The Only Architect in the Room

Your Blueprint to Successful Local Advocacy

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YOUR BLUEPRINT TO SUCCESSFUL LOCAL ADVOCACY
As an advocate, your voice can be vital in delivering messages that represent your opinion or that of your local AIA chapter’s collective opinion. It’s your voice and, subsequently, your actions that make a difference in shaping your community. As a professional in your field, you have the ability to shine a light on issues that may have gone unnoticed.

Your stories and expertise are what community leaders want to hear. It’s what helps them make good decisions – and avoid bad ones. Your voice and actions can ensure that important issues and priorities receive the attention they deserve.

In the coming years the architectural community will face a myriad of issues that will need to be addressed. For example, California will need to build millions of new housing units, places that are affordable for people across the income spectrum to rent and buy as well as temporary shelter and transitional housing for our homeless residents.

To accomplish these goals, we need more architects involved in the state and local decision-making processes to help make sure these efforts are effective and have positive long-term results. We need architects at the table and active in the community.

The State Legislature, county boards, city councils and planning commissions are all too often making decisions about the growth and development of your community without an architect in the room.

Every week around the state, meetings are held to plan California’s future - be it at the State Legislature, county offices or city council chamber. They’re deciding where to build, what to build – roads, parking and master plans. They’re making choices that affect you and your community. They’re taking action on the things you know, the things you learned as an architecture student and as a practitioner. Your knowledge and contributions at these meetings and hearings will give architects a voice that will shape their community.

Yet, there is seldom an architect in the room.

The design gap in which California’s local governments, developers and housing activists have taken control of the shape and growth of our communities, is leaving behind a landscape that lacks the thoughtfulness of a design professional.

High-density communities are being developed without making room for much-needed green spaces. Public spaces in shopping malls, for example, are disregarded in favor of more retail space. “Walkability” is still a concept decision-makers struggle to understand and implement effectively. Many people don’t understand transit-oriented development doesn’t have to mean just tall buildings. But you do! You understand all of this – and the value it adds to the entire community. You understand the design principles needed to create a city – and your voice is needed.

American Institute of Architects California has assembled this guidebook to help architects become more involved at different levels of their local and state government. Filled with case studies, testimonials, directories and step-by-step instruction on how to transition from an interested observer of local politics to an active participant in the decision-making process, this guidebook helps you bring your extensive experience, practical skills and powerful voice to the table so that, as the only architect in the room, you’re heard!
An advocate for architects and good architecture is someone who stands up for and supports laws and policies that protect your peers within the profession, has a positive impact on the community, and reflects the need for healthy, sustainable well-planned communities. In this role, you are capable of many things that can have significant social and economic impacts.

Here are some examples of what you can do as an advocate:
- Speak in public forums on a particular issue that is important to you and the profession.
- Meet with elected officials, community leaders and policymakers about important architectural or design issues.
- Organize educational opportunities for your community and policymakers.

What Is Advocacy?
Architects and their allies have a duty and professional responsibility to protect the public’s health, safety and welfare. Advocacy efforts draw attention to an important issue or cause by educating key decision-makers about the impact of their choices on residents and businesses in their community. If the time isn’t taken to inform, guide and educate policymakers and other stakeholders, their “good intentions” may have bad results.

Advocacy gives you the opportunity to proactively impact issues at different levels of government. You can engage with legislators and policymakers in the earliest stages in the process of law making. Once a law is passed, you can work with regulators as they go through the process of implement rules and regulations. Lastly, you can participate in conversations with the people who enforce the laws before, during and after the decision making process.

Your advocacy efforts can educate elected officials, regulators and other policymakers who make decisions.

Through advocacy, you can use your personal experiences and the perspectives of your peers to collectively voice concerns to influence public policy and its consequences.

Types of Advocacy
There are many different avenues through which you can approach advocacy – from the micro to the macro. Advocates for the profession are needed from the homeowners association to the local planning commissions to city councils and county boards, and all the way up the ladder of governance to the broader state and federal levels. Architects are encouraged to participate in any and all levels of advocacy that interest them.

The AIA, AIA California and California chapters support architecture and design initiatives by their members, and can assist and help ensure that your voice is heard in a way that supports the profession most effectively.

Federal/National Advocacy
Advocating at the federal or national level within the legislative and regulatory processes can be accomplished in your elected official’s home district or in Washington. Within the regulatory process, it can be accomplished through the AIA, other government agencies or national organizations.

State Advocacy
There are many opportunities for you to engage elected officials and regulatory agencies at the state level. As an advocate, you will be able to closely work with the AIA California to determine if an issue is already being tackled before starting this journey on your own. The collective voice can be very powerful, and this may be a more effective way of accomplishing your goal than going it alone.
The AIA California can help facilitate communication with state legislators and regulators and help craft messages that have a significant effect on architecture and design issues.

As a resident of your district and city, you are a constituent to whom lawmakers have a responsibility. Elected officials and their staff carry out that responsibility by meeting with their constituents and stakeholders to hear their stories and concerns.

On the state level, regulatory agencies carry out their responsibilities through state agencies, departments, boards and commissions. An advocate’s voice can make a difference and influence the outcome and impact on the built environment.

You can also play an important role by identifying architects with expertise in certain aspects of the field to serve in state-appointed and elected positions and on state boards and commissions.

**Local Advocacy**

Local advocacy in your community includes engaging with a particular issue that can affect your neighbors, businesses, and local institutions and organizations. Local advocacy can take many forms. It can be as simple as showing up to a meeting and voicing your professional opinion. It can involve creating programs and services that educate your community and raise awareness and offer technical assistance about a specific topic or priority. As a community leader, you can organize like-minded people and schedule town halls to help influence the development and implementation of public policies and decisions.

**AIA California Advocacy**

AIA California’s Government Relations team represents the profession before the State Legislature, regulatory agencies, boards and commissions.

Providing a strong and continuing presence in the Capitol, AIA California sponsors legislation critical to the profession’s interests and actively monitors other bills that affect the profession’s, and our communities, well-being.

On the regulatory side, we represent architects before the regulatory agencies, actively advocating for issues including: sensible, workable state building codes, energy-efficient design principles, improvements to the state procurement process, and unified design and construction authorities within the Governor’s administration, to name a few.

Our Government Relations program also works to build a strong political base for architects by promoting the critical relationships between architects and their legislators.
Understanding Advocacy

Chapter Advocacy

Chapter Advocacy Liaisons are closely aligned with their local AIA chapter, and are effective by monitoring and reporting policy issues relevant to their chapter, receiving news and information from AIA CA and sharing it with chapter members, helping to coordinate local advocacy initiatives, and providing feedback on how AIA California can better serve chapters around advocacy efforts.

An AIA CA Advocacy Liaison is part of a network of architects across multiple chapters in California called the Local Advocacy Network. The purpose of this network is to assist AIA California’s efforts to impact the political landscape by improving the built environment at a grassroots’ and local level.

Besides supplementing the advocacy work in Sacramento, the Network – including you – continues to spread the word about how architecture can greatly improve the health and prosperity of the community.

Individuals interested in participating in the Local Advocacy Liaison Network should contact their chapter Executive to be appointed and referred to the AIA California for inclusion.

Advocacy and Lobbying

The AIA CA represents the profession at the State Legislature and with the regulatory agencies. All lobbying is advocacy, but not all advocacy is lobbying. Lobbying is an attempt to influence specific legislation. Advocacy involves a much broader range of activities.

For example, let’s say there is a particular piece of legislation being considered at the state capital that seems to solve a problem unique to your field but upon closer examination makes things worse. The AIA California registered lobbyists can lobby your elected officials (their staff and key influencers) and explain how this proposed bill fails to accomplish its intended goal. Advocacy, on the other hand, takes a broader approach.

For example, consider the issue of affordable housing. As an affordable–housing advocate, you might not talk about a specific piece of legislation but work to explain the wider issue and a variety of possible solutions. You might host a community forum with a panel of experts, or hold a design competition looking at innovative housing concepts, or even set up a booth at the county fair to hand out literature.
**Going Alone and Working with the AIA**

There are issues you are passionate about, and we want to encourage you to speak up on behalf of your industry. As an architect or AIA member, you don’t need our permission to talk on any particular issue. In fact, we encourage it. We need more architects engaging at all levels of government.

However, if you are speaking on behalf of any arm of AIA, we encourage you to talk with the AIA California so we can help best shape the message and ensure it represents the position of the organization.

“**PASS is a collaborative process that increases permitting efficiency, doesn’t change any existing roles or processes, will not increase risk or liability, and will save owners, contractors, developers, and jurisdictions time and money.**”

–**RANDY GOODWIN, AIA**

**BUILDING OFFICIAL, CITY OF WEST SACRAMENTO**
Collaborative Partnerships and Coalitions

Advocacy is all about building relationships and working collaboratively with legislators, their staff, various officials, stakeholders and community partners, along with other AIA members. A collaborative partnership involves people and groups working together to achieve a common goal.

The Benefits of a Collaborative Partnership

By thinking, planning and working together, individuals and groups can achieve goals that we can’t reach alone. Partnering with others can not only increase the volume and reach of your voice, but it can also add diversity to your messaging.

A collaborative partnership will combine different perspectives from a variety of individuals or groups, and can lend credibility and strength to your objective.

In any collaborative partnership, it is important to identify the key stakeholders surrounding your issue and investigate whether and how a collaboration with those stakeholders makes sense. Other individuals with a common interest may provide a perspective that you or your group has not yet thought of.

Case Study

See AIA Silicon Valley Advocacy Case Study example on how they established a baseline understanding of their current advocacy capacity so they could measure their advocacy involvement, improve their civic engagement process and develop best practices.

Idea

Opportunity to build and enhance relationships exist everywhere. Not all of them are organic or reciprocal, but that shouldn’t discourage you from asking questions. For example, Bob Chase, AIA former City of Sacramento Chief Building official and former California Deputy State Architect explains that he can “see an architect contacting a building official to see what suggestions he/she might have to help architects better prepare plan submittals. The input can be shared with local architects. If possible, an architect/advocate could set up a meeting between the building official and architects in the jurisdiction to foster a positive working relationship.” In this example we can see how a collaboration of one or more architects with a local building official can positively affect other architects in the community.

Case Study

An example of a valuable collaborative effort is the establishment of a streamlined system of submitting plans. Mike Malinowski, FAIA, developed an excellent guide that has been adopted by many building departments in the Sacramento Region. Survey Results indicate that building officials have been responding positively to its value for both architects and building officials. You can see the case study in the appendix.
Before you consider a partnership, it is important to clearly identify and evaluate your strengths, available resources and areas of expertise. This will allow you to seek out individuals and groups that will complement and strengthen your mission or goal.

Building effective and long-lasting collaborative partnerships takes time and trust. Establishing collaborative partnerships can provide a structure for planning and implementing ideas and priorities while working toward a common goal.

Some tips to think about when building a successful collaborative partnership:

**What do you hope to gain from this partnership?**

**What common goals and expectations do you share with your potential partners?**

**What aspects of this partnership might distract you from your mission and goals?**

**What are the roles and responsibilities of each partner?**

**In what ways do members of your partnership complement each other?**
Educating your coalition members and sharing your passion with them to garner their support plays a crucial part in your advocacy success.

Enthusiastic advocates carry their message into their communities and get it in front of those who will listen, support, and help them carry their message. People who believe in and share your vision will naturally want to join you.

Identify ambassadors of your message – other people who can provide testimony and case studies on why your issue, cause or initiative is important. Consistent engagement with these individuals and groups will help ensure that the architect’s voice is heard, and influential and prominent in the way that architecture and design affects communities.

Please use this guidebook to keep yourself and anyone in your coalition connected and spreading the word throughout the advocacy process.
ENSURE THAT YOU ARE HEARD - FINDING YOUR WHY

Time and again, elected leaders tell us that they want to hear from educated, trained, practicing professionals (in all disciplines). They want to represent those who have elected them to office.

Why? Because it helps them do their job. They are elected to represent their constituents but cannot be expected to be experts about everything that comes across their desks. They need information and guidance from experts, academics, concerned citizens and business owners, community leaders, professionals and YOU! But what makes you so special?

This section is much more than advocacy. It is actually the most important question you can ask yourself about your profession. This is one of those huge pieces of the advocacy puzzle that changes everything – it is about your WHY.

You might have already been asked this question before, and if you have, it is undoubtedly the reason you became an architect. If you haven’t, or you need a refresher, ask yourself this: “WHAT IS YOUR WHY?” When you know this, you’ve found your voice and it will shape how you tell your story.

Author and speaker Simon Sinek has a well-known Ted Talk, a condensed version of his game-changing book titled “Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sioZd3AxmnE) In it, he talks about how people don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it. After watching this video, think about these ideas through the lens of your practice. Very few people do what you do, how you do it, and most importantly, why you do it. Your job is to communicate your WHY….

**WHAT INSPIRED YOUR INTEREST IN ARCHITECTURE?**

**AT WHAT POINT DID YOU MAKE THE DECISION TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR OTHERS?**

**WHY DO YOU THINK INVOLVING OTHERS IS IMPORTANT?**

**WHY SHOULD PEOPLE BELIEVE IN WHAT YOU DO?**

**WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO ARTICULATE WHAT YOU DO?**
Working on the answers to these questions will help you identify the rest of your advocacy strategy and serve as support as you share your message. Think of that before we deep-dive into the rest of your training as a local advocate.

**Remember:**

**You are the expert in your field.** Decision-makers need your professional insights so they can be confident they’re working effectively in the best interests of their constituents while making decisions that are also good for the profession.

**You provide perspective.** To make a wise, informed decision, they need to hear from all sides. If we don’t let them know our position on certain issues, they will only hear from those who may not have the same point of view. By providing thorough, well-researched information and perspectives, you give them the opportunity to make a balanced decision.

**You are a reliable, trusted source.** As a professional working in the field on a daily basis, you have a unique perspective on issues that is grounded in real-world experience. Your analysis of the issue gives them the ability to bolster their own thoughts and make informed opinions.

**We validate their positions.** If elected leaders take a position not aligned with their constituents, they need solid arguments to communicate that position and persuade them to support their decision. As a knowledgeable source, you can provide decision-makers with the information they need to explain their position in a way that is understandable to the public – and helps build support among community members during and after the process.

Bottom line: Believe in your why, tell the story of your why, get others to believe in your why, and meaningful change that makes a difference will happen.

**EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

Before you can begin to tell your story, preparation and careful planning is key. As you begin to advocate for something, the story you are about to tell is part of a larger story.

- Speak honestly.
- Start with your personal story. If you’re presenting with a group of people, divide the content to determine who will deliver what part of the message.
- Always provide an example of “why this is important” to your audience.
- Get to the point quickly and stay on message.
- It is very important to understand that the staff in a legislative office informs and educates the legislators about an issue. That is their job. Staff are very important people and often move up in ranks. This is equally true for other levels of government such as city council members so treat them as you would the legislator or counselor you are trying to approach.
- Develop relationships with your local officials and staff.

**Follow up! Contact them at your convenience, remind them of your visit, ask if they have any questions and tell them you’re looking forward to the next time you meet and work together.**
YOUR ADVOCACY BLUEPRINT

Your advocacy plan is your blueprint to achieve your goal. Your plan should align with your overall mission, the issues that affect your community, and how architects and design professionals can help alleviate those issues.

Your plan should highlight your priorities and outline the ways that you plan to work with your local elected leaders and other officials who affect change to ensure those issues are being addressed. Some issues are so important that cannot be addressed (completely) at the local level and require partnership with AIA California to change the rules and regulations.

AIM HIGH

CREATE LONG-TERM AND SHORT-TERM GOALS.

Clearly define your goal and how you plan to achieve it because your goals will influence the ways in which you advocate. It's important to have your plan set – but flexible – before you engage others.

Once you’ve developed your priorities, do some research to identify individuals (architects, AIA members, other organizations, local government bodies and elected leaders) who might help you champion your cause.

Consider keeping a list of individuals as you move through your efforts so you will know who to contact at the appropriate time:

- Is there an elected official with a personal connection to your issue?
- Is there an elected official you can influence?
- Is there an elected official who has worked on this issue in the past?
DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

Regardless of what you are advocating for, getting started and taking those first steps can be hard. You’ve already taken the first step in understanding the fundamentals in advocacy: understanding what advocacy is, and how to go about it appropriately.

Advocacy is crucial to ensure that architecture and design policies and initiatives are fulfilling the public health, safety and welfare standards that were intended. People will listen. So whether you find yourself working at the local, state or national level, advocacy is important on every stage.

Worksheet for Your Advocacy Efforts

Identify Your Issue and Prepare

WHAT ISSUE IS IMPORTANT TO YOU?

WHAT IS YOUR VISION AND MISSION?

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST STRENGTH IN ADDRESSING THIS ISSUE?

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST WEAKNESS IN ADDRESSING THIS ISSUE?

WHAT IS YOUR ULTIMATE GOAL?
Define the Target Group

**AIA Members**

**Other Stakeholders, Interest Groups and Partners**

**Constituents**

**Local Elected and Appointed Officials**

**Department or Agency**

Do Your Research

**What do you need to help you achieve your goal?**

**Who else is talking about or working on this issue?**

**Do you have the resources available to reach this goal? And how can you get them if you don’t?**
Are there potential coalitions or partnerships to be formed to achieve your goal?

How will you deliver your message?
- [ ] In Person
- [ ] By Phone
- [ ] Email
- [ ] Letter
- [ ] Social Media

How Will You Measure Your Success?

Did you achieve your goal?

How many individuals did you contact?

What were the professions of the people you contacted?

How many emails did you send?

How many partners were you able to engage?
WHICH PHONE CALL, EMAIL OR OTHER CONTACT WAS MOST SUCCESSFUL AND WHY?

WHAT FORM OF CONTACT WAS THE LEAST EFFECTIVE?

IF NOT, HOW CAN YOU MODIFY YOUR APPROACH?

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR NEXT TIME?
Understanding the Local Process

The process for communicating with your local elected officials and agency staff will vary by jurisdiction. Effective local advocates will build relationships with those individuals and agency staff.

To learn about your jurisdiction’s government structure, visit your city and county websites.

Learn about your city or county structure and committees in areas that interest you or are relevant to your chapter’s advocacy goals.

Building strong relationships is an important aspect of advocacy. Learn about the members of each committee or department, know who serves as chairs, and learn about the staff. Before meeting with them, you will want to do some research to determine their position and track record on particular issues. Learning more about them will allow you to communicate confidently by considering their experience, background, and areas of interest.

Committees hold public hearings on their respective area of authority and are a great platform for advocates to make a difference. Before you attend a meeting, here are some questions that you should consider:

1. How long have the officials been in office?
2. Are they on any committees or boards that relate to architecture, design or building trades?
3. What have they said or written in newspapers, press releases, periodicals and social media?
4. What relevant policies have they supported or opposed in the past?
5. Who is likely to show up at this meeting?
6. How will you handle opposition? And connect with allies?
7. What documents, information, resources and facts can you prepare ahead of time to support your position?

Take the time to consider these questions and possible outcomes. Attending meetings and hearings might feel intimidating or daunting at first. Be true to your voice and remember: they are all people, people with opinions and concerns just like you and they all want to be heard, just like you.

The more prepared you are when you meet with them, the more confident you will feel. Not only will they appreciate you taking the time to learn about their positions on certain issues, it will also help you focus on your issue and share your message effectively.
PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY – IT’S A YEAR-ROUND THING

Advocacy is a year-round effort. Whether you’re working alone or with a group of people, staying engaged throughout the year is essential. Here are some examples of how you can stay connected and educate people about the value of architecture and design in various ways so that the architect’s voice is heard.

**Local Events**

Your chapter might already have a community outreach kit that can be used at public events, resource tables and local fairs. The AIA California can always be relied upon to give the resources or help create one if not. Those materials – canopy, banners and roll-ups, brochures and flyers, and other educational/promotional materials – are likely branded with your chapter’s name to distribute and help people understand the role of local architects.

There are many events that can put the architect in the forefront and help them engaging effectively with their community:

**Fundraising / PACs**

Showing your support of Political Action Committee activities demonstrates the value and importance of the profession, and that you believe in the long-term success of your career. Supporting the AIA California’s sponsored PAC, California Architects for Livable Communities Political Action Committee, is a way that the AIA California can have a more impactful relationship on the legislator that it supports.

You can also ensure that the profession is well-positioned to support a candidate or ballot measure by contributing to the AIA CA-sponsored Political Action Committee (CALCPAC). By contributing to CALCPAC, you’re helping protect the the profession’s interests and further our proactive advocacy agenda. Watch CALCPACs compelling video on how PAC contributions do just that!

**Project Tour**

Hosting a project tour is an exceptional and visceral way to showcase the value of design and it can take many forms. Organize a community walking tour highlighting historic architecture. People enjoy learning about the history of their community and such a tour allows you to add an architectural spin to the content. New construction also offers an opportunity for engagement. When a new building goes up it sparks the curiosity of those who have watched it being built. Organize a tour so people can see inside and use the opportunity to educate people on the architectural elements of the construction.

IDEA

Legislative and regulatory threats make it critical to have PAC dollars to educate lawmakers. Contribute to CALCPAC to support a candidate who believes in you and the profession.
Tours offer a great way to engage people in your community, emerging professionals and local leaders who influence how your community is shaped. They provide an opportunity to demonstrate how architects have influenced the fabric of the community and solve design challenges.

**Workshops, Panels and Webinars**

A great way to engage the community and local officials is through a workshop or webinar. This is where people can gather in person or through the internet and learn more about design and practice. These can be presented by an individual, chapter or firm and address multiple topics. Take homelessness for example. Everyone is concerned about this issue, but most don’t understand the role architects can play in solving the problem. Host a workshop on homeless solutions in which you present several case studies of successful projects created by architects.

Architects are often missing on speaker panels at conferences and seminars. Search out future events in which you think the voice of an architect would add to the discussion and volunteer to participate. Sometimes organizers won’t understand the value an architect can bring to the conversation until you explain it to them.

**Committees**

Committees and other agencies and departments are often looking to fill vacant seats. This is a great opportunity to represent the profession. Participation on those committees can be the first step in the process of having your voice heard amongst other organizations, professionals and agencies.

**District Meetings**

Local meetings with your council members and other elected leaders are imperative to your success as a local advocate. Spend time building relationships with your officials.

Many chapters host regular events to connect both formally and socially with their elected officials, policymakers, developers, institutional clients and others who are key to transforming the region. For example, AIA Los Angeles hosts a City Leaders Breakfast where architects can learn more about the their regional leaders and those leaders in turn can learn more about the field of architecture and the built environment.

**Volunteering**

Volunteering for activities and programs gives you the chance to meet and engage with a wide variety of people. Through volunteering you have the opportunity to find like minded individuals with whom you share similar ideas and opinions. You never know who you will meet and who will add value to your cause. Collect names and affiliations of those individuals so when the time comes, you will know who to call. Meaningful connections can be found in the most unsuspecting of places: at your child’s school, soccer practice or another non-profit organization.
Lobby Day
In the past, AIA California has organized a memberwide “Day at the Legislature.” This is where AIA California equips members with training, information materials and leave behinds for when members meet with their elected officials. Legislative visits are a chance to educate government officials about a specific issue and the value of the profession. When the time comes, whether at a state or local event, exercise that opportunity to educate your leaders and tell your story – the elected officials and their staff will listen.

AIA Los Angeles has documented their strategic objectives, mission and Legislative Day at City Hall: https://www.aialosangeles.org/advocacy-reports/ar-09-06-18/
Visit the appendix for Do’s & Don’t’s when meeting with your legislator.

Public Meetings
Local governments publish schedules of informational hearings and public meetings in your city. Visit your local government website(s) to learn about upcoming meetings. Use the advocacy-strategy worksheets in the appendix to help you craft an appropriate message for each type of meeting. Add your voice as an architect to the discussion.

Social Media
Everyone has at least one social media account, so use yours to help spread the word on the architectural issues that are important to you. Use social media to share articles, tweets or images that reflect your position on the issue. Use social media to invite people to meetings and local events, post pictures of meetings that you have attended, and encourage your followers to join in and support future activities. Your local chapter has its own social media outreach plan, so make use of their posts and share them with your followers.

Online Calendar
Your chapter has an online calendar of events where you can learn about activities and events. Even if you are not a member, these events are a great way to connect with your peers. If your chapter doesn’t have an online calendar, ask about developing one as soon as possible. For local chapters, an online calendar is a great way to inform members and other interested parties about your chapter’s activities and what’s
# Staying Connected Via Social Media

**Facebook**

Facebook is a social-media platform that allows you to connect with others and share stories. Facebook has over 1 billion monthly users - even Congress has a Facebook: www.facebook.com/congressorg. You can use Facebook to directly connect with your elected official and join in discussions by posting or commenting on their walls. Follow the AIA CA at www.facebook.com/aiacalif

**Twitter**

Twitter is a platform that allows you to share “snippets” of information in a limited number of characters (now 280), called “tweets.” Most legislative offices and agencies have Twitter accounts and you can “follow” them to see what important issues they are working on. Twitter allows you to use “hashtags” - (#) to help you categorize topics that are important to you. And if you see a post that you like or support, you can “retweet” it and immediately share it with your other followers. Example of a Facebook or Twitter post to your elected official: “I am a constituent in your district, and I support bill number XXX. Please consider supporting it too by co-signing.” If this is a Twitter post, follow it with a relevant hashtag. Follow the AIA California at www.twitter.com/aiacalif

**YouTube**

YouTube is a video-sharing platform where you can share your videos and view videos that others have taken. Many congressional offices have YouTube “channels” where they post important videos. If your Congressional office has a channel, you can subscribe to it to stay connected with them. View AIA California YouTube videos at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjrdyZIfAMw&feature=youtube

**Instagram**

Instagram is a picture-sharing platform. You can take pictures and videos and share them with your followers. Instagram can only be used with a smart phone, but it’s a fun way to share experiences and to see in pictures of what your followers are doing and care about. Connect with AIA California on Instagram: www.instagram.com/aiacalif

**Pinterest**

Pinterest is a visual media platform, akin to a virtual scrapbook. It allows you to visually share ideas or topics that are important to you. You can create “boards” for each area of interest. For example, if there is a cause that you are advocating for, you might create a message board for that cause that you can share with others.
SUCCESS IN ADVOCACY isn’t just about getting a bill passed into law, or an ordinance modified, it’s about all the little steps leading to those goals. Celebrating your successes throughout the process is important! Progress, even in the smallest increments IS success. And because very little happens quickly in government, you should enter the advocacy process with a “never give up” attitude.

When you CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESSES, you remind yourself and your team of the one common goal you set out to achieve together.

You REMIND YOURSELF and those around you to focus on the positive rather than the negative. It allows people to believe in the concept that setting realistic goals can help them accomplish anything.

SHARE YOUR SUCCESS. The AIA California is dedicating a section of its website to highlight successes, testimonials and stories from people just like you; a place where you can learn about the work of other advocates, and a place where you can share what you have been doing on a local level. To keep things simple, we are creating an easy-to-use template where you can enter key information about your advocacy efforts which will generate an article about your work.

Thank you participating as a local advocate - together we are all working toward a common goal.
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A PLANNING GUIDE FOR YOUR CHAPTER ADVOCACY OUTREACH EFFORTS

I'M AN ADVOCATE FOR

OUR MISSION IS TO

WE ARE AN ORGANIZATION THAT

WE DO THIS BY

I GOT INVOLVED BECAUSE

YOU TOO CAN GET INVOLVED – HERE’S HOW
DATE

NAME

CHAPTER

WHAT WAS YOUR GOAL?

IN WHAT WAYS DID YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL?

WHAT HAPPENED? SHARE YOUR STORY:

FOLLOW UP NECESSARY FROM CHAPTER OR AIA CA STAFF?

CONTACT INFORMATION:
In 2018, voters elected the 53 U.S. Representatives from the state of California, one from each of the state’s 53 congressional districts. There are 58 counties and 482 cities in California.

To find your Congressional Representative: https://ziplook.house.gov/htbin/findrep_house
To find your California Representative: http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/
To find your City Councillors and local elected officials: visit your city and county government pages.

AIA CALIFORNIA CHAPTER ADVOCACY LIAISONS

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AIA CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS TEAM

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Scheduling District Meetings

Scheduling a district meeting may seem like a daunting process, but it is actually very simple. To assist you in the scheduling process, we have outlined the steps for putting on the meeting. For this example, we will refer to the types of individuals above as “leaders.” For the most part, requesting your government leader’s attention works similarly.

1. **Submit a scheduling request.** While you don’t have to provide specific details, make sure to include the main topic of the meeting in your request. Most offices require that you submit these requests via email. Tip: Remain flexible as to the date of your meeting. Flexibility on your part allows you to work with the leader’s packed schedule and increases the likelihood that you get the meeting.

2. **Follow up, follow up, follow up.** After your meeting request is submitted, follow up with the scheduler by phone. You may have to follow up more than once. Member offices get numerous meeting requests every day, so persistence is key to ensuring your request is at the top of their list.

3. **Determine talking points and leave-behind materials.** Have set talking points for your meeting to make sure that you get your point across clearly and succinctly. Contact your chapter’s executive director, president or AIA California for the most current talking points on issues to include in your message and materials.

4. **Invite other AIA members.** Once you have the meeting scheduled, contact other AIA members in your community to attend. There is strength in numbers – having multiple AIA members in attendance shows that the issues are important to numerous constituents. Also let your AIA chapter and AIA California know the date and time of your meeting.

5. **Attend the meeting.** Brief all attendees on the talking points beforehand to ensure everybody is on the same page. In the meeting, stick to your talking points and walk the leader through your supplementary materials. Leaders have limited time available to talk with you, so stay on message and deliver your key points. Be ready to cut your remarks down, as the amount of time they have can often change quickly. Remember to take photos and video to send to AIA California.

   **Important note:** Sometimes it is possible to meet only with staff. We encourage you to take that meeting. Sometimes meeting with staff will allow you more time to get your message across and have a meaningful, more in-depth conversation and an opportunity to build your relationships for times of future need. Don’t forget that staff also rise through the ranks and will perhaps be a leader one day – and when that happens, you will have the advantage.

6. **Send a thank-you letter to the leader (staff) after the meeting.** Within a few days of your meeting, send a thank-you letter to the leader and any staff in attendance. You should also thank the staff member who assisted with the scheduling. Tip: Reiterate the key messages in your talking points in your letter to remind the staff what was discussed and next steps.

7. **Provide photos and feedback to AIA member attendees and AIA California.** Thank AIA members who attended the meeting, and send a summary of the meeting and any photos taken to your chapter staff and AIA California. These will be promoted on the AIA California Government Relations website and social media properties.
PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Your Company Name

Contact: <<Your Name>>
<<Your title>>
<<Your Phone>>
<<Your email>>

<<COMPELLING HEADLINE FOR PRESS RELEASE>>

<<CITY>>, <<State>>—
<<Two or three sentence lead. This paragraph should be relevant, objective, easy to read and timely. Be sure to immediately address all pertinent information: who, what, when, where, why>>

<<One or two paragraph body. This is where your message should be developed. The shorter and more direct, the better. Avoid the first person perspective. Avoid cliche and hyper-sensationalized words or phrases like “breakthrough”, “state of the art”, and “unique.”>>

<< One or two sentence broilerplate: A description of your company, its products, services, and history. Lastly, your name, phone, and email are listed. Three # signs at the bottom of your press release mark the end>

####
<<Your company mission statement>>
The following tips are mere suggestions and are principles that are adaptable for your interactions with all levels of legislative staff and policy makers. A general rule of thumb is to trust your instincts.

**Introduce Yourself.** Remember to tell the legislator or staff member who you are, where you are from, what you do, and that you are a member of the AIA. Do not assume they have this information.

**Be Flexible, Be Polite.** Legislators have very busy schedules that change constantly. It is important to stay flexible and understand that you may have to meet with staff, that your meeting may be interrupted or cut short, or that you may be meeting with someone who may disagree. Always maintain flexibility and be polite, regardless of your personal opinion.

**Ask for Something.** Remember to make specific asks on the legislator’s bills and key issues that are of interest to you. When in doubt what those issues and talking points currently are, contact the AIA California staff.

**Make It Personal.** You are the expert on the architecture and design industry, and you should use this opportunity to educate your elected officials about the needs and concerns of the industry. Legislators want to know how a specific issue will affect their district, so use personal or local experiences to emphasize your points. Members of the legislature relate most to issues that have a direct impact on the constituents they represent.

**Set the Expectation for Future Interaction.** Invite the representative to take part in future in-district activities in the district (component meeting, site visit, etc.). Let the legislator know that this is the first of (hopefully) many future interactions.
Say “Thank You”. We are always asking our legislators for something, so thank them for their hard work, and ask what you can do for them.

**Follow Up.** Take the time after your meeting to let chapter and AIA California staff know how your meeting went and if they should follow up with the legislator’s office. And send your legislator a thank-you note reviewing the issues (“asks” and next steps) you discussed.

**Meeting report template located in the appendix**

**Have Fun.** This is not only a great opportunity for you, but it’s a valued interaction for legislators and staff to hear from their constituents. Enjoy it!

---

**DON’T**

**Don’t Feel Slighted.** You may have to meet only with staff or have only have a couple of minutes to talk in a crowded hallway or elevator. Remember, every opportunity to communicate with legislators and their staff is a great chance to show our commitment to our profession and to our issues. Take advantage of it. And maybe suggest another, more convenient time to chat.

**Don’t Feel Like You Need to Know Everything.** If someone asks a question, and you don’t know the answer, offer to have chapter or AIA California staff follow up with the requested information. Don’t make up answers, exaggerate or feel like you are expected to be an expert on every legislative issue or detail.

**Don’t Miss the Opportunity.** Don’t just say “Hi” or read from the talking points. Share your story – that is the one the legislator most wants to hear.

**Don’t Talk About Money.** Keep fundraising and campaign conversations separate. Have those conversations back in the district outside of a member’s office.
Ric. Abramson, FAIA has done it again. For the second time he has come up with a good idea on how to improve state law. In 2013, he developed an idea to better protect both an architect’s Instrument of Services and the architect. With the AIA California’s help, that idea became a bill that was signed into law. (http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB630)

This year Abramson based on his experience designing and developing a live/work unit, realized that the building standards code needed improved definitions of live/work. Ric.’s proposal was introduced as AB 565 and was signed into law by Governor Brown on September 20. (http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB565)

Examples of other testimony conducted by the AIA California can be viewed at Digital Democracy. (http://www.digitaldemocracy.com)
AIA Central Valley - Advocacy

Provide a summary of these engagement activities, including interactions with local government officials and staff (for example, discussions about regulatory or legislative concerns, invitations to chapter events, and partnerships with local business networks.)

AIA Central Valley actively engages in myriad advocacy efforts. We, as AIA architects, are increasingly recognized as experts and “trusted advisors” with our local decision makers and are actively engaged within our community as a key voice on issues.

Our advocacy efforts include: monthly meetings / collaboration with the City of Sacramento; formation of a Civic Engagement Team to address advocacy within our Chapter; support of the Permit Simplicity program developed by AIACV member Michael Malinowski, FAIA; continued membership in the Sacramento Metro Chamber (as well as ongoing valuable partnerships with community groups and allied organizations) and Smart Growth Leadership.

City of Sacramento Monthly Meetings & Special Projects

The Chapter meets monthly with the Urban Design Manager for the City of Sacramento, the Planning Director and other vital staff to connect and discuss issues of importance to the design community. This year we were key advisors in providing significant comments and feedback to the City during its revision of the Design Guidelines for single unit dwelling/ duplex dwellings and commercial structures, as well as a new Bulk Ordinance that had considerable impact on design of residential housing. Other topics included Transit Oriented Development, Accessory Dwelling Units and Tiny Homes, SB 35 Multi-family Housing checklist, Historic District Design Guidelines.

Civic Engagement Team

Mission Statement

The AIA Central Valley Civic Engagement Team seeks to protect and advance the profession of architecture and placemaking in our region through pro-active involvement with local jurisdictions on issues impacting the profession. The team serves to advise the Chapter’s Board of Directors, who approve and speak for the organization on behalf of its members.
Goals:

- Serve as the “eyes and ears” for the membership on issues of professional interest, communicating issues to the Chapter’s Board of Directors and soliciting member feedback when warranted.
- Provide on-going monitoring of projects and policies in our region that affect the built environment, and pro-actively engage in support and constructive feedback on specific projects.
- Expand and strengthen the AIACV’s relationships with local groups, governmental agencies and other professional associations—and serve as a resource and influencer to these groups on behalf of the profession.
- Provide collaborative communication with the membership on issues of impact and importance; and promote the role and value of architects to quality of life issues in our communities.
- Identify and support AIACV members who serve as Citizen Architects.
- Work with National AIA and our state component, AIA CA, to support their advocacy efforts and initiatives.

**Permit Streamlining**

The PASS program has been designed to streamline permitting throughout the Sacramento region. It provides a more efficient and effective plan review process by implementing a clear and concise set of standards for document content and organization. Participation is voluntary, and requires a half-day training class. Future classes will include annual updates and expansion of the program. The initial program is targeted at Tenant Improvements and Small Commercial Projects.

The class is designed for architects, engineers, contractors and designers—anyone who can legally sign plans for commercial building projects—and who want the benefits of streamlined permitting at participating jurisdictions, plan review professionals from jurisdictions adopting or considering adopting PASS, and anyone seeking knowledge of Construction Documents and the Permit Process.

The PASS program is one of three separate, but related efforts, that the Chapter is tracking. (Other efforts include Region Builders Permit Simplicity and the Greater Sacramento Area Economic Council / GSAEC program.) Each effort takes a different approach and AIACV is supporting and promoting these efforts to make sure our member’s needs are met and that the programs are beneficial to architectural practice in our region.
Sacramento Metro Chamber

Our Chapter has played an active role with our local Chamber of Commerce for several years now. The Chamber represents nearly 2,000 members with 130,000 employees in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties. They are the region’s leading proponent of regional cooperation and primary advocate on issues affecting business, economic development and quality of life.

Smart Growth Leadership

AIA Central Valley is an active participant in the Smart Growth Leadership Recognition Program. This program is a joint effort by AIACV and Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS). The goals of the program are to:

- Promote and support coordinated land use and transportation planning that represents compact, intelligent, non sprawl urban development, that preserves and enhances the natural ecology of our open spaces, that reinforces the urban ecology/quality of existing communities through reinvestment, and that reduces pollution in our air, water, and land.

- Enable the Sacramento region to become a sustainable community through the application of Smart Growth principles in all planning and development actions.

- Foster community design excellence that improves the quality of the built environment.

- Provide public awareness and support of projects that embody the “public good” as described above through its project recognition.

- Provide an incentive to the development community to produce exemplary projects that embody the “public good” as described above through its project recognition endorsements.

- Be used as a positive tool to attain these goals.
The guiding principles that define Smart Growth and Sustainability are as follows:

- Promote infill development. Take advantage of existing community assets by accommodating additional growth in already developed areas.
- Foster walkable, close-knit neighborhoods through a system of fully connected streets, pedestrian paths and bicycle routes.
- Promote distinctive, attractive communities of distinguished design that create a strong sense of place.
- Mix land uses at an appropriate scale either vertically or horizontally within projects to create vibrant urban places.
- Promote rehabilitation and use of historic buildings.
- Promote distinguished design of the “public realm” that emphasizes a pedestrian and ecological focus.
- Promote social equity in residential, commercial, recreational and transportation usage.
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices with a diversity of affordable housing options.
- Provide and strengthen a variety of transportation choices that promote walking, bicycling, and public transit usage.
- Support appropriate and safe reuse of brownfields.
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas within the urban environment and on the urban edge.
- Provide for minimal and managed storm and wastewater runoff.
- Discourage projects that reinforce urban sprawl and its resultant infrastructure costs, excess vehicle usage, environmental degradation, social isolation, and public transit inefficiency.

The Guiding Principles have been developed from those presently utilized by the City of Sacramento and the County of Sacramento. A brochure has been developed by AIACV to promote the program and encourage participation at local Building Departments.
Elements of Advocacy – Case Study Form

AIA, state and local components, and advocacy leaders from across the country are engaged in a year-long exercise to build a lasting “Culture of Advocacy” by developing a program to build advocacy capacity at the component level. One of the core objectives of this “Capacity Building Group” is to establish a baseline understanding of our current advocacy capacity so we can measure our advocacy involvement, improve our civic engagement process and develop best practices.

The case study information collected here will help the Capacity Building Group gain a better understanding of our advocacy initiatives, the outcomes of those efforts, and how members are being engaged.

Thank you for participating in this important effort.

Component Staff and Knowledge Committee chairs will be contacted by designated members of the Capacity Building Group to discuss the organization’s advocacy activities and to determine one signature advocacy initiative for this case study exercise. (If you have implemented two or three advocacy initiatives that you believe should be highlighted, fill out separate forms for each effort.) The Capacity Building Group members will be charged with facilitating the compilation of the case study using this form.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For purposes of this exercise, advocacy initiatives are defined as efforts related to public affairs and government affairs. They usually involve efforts to influence legislative action at the state, local or regional level, or in shaping the opinions and behavior of key influencers or the broader public.

1. Name of AIA Component/Knowledge Community: AIA Silicon Valley

2. Contact Person (name, role of person who provided the information for this case study): Lee Salin, Past President and Thang Do, Advocacy Chair

3. Short, descriptive title for this advocacy initiative: Education Program for public agencies and communities

4. Please briefly summarize the advocacy initiative:

   Customizable education program for public agencies, planning commissions, and the general public, to promote greater awareness and understanding of fundamental design principles. The program is delivered through a workshop setting by members in an interactive format.
5. Why is this initiative important to AIA members?
The Architecture 101 program increases public awareness, educates decision makers and influencers of the built environment, and advocates for the value of architects and architecture.

6. Why did you select this initiative?
Architecture 101 benefits communities, and educates policy and decision makers, while raising the profile of the AIA and voice of its members.

7. What were the objectives of this advocacy initiative?
To provide a value-add program that educated public agencies, planning commissions, and community members on fundamental design principles, and to increase engagement of members in advocating for the value of architects and architecture.

8. Timeframe of effort (when initiated, when concluded/still ongoing):
The Architecture 101 program was initially developed in 2001 and has been delivered several times each year since then in a variety of public and agency settings. There is no plan or intent to conclude this effort.

9. Does this advocacy effort align with a specific AIA Position Statement? Click here for Directory of AIA Public Policy and Position Statements
Yes – Civic Engagement, Architects are Environmentally Responsible, Architectural Design Matters

**EVALUATING ADVOCACY INITIATIVES**
To ensure consistency in our evaluation method we have outlined four phases that comprise advocacy initiatives: Develop, Invite, Deploy and Assess. We would like you to describe your efforts from that perspective. Additionally, we have included the characteristics of these phases that make for a good, better or great advocacy initiative as a guide.

**Develop:**
1. How was your advocacy initiative developed? This relates to how you collected knowledge and conducted research, determined your policy positions, identified key stakeholders and organized your resources.

The program was originally developed over 15 years ago and grew out of a strategic goal to provide added value to communities while increasing the awareness and appreciation for architects and architecture. The program has been refined over time by committee members and has been upgraded with new graphic tools and illustrations, as well as responding to current trends and requirements.
Ideas to Improve: Program purpose and content components could be further refined to correspond to and more effectively advance AIA and AIACC strategic goals. Public Agencies and communities desire more guidance on urban design and looking at the larger context of the urban fabric, in addition to buildings (e.g. the spaces between buildings).

2. How would you characterize the development phase of this advocacy initiative? (check one)

**Good** – “Good” development efforts are along the lines of the following: Component leaders have a solid understanding of The AIA statement of values and AIA policy statements and their priorities are appropriately aligned with The AIA policy statements. An Advocacy Committee(s) establishes and guides the development of goals, priorities and position statements. Advocacy efforts are communicated to members broadly.

**Better** – “Better” development efforts are along the lines of the following: State and/or local level policy positions are developed to augment, not just align with, those of AIA national. The membership is engaged in developing the list of advocacy priorities. Member engagement and outcome plans are developed for each advocacy priority. Knowledge of advocacy issues is strong enough to recognize where additional expert knowledge needs to be sought out.

**Great** – “Great” development efforts are along the lines of the following: Broad-based, component-wide and informs the development positions and policy statements. The initiative contemplates a multi-year approach and considers the impact on the organization (including potential for organizational growth). The effort culminates in a written plan that includes: goals, strategies, message, targets, and tactics.

**Invite:**

1. How did you recruit individuals to advocate? Who were those advocates?

Local chapter board members have recruited volunteer chairs and committee members. Additional members are invited to participate via Chapter events and communications.

Ideas to Improve: The program and committee have benefitted when there was continuity of membership while other members transition on and off the committee. Maintaining some level of continuity is important.

2. How would you characterize the invitation phase of this advocacy initiative? (check one)

**Good** – “Good” invitation efforts are along the lines of the following: Members are broadly made aware of opportunities to engage in advocacy initiatives (emails, regular member communication). There is a general call to action inviting members to engage.

**Better** – “Better” invitation efforts are along the lines of the following: A diverse cross-section of members are engaging in multiple advocacy efforts. The organization has a small core of AIA members who regularly engage in advocacy initiatives.

**Great** – “Great” invitation efforts are along the lines of the following: Stakeholders beyond AIA members feel invited to advocate in community with AIA members, and AIA members feel invited to advocate
in community with key stakeholders. Coalitions are created by AIA members and components to serve specific needs and in a manner that gains buy-in regarding the resources and timeframe necessary for coalition success. The organization has a large core of AIA members who regularly engage in advocacy initiatives and is involved in coalition activities.

**Deploy:**

1. What did your advocates do? Where were their efforts directed and why?

Local chapter officers, chairs and committee members reach out to local jurisdictions to share the opportunity and benefits of the educational program. Modest fees are negotiated to cover costs and support the chapter. Programs are tailored for each audience and presented by a group of committee members and others in an interactive setting with attendees.

Ideas to Improve: Increase extent of member participation. If needed, presenters could be coached to improve presentation delivery and workshop facilitation skills.

2. How would you characterize the deployment phase of this advocacy initiative? (check one)

- **Good** – “Good” deployment efforts are along the lines of the following: Involve core leadership and key staff as the organization’s advocates. On issues where there’s a direct impact on the profession, we request a seat at the table.

- **Better** – “Better” deployment efforts are along the lines of the following: Advocates have access to and interact with key decision-makers (take our calls and meetings when requested). A cross-section of members are regularly engaged in multiple advocacy efforts. AIA members use their positions on coalitions to share relevant knowledge and expertise and to further coalition goals.

- **Great** – “Great” deployment efforts are along the lines of the following: Advocates have developed mutual relationships with key decision-makers. Stakeholders and AIA members respond to community challenges by advocating together.

**Assess:**

1. How did you evaluate the success of the initiative? How were your efforts received by others?

In preparation for each workshop, goals are established working with each agency/commission. Feedback is sought following each workshop (1 to 3 times/year). The program is evaluated annually as part of the Board’s strategic planning and budgeting processes, to align with local chapter advocacy and public outreach goals. Outcomes are shared with the Board and membership via e-newsletters.

Ideas to Improve: Feedback and results have been documented, but the history and maintaining consistent documentation in the future would be more valuable.
2. How would you characterize the assessment phase of this advocacy initiative? (check one)

**Good** – “Good” assessment efforts are along the lines of the following: An annual report of advocacy activities that is discussed by board and staff, and shared with membership. Primarily involves conversation among component/knowledge-community leaders.

**Better** – “Better” assessment efforts are along the lines of the following: A comparison of this advocacy initiative to others implemented by the component/knowledge community for purposes of learning and improvement. The assessment conversation involves the broader membership.

**Great** – “Great” assessment efforts are along the lines of the following: A comparison of this advocacy initiative to those of other organizations. The assessment conversation goes beyond component/knowledge community membership and engages the broader external community of stakeholders.

### Post advocacy initiative

1. What were the outcomes of this initiative?

Designed to increase understanding of design principles and ability to communicate viewpoints about qualities of design projects, and broaden perspectives to larger context of urban fabric.

2. What were the lessons learned?

See “Ideas to Improve” in the Develop, Invite, Deploy, and Assess sections.

3. What does this initiative have to teach other component leaders and would you be willing to share your experience or skills with others?

Architecture 101 is an effective advocacy tool to build connections with and educate policy and decision makers, and influencers of the built environment. We would be willing to share our experiences and learn from others feedback.

4. Overall, would you say this initiative was: (check one)

**Good** – met baseline requirements for accreditation (primarily reactive)

**Better** – exceeded baseline requirements and engaged members (primarily pro-active)

**Great** – engaged members and other stakeholders at a high level, brought attention to AIA and grew the organization (transformative)

5. What resources could have helped propel this effort to the next level (e.g., technology and member engagement tools, research and knowledge, skills and training, political and PAC engagement, etc.)?

The initial development was very intensive, and copyright issues were tedious. If another component had done this previously, it would have been good to have learned from them, or even better, built on the existing foundation. Having well developed summary information to preview with potential cities and commissions would have been beneficial.

Thank you for your participation!
COLLABORATIVE AND PARTNERSHIP SUCCESSES

AIA Central Valley White Paper on Successful Public-Private Partnerships

The AIA Central Valley developed a useful white paper that outlines the process of creating a successful relationship between an AIA Chapter and a City Government:


AIA California and AIA Santa Clara Partnership with the City of Palo for Adobe Creek Pedestrian & Cyclist Bridge Design Competition
ADDITIONAL PROJECT SUCCESSES

The AIA California, AIA Santa Clara Valley and the City of Palo Alto partnered 2014 to create a competition for the Adobe Creek Pedestrian & Cyclist Bridge. The competition specifications and results can be found here: http://AIA.CAlifornia.org/adobe-creek-pedestrian-cyclist-bridge/


March 22, 2018
Attn: SF Planning Commissioners
SF Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103

Subject: Support for the Urban Design Guidelines Adoption

Dear SF Planning Commissioners:

Approximately every two months for the last three years, Jeff Joslin and his team at the Planning Department have met with the Public Policy & Advocacy Committee of the San Francisco Chapter of the AIA in a series of intensive workshops aimed at improving Planning Department design review policies and procedures in the City.

The mission of this AIASF Committee has been to strengthen the constituency for progressive design in the Bay Area through direct engagement with neighborhood, advocacy, political, regulatory and legislative bodies. More broadly, we look to effect positive change through education and action related to urban issues impacting the architecture profession and our communities.

Through this collaboration with Planning, we have reviewed and commented on a series of draft Urban Design Guidelines and were pleased to see that each of our recommendations were always given thoughtful consideration. For example, our group advocated for the inclusion of a glossary of terms, defining sometime elusive architectural concepts and professional jargon, as well as for the consistent use of those terms in the document.

Words like context, massing, scale, proportion and detail are in fact definable professional concepts for designers and architects, and those good at their craft learn to control them with skill, thoughtfulness and sensitivity. The reason they are definable is that they can be used in a comparative way to analyze a given context. For example, we can in fact say that the mass of a proposed building is or isn’t larger than the mass of an adjacent one.

In contrast to these terms, are far more subjective ones, such as those that advocate for a singular concept of stylistic beauty or appropriateness. We can agree far more easily that one building seems out of scale with another by looking at their relative sizes, yet it is difficult to say with any objective authority that one building is more beautiful than its neighbor. While there is much we can agree on in our extraordinarily diverse city, one unifying preferred historical period or style does not fit all. Nor is it good for an alive and evolving city.

That said, through greater interaction with the Planning Department in this process, we professional designers have also come to better understand the neighborhood concerns about the evolution of our city and a perceived lack of voice in the process. Not all architects practice with the same nuance and sensitivity, and many projects can seem pieced together from a bucket of trusty parts rather than actually thoughtfully designed.

Those of us who practice architecture are often drawn to it exactly because it lies between an art and a science. We realize though how vexing this can be when trying to pin down definitive “rules” for all design. Baring this possibility, we are left with rules-of-thumb – otherwise known as Design Guidelines.
The reason these Urban Design Guidelines become so critical to both professionals and lay-people, is that they attempt to establish criteria for evaluation based in tangible design concepts, which have (relatively) objective meanings. They set the terms of debate among wildly diverse constituencies and opinion.

We were encouraged to see that even in its infancy, this document understood the need for design guidelines to remain just that—guidelines. To remind us of the nuances of guidelines, as opposed to rules, requirements, or laws, our friendly Wikipedia does a fine job:

A guideline is a statement by which to determine a course of action. A guideline aims to streamline particular processes according to a set routine or sound practice. By definition, following a guideline is never mandatory. ... Guidelines may be issued by and used by any organization (governmental or private) to make the actions of its employees or divisions more predictable, and presumably of higher quality.

The AIASF and its Public Policy & Advocacy Committee support the adoption of this document because, while not perfect, it does successfully articulate to professionals and the public the key design concepts that allow us to both respect and evolve our city. This is no easy task and we applaud the Planning Department for its efforts to articulate what it is that we professional designers and architects do.

Sincerely,

AIA San Francisco Board of Director

**SAMPLE MEMBER OUTREACH AND PETITION**

As an architect primarily focused on education projects it is extremely encouraging to see the AIA start a grassroots school safety initiative. Architects and the power of design can and must be an integral part of addressing our nation’s ongoing school violence problems. This message was delivered by AIA leadership to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Nielsen, White House cabinet officials, and through testimony before the Federal School Safety Commission on behalf of the members of the AIA. And we need our AIAOC voices to carry this message to our elected officials.

The ultimate goal of AIA’s school safety initiative is to protect our students and teachers by advocating for new laws that will prioritize design as part of the solution to school violence. We know architects can help in many more ways too.

But as a first step, **join me in signing this petition**. Once it reaches 50,000 signatures, it will be delivered to elected officials at the local, state, and federal levels. Therefore, remember to spread the word after you sign it.

Then, text ‘AIA’ by typing in 40649 to sign up for the AIA ‘Action Alert’ text messages. Join me and be an Advocate for our schools and our profession. Sign and text today.

Steven Kendrick, AIA
AIAOC Vice President / President Elect
Architect Action Center

AIA’s Architect Action Center is an online platform for members to easily contact their Members of Congress to educate them on critical issues, including sustainability, housing, resilience, school safety, and student loan debt.

Visit aia.org/takeaction.

Architects have a major role in addressing pressing social, economic, and environmental issues, but resolving them is impossible without also advocating on policies that influence the built environment.

Blueprint for Better

In 2018, AIA launched the “Blueprint for Better” campaign – a proactive effort that highlights the role of architects as thought and action leaders in improving America’s cities, towns, and neighborhoods. A major part of this campaign also focuses on encouraging architects to work with local, state, and federal officials to solve public policy issues that directly affect the work they do every day.

Phone2Action

AIA also uses an interactive mobile feature - Phone2Action engages advocates and connects them directly with their lawmakers at the federal, state, and local levels through social media, email, and phone.

Using Phone2Action you can:

• Share campaigns through SMS and MMS
• Send an email directly to legislators.
• Take action with Facebook Messenger
• Tweet your officials
• Call lawmakers with patch-through calling tool

For the latest updates on issues impacting architects, join AIA’s Architect Action Alerts by texting “AIA” 40649