2016–2020 Strategic Plan

Advancing Member Experience & Value

AIA

AIA Mission

The AIA is the voice of the architectural profession and a resource for its members in service to society.

AIA Vision

The American Institute of Architects: Driving positive change through the power of design.

Strategic Initiatives

1. Knowledge
2. Prosperity
3. Sustainability
4. Workforce

Contents

Envisioned Future: The AIA in 2030

It is the year 2030, and the American Institute of Architects is harnessing the power of architecture to transform society. The role of architects has never been greater. The United Nations predicts that by 2050, the number of people living in cities will have doubled from 2015 rates, with 96 percent of that growth in emerging markets. The AIA and its members have embraced these dramatic changes and are leaders in demonstrating how the built environment is fundamental to a healthy society, and in showcasing how the thoughtful and responsible practice of architecture is an essential ingredient in addressing the inherent opportunities, challenges, and inequities in our communities.

The AIA's steadfast commitment to leveraging the transformative power of architecture to design a better world has led to:

Architects creating more vibrant, equitable living environments that embody our nation's democratic ideals, visible in cities and towns throughout America and the world. We know that communities thrive when people are sheltered and safe, and that justice demands equal access to a healthy living environment and affordable housing. Through their civic leadership and design solutions, architects have helped ensure that all people enjoy their fundamental rights to safe, healthy, and affordable homes and communities.

Architects leading dialogues in their communities to convey the value of architects and architecture. The AIA's successful efforts to create a more equitable framework for federal procurement of design services has translated to more favorable fee structures in state and local jurisdictions as well as commercial settings. This is made possible by a more effective approach to harnessing the power of AIA members, in collaboration with allies, to drive positive legislative and policy outcomes at all levels of government.

Buildings meeting or exceeding 2030 Challenge targets. Human survival depends on a more sustainable built environment. AIA's global leadership in sustainability enables architects to build with public health in mind and positively impact the lives of users in dramatic ways. Increased options for resilience and improved transparency of building materials add a new dimension to the architect's selection process for all projects.

> "The United Nations predicts that by 2050, the number of people living in cities will have doubled from 2015 rates, with 96 percent of that growth in emerging markets."

AIA becoming a global leader helping communities tackle their most difficult problems. As globalization has created new opportunities and challenges for architects, the AIA is the place they look to for the latest resources on international practice. Architects recognize the impact that a flatter world has on the economic viability and environmental integrity of their projects domestically. The AIA is out in front working with its partners on the development of global solutions for society.

Architects leading innovation in design and construction around the world. As radical changes in the design and project delivery process have unfolded, the AIA supports its members and firms in adapting to a rapidly evolving landscape. Architects are valued for their insight and ability to help envision, plan and realize a better world while achieving their client's goals. As the central, digital, user-friendly "hub" of knowledge for the profession, AIA's tools and resources help its members prosper by equipping architects to provide the value that their clients, partners, and communities expect. Access to research fuels our members and society with facts that underscore design decision making and outcomes.

Architects embracing novel and entrepreneurial approaches despite the oscillation of the economy to create a prosperous profession. The AIA has helped members pursue innovative business models and navigate the opportunities and challenges of practicing in a dynamic market. The free flow of architectural services across borders has created new practice models and allowed AIA member firms to tap into global demand while sustaining the leadership of architectural practice and the mitigation of unsustainable design practices that exacerbate the impacts of climate change. AIA architects are project leaders demonstrating the total value of architecture in the design and construction equation.

AIA becoming the professional home for an increasingly diverse and engaged workforce and advancing solutions to positively impact the profession and prepare the next generation of architects to become trusted advisers in a global economy. Individuals with diverse perspectives and backgrounds are sought out and included in leadership at all levels of the AIA and within AIA member firms. Member-architect structures, functions, and work products are exemplary. The infrastructure that supports AIA core programs and services drives member value across strategic priorities, and the AIA is, indeed, the essential resource to its members in their service to society. The AIA is a strong network of motivated individuals who choose to participate because of the value of services.

"The AIA is out in front working with its partners on the development of global solutions for society."

Commitments to Continuous Improvement

Achieving the goals and objectives of this plan demands the AIA utilize finite resources effectively and efficiently. Organizational effectiveness represents the AIA's continual effort to strive for excellence and develop new resources, new systems, and new ways of working together. The AIA's infrastructure and shared services teams are integral to our ability to deliver value to members.

These are the tools that the AIA will use over the coming years to help remain on track to achieve its goals and to ensure the success of our four strategic initiatives. Some are new initiatives that will transform the AIA into a 21st-century member-service organization; others are longstanding programs re-envisioned to better align with the AIA's goals. They all have one goal in common: to enable the leadership and staff of the AIA to deliver exceptional results to members.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION Digital Transformation is the AIA's two-year initiative to transform the AIA and provide increased value to members and the profession through technological advancements. Digital Transformation will not only provide an enhanced member experience through new online and mobile experiences; it will provide the AIA with better data, enabling it to continuously monitor the prioritization and member value proposition of AIA offerings, to ensure the Institute's work is continuously relevant to members as their careers evolve.

The AIA serves a number of audiences, including the public, and there are many different needs. By leveraging public-user research, Digital Transformation can identify what types of content will be most effective to showcase. Digital Transformation will enable the AIA to utilize digital data in ways it never previously could, helping the Institute better understand user needs and interests, to provide more useful and effective content, products, and online experiences. The AIA website and emails are being designed under the "mobile first" strategy, so that AIA content will be readable and usable on any technology platform, from desktops to smartphones. New online project galleries and a more robust Architect Finder will make it easy for members to showcase their work on the national stage.

COMPONENT EXCELLENCE The AIA is committed to providing a consistent experience for all members, while aligning financial resources and service capacity to ensure that AIA membership is valuable and relevant. The implementation of the Member Services Resource Task Force recommendations will back up AIA member value goals with concrete action, ensuring that no matter where an AIA member lives and works, the baseline level of service will be the same. Provided by the AIA, the Member Service Alignment Grants are one example of support designed to defray the costs of making organizational change. Component Accreditation begins in 2016; AIA Components that meet core services will be accredited for three years, but can achieve up to a five-year accreditation in recognition of excellence in providing services above and beyond the "baseline."

VALUES-BASED CULTURE: A STAFF COMPACT Internally, the AIA staff has embarked upon a process to develop and commit to a set of common values. Shared among AIA staff and supported by member leadership, these new values will provide a model for the behavior and beliefs that we collectively put into action every day.

The commitment by AIA staff to enhance the way we work together will create higher levels of performance, increase the recruitment and retention of top talent, enhance relationships between staff and members, and model effective organizational behaviors for the entire organization. Efforts will shift to maintaining, reinforcing, and communicating the values and behaviors through new or enhanced management systems such as performance reviews, training, and other organizational structures.

BUILDING A CULTURE OF ADVOCACY In order to ensure that the AIA remains a powerful voice for architects before decision-makers within and outside government, the Institute is embarking on a long-range initiative to build its capacity, and that of its members, to effectively advocate for our profession. Building a culture of advocacy will help the AIA advance pro-architect policies before government bodies at all levels and provide architects with tools to speak up for their profession before clients, allied professionals, and the public.

In 2016, the AIA will inaugurate a bold new event that will combine real-time grassroots lobbying on Capitol Hill with training to help members bring advocacy skills and tools to every community. The AIA is building a robust, diverse network of member advocates who can advance AIA's policy agenda to audiences and decision-makers across the country and new communications tools to help spread the message. The AIA will expand its efforts to identify, support, and celebrate AIA members who assume leadership roles in their communities and policymaking bodies working collaboratively with all state and local Components.

OUTREACH A public awareness campaign will continuously develop new creative approaches to demonstrate architects' skill, passion, and commitment to serving their clients and communities. Audience research will refine, focus, and expand the reach and impact of the messages. The campaign will be increasingly explicit and compelling in showcasing what architects do and how the value they create contributes to healthier, more sustainable outcomes.

Existing strategies, such as media relations and public affairs outreach, will augment the public awareness campaign as well as continue to consistently promote the role and contributions of architects to professional, government, and public audiences, generating more than 4,000 media placements annually. Combined, the public awareness plan, public relations support for the Architects Foundation, social media, media relations, executive communication, publishing, and Honors & Awards will be leveraged to help expand and reinforce awareness of the value of the profession among clients, policymakers, influencers, and the general public.

The outreach efforts will build upon the current success of the AIA Annual Convention and Expo, expanding the appeal of this professional development opportunity to earn a reputation as the nation's premiere gathering of the design professions. Generating new experiences requires selecting broadly appealing and inspiring speakers as well as relevant and timely education sessions, and providing an opportunity to interact with experts on the building materials and services that comprise the raw material for the solutions architects provide.

Strategic Goals

The AIA has set forth the following goals to support the Mission and Vision of the organization:

ELEVATE PUBLIC AWARENESS of the value of architects and architecture to society.

ADVOCATE FOR THE PROFESSION by championing the architect's role in designing a better world.

ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE that bring the transformative power of architecture to the built environment.

Strategic Objectives

In order to achieve its goals, the AIA has articulated the following primary objectives:

CAREER PATHWAYS Foster a growing population of diverse, culturally competent, resilient, and knowledge-based design professionals.

INFLUENCE Expand architects' power to effect change with key decision-makers.

INNOVATION Redefine perceptions of the architectural profession by broadly disseminating effective models of entrepreneurship, collaboration, consulting design services, and corporate culture.

MARKET LEADERSHIP Position the AIA and its members as the leading source for credible, reliable and accessible information on sustainable design practices that positively impact the built and natural environments.

OUTREACH Dramatically expand and enhance "touchpoints" in which the public can experience and interact with architects and architecture in their communities.

POLICY Advance federal, state, and local legislation and regulations that advance the architect's role in the design of the built environment.

RELEVANCE Demonstrate the central role architects play in the design and construction industry, protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public, and advancing solutions that directly impact our most compelling social, economic, and environmental challenges.

RESEARCH Advance the study of evidence-based practices in architecture that lead to improved building performance.

Strategic Initiatives

The AIA has created four strategic initiatives that will emphasize certain critical areas of concern and opportunity for AIA members in furtherance of its goals and objectives:

I. KNOWLEDGE A primary aim of the AIA since its founding is to advance knowledge that increases architects' value to their clients, their practice, and their communities. To that end, the AIA has invested in the creation of a robust knowledge agenda that leverages and shares our professional expertise. The agenda sets forth key programs, including practice-relevant research, business intelligence, Knowledge Communities and member constituencies, and knowledge sharing and dissemination, while enhancing member value through a focus on quality continuing education.

2. PROSPERITY The AIA will focus its efforts and resources on advancing opportunities for practitioners and firms of all sizes to promote and sustain successful and resilient practices and prosperous business models. The initiative will integrate professional resources in a unified digital platform including a virtual practice handbook, support the practice-based understanding of environmental impact and human wellness in the built environment, initiate a network of expert advisers, identify and disseminate metrics for successful practice, and advocate for thriving practice to the profession, public, and government.

3. SUSTAINABILITY Sustainability remains a top priority for the AIA. As evidenced in AIA Policy and Position statements, Ethics Rules, AIA member groups, and the multitude of existing programs and activities dedicated to the subject, the impacts of sustainable design are some of the most significant market shifts of the current era. The AIA will continue to implement and grow its sustainability resources in four areas: Energy, Materials, Design & Health, and Resilience. Through education, research, policy, communications, partnerships, and Components, the AIA will advance our members' relevance and prosperity by enabling them to lead in this essential arena.

4. WORKFORCE A productive, diverse, culturally competent, and engaged workforce is essential to the future of the architecture profession. To foster this outcome, the AIA will broaden its view of the opportunities and challenges related to workforce development, and provide a more cohesive and structured approach to identify key catalysts in the areas of market demand, employment capacity, education, work experience, compensation, on-the-job training, career outlook, and organizational culture.

Process Summary

In October 2014, the AIA embarked upon a collaborative effort to establish the organization's strategic priorities for the next five years. A task force with leadership by the Strategic Council and representatives from key stakeholder groups including the National Associates Committee, Culture Collective, and Knowledge Communities was charged with advancing the planning process. At the inaugural meeting of AIA's Strategic Council, the group engaged in a visioning exercise which established the foundation for the development of strategic objectives and initiatives laid out in this plan. Building upon findings from AIA's recent repositioning effort, the Strategic Council moved quickly to affirm AIA's mission and vision, and adapt the advancement statement into a more concrete set of goals for the organization.

From January to March 2015, task force members engaged various internal and external stakeholders through outreach, interviews, and surveys to gather input to inform the process. In addition, strategic plans were gathered from Components and allied organizations, and staff evaluated them for their relationship to the emerging topics from the Council and task force discussions.

Through an iterative process among the AIA Board of Directors, the Strategic Council, the Strategic Planning Task Force, and staff, the plan began to take shape. In August 2015, an all-member webinar was held to solicit input from components, members, and other stakeholders. The final plan, endorsed by the Strategic Council, was presented to AIA Board of Directors in September 2015.

As the plan moves into implementation, AIA staff will develop a dashboard of indicators that will help track the progress of each strategic initiative, as well as Institute-wide key performance indicators. Regular monitoring and reporting will create a common vocabulary for discussing the success of the plan with the Board, leadership and staff.

"Task force members engaged various internal and external stakeholders through outreach, interviews, and surveys to gather input to inform the process."

Conclusion

The future holds great promise for architects and their role in the building industry. We will deepen our working relationship through future joint planning exercises with the Architects Foundation and further our goals in elevating public awareness. We will leverage the strengths of local networks, expert members, talented staff, and our strongest partners to advocate and advance knowledge for the benefit of the profession. And, we will look to the horizon for emerging strategic issues for the organization to address, including public interest/social impact design and specialty certification.

The AIA will achieve its long term goals and objectives with continuous guidance from the Strategic Council and Board of Directors, and through the implementation of both core programming and distinct strategic initiatives that emphasize a commitment to organizational excellence and continuous improvement. We are committed to putting this plan into action. And, we will change the way we work and reprioritize programs to advance this plan.

Acknowledgements