Council shall be engaged in the strategic plan consultant RFP process and the strategic plan development effort.
- e) The AIA shall prepare EVP/CEO Succession and Transition Policies to codify CEO search and transition oversight by:
 - Establish a standing CEO Search and Transition Committee – the composition of which should at least include the interim CEO, Selected Board Members, CACE Leadership, and C-suite staff representation (VPs of HR, Diversity, Strategy)
 - Mandate a Transition Framework that includes issues as planning and preparation, handover and onboarding, integration and relationship building with relevant stakeholders in the organization, prioritizing communications, and creating a "Success Charter" that cements our commitment to supporting our Executives in their new roles.



AIA of the Future study group AI generated image

Resilient Practice Models

Chair:
Leah Bayer

Participants:

Laura Wake-Ramos	Rex Cabaniss
Leanne Meyer-Smith	Andrew Gorzowski (YAF)
Molly Jacobs	Christine Olshan (NAC)
Peggy McDonough	Emily Yeow (AIAS)
Tom Hysell	



*AI Image generated for discussion purposes only

Exploration & Intent

The Resilient Practice Models Study Group was charged with investigating the structural and cultural shifts necessary to ensure that architectural practice remains resilient, equitable, and impactful in the face of mounting pressures. To address this broad charge, the group organized into three subgroups examining different dimensions of practice resilience: External, Internal, and Professional Pressures.

The External Pressures team analyzed the 2025 AIA Firm Survey, studied federal Executive Orders affecting practice, conducted a supplemental survey, and explored AIA resources on AI. The Internal Pressures team reviewed existing AIA programs, met with staff, and surveyed peers to evaluate business acumen and leadership gaps. The Professional Pressures team assessed AIA’s history with research, surveyed firms and components, collaborated with the AIA Vice President of Research, and convened a national roundtable of research-active practices.

Together, these complementary methods revealed how external forces, internal challenges, and professional gaps intersect to shape practice resilience. This summary distills the key findings and presents three top-level recommendations, one from each subgroup, that form a collective vision for strengthening architectural practice.

Key Findings

External Pressures – Accelerating Change and Competition

- Architects face mounting disruption from technology, shifting client expectations, policy and regulations impacts, and adjacent industries encroaching on traditional service areas.
- Without adapting our models, we risk diminishing relevance and limited ability to advocate for our role in shaping the built environment.

Internal Pressures – Gaps in Leadership Pipeline

- Early- and mid-career professionals lack business acumen, mentorship, and visible leadership pathways. Particularly, business acumen development lags behind efforts to accelerate licensure.
- This is less a content problem than a visibility and integration problem: resources exist but awareness is low. AIA platforms are fragmented, poorly marketed, and difficult to navigate.

Professional Pressures – Weak Research Infrastructure

- Architecture remains one of the only licensed professions without a strong, applied, and accessible body of research. AIA developed a robust Research Agenda in 2019, but its research department today is focused almost solely on economic forecasting.
- Without evidence, architects struggle to demonstrate value, improve design outcomes, or build public trust. Our Roundtable responses identified Health & Wellbeing as a top area of interest for research.
- Research efforts exist across firms and academia but are scattered, underfunded, and disconnected from AIA’s core infrastructure. Our Roundtable responses noted a searchable database of case studies and best practices as a top wishlist item.

Anticipated Future Trends

Together, these findings reveal a profession at risk of fragmentation: disrupted externally by client and technological shifts, undermined internally by leadership gaps, and weakened professionally by the absence of a research foundation. If unaddressed, these trends will erode public trust, firm resilience, and the ability of architects to lead in addressing climate, equity, and wellbeing challenges. Collectively, they point to a singular need: **to reposition AIA as the platform that connects architects to tools, knowledge, and legitimacy in an era of rapid change, capitalizing on the advantages of AI to help identify and distill information from large and evolving datasets and resources.**

Act Now

1. **External Pressures** – Establish a Rapid Response Practice Advisory
Create a permanent AIA mechanism, aligned with the 10 Year Valuation Group and Governance Task Force recommendations, to monitor and quickly respond to disruptive external forces (e.g., new delivery methods, adjacent industries, federal policy shifts, executive orders). This Advisory would issue timely guidance and tools to help firms adapt practice models and safeguard professional relevance.

2. **Internal Pressures** – Bridge the Business Acumen Gap
Fund targeted research on early-career business acumen needs (continue this study within the Strategic Council next year) and create a visible, centralized hub for business and leadership resources within a larger knowledge and resources platform (i.e. an expanded “BRIK 2.0”). Integrate these into existing AIA initiatives (Prosper Lounge, Next Gen Lounge) to make them accessible, consistent, and equity-centered.

3. **Professional Pressures** – Revive and Resource the AIA Research Agenda
Commit to rebuilding an architectural research infrastructure through: quarterly recurring convenings, standardized research templates (e.g. case studies, POEs), partnership programs, an AI-enabled “BRIK 2.0” platform, and embedding research in contracts and awards programs to normalize outcomes-based practice and strengthen public trust.

These three recommendations — **Practice Advisory, Business Acumen Hub, and Research Agenda** — together address the most pressing challenges facing practice. By equipping architects to anticipate external shifts, empowering the next generation of leaders with the tools to sustain firms, and grounding our work in research and evidence, AIA can secure the long-term prosperity, health, equity, and impact of the profession.

Resources

- External Pressures:**
- [Executive Orders Evaluation Summary](#) – Dismantling of federal DEI infrastructure, rollback of national climate commitments and incentives, workforce and immigration actions, and reductions in federal funding and staffing for public sector architecture have all contributed to a re-shaping of federal policies and have impacted how firms navigate federal regulations in their architecture practices.
 - Firm Leaders Survey – issued at the A’25 Conference through July: 30 respondent sampling of member opinions on Resilient Practice Model Aspects, most impactful Client Expectations and Market Forces: https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-yr559iRvX7tZW90DA2FQ_3D_3D/
 - [Memo – external pressures sub-group findings. 7/24/25 Report](#) – Analysis of relevant tools and resources on AIA.org. to help architecture service models adapt in response to economic, technological, and industry-related influences.

- Internal Pressures:**
- TBD
- Professional Pressures:**
- [AIA 2019-2020 Research Agenda](#)
 - [2025 Strategic Council Research In Practice Report](#)

Digital Architecture

Co Chairs:

Michael Daly
Leap Chear

Participants:

Ayo Yusuf
Lewis Miller
Matthew Breakey
Melissa Schulteis
Nathalia Ellis
Peter Wehner

Tommy Watts
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Kinda Hawash (AIAS)



*AI Image generated for discussion purposes only

Exploration & Intent

The 2025 Digital Architecture Study Group (DASG) extended the Strategic Council’s leadership in understanding the transformative role of artificial intelligence (AI) in architectural practice. Building upon the foundational work from the 2024 AI Study Group and the subsequent passage of the AI Resolution with overwhelming support, the group framed its work around three central areas of impact: Equity, Business, and Wellbeing. These lenses guided our inquiry into how AI is reshaping not only the tools we use, but the values, structures, and responsibilities embedded in architectural practice. The culmination of this multi-year effort was the adoption of the AI Resolution (Exhibit 1), passed with 99 percent member support.

Key Findings

Our objective this year was to continue our research while serving as a complement to the implementation work of the newly formed AI Task Force by acting as a strategic think tank. We aimed to map long-term implications, align innovation with member needs, and ensure that adoption pathways are informed by diverse voices and firm sizes. This summary outlines our major findings, highlights risks and opportunities, and presents a forward-looking set of recommendations.

1. Equity Gaps Persist in AI Readiness and Access

While artificial intelligence has the potential to democratize access to design tools and broaden participation in architectural innovation, our study found that small and midsize firms remain at a significant disadvantage. The barriers are both practical and systemic. Many firms lack the financial capacity to invest in secure, enterprise-grade platforms. Others do not have the internal infrastructure, either in hardware or in staff expertise, to evaluate or implement emerging tools. In some cases, firms are reluctant to explore AI due to legal uncertainty or ethical ambiguity about how client data, design authorship, or decision-making would be handled.

To address these challenges, the Equity Subgroup examined a range of strategies to empower firms across the spectrum of readiness. This included exploring customizable AI policy templates, use case evaluations that compare different tool types, and decision-making frameworks to guide firms in determining whether to buy, co-create, or build AI tools. The work emphasized reducing entry barriers and ensuring that the benefits of AI are equitably shared across the profession. If AIA does not proactively address these access disparities, smaller firms and the communities they serve risk being left behind as the profession undergoes technological transformation. See Exhibit 2 for expanded subgroup findings on equity gaps and proposed resources.

2. Business Frameworks and Legal Structures Are not Keeping Pace with AI Use

The widespread integration of AI into architectural workflows presents a growing set of business, legal, and contractual

Key Findings (continued)

risks that are not adequately addressed in current practice standards. The Business Subgroup focused specifically on the implications of AI for the concept of Instruments of Service, as defined in AIA contract documents and commonly used agreements. They found that as AI tools generate portions of design documents, visualizations, or specifications, the boundaries around authorship, liability, and ownership become increasingly blurred.

For example, if a rendering is produced using a generative AI platform trained on proprietary or copyrighted images, does the firm own the result? Who is liable if an AI-generated floor plan misinterprets code constraints? How should firms protect themselves and their clients when third-party tools may use their data to retrain models without consent? These are real operational concerns already facing many firms.

To mitigate these risks, the subgroup recommends that firms update their contracts to explicitly define the use and limits of AI-generated content. Clauses should address copyright ownership, license scope, third-party tool use, and indemnity protections. The group also recommends firm-wide training to ensure that project managers, principals, and staff understand how AI intersects with contractual obligations and risk management. Without this foundational work, the adoption of AI may expose firms to legal ambiguity and reputational harm. AIA should provide standardized guidance and model language that can help firms of all sizes navigate these new complexities without incurring prohibitive legal costs. See Exhibit 3 for detailed subgroup analysis on contracts, liability, and Instruments of Service.

3. The Definition of Health, Safety, and Welfare is Evolving

Traditionally, health, safety, and welfare (HSW) have been defined in physical terms such as code compliance, life safety systems, material choices, and accessibility standards. AI is reshaping that framework by expanding the architect’s influence and responsibility into digital infrastructure, environmental responsiveness, and occupant experience.

The Wellbeing Subgroup found that AI-enabled systems can improve indoor air quality, align lighting with circadian

rhythms, and predict energy performance, enhancing both physical and emotional wellbeing. At the same time, they raise difficult questions about data privacy, occupant consent, and the ethics of automated systems that adapt to or predict human behavior.

New definitions of safety now include cybersecurity protections and transparency in algorithmic decision-making, since building systems can become vectors for digital harm if left unsecured. Welfare has broadened to include equitable planning and sustainable material selection, while also confronting AI’s energy demands and environmental footprint. Taken together, these findings show that the architect’s HSW obligation now extends beyond the physical building to encompass digital ethics, system security, and environmental accountability. Meeting this challenge requires not just tools or training but a cultural shift in practice and a proactive ethical stance. See Exhibit 4 for expanded subgroup work on wellbeing, cybersecurity, and energy and climate impacts.

AI Challenges Are Shared Across Domains

Although the three subgroups approached their work from different thematic starting points, they identified a consistent set of challenges that intersect all areas of AI adoption in practice. These include:

- Inconsistent data quality and limited transparency around AI training sets
- Ambiguity in authorship and professional liability
- Uneven access to secure and affordable AI platforms
- Risk of bias in AI-generated outputs
- Lack of guidance on balancing efficiency with ethics

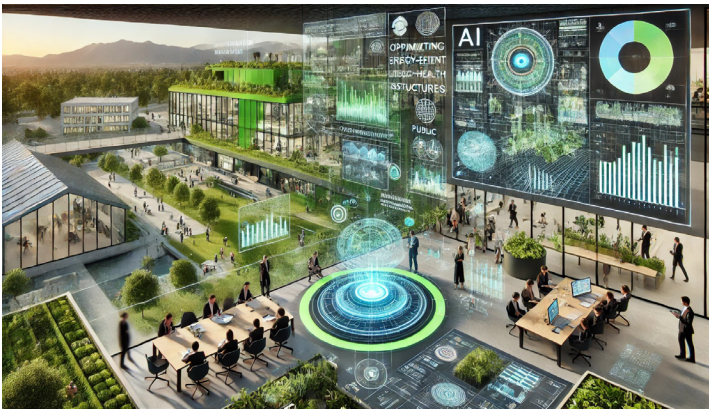
Most importantly, there is growing concern that over-reliance on AI tools may erode the core human values of architectural practice. Design is not only a technical function. It is a cultural, contextual, and ethical act. Tools that optimize speed or cost must be tempered by human judgment, empathy, and social responsibility. Firms with in-house digital teams or AI partnerships are rapidly expanding their capabilities, while others remain unsure how to begin. This digital gap risks becoming a permanent equity divide unless resources, education, and institutional support are provided broadly and intentionally.

The Digital Architecture Study Group Has a Unique Long-Term Role

Unlike the AI Task Force, which is charged with near-term implementation of policies, toolkits, and advocacy efforts outlined in the AI Resolution, the Digital Architecture Study Group is designed to look further ahead. Our group serves as a strategic foresight and connective platform, linking member insight, research, and exploratory thinking to the formal governance and operational functions of the Institute.

Throughout 2025, DASG has helped develop and vet resources such as decision frameworks for equity adoption, risk mitigation strategies for contracts, and expanded HSW considerations. We have identified emerging risks, piloted frameworks, and explored how AI intersects with the Council’s broader work on equity, sustainability, and wellbeing. Our unique position allows us to test ideas before they become policy, amplify underrepresented perspectives, and ensure that member voices shape the future of digital practice.

This role is not redundant to that of the AI Task Force. Rather, it is complementary. As implementation advances, there will continue to be a need for strategic foresight, early signal detection, and space to explore questions that do not yet have answers. DASG should remain active, visible, and resourced, with a clear mandate to work alongside the Task Force while offering the long view that only a Council-led study group can provide.



AI Image generated for discussion purposes only

Anticipated Future Trends

The next decade will bring rapid integration of AI across every aspect of design, construction, and building operation. Architects will be called upon to guide how these technologies are used, not just within firms, but across client relationships, public agencies, and the built environment. Without intentional direction, AI adoption may increase inequities, compromise data security, and weaken public trust. Conversely, with thoughtful governance and collaboration, it can enhance creativity, accelerate sustainability goals, and improve human wellbeing at scale.

The continued blurring of lines between physical and digital spaces will require architects to consider not only traditional HSW responsibilities but also data ethics, algorithmic transparency, and system interoperability. As the technology evolves, so must the profession’s ethical frameworks, educational models, and regulatory standards.

Recommendations

1. Codify the Digital Architecture Study Group as a permanent strategic function. The DASG should be formally established as a standing group within the Strategic Council, focused on digital transformation, emerging technologies, and long-term foresight. This would allow for continuity in leadership, deeper collaboration with the AI Task Force, and consistent member engagement.

2. Build a formal bridge between the Council and the AI Task Force. Create a structured collaboration model where DASG contributes to implementation areas identified in the AI Resolution. This includes peer review of policies, development of onboarding resources, identification of panelists, and support for licensure-related discussions. Regular information exchanges will strengthen alignment and reduce duplication.

3. Launch a recurring “Digital Intelligence Brief.” Pilot a quarterly or biannual deliverable to summarize emerging trends, case studies, and policy developments related to digital practice. Each edition could feature contributions from Equity, Business, and Wellbeing perspectives and be shared with the Board, Knowledge Communities, and components.

Together, these recommendations will help AIA lead with intention, serve all members equitably, and protect the profession’s core values in a rapidly changing world.

Connected Communities

Co Chairs:
Bruce Herrington
Stephanie Leedom

Participants:

Andre Brumfield	Mary Womble
Galen Lif	Ryan Morse
Jamie Crawley	Trey Wheeler
Jason DeMarco	Brady Laurin (YAF)
Matt Hutchines	Cooper Moore (NAC)
Marc Mondor	Kody Cheung (AIAS)



Exploration & Intent

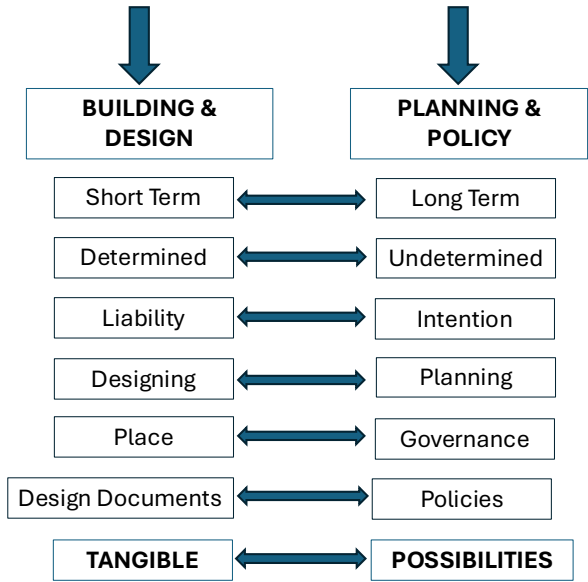
Connected communities are places where the built environment strengthens the social, economic and environmental networks – linking people to opportunities, boosting resilience against climate and economic shocks, and ensuring equity in quality of life improvements. Our exploration prioritized these critical issues and found that while the challenges are common nationwide, a community’s size significantly influences its capacity to address them. Therefore, a scalable model is needed to equip communities with the model to effectively support diverse municipalities and promote well-being in each community. The investigation concentrated on the vital role architects can play as administrators and advocates in transforming community well-being. It also highlighted the need for expanded technological resources to empower architects to serve municipalities of all sizes. This Summary outlines key insights and actionable recommendations to enhance community development through a more intensive and expanded architectural role.

Key Findings

The Findings describe differentials in the connective opportunities of various sized communities and the dissatisfaction common to public architects.

- **Finding 1:** The concept of a “Chief Architect” is not widely utilized by many municipal/county governments, perhaps due to lack of understanding. In medium-to-large-cities, the presence of Chief Architects – utilized to maximum potential, responsibility, and accountability – is uncommon. AIA’s survey of “Chief Architects” identified only 29 “Chief Architect” positions in as many US municipalities while there are 346 municipalities with over 100,000 residents.
- **Finding 2:** Small towns and cities often lack the revenue or other resources to hire a permanent, meaningful “Chief Architect.” AIA’s survey of “Chief Architects” identified 11 “chief architect” positions in this size city / community.
- **Finding 3:** Public Architects and Architects in Non-Traditional practice (i.e. government and educational settings) feel a sense of disconnect and lack of perceived value by the Institute and its members in relation to design architects.

How Architecture Differs from Planning



Connected Communities study group discussion diagram

Supplemental Findings:

- **Finding A:** Technology can empower cities and communities to significantly improve their residents’ well-being through application of smart systems prioritizing sustainability, resilience, efficiency, and inclusivity; as seen in the plethora of current programs and web applications.
- **Finding B:** To most effectively evaluate, pursue, and promote equitable growth, community resilience, and well-being at all scales, architects have the opportunity to provide critical involvement in processes that guide development – by becoming adept at planning and policy thinking in addition to design thinking. This long-term, large scale planning-based approach can meaningfully expand the role of architects by considering processes, governance and frameworks for growth.

Key Findings (continued)

- **Finding C:** As an expansion of their traditional role, architects can facilitate a municipality’s long-term planning, specifically in community resilience, adaptability, and transformability. Community resilience is the ability to withstand and adapt to climate, economic and social shocks. Adaptability is the ability to bounce back in maintaining community well-being. Transformability is the ability to bounce forward, utilizing shocks as an opportunity for broad based improvement with larger community support.

Anticipated Future Trends

Architects have a vital role in shaping equitable, sustainable, and wellness-oriented communities, especially when their expertise aligns with urgent infrastructure needs. To support municipalities of all sizes, a multi-tiered strategy is essential—one that continues advocacy for formal “Chief Architect” positions and encourages the creation of Community-level Architect roles to AIA members to connect resources and knowledge, particularly in underserved areas. Architects must evolve beyond static, building-centric practices to embrace interactive community systems. Integration of smart systems can assist Architects and communities in bringing expansive data sets together for amplifying, synergistic solutions. In advocating for more members in public practice, AIA should lead by addressing perceptions of non-traditional practice and strengthening its own organizational health with its public architects.

Act Now

- **Recommendation 1 – City Architect initiative:** AIA Board to immediately authorize the following regarding the “Chief Architect” initiative: rename the initiative to “City Architect” to honor and respect the historically significant tribal use of the term “Chief” and be more targeted in its implementation in medium to large cities; continue advocating for City Architect position through engagement with the U.S. Conference of Mayors; gather data on the implementation of this position to understand the impact this AIA program is having at the municipal level. AIA staff to report to membership at the AIA Leadership Summit or AIA Conference on Architecture and Design with progress on the implementation of the program.
- **Recommendation 2 – Community Architect program:** AIA Board to immediately authorize the following regarding a “Community Architect” program: direct AIA staff to advocate for creation of Community Architect positions in small-towns to small-cities; revive AIA’s Center for Civic Leadership as the “home” for this program; program to include the “Community Architect + AI” strategy to support smaller cities and communities with resources, including connecting them to local AIA chapters to support the community. (Note: Supplemental Findings A, B, & C can be incorporated into Recommendations 1 & 2.)
- **Recommendation 3 – Public Architects Task Force:** AIA Board to immediately authorize a Task Force to investigate and address the perceived lack of appreciation and value by the Institute/membership to Architects in Non-Traditional Practice; Task Force to be composed of representatives of AIA membership, AIA staff (Advocacy and Membership offices), AIAS, NAAB, and the Public Architects Knowledge Community; Task Force to report to AIA Board within 1 year of authorization on their findings and recommendations to bridge the gap between public and private practicing architects; Task Force to further report findings and recommendations to membership at the AIA Leadership Summit or the AIA Conference on Architecture and Design.

Resources

Recorded Presentations

- “Update on AIA’s ‘Chief Architect’ Initiative” by Michael Winn, AIA National, Senior Director for Public Policy) (recorded) February 18, 2025
- “The Model Resilient Zoning Code with Equity” by Bert Gregory, FAIA (recorded) March 18, 2025
- “AIA Government Affairs Forum, Launch & Tutorial” by Amal Mahrouki, (AIA National, Senior Director, State and Local Affairs) (recorded) May 20, 2025
- “Engaging Change: Mosaics, Community, and Design” by Dan Pitera, FAIA (recorded) July 1, 2025

Websites / Webpages

- <https://www.aia.org/resource-center/guides-equitable-practice>
- <https://www.aia.org/design-excellence/aia-framework-for-design-excellence/equitable-communities>
- [Civic-Engagement-Toolkit.pdf](#)
- [AIA guide to engaging with civic leaders](#)

Other / Articles

- [Public Seminar on Middle Housing Policy](#) – Matt Hutchins AIA
- AIA White Paper – “Chief Architect” and “Scalable Models for a Chief Architect”
- AIA Report – “Architect’s Role in Creating Equitable Communities”, September 2022
- AIA Guides for Equitable Practice, November 2023
- AIA-USGBC Resilient Design Synergies Convening Group proceedings, AIA CoA
- AIA-California “Making a Case for Official Architects in California Cities and Counties: A Case Study” – A Study on the Importance of Developing Strategies for Appointment of Public-Sector Architects, February 1, 2022 Ver. 2
- AIA Architect Interview with Mayor Karrin Knudson, AIA Eugene, OR <https://www.aia.org/aia-architect/article/kaarin-knudson-aia-brings-housing-and-sustainability-focus-new-mayoral-role>
- AIA National. “Chief Architect Job Description”, 2024.
- AIA National. “Scalable Models”, 2024.
- FINAL REPORT of 2025 AIA Strategic Council Connected Communities Study Group



AI Image created for discussion purposes only

Climate Responsive Design & Leadership

Co Chairs:

Gwen Fuertes
Matthew Green

Participants:

Ben Ward	Tim Lock
Corey Squire	Verity Frizzell
Jean Caroon	Gilberto Lozada Baez (AIAS)
Kimberly Dowdell	Erin Agdinaoay (YAF)
Rebecca Fletcher	Ifreet Rahima (NAC)
Richard Polk	Juanita Libreros Foronda (AIAS)
Sheldon Pennoyer	

Exploration & Intent

The Climate Responsive Design and Leadership study group set out with a very specific perspective and goal related to Climate Design this year. As representative Councilors, we are aware of the membership’s desire for tools and information to respond to the rapidly evolving climate with effective design tools.

Our group set out to identify and curate the information that practitioners need to realize the vision of Design Excellence (especially as it relates to a myriad of Climate Issues) established by the Institute. We addressed multiple relevant and important topics monthly, through the ‘Climate Corner’ a monthly (2-pager) content deck that can be easily shared, enabling and nourishing climate-responsive design and leadership within firms.

Topics were developed iteratively, and we were able to amplify and collaborate with other AIA KCs to deliver information to members through the Strategic Council communication network.

Key Findings

The Climate Corner 2-pager content spanned the entirety of our Study Group’s research year, with new issues released monthly, starting in February and continuing through August. Direct link to the published content is in the reference section at the end of this memo.

We researched and published content on 7 monthly topics:

- **Urban Heat island effect:** this phenomenon causes severe negative energy use and community health impacts, we recommend architects advocate for active mitigation strategies (such as high albedo roofs and enhanced greenspace / reduced impervious surface) on every project site
- **Water use and scarcity:** more and more severe storms result in too much water, too little, water pollution, or all three. Architects should be aware of disaster impacts, encourage aquifer recharge where possible on project sites, and advocate for water recycling / grey water use in applications that don’t require potable water.
- **Sufficiency in resource consumption:** Material and Energy Sufficiency as a Design Ethos – Rather than compensating for excessive consumption with sustainable materials, start with the question: Can I do nothing? Is reuse an option? Can we design transformative buildings that simply need less?
- **Energy Codes (under threat):** In the current political climate, more jurisdictions are considering rolling back energy codes, architects must understand the negative implications of these governance moves and advocate to preserve and even progress energy codes wherever possible.
- **Resilience:** Resilience is becoming more critical by the day – it needs to be augmented w/ vulnerability analysis, identifying the most prescient threats in a region or climate zone and designing to maximize the project’s resilience against the most pressing threats.



*AI Image generated for discussion purposes only

Key Findings (continued)

- **Circularity / Reuse:**
 - Reduce: Can you adjust the scope of the project to use less materials overall?
 - Reuse: Can you reuse existing structures or materials in place?
 - Deconstruct: Can you take the building apart more gently to recover reusable materials?
 - Recycle: What you can't reuse as is, can it be remanufactured or recycled?
- **Strategies for messaging** to our clients and communities: Communication is the most powerful tool that we have as architects, and our clients depend on us to use it and shepherd them towards the best possible design outcomes.

All of these 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 are not properly addressed in the final design solution. We received extremely positive feedback from the membership and some components, not only on the content itself but our deliberate methodology for delivering the content in a rapidly usable and digestible format.

Our group has felt very encouraged in the efficacy of this approach, particularly when it comes to such an urgent and exigent subject as Climate Responsive Design. Time is of the essence and our client’s needs in order to make good project decisions in response to available data are many. There is more potential for future content and investigation in this vein moving forward into new Study Groups in 2026 and 2027, which would include the Institute’s increasing interest in the concept of Regenerative Design, and how this ideal might further add to the body of knowledge outlined in the Framework for Design Excellence and the various Knowledge Communities efforts.

Our group has already drafted an initial memo at the Board’s request related to current state of the market related to Regenerative Design and how AIA should define and leverage its use moving forward.

Anticipated Future Trends

This endeavor left us convinced that delivering content in this way – directly to the membership with the intent of arming them to advocate for Climate Responsive Design to their clients – is essential and brings tremendous value to the membership.

Our monthly aggregating of Climate Corner content has begun what we feel is a legacy that can be continued – a toolkit / library of resources that can continue to grow and mature over time as subjects and needs evolve in the Climate Space. This provides a sustainable platform for continually providing value to our membership, and may potentially serve as a deliverables roadmap for other study groups investigations moving forward.



Climate Corner editions

Act Now

- Potential Board Action Items**
- Consider a potential resolution next year emphasizing the importance of advocating for good Climate Responsive Design when projects are in consideration for any major National Design Award
 - Continue the focus / emphasis on Climate and Resilience in the future AIA Strategic Plan(s) and any strategic / task force initiatives as existential to our communities and our relevance as an Institute
 - Advocate for more direct communication of regular content and membership-facing priorities as a part of a more transparent engagement of our components on Climate
 - Keep the pipeline / partnership of Board efforts related to Climate initiatives in full collaboration with the tools and study groups of the Council.

- Potential Council Action Items**
- PRESERVE the Climate Study Group as an essential silo for next year – as we continue to develop member-facing content and research
 - Give us your feedback on content presented thus far in Climate Corner – and suggestions for content for next year
 - Assist us in connecting with any subject matter experts or firms that can be resources for us as we begin to tackle Board priorities like Regenerative Design for next year
 - Consider lending us your support on a potential resolution for next year related to Climate Responsive Design as it pertains to national design awards.



AI generated image for discussion

Resources

- **AIA – Strategic Council**
 - <https://www.aia.org/about-aia/leadership/aia-strategic-council>
- **Framework for Design Excellence** – outlines current standards of excellence for sustainable and resilient design
 - <https://www.aia.org/design-excellence/aia-framework-design-excellence>
- **Urban Heat**
 - [Heat-related mortality in Europe during the summer of 2022 | Nature Medicine](#)
 - [Health Impacts from Excessive Heat Events in Multnomah County, Oregon, 2021](#)
 - [Reimagining Urban Spaces: Green Spaces, Obesity, and Health Resilience in an Era of Extreme Heat](#)
- **Water: Use and Scarcity**
 - [Water and Climate Change](#)
 - [Non-potable Water Reuse Practice Guide](#)
- **Sufficiency: Less is Less**
 - [Living Future: A vision for the future](#)
- **Are Building Energy Codes at Risk?**
 - [Estimate Improvement in Energy Codes](#)
 - [Comparison of 2021 IECC Residential Cost Effectiveness Analyses](#)
 - [Zero Emission Building Ordinances](#)
- **Resilience and Vulnerability Assessment**
 - [Climate Adaptation for Architects: A Design Toolkit](#)
 - [Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves: 2019 Report](#)
- **Circularity and Reuse**
 - [What is Deconstruction?](#)
 - [Construction and Demolition Debris: Material-Specific Data](#)
 - [Encouraging and Mandating Building Deconstruction](#)

Special Initiatives & Collaborations

50	Strategic Council Equity Task Force
	AIA Architect Article Contributions
52	- Sustainability
56	- Building Science and Technology
58	- Career and the Profession
60	- Sustainability
63	- Sustainability
	Collaborations
66	- AIA Committees & Member Groups
68	- Future Focused Videos
71	2025 Resolutions

Equity Task Force

Chair:
Garfield Peart

Participants:
Stephanie Leedom
Robert Easter
Hallie Crouch
Jessica O'Donnell (Advisor)

Mission and Purpose

- Purpose: oversee the formulation of an implementation strategy for the recommendations presented in the 2024 Strategic Council Equity Group Report. Council leadership and staff deemed it essential to pursue further action in regards to the 2024 Equity Group’s work to ensure the effective realization of these recommendations within the broader AIA.
- Mission: guide the development of an implementation strategy for the eleven recommendations outlined in the 2024 Strategic Council Equity Group Final Report. This process involved active engagement with AIA Board Committees, staff, organizational components, member groups, and partner organizations. At the conclusion of the year, the Task Force presented a detailed report specifying concrete actions to be undertaken to advance these recommendations.

Collaboration within the AIA Ecosystem

The Task Force held several meetings with AIA Staff/Orgs Engaged – EQFA, NEC, PAKC, Advocacy, AIAU – over the course of the year, which resulted in identifying over 27 clear action items to advance the recommendations.

Notable Achievements

- a) 2024 Strategic Council Equity Recommendation #1: Update the AIA Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct to encompass the architect’s responsibility towards communities, particularly underrepresented groups, to ensure inclusivity and ethical integrity in architectural practice.
 - i) The final proposed amendments to the 2024 Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct focused on three principal themes: (1) Microaggressions; (2) The architect’s duty to communities; and (3) Environmental justice. Task Force members presented these amendments at the September meeting of the AIA National Ethics Council (NEC) for consideration and presentation to the AIA Board for approval.
- b) 2024 Strategic Council Equity Recommendation #2: Further study the barriers firms face in adopting the AIA’s Guides to Equitable Practice and how the applicability of the Guides across different types and sizes of firms/employers can be improved
 - i) Collaboration with the AIA research team resulted in a project submission to 2025 AIA Board to develop a Pay Equity Tool. This tool would gather and analyze compensation data across the architecture profession,

- integrating findings into a new member service and enhancing the updated Guides for Equitable Practice. EQFA has included the Pay Equity Tool in its 2026 Workplan to help ensure its advancement in 2027.
- ii) AIA rolled out the new ‘Guides for Equitable Practice Activation Kit | Advance Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: From Awareness to Implementation’ which included ‘Discission Cards.’ Task Force members attended the 2025 NOMA conference where they hosted a session that showcased the AIA and Strategic Council’s ongoing equity initiatives and highlighted progress made over the past several years.
- c) 2024 Strategic Council Equity Recommendation #8: Examine what additional training or resources the AIA could offer to help architects address the specific elements within the Equitable Development Frameworks.
 - i) The Task Force met with the AIAU team to expand Equity/Equitable Development Framework training within AIA. This resulted in a more formalized ongoing collaboration between the Public Architects Knowledge Community (PAKC), EQFA and the AIAU team.
- d) 2024 Strategic Council Equity Recommendation #9: (a) Leverage architects’ knowledge of the built environment, education, and “big picture” thinking to support public and elected officials in solving major societal challenges related to affordable housing, climate action, infrastructure resiliency, and public health. (b) Develop a strategy to create a comprehensive database of public architects, which will be crucial for engaging with key stakeholders like the Council of Mayors.
 - i) AIA Advocacy and Civic Engagement staff are committed to providing regular updates to the Strategic Council and PAKC regarding ongoing civic engagement initiatives with the Conference of Mayors and the Council of Governors. These efforts are part of AIA’s broader strategy to educate local government leaders on the societal value of architects and effectively disseminate this information to AIA member groups and components.

Next Steps

- a) EQFA will continue to be a key partner in advancing this work further through additional meetings.
- b) The Council will continue to advance the AIA’s Strategic Plan and promote ongoing conversations and engagement with other AIA groups.

How residential design offers opportunities for sustainability

Sustainable home projects can directly benefit both homeowners and architects.

December 17, 2024
BY TIMOTHY LOCK, AIA AND GABE TOMASULO, AIA

While large-scale commercial and institutional projects tend to garner top sustainability honors, more humble single-family residential designs remain one of the most consistent project types for architects practicing in the United States.

Residential design offers a significant opportunity to create positive, resilient ecological impact in a way that can directly benefit both homeowners and architects. To achieve this, our Maine-based firm, OPAL, approaches “sustainability” as an imperative and a design opportunity, with criteria and metrics specifically catered to delivering noticeable quality of life improvements for occupants. We embrace our role as experts and seek to educate our clients and fellow practitioners on how we can all be part of a sustainable future.

We consider the opportunities for sustainable design across five dimensions: **habitable planet, circular resources, protected water cycle, resilient ecosystems, and healthy communities.**

Habitable planet

When we talk about “carbon footprint” or “emissions,” typically what we mean is the human impact on the future habitability of our planet in the face of global warming. While this is a very large problem to contend with—affecting every human on the globe – it is the area in which architects have the greatest leverage and the most robust history of practice to draw upon. Buildings are responsible for approximately 40% of all global greenhouse gas emissions, through both their operations and construction. While residential buildings tend to be small, there are many of them, so reducing their whole-life carbon emissions is extremely effective collectively. Further, unlike in commercial and institutional design, it is easy to relate valuable occupant outcomes to design choices around emissions reduction. The easiest, perhaps, is fuel costs over time.

Early in the history of our practice we made it a goal to design using Passive House principles on every project. This was not with the intent to certify all our projects or try to “hit a number” on low energy use. Rather, it was a response to our clients’ needs. At the time almost all of our projects were detached single family homes in Northern New England and the Upper Midwest—very cold places with very high heating costs. We explored a “Passive House for everyone” approach involving climate-appropriate windows, thicker-than-code insulation, and mechanical ventilation to meet our clients’ financial sustainability needs, while ensuring durable, comfortable, not drafty, healthy environments for people. This approach represents the single largest achievable reduction in greenhouse gas emissions on a house project, particularly when paired with on-site renewable energy production—made significantly more financially viable through the Inflation Reduction Act.

Expanding the frame to consider embodied emissions, many residential projects in the United States already utilize sustainably sourced bio-based materials for their structure and finishes (think wood studs and floors). From this point of departure, it is a short journey to considering carbon-storing insulations such as wood fiber and cellulose, durable natural exterior finishes like thermally treated wood, and high-recycled content metal roofing and flashing materials over petroleum-based products like asphalt and plastic. All of these design choices bring immediate value in terms of operational cost savings and occupant well-being, while also radically increasing long-term resilience, durability, and positive impact. Any homeowner can appreciate the advantages of such an approach.



Photo Credit: Trent Bell

Circular resources

Discussions of circular economies and architecture often fall victim to an assumption that architects can only employ circular strategies by reusing existing buildings or building components. While this is a key attribute of a circular economy, as a designer, we don’t always have the option to reuse a building. This is particularly true in single family residential design. At OPAL, we choose to consider circularity as an acknowledgment that all projects exist at a point along a timeline. Intervening at the beginning of any timeline, as is the case with new construction, does prevent us from planning for the eventual reuse and adaptation of the buildings we design.

A single-family home is a unique building type in that its occupants will often experience the building across multiple stages of their own life. In a commercial or institutional setting, the same demographic of people often will use the building in the same way for decades. This can make designing a circular, adaptable building easier, because the building’s effective use over time is more knowable. In a residential setting, aging or changes in occupants’ physical abilities are often catalysts for renovation, creating waste from demolition and reconfiguration.

However, if we can conceive of a residential architecture that can be effective and inclusive for all ages, the potential for reuse and adaptation increases tremendously. We have had the opportunity to design many houses with aging in place as an explicit goal, or the intent to move in multi-generational family members over time. We expect this to be a growth opportunity in practice as our population ages, and we encourage all residential architects to lean into this model—it makes our building stock inherently more circular, healthier, and more inclusive.

Protected water cycle

As water emerges as a limited resource, reducing water use becomes imperative for all projects. While many residential projects are technically net-zero water, managing both supply and waste onsite through the use of wells and septic systems, residential designers can look beyond overall net water use to create positive water impacts. We recommend thinking critically about overuse of potable water, particularly for irrigation.

When revegetating disturbed soils, select native, drought-resistant plants. Plants that need extensive watering to establish themselves and grow over time are a significant contributor to water overuse and disturbance in the local water cycle. Furthermore, the designer can take care to ensure that stormwater is properly managed on site once it leaves the roofs of the building. Consider the quality of runoff when choosing roofing materials and ensure that runoff is not furthering site erosion or pollution. In best practice, stormwater can actively reduce the need for potable water use onsite. Lastly, consider the viability of gravity flow to move water over pumping, when possible, further reducing energy demand.

Resilient ecosystems

The physicality of each building project changes and becomes part of the ecosystem that surrounds it. Our buildings are part of our human ecosystem and exist in negotiation with all of the species of plants and animals that live on and around our building sites. Perhaps a groundhog lives under your deck—congratulations! You have designed a shelter for more than one species! The designer’s brief certainly centers our human ecosystem, but ignoring or working against the reality of the flora and fauna surrounding our buildings is impossible. When considering a new design, OPAL considers the “human-only” area on the site and seeks to limit it as much as possible. This



Photo Credit: Trent Bell

entails considering not just the building, but also outdoor patios, hardened drives, and monoculture planted areas like lawns. Outside the human-only area, we deliberately design spaces that promote a diversity of plant and animal species. Further technological advances with ecosystem benefits, such as bird-safe glazing, are becoming more readily available as well. We suggest deploying them on all projects.

Healthy occupants

In our experience, the idea of creating a healthy building has been our most consistent “way in” to a sustainable approach with our clients. People care deeply that the home they are investing in is healthy and, hopefully, contributes to their physical and mental well-being.

At OPAL, we consider two base health criteria non-negotiable and would recommend all architects do the same. We do not design buildings that require the combustion of fossil fuels for heating or cooking. Despite the recent focus on VOCs and other chemicals in interior finishes, combustion of fossil fuels inside buildings remains the single greatest interior and localized air pollutant. This is rarely discussed, as the removal of fossil fuels is generally considered an energy and emissions strategy without considering the benefits to occupant health. Speaking about these health benefits and emissions reductions together directly and positively ties personal physical well-being to shared global sustainability goals a critical and powerful communication tool. In further pursuit of healthy indoor air, we provide one hundred percent fresh air mechanical ventilation with highly efficient energy recovery on all of our residential projects. Yes, natural ventilation through open windows is wonderful, and preferred, but the reality is that in nearly all regions of the United States there are significant portions of the year where opening windows is not practical given the weather. Consistent access to fresh air is not only cleaner but improves mental health as well.

Beyond these criteria, access to daylight, views of nature, and proximity to bio-based finishes are great steps toward a healthy residential project.

While the applicability of advanced sustainability design and technology to small-scale residential architecture may seem limited, we have found that a synthesis, simplification, and abstraction of the core tenets of contemporary ecological design practice can yield great results for our buildings and our clients. It was from this lens that we developed our own guiding framework, called the Dimensions of Building Ecology, which provides clear, non-metric design interventions.

It can be challenging for smaller, residential-focused practices to manage sometimes diverse criteria. Thankfully, for those interested in backing up more abstract considerations with data, frameworks such as the AIA Framework For Design Excellence, are available to help harmonize an approach at any scale. Moreover, embracing a mindset of considering the next home design as part of its ecosystem is the perfect first step.



TIMOTHY LOCK, AIA is a management partner at OPAL and a member of AIA's Strategic Council.
<https://www.aia.org/aia-architect/article/how-residential-design-of-fers-opportunities-sustainability>



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<https://www.aia.org/aia-architect/article/how-residential-design-of-fers-opportunities-sustainability>



Photo Credit: Trent Bell

A cross-cutting tool for architects

With the Integrated Design Process (IDP), architects can tackle complex problems and audacious goals.

FEBRUARY 17, 2025
BY MARC MONDOR, AIA

More than just a tool, the Integrated Design Process (IDP) is a paradigm, a way of looking at the world. It’s an approach that ensures synergistic, multilateral thinking—a cross-cutting approach—and provides the means to advance promising ideas and strategies, while discarding others that aren’t useful. At our firm, evolveEA, we use this approach when dealing with complex problems and strategizing to meet audacious goals. Best of all, architects are well-suited to lead efforts providing this valuable service.

What is IDP and how do I use it?

Big, ambitious projects are great candidates for the Integrated Design Process.

A good first step is to identify the project's main stakeholders and bring them together for a facilitated discussion. A face-to-face **charette** (or workshop) carries a logical arc from the client's exploration stage and gives structure to their goals. Once these goals are established, you and the client can start to discuss your strategy.

In addition to subject matter experts and the design team, owner participation is essential. Many architects are hesitant to explore partially-baked ideas with owners in real time, but this misses the point of the exploration. In the words of my friend and IDP authority Bill Reed, AIA, the charette is where architects go from being experts to being co-learners. Humility goes a long way.

Strategies can be shaped by frameworks. One outcome of a charette can be an Owners' Project Requirements document, which organizes the goals and strategies of the project around desired benchmarks like energy efficiency, community impact, water efficiency, health outcomes, and more.

Once you've started with a **mission statement**, which has led to **goals**, then to **frameworks and strategies** that will address those goals, the next step is to assign **metrics** that address the strategies—for example, dollars saved per year for ROI or Water Use Intensity. Healthy interiors metrics could be related to air quality, low particulate matter and VOCs.

Why involve so many people?

It can be daunting and expensive to see a room full of assembled experts. The design and construction team should be well-represented in order to address the questions and issues that arise from stakeholders.

Once the charette is completed and has been documented in the form of Owners Project Requirements or a Summary Report, the charge is to integrate these strategies into the project. Not all answers are solid this early in the project, but items to explore should be apparent. From this point forward, the documents should provide guidance, and are intended to be modified as you continue to explore strategies.

Why don't we have the charrette later in the process when we know more about the project?

The purpose of a charrette early in the process, ideally before any sketching takes place, lies in the inverse relationship between the ease of making changes early and the cost and disruption of making changes further along in the process.

Project meetings to discuss the project goals should be held regularly and at milestones. As design decisions become solidified through the course of the project, the ability to make changes becomes more difficult and costly. Aside from confirming forward movement, this process is equally useful in noting ideas that may have been explored, but not implemented.

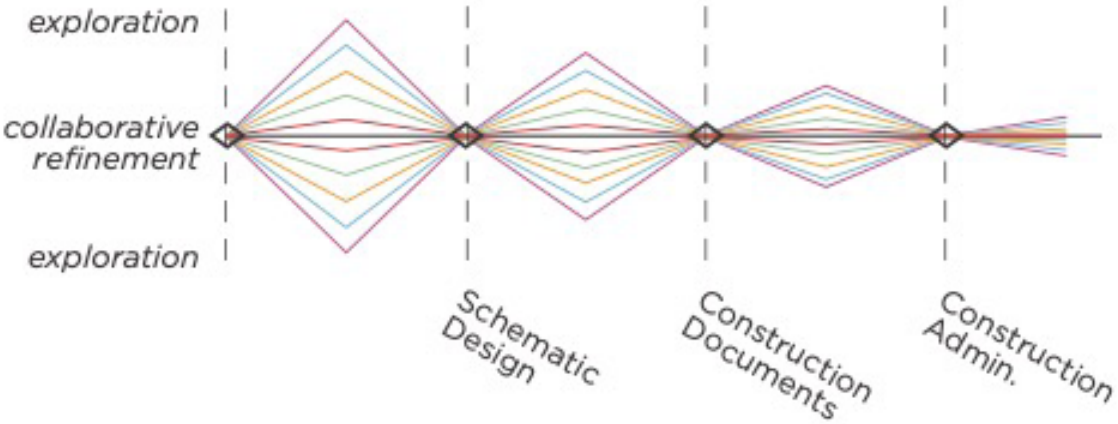


Photo Credit: Marc Mondor

As charrettes occur, the bracket of possibility becomes smaller with each successive charrette. On a Living Building Challenge project that we managed, we clearly had the owner's voice in our heads, saying "no shortcuts." While exacting, this made for a more streamlined process, as we didn't bother considering substitutions that would ultimately be rejected.

The project is complete; what now?

This is a tough part of the process. The design and construction team is generally disincentivized from doing too much follow-up. The fee is exhausted, the project works and is in the books, and other projects demand our attention. The paradox is that while this is how our industry works, this specific time after project completion is particularly rich to determine the success of the project. How well were the goals achieved? What worked or didn't work? Can a post-occupancy survey or evaluation be performed? How can any lessons learned be applied to the owner's next project and contribute to the firm's institutional knowledge?

Do charrettes have to be in person?

"Charrettes are far more effective when held face-to-face" is an answer we would have given until a few years ago. In the post-Covid era, we've found that virtual rooms allow everyone to follow along with a presentation while being able to write their ideas and post them. This negates the too-typical 20% of participants doing 80% of the talking; with this approach, everyone can have their say. What's more, the virtual board can be left open for access after the charrette, allowing participants to return with more ideas or refinements.

The takeaways

The IDP approach and terminology mirror much of the architect-led delivery process. The architectural formation and discipline is rich in lateral thinking, facilitation, creativity, concept integration, and form-making, making architects able to handle and simplify complex concepts and issues. Architects listen actively, while finding patterns, determining conclusions and advocating clearly. Architects are able to see the big picture and think in systems over time. What's more is that architects are typically at the table when projects are being conceived, giving us the ability to help shape larger forces.

The Integrated (or Integrative) Design Process has been recognized by LEED and the Living Building Challenge frameworks, as well as being a registered ASTM International process. This steady-improvement mechanism, when codified, can be used for any problem and any scale.

A maxim of the regenerative practitioner, attributed to President Eisenhower, states, "If you're having trouble solving your problem, enlarge the problem." With this paradigm, blight, hunger, poverty and inequality are all problems to be solved. Buildings are great targets for this approach, but so are the larger systems that they inhabit.



Marc Mondor, AIA is principal and co-founder of evolveEA, a green building and sustainability consulting and design firm. He currently serves on the AIA Strategic Council and is past president of AIA Pennsylvania.

<https://www.aia.org/aia-architect/article/cross-cutting-tool-architects>

Building philanthropy into your firm's plan for growth

Cushing Terrell principal Shannon Christensen, FAIA, tells us about her firm's strategy of doing well by doing good.

MAY 12, 2025
BY SHANNON CHRISTENSEN, FAIA

A primary goal for many companies is growth—growth in the number of clients you have, the number of projects your teams deliver, and the number of people you employ.

Growth can bring substantial benefits as it relates to financial success and employee opportunities, with firms determining how and where they want to grow to align with their business objectives and mission, vision, and values. But another important element to consider as part of your overall growth plan is philanthropy.

At Cushing Terrell, a national firm with offices in eight states across the U.S., we’ve always had a strong commitment to supporting our local communities. Each of our offices has long-held traditions that reflect the culture of the teams in those areas. In Billings, Mont., for example, we support Newman Elementary School through the donation of Thanksgiving food baskets and by participating in reading programs; we bring local high school students into our office for hands-on career days; and we organize the Cushing Terrell Golf Classic to raise funds for local nonprofit organizations. These are just a few activities among many we commit to each year. These traditions are at the heart of who we are and create cross-generational relationships that contribute to thriving communities and workplaces.

As we’ve grown as a firm, we’ve made two big moves that have helped formalize our commitment to our communities with the goal of creating an even greater impact.

First, we established a pro bono design services program in 2022. Our pro bono program—encompassing all our offices—is part of an effort to better define and organize our commitment to social action. In addition to providing pro bono design services, this initiative includes action around diversity, equity, and inclusion; community service; charitable giving; and sustainable design. The objective is to support

communities local to Cushing Terrell office locations as well as engage with entities outside the firm’s immediate network. Through these charitable projects, we foster connections and professional growth for Cushing Terrell team members by engaging a broad range of talents from people at different levels and stages of their careers.

Each year, we set aside billable hours that can be donated to support nonprofits nominated for pro bono services. For those nonprofits and projects selected, we assign design teams of interested people from across our offices and disciplines. The program has helped organize the expertise of our team members behind projects they feel passionate about.

Three years in, we’ve supported organizations such as the American Legion in Big Timber, Mont.; the Girl Scouts of Montana and Wyoming in Billings, Mont.; Sacred Heart Academy in Boise, Idaho; Northern Lights Family Justice Center in Billings, Mont.; University District Food Bank in Seattle, Wash.; Holy Aid and Comfort Spiritual Church in New Orleans, La.; and Advocates Against Family Violence in Caldwell, Idaho.

Our recent big news is the establishment of the Cushing Terrell Foundation. Through the foundation, we will identify strategic partnerships with nonprofits to enable support that goes beyond monetary donations. Our goal is to bring together resources and capitalize on collaboration to increase the impact of our philanthropic and charitable-giving efforts in alignment with our mission to “invent a better way of living.” I’m proud of our firm’s leadership team for taking this step and making the foundation a reality, and I’m excited by the enthusiasm shown by our entire team. This foundation will be a strong and enduring legacy we can all contribute to in a variety of meaningful ways.



Photo Credit: Cushing Terrell

One of our associate principals, James Foster, AIA, summed it up like so: “Philanthropy is an important aspect of a healthy society. And one of our core values at Cushing Terrell is ‘share success,’ which for us means contributing to society’s health by being good stewards of our communities and the built and natural environments.”

In deciding upon how and what to take on as a firm — as it relates to philanthropy and giving back to our communities — one of the things that has guided our path is our mission, vision, and values. We always come back to these and to the realization that we have so much power and potential to “invent a better way of living.” And if we’re growing our firm in so many other ways, we must have a plan for growing our influence and impact.



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<https://www.aia.org/aia-architect/article/building-philanthropy-your-firms-plan-growth>

Architects can strengthen their communities through strategic volunteering

Architects are uniquely equipped to support and lead community volunteerism.

MAY 12, 2025
BY REX CABANISS, AIA

Just as architects build structures that connect our cities, civic service builds social structures that connect our communities.

As federal funding resources that support social programs evolve, the need for civic service in our communities grows more critical, along with architects’ opportunities to expand professional visibility through outreach, impact, and value to society. As our cities grapple with complex challenges of equity, resiliency, and sustainability, volunteer action at the grassroots level can yield substantial results. Architects are uniquely equipped and positioned to engage in both support and leadership roles to bolster communities.

Many terms are applied to categorize such service efforts: civic advocate, community volunteer, social activist, servant leader, and citizen architect. In 2008, AIA defined a "citizen architect" as someone who:

- **Uses his/her insights, talents, training, and experience to contribute meaningfully, beyond self, to the improvement of the community and the human condition.**
- **Stays informed on local, state, and federal issues, and makes time for service to the community.**
- **Advocates for higher living standards, the creation of a sustainable environment, quality of life, and the greater good.**
- **Seeks to advocate for the broader purposes of architecture through civic activism, by gaining appointment to boards and commissions, and through elective office at all levels of government.**

In 2018, AIA published the Citizen Architect Handbook as a guide to elected, appointed, and volunteer positions utilizing

their professional expertise for the betterment of society, improving living standards and quality of life, plus contributing to initiatives that serve the greater good.

There are no lack of local organizations focusing on social, educational, and environmental issues needing professional expertise. For purposes of this article, community volunteerism and civic service are catch-all terms for a wide range of endeavors beyond standard professional work in service to broader public benefits. Such commitments can directly and/or indirectly address issues of civic values, social equity, quality of place, and quality of life. Opportunities abound to join advocacy groups, associations, boards, causes, coalitions, commissions, committees, councils, and task forces, each with a unique focus on public needs.

In addition to creative problem-solving, teamwork and leadership, architects bring direct applications to situational analytics, organizational complexities, strategic planning, and budget management. Such skillsets developed in building design share many parallels to addressing the myriad of social, operational, and performance challenges in the non-profit sector. Crafting bold, innovative programs that yield incremental, hard-won progress on entrenched, generational problems requires diligent, hands-on, action-oriented teamwork. As in the realm of architecture, pursuing collective impact requires the following combinations to best realize optimal potential:

- **Aspirational vision and dedicated commitment**
- **Strategic collaboration and creative synergies**
- **Authentic energy and abundant patience**

My personal network in Baton Rouge, La., of a dozen organizations served over the years can be broadly



Photo Credit: Getty Images

categorized into those with a community, educational, and municipal focus, each offering a distinct lens into pressing needs, complex issues, and significant opportunities. They include the multi-state The Walls Project; the local Young Entrepreneurs Academy; and the Baton Rouge Planning Commission, among others.

Getting started

I initially joined various committees of the local AIA, neighborhood residents, the chamber of commerce, the parks department, and school and church groups. This grew to weaving together twelve organizations covering a spectrum of community issues broadly divided between quality of place and quality of life issues. Such local groups also bring connection to national organizations such as NeighborWorks America, Trust for Public Land, and the Urban Land Institute, providing prime access to expanded contacts, enhanced resources and best practices.

Just as design projects bring us deep into each client’s specific world, volunteering opens many doors into aspects of our communities by working directly to address citizens’ daily aspirations and obstacles.

These non-profit organizations greatly benefit from the design thinking, process innovation, and project management skills architects use every day and can apply to a myriad of civic needs. Community volunteering offers a rich palette of key opportunities for stretching both personal and professional capabilities, plus the rewards for helping guide tangible, catalytic impacts to areas of public need.

Balancing participation in both emerging startups and well-established service entities, such community activism can provide eye-opening insights into conditions, issues,

and challenges to join in concerted steps towards significant progress, benefits, and value. Experiencing the contrast of organizational scale brings fresh energy, and best practices can be applied back and forth between each program.

Experiential vignettes entail both one-on-one encounters and group collaborations through either short-term interactions or years-long initiatives, such as follows:

- **From introductory architecture for Mentorship STEAM academy students to saving a historic downtown building from imminent demolition**
- **From weatherproofing and painting an elderly neighbor's house to taking a foster child for his first visit to a museum**
- **Planting produce gardens at Howell Community Park in a historically disinvested district of the city, plus at low-income housing sites in food deserts.**

It's not a job, it's an adventure

What’s there to gain from combining the practice of architecture with practicing civic service for social impact? The rewards vary widely and are surprisingly accessible and creatively expansive. Additionally, it’s both personally and professionally motivating to see significant initiatives, resultant growth, and incremental progress develop throughout the city.

It provides an integrated spectrum of social awareness with a deeper sense of the community fabric we place our building into, as certain aspects of civic engagement only transpire at this grass-roots level. It can be professionally complementary to the rhythm of business dynamics, with vivid experiences of striking social contrasts and visceral confrontations of real lives struggling in marginalized neighborhood conditions.

“*Just as design projects bring us deep into each client's specific world, volunteering opens many doors into aspects of our communities by working directly to address citizens' daily aspiratios and obstacles.*”

Community volunteering to successfully connect with underserved populations requires the best of strategic, systemic, and empathetic approaches to bring positive change and lasting value through both quality of place and quality of life enhancements. Each time investment offers a window into intertwined human issues and place-based opportunities to contribute enduring public value. Such meaningful contributions can forge deeper social ties that foster new perspectives of awareness and responsibility to the urban village.

Done well, civic service and community volunteering by whatever name intrinsically augments the practice of architecture, can be exceedingly gratifying and inspiring, plus there’s always more to do!



REX CABANISS, AIA is a a partner at WHLC Architecture in Baton Rouge, LA and a member of AIA's Strategic Council.

<https://www.aia.org/article/architects-can-strengthen-their-communi-ties-through-strategic-volunteering>

What you should know about LEED version 5

Three LEED experts catch you up on the sustainability framework's latest update.

SEPTEMBER 19, 2025
BY MICHAEL DALY, AIA; TIMOTHY LOCK, AIA; AND MARC MONDOR, AIA

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) started in 1998 as a one-size-fits-all checklist before evolving into the world’s preeminent green building rating system. LEED is now in use across 185 countries, and there are more than 100,000 LEED-certified projects. The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) recently released LEED version 5, which is the program’s newest iteration and its biggest step forward in more than 10 years.

Given LEED’s prominence, architects need to understand the new version’s changes, which reflect today’s urgent climate and equity priorities. This article covers the updates to know, from the perspective of architects whose firms have collectively worked with LEED for decades: Michael Daly, AIA; Timothy Lock, AIA; and Marc Mondor, AIA.

Reprioritization, Platinum certification, and new credits

Like past iterations, LEED v5 rewards projects credits for including certain features. Credits in turn earn projects points, which build toward LEED certification. As reflected in its credits, LEED v5 brings a high-level shift in priorities, defined by its credits’ three core focus areas: 50% of LEED v5’s credits address decarbonization, 25% address quality of life, and 25% address ecological conservation and restoration.

There is also a new Platinum certification level, which is more difficult to achieve than the previous levels (which are Certified, Silver, and Gold). For Platinum certification, in addition to earning at least 80 points, projects must be:

- Fully electrified
- Powered by renewable energy
- Highly energy efficient

- Low in embodied carbon

Additionally, LEED v5 brings new ways to earn credits. The new credits reward projects for incorporating transportation demand management, equitable development, quality-of-life considerations, and resilience.

New assessment, monitoring, and planning requirements

LEED v5 calls for several new context assessments, performance monitoring, and planning requirements. The context assessments help teams identify risks and opportunities early. Every project must complete a carbon assessment, a climate resilience assessment, and a human impact assessment.

For performance monitoring, teams must register projects in the Arc platform. This ensures simulated design metrics align with actual operational performance, not just one-time documentation.

LEED v5 also brings new requirements for operational impact planning. All projects must plan for:

- Zero waste
- Decarbonization
- Occupant travel
- Embodied carbon

How past versions compare

Marc Mondor and the team at his firm, evolveEA, began broadly applying LEED v2 over 20 years ago and have seen the calibration of each successive release balance impact with



Photo Credit: Getty Images

market acceptance. As a relative sustainability standard, LEED has always been within arm’s reach of progressive codes and standards while offering a broad framework by which to evaluate sustainability strategies. Meanwhile, at OPAL, Timothy Lock and his colleagues track results against absolute sustainability standards, such as the exacting Passive House criteria, whereas LEED has seemed more complex than necessary to accommodate a variety of strategies. And LEED did not always address existing buildings and material reuse with sufficient weight. Thankfully, LEED v5 changes that.

The systemic change with LEED v5 centers on a re-understanding of the impact of building design as an ecosystem with holistic impact rather than as a series of discrete decisions. Carbon emissions assessment and reduction are now prerequisites, not optional, with operational energy use and electrification tracked more rigorously. These requirements will empower practitioners to consider possible assessment software like C.Scale, Tally, or OneClick to perform common-practice whole building life cycle analysis.

LEED v5 elevates envelope performance and recovery ventilation as strategies essential to lowering loads and reducing overall system sizing. At the same time, overall point impacts prioritize building reuse and total emissions reductions. Just as importantly, indoor air quality, resilience, and equity are no longer add-ons but are embedded from the start, with a LEED framework that feels closer to an integrated design philosophy that many sustainability practitioners will find useful. This synthesis is likely to result in better-performing, longer-lasting, and healthier buildings for communities.

LEED v5’s influence on policy

Beyond individual projects, LEED v5 is starting to influence policy discussions. Michael Daly’s service on the Maryland Green Building Council (MGBC) lets him offer perspective on how states are exploring ways the new version can inform standards for public-sector buildings. LEED v5 is shaping not only how architects design projects but also how governments think about investment in the built environment.

In Maryland, the state’s High-Performance Green Building Program (HPGBP), which governs state-funded projects, is undergoing updates in response to LEED v5. As part of this work, the MGBC has evaluated LEED v5 alongside existing state requirements and drafted proposed updates that elevate several credits from optional to mandatory. The draft revisions emphasize:

- Electrification (and no on-site fossil fuel combustion)
- Enhanced commissioning for both MEP systems and enclosures
- Resilience assessments with implementation strategies
- Accessibility and inclusion measures (such as nongendered restrooms, adult changing tables, and signage)
- Indoor air-quality monitoring or testing

Although not yet ratified, these proposed changes illustrate how jurisdictions can use LEED v5 as a roadmap to advance their climate, resilience, and equity goals. For architects, it signals how quickly voluntary rating system updates may translate into requirements on public projects.

Why LEED v5’s changes matter and what’s next

LEED v5’s changes are significant, but they are well reasoned. LEED continues to index third-party industry standards and reflects appropriate buildings that are healthy and low-impact, much like AIA’s Framework for Design Excellence.

Per the USGBC, LEED-certified buildings lower water usage, energy needs, and waste by over 20%, and they provide healthier settings for occupants and employees. There are financial benefits, too: LEED-certified buildings sell for 21.4% higher prices, have 11% higher rent rates, and attract better financing options for owners.

LEED credits reflect a collection of best practices, and they evolve alongside available technology and public awareness. The USGBC plans to update LEED on a five-year cycle, meaning LEED v6 will arrive in 2030. But architects don’t need to wait: LEED’s latest changes are already shaping expectations in both public and private projects. The firms that adapt now will be positioned to lead later.

Key takeaways from this article:

- LEED v5 calls for early assessments of carbon, resilience, and human impact.
- Beyond gathering points, LEED v5’s new Platinum certification requires electrification, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and low-embodied-carbon strategies.
- LEED v5 aligns with broader industry frameworks like AIA’s Framework for Design Excellence.
- Maryland’s HPGBP shows how LEED v5 priorities are already becoming state policy.

- Architects should prepare to integrate these requirements into every project, not just those pursuing LEED certification.



MICHAEL DALY, AIA is the managing principal of Architectural Support Group and a member of AIA’s Strategic Council.

<https://www.aia.org/aia-architect/article/what-you-should-know-about-leed-version-5>



TIMOTHY LOCK, AIA is a management partner at OPAL and a member of AIA’s Strategic Council.

<https://www.aia.org/aia-architect/article/what-you-should-know-about-leed-version-5>



Marc Mondor, AIA is principal and co-founder of evolveEA, a green building and sustainability consulting and design firm. He currently serves on the AIA Strategic Council and is past president of AIA Pennsylvania.

<https://www.aia.org/aia-architect/article/what-you-should-know-about-leed-version-5>

Collaborations

Committees & Member Groups

Per the AIA by-laws, at least one Strategic Councilor serves on each board-level committee. This year, the Council also invited representatives of other AIA member groups to participate in our study group work to draw on a wider breadth of knowledge and to strengthen connections between groups. Including these members fosters opportunities for meaningful discussions about potential intersections and collaborations between their groups and the Strategic Council.

“Serving as a Council liaison to the Government Affairs Committee ensures that advocacy opportunities are identified in the Council study groups, communicated to the board, and prioritized for action by AIA. It keeps staff and board members apprised of the Council’s reseach and visioning”

Bruce Herrington, AIA
2025 Council Liaison to
the Government Affairs Committee



AIA Board Committees

Government Advocacy Committee
(GAC)
Bruce Herrington, AIA

Board Knowledge Committee
(BoKnoCo)
Brien Graham, AIA, NOMA
Jessica O'Donnell, AIA

Committee on Climate Action & Design Excellence (CCADE)
Jean Carroon, AIA
Gwen Fuertes, AIA
Sheldon Pennoyer, AIA

Equity and the Future of the Profession (EQFA)
Robert Easter, FAIA, NOMAC
Garfield Peart, FAIA, NOMA

Public Awareness Committee
Kathy Hancox, AIA
Garfield Peart, FAIA, NOMA

Secretary's Advisory Committee (SAC)
Abigail Brown, FAIA

Candidate Development Committee (CDC)
Shannon Christensen, FAIA
Jessica O'Donnell, AIA

Strategic Planning Committee (SPC)
Paolo Campos, AIA
Saakshi Terway, Assoc. AIA
Abigail Brown, FAIA

American Institute of Architectural Students (AIAS)

Hudson Meyn, AIAS
Vivian Rendon, AIAS
Juanita Libereros Foronda, AIAS
Kody Cheung, AIAS
Kinda Hawasg, AIAS
Emily Yeow, AIAS

AIA National Associates Committee (NAC)

Rachel Wiesbook, Associate AIA
Saakshi Terway, Associate AIA
Ifreet Rahima, Associate AIA
Cooper Moore, Associate AIA
Chien-Yi Chu, Associate AIA
Christine Olshan, Assocaite AIA

AIA Young Architects Forum (YAF)

Chelsea Davidson, AIA
Alex Oetzel, AIA
Erin Agdinaoy, AIA
Brady Laurin, AIA
Matt Jennings, AIA
Andrew Gorzowski, AIA

Future Focused Videos

This video campaign celebrates underrepresented architects and designers, their work, and their incredible impact on people, the profession, and their communities. Even more powerful, these are their personal stories of leadership, mentorship, and their vision for a diverse, equitable, inclusive future. Many Strategic Councilors have contributed to the series, including these four videos produced in 2025.

**AIA Future Focused
Evelyn Lee, FAIA, NOMA**



View the video here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2So-OaDJHqA&list=PLX6EGii52HyMFRxQYusJDSRQ_3iYkv05Y&index=6

**AIA Future Focused
Saakshi Terway, Assoc. AIA**



View the video here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2k46pEVayg&list=PLX6EGii52HyMFRxQYusJDSRQ_3iYkv05Y&index=4

**AIA Future Focused
Gwen Fuertes, AIA**



View the video here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93jReZrw9lc&list=PLX6EGii52HyMFRxQYusJDSRQ_3iYkv05Y&index=3

**AIA Future Focused
Angela Brooks, FAIA**



View the video here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YyR9XiMauN8&list=PLX6EGii52HyMFRxQYusJDSRQ_3iYkv05Y&index=1

2025 Resolutions

AIA Artificial Intelligence Policy Resolution

Sponsored by the AIA Strategic Council
Championed by Ayo Yusuf, AIA and Michael Daly, AIA



Michael Daly, AIA



Ayo Yusuf, AIA

This resolution's intent is to prepare AIA members for the evolving landscape of artificial intelligence (AI) by establishing clear policies and promoting responsible adoption of AI technologies. The resolution seeks to investigate the profession’s strategic adoption of AI's potential to foster innovation, enhance design, and increase efficiency – while addressing ethical concerns and safeguarding the profession's integrity and the public's welfare. This resolution calls for a formal establishment of AI Usage Policies, an AI Education & Exchange Platform, an AI Ethical Framework (AI’s Integration into the Code of Ethics), and incorporating AI into the next AIA 5-year Strategic Plan.

WHEREAS AI technologies are rapidly evolving and have shown potential to revolutionize various industries, including design and the built environment;

WHEREAS The architecture profession is being transformed by advancements in AI technologies, which offer new opportunities and challenges for architects;

WHEREAS architects are increasingly adopting AI-driven tools for design, simulation, project management, and construction, which presents both opportunities and challenges that require clear guidance and responsible practices;

WHEREAS AI, through automation of multiple aspects of the design process, has the potential to improve design processes, optimize health and wellness outcomes, optimize the achievement of climate responsiveness and building performance goals, and increase productivity;

WHEREAS the integration of AI in design raises important ethical considerations, including issues of authorship, originality, bias, security, and risks such as workforce disruption;

WHEREAS the AIA has a responsibility to guide its members in navigating these changes and ensuring that AI is used in ways that benefit the profession, industry partnerships, and society at large;

WHEREAS studying AI’s impact on design will facilitate the development of best practices and standards that ensure AI is used responsibly and effectively, and for promoting improved collaboration within the design community and with AI experts.

WHEREAS a proactive approach to AI adoption will help AIA members remain competitive and relevant in a rapidly changing industry;

“This resolution was a deeply collaborative effort, built on shared purpose and collective expertise. Receiving 99% approval affirms the importance of establishing ethical, practical guidance for AI and ensuring the AIA leads with clarity as this technology transforms practice.”

Michael Daly, AIA

LET IT BE RESOLVED that the AIA shall actively support and advocate for the responsible and effective use of artificial intelligence.

LET IT BE RESOLVED that the AIA shall actively participate in legislative and regulatory processes to support policies that advance the interests of architects and ensure the ethical application of such technologies within design professions.

LET IT BE RESOLVED that the AIA will convene an AI Advisory Panel to provide ongoing guidance on the integration of AI into the architecture profession, including the development of and updates to best practices, ethical frameworks, impacts to revenue, relevant educational resources, and contractual and legal implications;

LET IT BE RESOLVED that the AIA will establish an AI Education & Exchange Platform for AI resources and industry partnerships;

LET IT BE RESOLVED that the AIA will support efforts to update licensure requirements and continuing education programs to reflect the evolving technologies, ensuring that architects are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively integrate AI into their practices, while upholding their professional responsibilities.

Appendix

74	AIA 2021-2025 Strategic Plan
81	Glossary of Terms



AIA Strategic Plan 2021–2025

2 AIA Strategic Plan 2021–2025



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Forward

Strategic Plan 2021–2025

The American Institute of Architects, the profession, and the world we live in are at a crossroads. What we do now will define the future.

Over the course of 18 months, the Strategic Planning Committee interviewed and surveyed hundreds of people, members and non-members alike. What we heard is remarkable and consistent: Now is the time for real change and revolutionary thinking. For turning conversations and ideas into bold action in how we prepare for and shape the future of AIA and architecture.

This means an AIA and a profession that emphasize:

- Climate action.** To deliver real action to help mitigate climate change.
- Justice and equity.** To ensure equity in the profession, in our communities, and for all who inhabit the built environment we design.
- The role of the architect.** To help society recognize the value of their work in addressing the world’s most pressing challenges.
- Research and technology.** To recognize that our unique knowledge defines who we are and what we do, and that innovation allows us to create a better world.
- Architectural Education.** To better prepare architects for the future and to include a true cross-section of society.

They also reminded us that we cannot do this alone, that we need to:

- Create a bigger tent.** Collaborate with those who realize the power of design to solve problems.
- Focus selectively on issues that really matter.** Mobilize our resources, educate, and prepare architects while refocusing activities that are not part of our core values.
- Prepare a new generation.** Ensure today’s emerging professionals are equipped with the tools and knowledge to lead the industry forward.

This Strategic Plan includes groundbreaking ideas; however, ideas alone are not enough. True change will come only through strategic action.

Brian J. Frickie, AIA
Chair, Strategic Planning Committee 2019–2020

The future we envision

It is 2030, and we have met the seemingly insurmountable climate crisis with courageous, creative, and decisive action. People everywhere are united under a common pledge to create an equitable, resilient, regenerative, and carbon-free future.

At the heart of this movement, AIA has energized a global community of professionals to leverage their knowledge and activism to enact positive change through design.

AIA is widely recognized for its commitment to excellence in the education and leadership development of design professionals. Architects have become leaders in our communities, bringing innovative yet practical solutions to the challenges we face. We foster diversity and inclusion in the profession.

AIA has become a catalyst for change, for bold action that develops and delivers solutions to society’s most pressing needs. Architects are positioned at the center of policy discussions surrounding the built environment.

AIA has convened broad coalitions to collaborate on solutions. We have generated, curated, and disseminated knowledge that magnifies the transformative impact of design. We have mobilized our members to meet challenges with decisive action.

AIA and allied organizational partners generate unity and accelerate progress in the design and construction industry.

AIA is at the center of the world’s most urgent conversations and is acknowledged as the driving force inspiring and empowering architects to improve society and change the world.

AIA Strategic Plan 2021–2025

Introduction

The American Institute of Architects will deliver profound change through this strategic plan: for our members, our profession, our communities, and our planet.

Key principles and guiding assumptions that informed the development of this plan include:

Urgency. The global climate crisis requires immediate, bold action to bring about meaningful change. Underpinned by AIA’s recent Big Move Toward Environmental Stewardship, the strategic plan amplifies this call to action for our members to redouble our efforts to develop solutions that will address the existential challenge of our time.

Alignment. The principal activities of AIA should be coordinated, focused, and deliberate. We will use our capabilities, scale, and structure to bring new levels of efficiency and impact to our work.

Collaboration. The role of the architect is changing dramatically. To realize our full potential as professionals and as an Institute, it is essential that architects collaborate: within firms, in professional relationships, and in communities. AIA will provide leadership to engage a broad network of professionals and community leaders to develop solutions.

Mission

AIA inspires and empowers architects to improve society and transform the world.

Vision

Drive positive change through the power of design and focused activism.

Core values

Impactful. What we do matters and is relevant to our clients and to society.

Transformative. We work for profound, lasting, positive change in the profession and in society.

Visionary. We imagine a better future, and act courageously and confidently to achieve it.

Equitable and inclusive. We believe architecture is for everyone, and we model deep collaboration and inclusion in all we do.

Innovative. We lead with creativity and insight.

Goals

- Climate action for human and ecological health
- Advance racial, ethnic, and gender equity

Strategies

Mobilize for impact: Focus and align programs, services, structures, and resources to develop innovative solutions to the world’s most pressing challenges.

Educate and prepare: Equip members for success by transforming architecture education, expanding access to the profession, cultivating a learning culture, and developing leadership.

Advance knowledge: Knowledge is our currency. Generate, curate, and disseminate knowledge required for success.

Broaden the tent: Collaborate with design, construction, and community stakeholders. Organize and activate grassroots advocates.

Imperatives

Emphasize climate action: Build impact by focusing on climate action and positioning architects as community leaders to drive widescale adoption of practical design solutions that will rapidly address and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Emphasize justice: Work to eradicate racial and gender inequity within the built environment and profession. and dismantle barriers within the AIA to better reflect the society we serve.

Catalyze equity: Foster equity and a sense of belonging within the profession, and advance the health, safety, and welfare of our communities through design and advocacy for lasting solutions in our built environments.

Optimize the role of the architect: Optimize architects’ presence and impact by equipping and preparing them to serve as conveners, collaborators, civic leaders, and change agents in developing and delivering solutions to society’s most pressing needs.

Revolutionize research and technology: Leverage emerging technologies and social science to accelerate architecture’s progression to a knowledge-driven discipline and evidence-based, transformative solutions. Harness an intra/entrepreneurial start-up mentality to foster rapid innovation.

Revolutionize architectural education: Make architectural education more responsive to emerging trends, more inclusive of underserved audiences, and more oriented toward the future role of the architect.



AIA Strategic Plan 2021–2025

- GOALS
- Climate action for human and ecological health
 - Advance racial, ethnic, and gender equity

Strategies

MOBILIZE FOR IMPACT

Focus and align programs, services, structures, and resources to develop innovative solutions to the world’s most pressing challenges.

EDUCATE AND PREPARE

Equip members for success: Transform architecture education, expand access to the profession, cultivate a learning culture, and develop leadership.

ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is our currency. Generate, curate, and disseminate knowledge required for success.

BROADEN THE TENT

Collaborate with design, construction, and community stakeholders. Organize and activate grassroots advocates.

Imperatives

EMPHASIZE

Climate action: Build impact by focusing on climate action and positioning architects as community leaders to drive widescale adoption of practical design solutions that will rapidly address and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Justice: Work to eradicate racial and gender inequity within the built environment and profession, and dismantle barriers within the AIA, to better reflect the society we serve.

OPTIMIZE

Role of the architect: Optimize architects’ presence and impact by equipping and preparing them to serve as conveners, collaborators, civic leaders, and change agents in developing and delivering solutions to society’s most pressing needs.

CATALYZE

Equity: Foster equity, diversity, and a sense of belonging within the profession, and advance the health, safety and welfare of our communities through design and advocacy for lasting solutions in our built environments.

REVOLUTIONIZE

Research and technology: Leverage emerging technologies and social science to accelerate architecture’s progression to a knowledge-driven discipline and evidence-based, transformative solutions. Harness an intra/entrepreneurial start-up mentality to foster rapid innovation.

Architectural education: Make architectural education more responsive to emerging trends, more inclusive of underserved audiences, and more oriented toward the future role of the architect.

MISSION

Inspire and empower architects to improve society and transform the world.

VISION

Drive positive change through the power of design and focused activism.

CORE VALUES

Impactful, transformative, visionary, equitable, inclusive, innovative

Acknowledgements

AIA Strategic Planning Committee members

- Scott Busby, AIA (AIA Strategic Council)
- Jeffrey Butts, Assoc. AIA (AIA National Associates Committee)
- Brian Frickie, AIA (Chair)
- Brenden Frederick, AIA, LEED AP (AIA Strategic Council)
- Jane Frederick, FAIA (2020 AIA President)
- Daniel Hart, FAIA (AIA Board of Directors)
- Timothy Hawk, FAIA (AIA Board of Directors)
- Julie Hiromoto, AIA (AIA Committee on the Environment)
- Hugh Hochberg, Assoc. AIA (Industry-at-Large)
- Nathaniel Hudson, AIA (AIA Strategic Council)
- Jana Itzen, AIA (Vice Chair, AIA Strategic Council)
- Danielle McDonough, AIA, LEED AP (AIA Strategic Council)
- Jessica O’Donnell, AIA (AIA Young Architects Forum)
- Lisa Richmond (CACE)
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- Kimberly Yoho, CAE, Director, Practice & Professional Resources
- Jay Younger, FASAE, McKinley Advisors

Commonly Used Acronyms

The following is a list of commonly used AIA acronyms and abbreviations. There are, of course, many more in the universe, specific to different practice and project types etc.; these are the ones you’ll hear most frequently in the context of your AIA volunteer service.

Architectural Alliance:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| AIA | American Institute of Architects |
| ACSA | Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture |
| AIAS | American Institute of Architecture Students |
| NAAB | National Architectural Accrediting Board |
| NCARB | National Council of Architectural Registration Boards |
| NOMA | National Organization of Minority Architects |
| NOMAS | National Organization of Minority Architects Students |

Knowledge Communities:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| KC AG | Knowledge Community Advisory Group(s) |
| KLA | Knowledge Leadership Assembly |
| AAH | Academy of Architecture for Health Knowledge Community |
| AAJ | Academy of Architecture for Justice Knowledge Community |
| CAE | Committee on Architecture for Education |
| CAFM | Committee of Corporate Architects and Facility Management |
| CBSP | Center for Building Science and Performance |
| CCA | Construction Contract Administration Knowledge Community |
| COD | Committee on Design |
| COTE | Committee on the Environment |
| CRAN | Custom Residential Architects Network |
| DFA | Design for Aging |
| HCR | Housing & Custom Residential Knowledge Community |
| HRC | Historical Resources Committee |
| IA | Interior Architecture Committee Knowledge Community |
| PA | Public Architects Committee Knowledge Community |
| PMKC | Practice Management Knowledge Community |
| REC | Retail and Entertainment Knowledge Community |
| RUDC | Regional and Urban Design Committee Knowledge Community |
| SPP | Small Project Practitioners Knowledge Community |
| TAP | Technology in Architectural Practice Knowledge Community |

Board Level Committees:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| BoKnoCo | Knowledge Committee |
| CCADE | Committee on Climate Action and Design Excellence |
| CDC | Candidate Development Committee |
| EqFA | Equity and the Future of Architecture Committee |
| FAC | Finance and Audit Committee |
| GAC | Government Advocacy Committee |
| PAC | Public Awareness Committee |
| SAC | Secretary’s Advisory Committee |

AIA Programs:

ABI	Architecture Billing Index
ACD	AIA Contract Documents
ArchiPAC	AIA’s Political Action Committee
CxD	Communities by Design
CACE	Council of Architectural Component Executives
CES	Continuing Education System
CEU	Continuing Education Unit
COF	College of Fellows
DAT	Design Assistance/Assessment Team
IRT	Institute Resource Training
KNet	Knowledge Net
LFRT	Large Firm Round Table
NAC	National Associates Committee <i>STAR State/Territory Assocaite Representative</i>
NEC	National Ethics Council
RUDAT	Regional Urban Design Assistance Team(s)
SDAT	Sustainable Design Assessment Team(s)
SFRT	Small Firm Round Table
YAF	Young Architects Forum <i>YAR Young Architects (Forum) Director</i>

International Architectural Associations:

ACE	Architects Council of Europe
ARCASIA	Architects Regional Council of Asia
ASC	Architectural Society of China
CACR	Costa Rica Institute of Architects
FCARM	Federacion de Colegios de Arquitectos de la Republica Mexicana
FPAA	Panamerican Federation of Architects Associations
JIA	Japan Institute of Architects
KIA	Korean Institute of Architects
RAIA	Royal Australian Institute of Architects
RAIC	Royal Architectural Institute of Canada
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
UIA	International Union of Architects (Union Internationale des Architectes)

Related Organizations:

ABC	Associated Builders and Contractors
ACE	Architecture, Construction, Engineering Mentor Program
ACHA	American College of Healthcare Architects <i>FACHA: Fellow, American College of Healthcare Architects</i>
ACEC	American Council of Engineering Companies
AGC	Associated General Contractors of America
AIAQC	American Indoor Air Quality Council
ACSE	Association of Consulting Structural Engineers
AIBD	American Institute of Building Designers
AICAE	American Indian Council of Architects and Engineers
AISC	American Institute of Steel Construction
APA	American Planning Association
ASA	American Subcontractors Association
ASAE	American Society of Association Executives
ASCE	American Society of Civil Engineers
ASHE	American Society of Hospital Engineers
ASHRE	American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers
ASID	American Society of Interior Design
ASLA	American Society of Landscape Architects
ASME	American Society of Mechanical Engineers
BEC	Building Enclosure Council
BOMA	Building Owners and Managers Association
CMAA	Construction Managers Association of America
COAA	Construction Owners Association of America
CORA	Congress of Residential Architects
CURT	Construction Users Round Table
DBIA	Design-Build Institute of America
GBI	Green Building Institute
GBCI	Green Building Certification Institute
HABS	Historic American Buildings Survey
HAER	Historic American Engineering Record
HBCU	Historically Black Universities and Colleges
ICC	International Code Council
IFMA	International Facilities Management Association
IIDA	International Interior Design Association
NACo	National Association of Counties
NAHB	National Association of Home Builders
NASFA	National Association of State Facilities Administrators
NAVFAC	Naval Facilities Engineering Command
NCIDQ	National Council of Interior Design Qualification
NIBS	National Institute of Building Sciences
NRDC	Natural Resources Defense Council
NTHP	National Trust for Historic Preservation
ULI	Urban Land Institute
USGBC	United States Green Building Council



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