



# The Power of Storytelling for Climate Action

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2023 AIA CACE Conference

4 August 2023  
Atlanta, GA

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**Amber Lombardo**

AIA Memphis, Executive Director  
CiV:: the Center for Architecture + Design  
2023 President AIA National CACE

**John Anderson AIA**  
**Allison Anderson FAIA**

Principals, unabridged Architecture

**Kathleen Lane AIA, LEED**

AIA Managing Director, Climate Action  
and Design Excellence

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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- Components will learn about ways to capture the imaginations of the public, demystifying the world of design and making it accessible to consumers from all walks of life.
- Components will receive coaching on how to speak candidly and frankly about the topic of climate change, especially in regions of the world that routinely reject the messaging.
- Components will learn about resources for use in a variety of contexts including civic organization presentations, k-12 outreach, university collaboration, and more.
- Components will learn specific ways to ignite members to implement the Framework for Design Excellence, commit to Architecture 2030, and measure and report metrics.



















UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI  
MARINE EDUCATION CENTER  
Lake Flato with unabridged Architecture









**AMERICA**

**BY DESIGN**

TM

**ARCHITECTURE**

**MISSISSIPPI!**

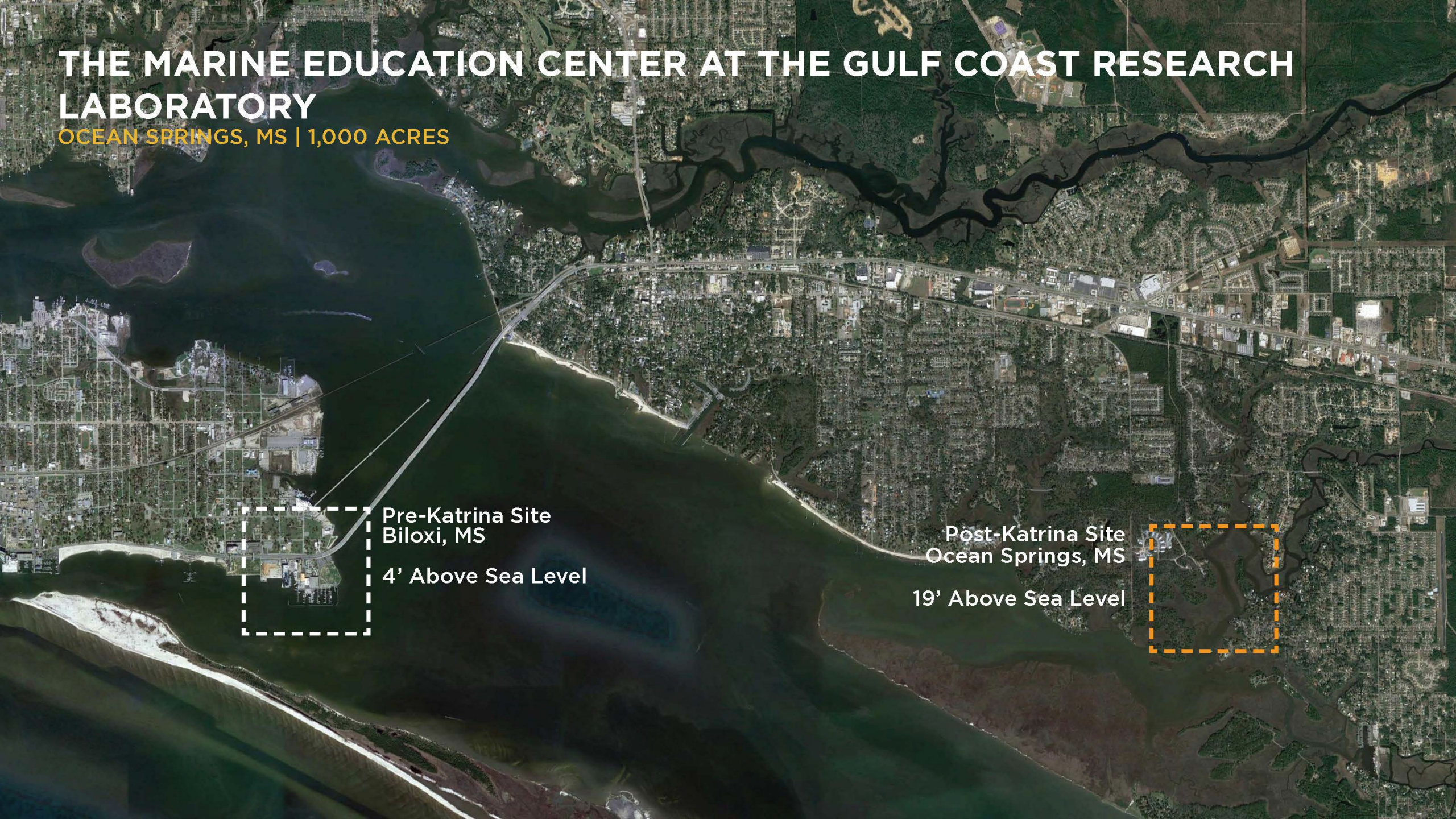




MARINE EDUCATION CENTER | BILOXI, MS  
DESTROYED BY HURRICANE KATRINA AUGUST 29, 2005

# THE MARINE EDUCATION CENTER AT THE GULF COAST RESEARCH LABORATORY

OCEAN SPRINGS, MS | 1,000 ACRES



Pre-Katrina Site  
Biloxi, MS  
4' Above Sea Level

Post-Katrina Site  
Ocean Springs, MS  
19' Above Sea Level

# INTEGRATED DESIGN CHARRETTE (IDC)



# DESIGN FOR ECOSYSTEMS + DESIGN FOR CHANGE



## ECOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- Productive natural habitats
- Aquatic features (bays, bayous, creeks, streams)
- Wetlands and barrier islands
- Natural resiliency
- Sensitive to man-made changes



## GEO-PHYSICAL SITE CONSIDERATIONS:

- Topography
- Flood zones and floodways
- Poorly drained soils
- High groundwater table
- Rainfall



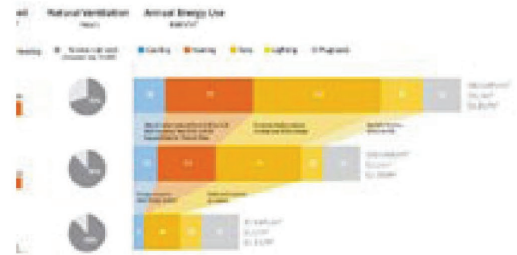
## CLIMATE AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS:

- Adapting to withstand extreme conditions (wind, waves and drought)
- Sea level rise

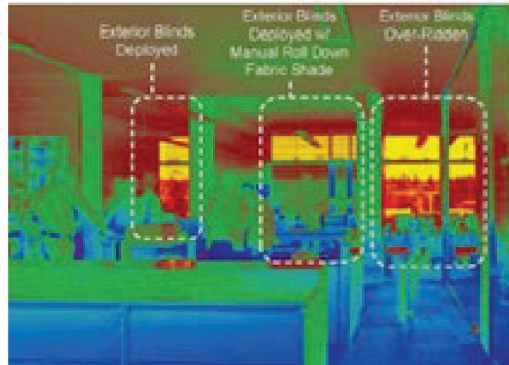
# DESIGN FOR ENERGY + DESIGN FOR WELLBEING

## ENERGY & AIR [ENERGY FUTURE]

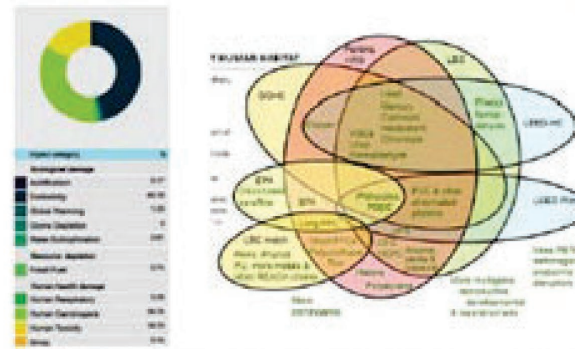
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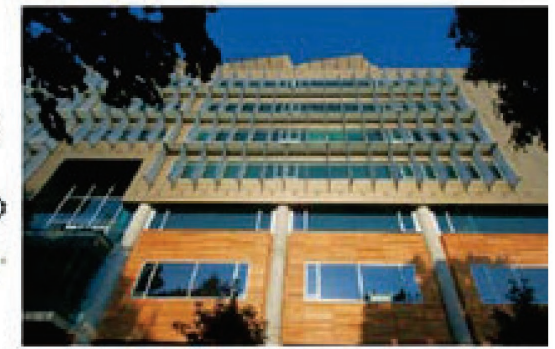
## DAYLIGHT [CLIMATE]



## WATER & SITE ECOLOGY [FOOD & WATER]



## RESILIENCY [DISASTER]



**“All buildings eventually  
end up in the ocean.”**

**Dr. Chris Snyder, MEC Director**

## DESIGN FOR CHANGE + DESIGN FOR RESOURCES

Zinc	✓
Creosote	✓
ACQ	✗
PVC	✗

A photograph of a lush, green forest. Sunlight filters through the dense canopy of trees, creating a dappled light effect on the forest floor. The trees are tall and thin, with thick foliage. The overall scene is vibrant and natural.

# RESILIENCY IN PRACTICE

THE MARINE EDUCATION CENTER AT THE  
GULF COAST RESEARCH LABORATORY









HIGHEST ELEVATION  
19 ft.

BUILDING ZONE  
18 ft.

FLOODPLAIN  
16 ft.













# MARINE EDUCATION CENTER - SITE WATER AND ECOLOGY



PINE FOREST

The buildings are placed within the dense canopy of pines and live oaks which serve as a wind buffer.



FORESTED BAYHEAD

All construction and building foundations are outside of the bayhead, and bridge spans over it to minimize impact on the site.



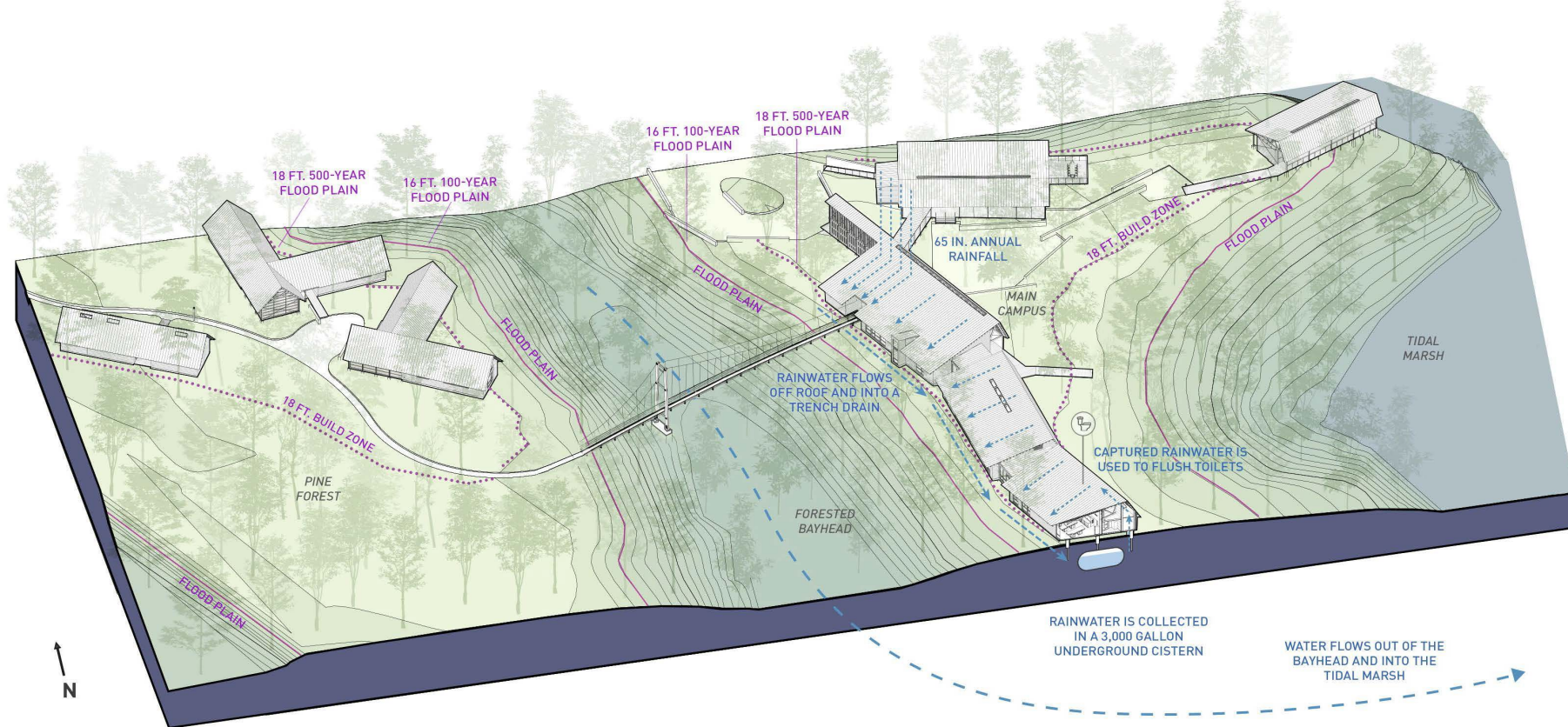
MAIN CAMPUS

The building was sited to preserve as many native trees as possible, and raised on piers to avoid disrupting natural water flow.



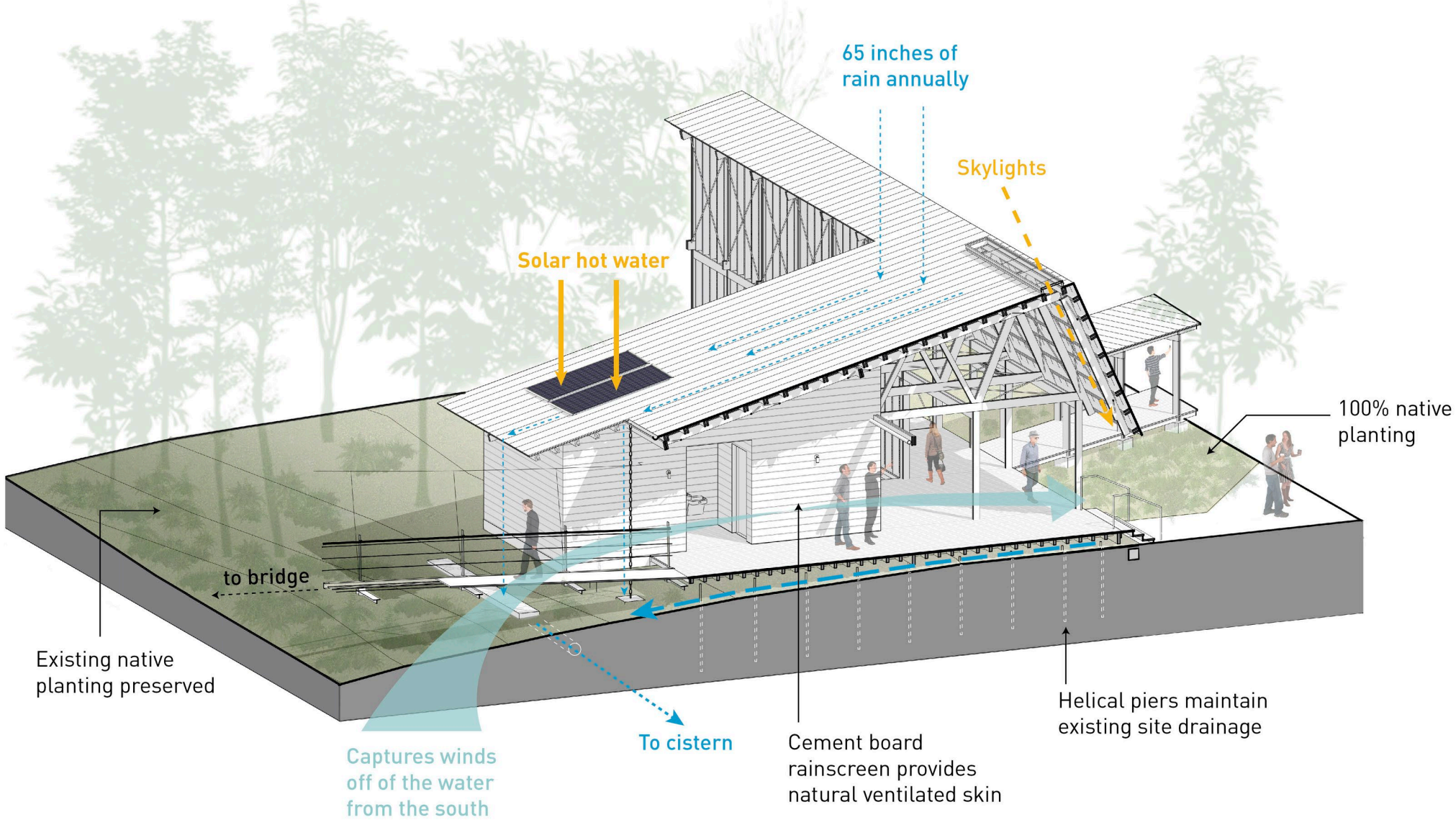
TIDAL MARSH

The building zone is 18 feet above sea level, and piers raise the finish floor to a full 20'-6" over sea level.

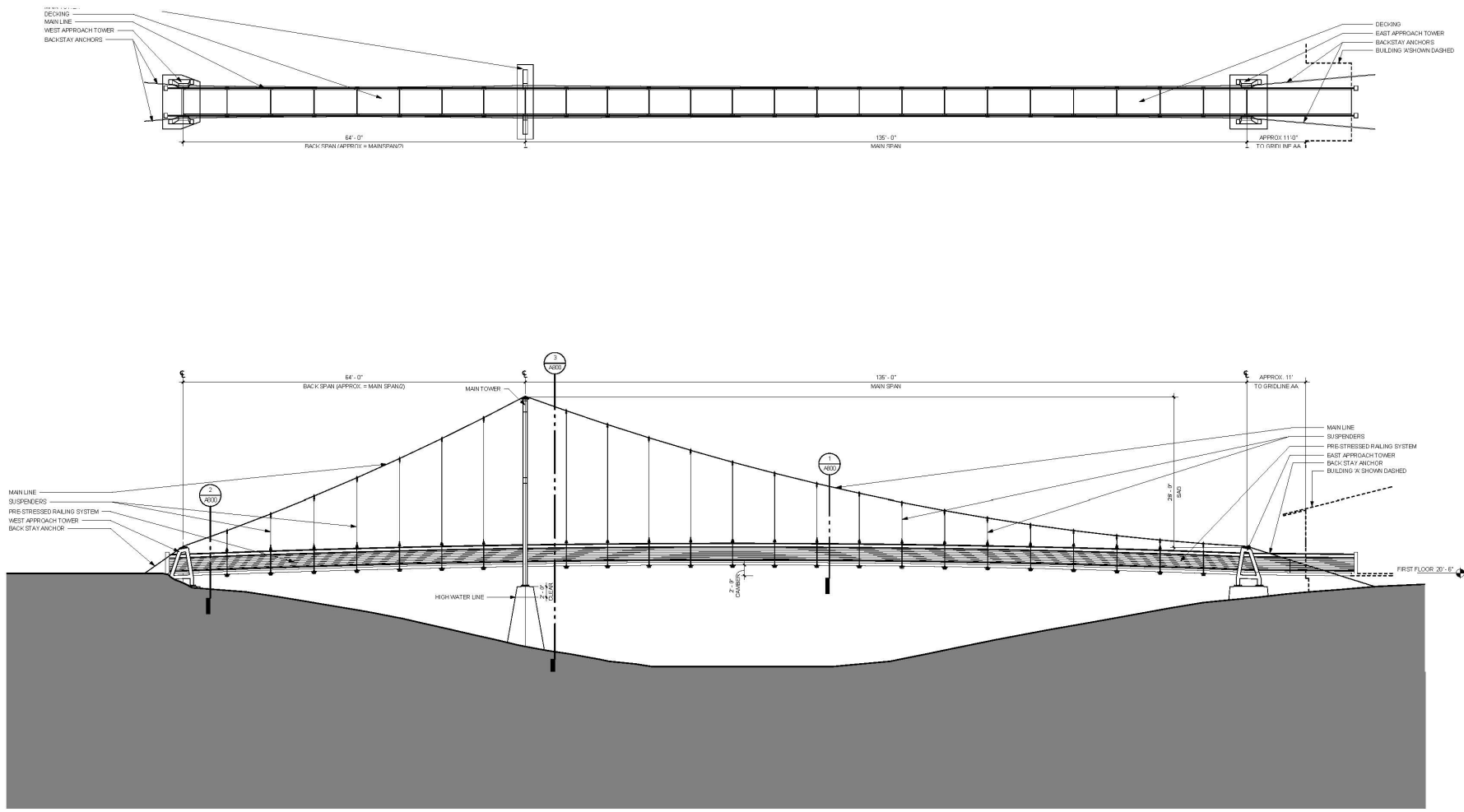


# MAIN ENTRY - SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

## DESIGN FOR WATER + DESIGN FOR ECOSYSTEMS



# DESIGN FOR WELLBEING + DESIGN FOR DISCOVERY



PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE - SECTION





COTE TOP TEN AWARD 2020  
AIA ARCHITECTURE AWARD 2022  
CBS BY DESIGN WINNER 2022



why was this small  
project recognized for  
design excellence?

“ All the designers I speak to say there's work to be done in telling the general public about the value of design and what design actually is. ”

*- Mike Chapman, Co-Founder & EP*



HURRICANE KATRINA 2005



great architecture tells a  
story – in this case, about  
recovery + preparedness

architectural storytelling  
focuses on 3 principles:

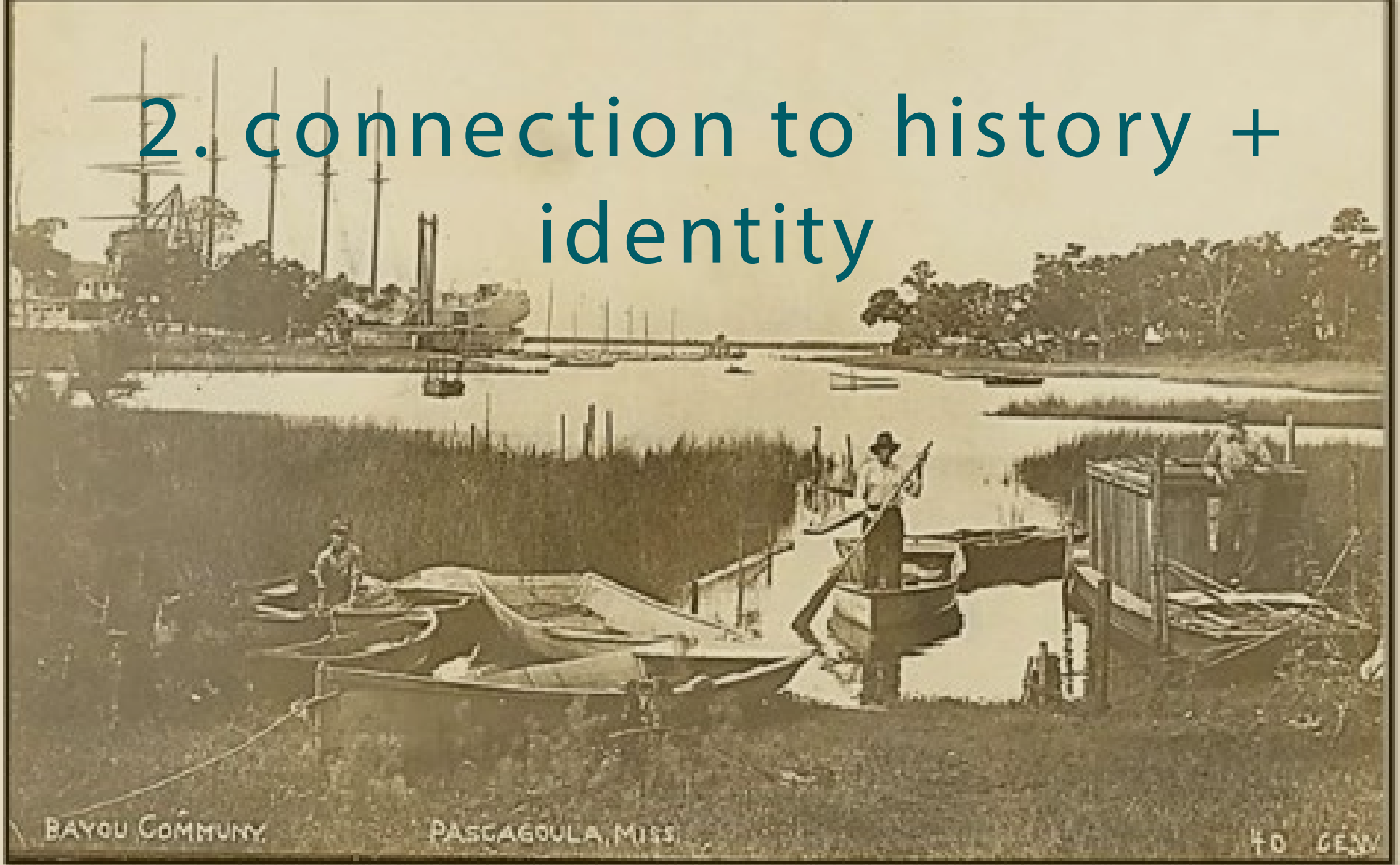
# 1. connection to place



connection to nature



## 2. connection to history + identity





**RURAL STUDIO - MASONS**  
BEND, AL



**FAY JONES - PINECOTE PAVILION -**  
PICAYUNE, MS



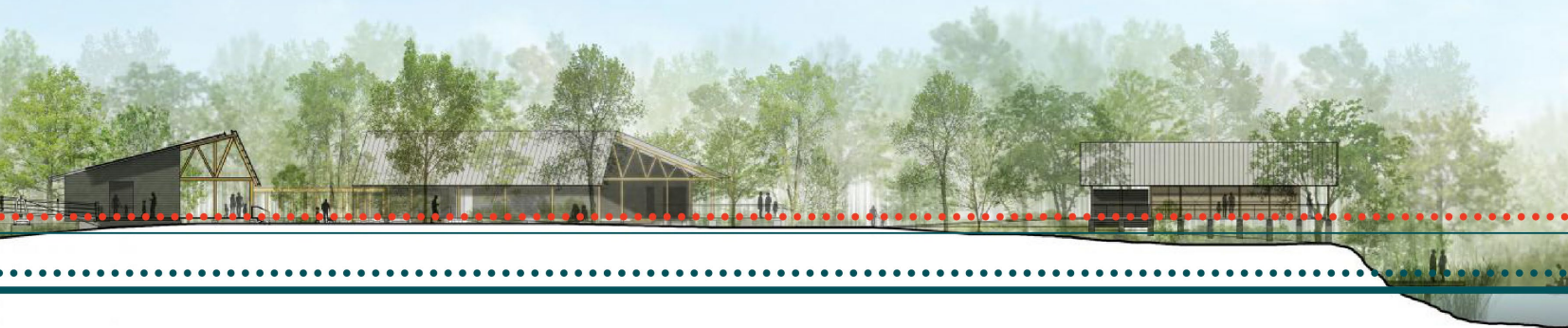
**THOMPSON & ROSE ARCHITECTS - NEW**  
SMYRNA BEACH, FL

# 3. connection to the future





# communicates future conditions



**FLOOR LEVEL +20.5'**  
**2040 SEA LEVEL +3'**  
**2022 SEA LEVEL 0.0**

**FLOOD ZONE AE17**

**(EXISTING GRADE + 16' - 19')**

stories to inspire  
climate action:  
personal, local,  
relatable, solvable

# Framework for Design Excellence



Design for Integration



Design for Equitable Communities



Design for Energy



Design for Well-being



Design for Resources



Design for Ecosystems



Design for Water



Design for Economy



Design for Change



Design for Discovery

Crisis stories:  
how architects protect  
communities from  
irreparable harm



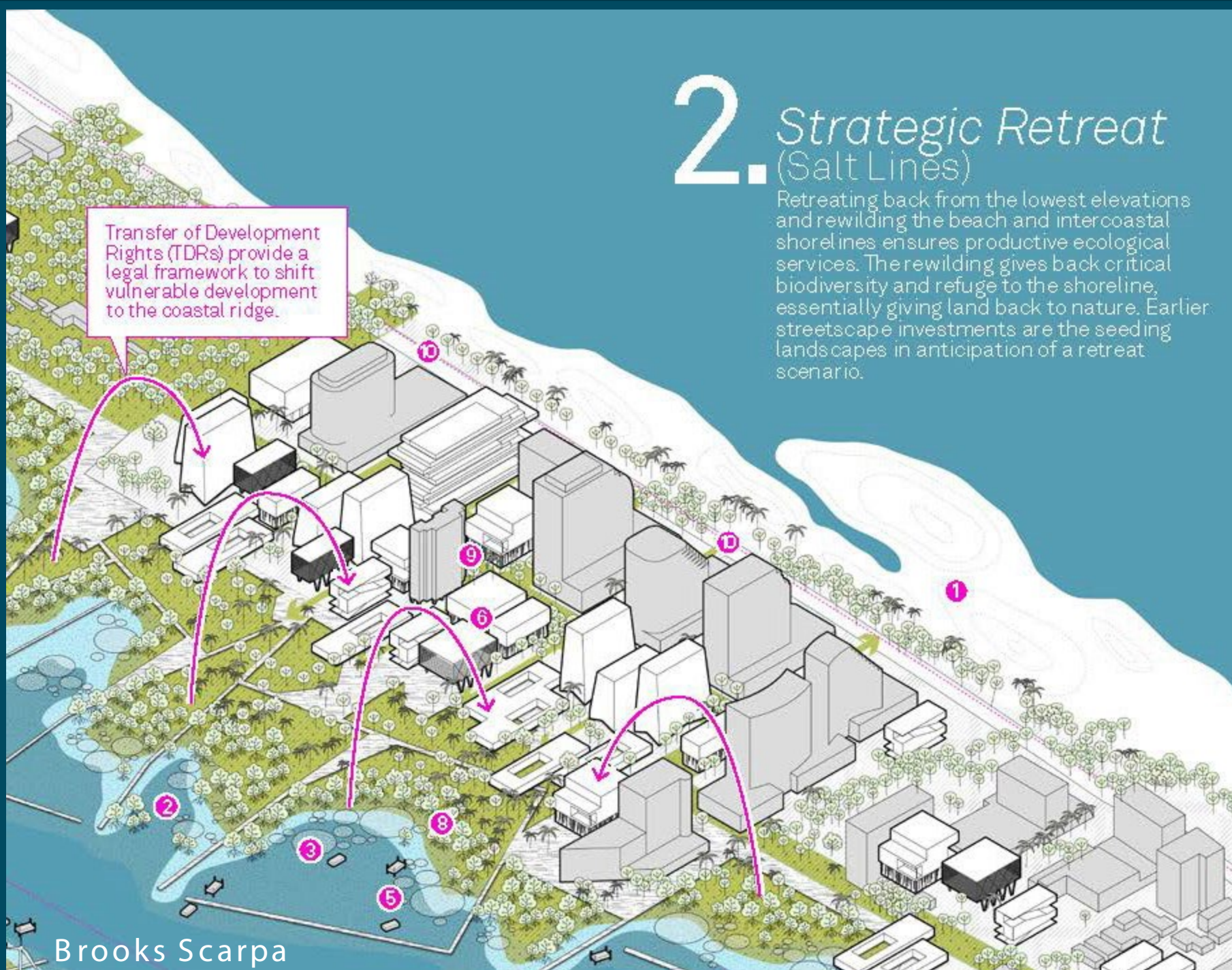
Lake Flato

Hopeful stories:  
how architects are  
envisioning the future

## 2. Strategic Retreat (Salt Lines)

Retreating back from the lowest elevations and rewilding the beach and intercoastal shorelines ensures productive ecological services. The rewilding gives back critical biodiversity and refuge to the shoreline, essentially giving land back to nature. Earlier streetscape investments are the seeding landscapes in anticipation of a retreat scenario.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) provide a legal framework to shift vulnerable development to the coastal ridge.



Direct experience:  
stories of sacrifice,  
courage, innovation





AIA Disaster Assistance Committee





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CLIMATE ACTION MESSAGE BOOK APPENDIX:

# Helping you communicate the value of sustainable design

*Please refer to [The Architect's Voice: Advocating for Our Profession](#) for general information; this appendix presents case studies about communicating sustainability's importance and the architect's central role in creating a sustainable future.*

“The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything.”

—Albert Einstein

## Introduction

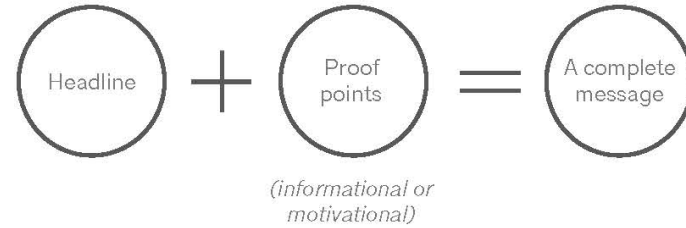
This appendix will prepare you for interactions with clients and civic leaders when discussing the meaningful role architects have in environmental stewardship. It will help you express your dedication to designing a sustainable world via memorable case studies, compelling facts, and reliable statistics. We also showcase how you can make an economical and moral case for sustainability. Now more than ever, we have a responsibility to champion healthy spaces for all.

Each of us needs to seek out opportunities to engage with multiple audiences, and this appendix is intended for use in your conversations with civic leaders, clients, and potential clients in virtually all industries. Help us show them that architects are trusted partners in strengthening society, designing solutions, and transforming communities.

### How should I use this appendix?

1. Review the “Message Design Process” in The Architect’s Voice for the rationale and mechanics of effective messaging.
2. Identify your audience: client, community stakeholder, civic leader, or lawmaker.
3. Choose one of several “Case Studies” to see the rationale and mechanics in action.
4. Build your own effective messaging campaign around your sustainability work.

## Message Design Process



### Step 1: Choose a key word that conveys your most important message.

Here's a list to get you started:

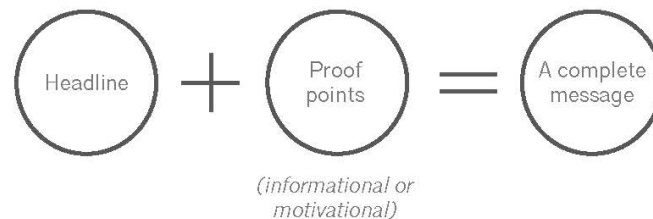
- |                |                       |                |               |                |
|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Accessible     | Cost-effective        | Future         | Investment    | Renewable      |
| Achievable     | Dedicated             | Good listeners | Knowledgeable | Resilient      |
| Affordable     | Deliberate            | Green          | Necessary     | Responsibility |
| Beneficial     | Effective             | Healthy        | Opportunity   | Savings        |
| Caretaking     | Enduring              | Home           | Partners      | Secure         |
| Clean          | Equitable             | Hope           | Passionate    | Stewardship    |
| Climate action | Ethical               | Humanity       | Possibilities | Sustainable    |
| Committed      | Excellence            | Inclusive      | Preservation  | Transform      |
| Common goals   | Experts               | Innovative     | Protect       | Urgent         |
| Community      | Fiscal responsibility | Inspiring      | Relevant      | Value          |

## Step 2: Use *headlines* developed from the key word list

## Step 3: Support your headline using *proof points*

## Step 4: Put it all together by *designing your message*

Headline + Proof Point (Informational or Motivational).



Here's an example:

### HEADLINE:

Architects are committed to sustainable and resilient design.

### PROOF POINTS:

(Informational) According to Dodge Data and Analytics' World Green Building Trends 2018, retrofitting buildings strengthens the local economy. Compared to new construction, a greater proportion of a retrofit's budget typically goes to labor, creating more jobs for the dollars spent. Among owners, 94% believe that their buildings are more valuable after a green retrofit.

### OR

(Motivational) Gulf Shores State Park in Alabama used sustainability certifications to manage requirements and guide the team to accomplish a project that inspires Alabamians. The project, developed from funds received through the BP oil spill settlement, inherently needed to incorporate sustainability to achieve the state park's mission of caring about nature's recovery from a man-made natural disaster. Resiliency was another goal because of the frequency of storms that hit Alabama's coastline. The project became the pilot for Fortified Enhanced Construction and a world-recognized model of sustainability. The park has served families and tourists for generations, so it was important to restore it to a vision of natural beauty. One visitor said, "The park is our favorite vacation destination—we have been coming together as a large family for over 40 years."



## How to Talk About Architecture with Your Clients and the Public

Let the **AIA Message Book** be your guide for crafting clear and memorable messages.

### Description

[Sign-in to Purchase](#)

User rating:



(400 votes)

\$25 non-member

\$10 member

1.00 LU

RIBA

# Framework for Design Excellence

Inspiring sustainable, resilient, and inclusive design



The world today is facing broad and complex challenges that threaten every aspect of our lives. The architect's call to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public has a new and broader meaning amid challenges such as increasing climate extremes and social inequity. Architects everywhere must recognize that our profession can harness the power of design to contribute to solutions addressing the most significant needs of our time. Every project can be used as a platform for addressing big problems and providing creative solutions. Every line drawn should be a source of good in the world.

The Framework for Design Excellence represents the defining principles of good design in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Comprised of 10 principles and accompanied by searching questions, the Framework seeks to inform progress toward a zero-carbon, equitable, resilient, and healthy built environment. These are to be thoughtfully considered by designer and client at the initiation of every project and incorporated into the work as appropriate to the project scope. The Framework is intended to be accessible and relevant for every architect, every client, and every project, regardless of size, typology, or aspiration.

The Framework for Design Excellence challenges architects with a vision of what the profession strives to achieve, the toolkit provides practical resources to help all architects achieve the vision.

## Introduction

The profession finds creative solutions that ensure design excellence and climate action as we make progress toward a zero-carbon, equitable, resilient, and healthy future. Every project is a new opportunity to make incremental improvements, test new strategies, and apply lessons from past projects.



### Design for Integration

Good design elevates any project, no matter how small, with a thoughtful process that delivers both beauty and function in



### Design for Equitable Communities

Design solutions affect more than the client and current occupants. Good design positively impacts



## Additional sustainability resources

[Learn more >](#)

## Download

[The Framework for Design Excellence](#)

## We'd like to hear from you!

If you have any questions or feedback regarding the framework, please let us know.

[Provide feedback here >](#)



## 2023 COTE® Top Ten

## Casa Adelante 2060 Folsom



ON THE NORTH PARTY WALL FACING DOWNTOWN, JESSICA SABOGAL'S MURAL DEDICATED TO MISSION DISTRICT ARTIST AND ACTIVIST YOLANDA LOPEZ PAID HONORAGE TO BAY AREA SOLIDARITY MOVEMENTS.

**Casa Adelante 2060 Folsom**

**Architecture Firm:** Mithun with Y.A. Studio

**Project site:** Brownfield

**Owner:** Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA) and Chinatown Community Development Center (CCDC)

**Building program type(s):** Residential – Mid-Rise/High-Rise, Retail Store

**Location:** San Francisco

The COTE® Top Ten Awards is the industry's best-known awards program for sustainable design excellence. Each year, ten innovative projects earn the prize for setting the standard in design and sustainability.

[View all recipients >](#)

In San Francisco's Mission District, where 47% of the city's households are housing-cost burdened, Casa Adelante provides 127 households with permanently affordable housing at no more than one-third of their income. The project takes advantage of its walkable and transit-rich site to bolster social equity and strive for a low-carbon future. Through its massing, the project increases the south-facing perimeter to create the most housing and provides compelling park views for the majority of the building's units. The team also reimagined a narrow fire easement between the site and the adjacent park to create a pedestrian paseo that delivers much-needed public outdoor space and a permeable area that boosts stormwater management and the region's biohabitat.

Integration

Equitable Co...

Ecosystems

Water

Economy

Energy

Well-being

Resources

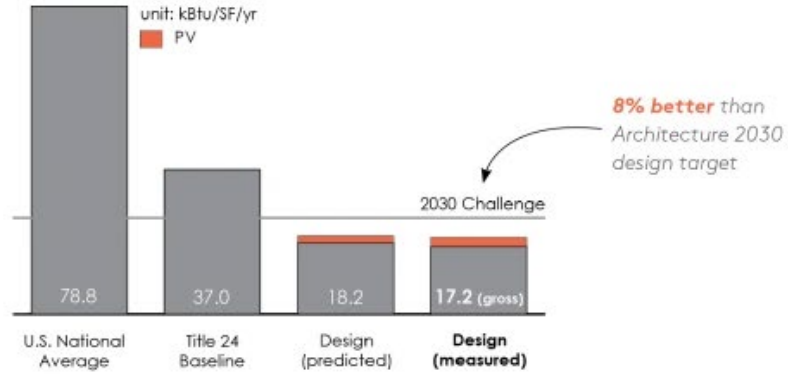
Change

Discovery

## DESIGN FOR ENERGY

# 14.9

kBTU/sf/year  
net measured EUI



**116,111 kWh**  
of annual onsite  
renewable energy  
generation

# 80%

## REDUCTION

in operational carbon  
emissions relative to US  
national average

## CARBON NEUTRAL OPERATIONS

based on all-electric  
systems, onsite  
renewables & local utility  
provider data



## DESIGN FOR ECONOMY

**25%**  
**INCREASE IN UNITS**

optimized City  
investment in land for  
affordable housing

**80%**  
**OF GROUND FLOOR  
SURFACES**

use structure as finish

Early in concept design the design team initiated a study for moving to all-concrete construction to add three stories within the 85' midrise limit, adding 25% more units than expected by the City at the same cost per unit, leveraging City investment and enabling 30 more low-income families to benefit from this amenity-rich transit oriented site.

The mix of single- and double-height ground floor spaces maximizes residential area while meeting zoning requirements for a tall ground floor at commercial streetscapes.



## Brooklyn Design Awards

[← Back to Index](#)

### THE COURTS OF SHEEPSHEAD BAY

COMMENDATION FOR RESILIENCE



The reconstruction of Stanton Court after Superstorm Sandy is a prototype for resilient design at the scale of a neighborhood according to the will of the community. This scale is missing from current policy and practice. Block scale planning required the team to challenge the standards of the City's Build-it-Back program to foster collaboration among city agencies. It produced an urban mews united in its architectural character, collective social space and shared stormwater management infrastructures.

“The footprint of the building is a positive aspect”

#### Project Info

**Firm**

Gans and Company; David Cunningham  
Architecture Planning PLLC; H2M  
Architects + Engineers

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# **AIA Minnesota Announces Three 2022 Honor Award Recipients and Six 2022 Framework for Design Excellence Commendations**

Tags: Awards



2021 EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN AWARDS

HONOR AWARD  
Commercial Architecture

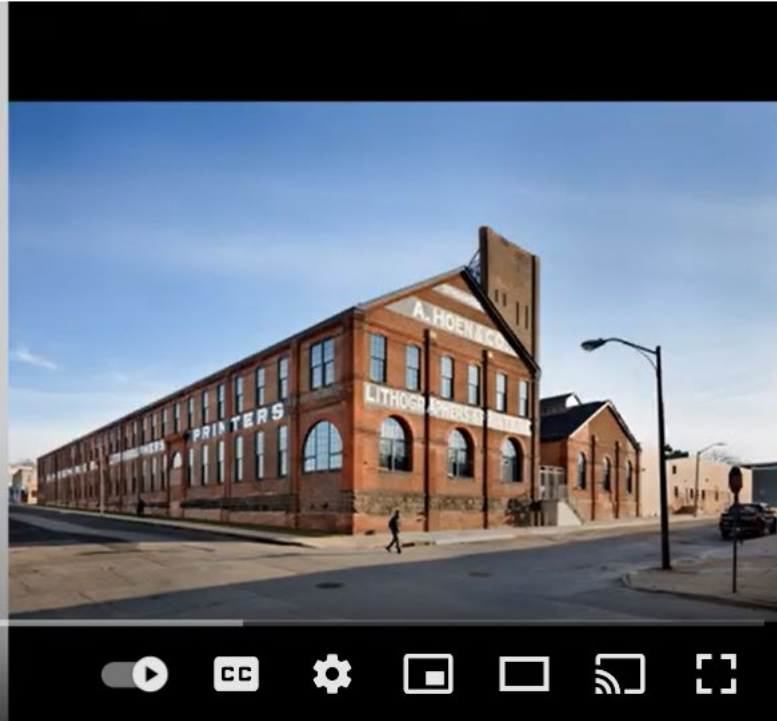
### A. Hoen & Co. Lithograph Center for Neighborhood Innovation

Baltimore, MD

Ziger|Snead Architects  
*Architects*

Cross Street Partners, LLC  
*Contractor*

Jennifer Hughes Photographer, LLC  
*Photographer*



0:03 / 1:04

## 26116 A Hoen Lithograph



AIA Maryland - A...  
43 subscribers

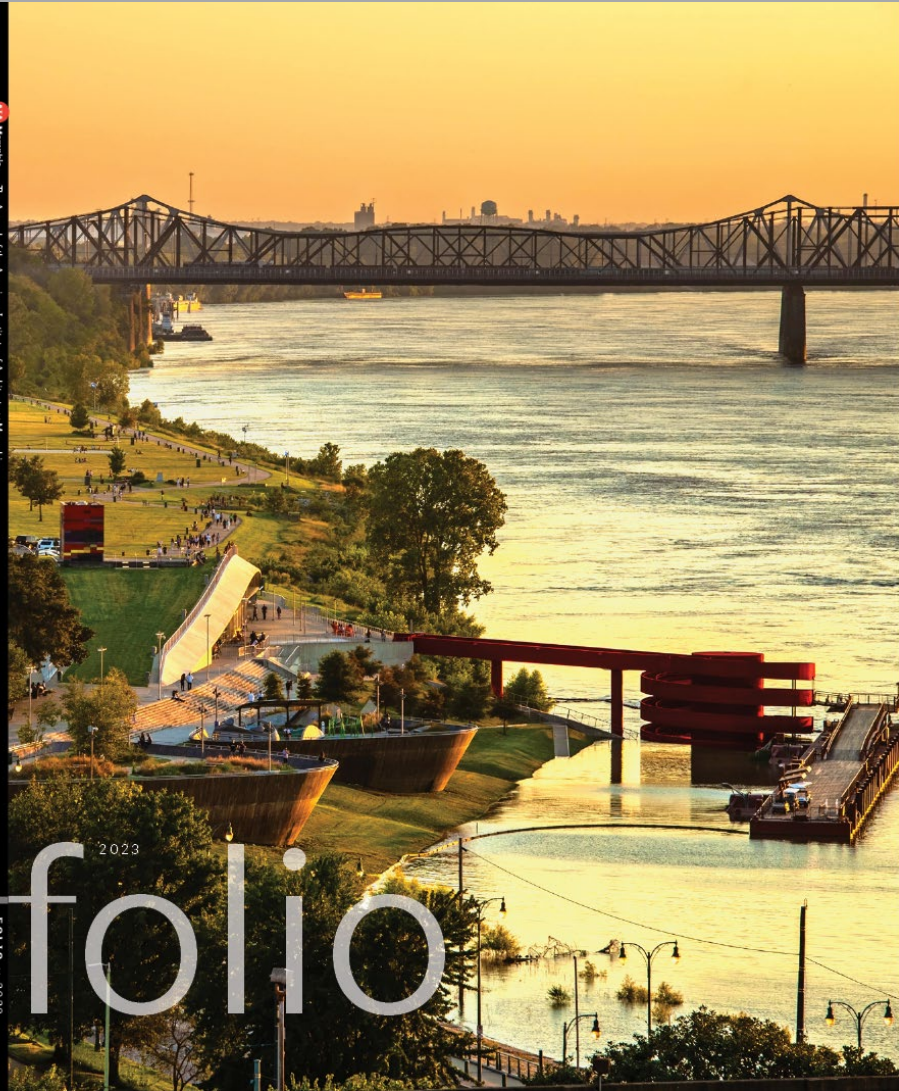
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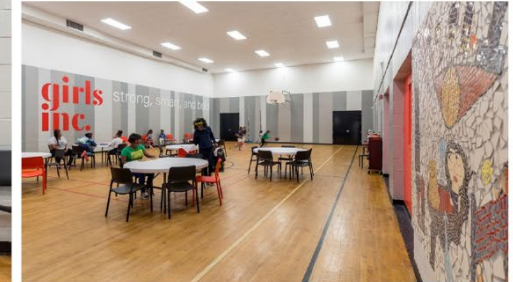


Share





2023  
folio



Girls Inc. South Park  
= LDT Centers  
1624 Robin Hood Lane  
Memphis, TN 38111

The client, a national non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold wanted to be even open to the neighborhood, strengthen their identity and create more building spaces with a few simple moves. Architects strengthened the connection of both centers in the community through a bold front porch, clean and identifiable thresholds, and an economical materials palette that contrasts the warm Civilis red.

ARCHITECT :: **SPH/MLA**  
COLLEANO DAYTON  
Creative Studio :: Collaboration  
C/STR/Engineering, Structural Engineering

RECOGNITIONS  
2020 AIA Chicago Merit Award in Spatial Design  
2020 Architecture Newspaper - Best of Design Awards, Best of Social Impact Award  
2020 AIA Civil Service Project, Honor Citation  
2020 AIA Tennessee Merit Award  
2020 AIA Memphis Design Honor + Sustainability



# AIA Climate Action Pledge Programs: Component Toolkit

Growing and engaging your local 2030 Commitment and A&D Materials Pledge signatories





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**AMERICA**

**BY DESIGN**

TM

**A R C H I T E C T U R E**