Next in the AIA CA series, Things You Can Do Right Now, we have some information about the AIA 2030 commitment. Be sure to register for the October 8 FREE introduction to the commitment as well.

What is the AIA 2030 Commitment?
The 2030 Commitment is a free, voluntary AIA program for firms to align their firm goals and culture to support the Architecture 2030 Challenge – for all new buildings to be carbon neutral by 2030. Its mission is to transform the practice of architecture in a way that is holistic, firm-wide, project based, and data-driven. The program has existed for about a decade, and hundreds of firms have signed on so far.

2030 Signatory firms track performance data for all projects in their portfolio that are in a design phase, with the goal of meeting the 2030 Challenge fossil fuel reduction targets. In addition, signatory firms develop a "Sustainability Action Plan" to establish a path to transform their design culture to integrate sustainability into practice.

Why is the AIA 2030 Commitment important?
According to Architecture 2030, the urban built environment is responsible for 75% of annual global GHG emissions, and buildings alone account for 39%. The 2030 Challenge was established by Architecture 2030 in 2006 to establish targets for the building and design industry to align to the Paris Agreement targets for emissions reductions. The AIA adopted these targets and transformed the goals to a format that is adoptable and actionable for any architecture firm, from sole practitioners to large firms.

Some firms may be lucky enough to work on projects and with clients that are already "on board" with deep sustainability goals and green building certification targets. But that is likely not the case for the majority of clients or projects. The 2030 Commitment provides a method to "close the gap" with the rest of the projects in a typical firm's portfolio – it is a tool to establish a performance goal at the beginning of all projects, track progress towards the goals, demonstrate improvement, and provide value and cost savings to clients that may not have had low carbon goals initially.

The most important groundwork of the program happens in the realm of firm-wide culture change, to educate designers and enable the performance goals improvements to become visible. Because of this holistic approach, the 2030 Commitment is among the most important design tools available to create meaningful change across our profession in the face of climate change.

What are the results showing?
1.   The program's base is broad, and it is growing. As of July 2020, the 2030 Commitment has 818 firms signed on, with an average growth rate of 20% per year. The most recent reported data available show over 3 billion square feet of projects across 92 countries.

2.   2030 designs are projected to save money and carbon. Recent program-wide reported results showed the equivalent of 17.7 million metric tons of CO_2 emissions saved, and operating savings of more than $3.3 billion.
3.   Projects can achieve the targets across all project types and U.S. climate zones. The most recent "2030 By the Numbers" report released by AIA showed results of all projects based on climate zone and typology. Firms have demonstrated that the 2030 Commitment targets are achievable, regardless of location and project type.

4.   Firms can achieve the 2030 goals across their portfolio. Sixteen firms recently demonstrated that they could achieve the 2030 targets across all projects in their portfolio – signaling that education and firm culture change can transform practice.

5.   2030 Signatories are industry leaders. Seven of the ten most recent AIA Firm Award winners are also signatories to the 2030 Commitment. Firms that are dedicated to high performance work are also recognized for healthy work cultures and design excellence.

6.   Project performance is improving, but average results are still below the targets. While the targets have been proven as achievable for a set of the reported projects, most firms/projects are not achieving the 2030 goals. Program-wide performance has been incrementally improving year to year, but not at the rate needed to achieve the targets.

What's changed in the program?
In 2020, the program's stepped reduction targets have increased, from 70% reduction from a baseline building performance, to 80%. This expected change was established at the beginning of the program, leading to 90% reduction in 2025, and 100% in 2030. The program's metrics have been based on predicted energy use intensity (pEUI), which relies on efficiency and on-site renewable energy.

This current 80% reduction target based on this metric is very difficult especially for urban, dense projects or project typologies with very high loads, such as labs and hospitals, who can't produce on-site renewable energy to offset the energy consumed over the period of a year, even if the building is very energy efficient. Therefore, the program will incorporate off-site renewable energy beginning in the 2020 reporting year, as a means to achieve the program targets – while keeping design and efficiency at the center of the work for architects.

Additionally, the program will be evolving to address the goal to reduce fossil fuel combustion in buildings. On- and off-site renewables may only be used to offset grid electrical energy use. If gas is used in a building design, that energy and those emissions cannot be offset with renewable energy. Therefore, the program and tracking tool (known as the Design Data Exchange, or DDx) will be structured to make this technical distinction clearer.

Finally, embodied carbon is going to be included in the DDx as well. Designing for low embodied carbon is just as important (and for some project types in certain locations, more important) than low operational carbon. Many firms have started performing lifecycle analysis on their projects to understand embodied carbon impacts. While embodied carbon will not formally be wrapped into the AIA 2030 Commitment's target for the time being, the tool will enable firms to track that information and endeavor to show improvement year after year. It should be noted that Architecture 2030 has also issued a 2030 Challenge for Embodied Carbon, to achieve 65% reduction by 2030.

Look for more information about this from AIA this fall.

Costs:
Participation in the program and access to the DDx tool is free.

Get started:
- If your firm has not yet signed onto the commitment, ask why. Consider polling your coworkers to gauge interest and build support. And sign on. https://2030ddx.aia.org/registerFirm
- If your firm is already signed on but has not yet reported, get organized. Log into the free DDx tool and start tracking projects – now! Data tracking does not have to wait. https://2030ddx.aia.org/users/sign_in
- If your firm is already signed on and reporting, consider upping your game. Embodied carbon is now able to be tracked in the DDx.

Things you can do right now:
- Reach out to your local component to join, or start, a local 2030 Roundtable. Groups may already exist in your local area; if not – reach out and start connecting with others at firms that are responding to climate change through their practice.
- Reach out to a firm that has not yet signed on, and educate them on the 2030 Commitment. Small- and medium-sized firms are underrepresented signatories. To make an impact on climate change as an industry, all of us have to be on board. If you're an experienced signatory, help demystify the process.

- Don't forge the October 8 Introduction to the AIA 2030 Commitment. Learn more and register here<u>https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_53zmsYOmQ0CafA0RvJszVA</u>.

Tools and resources:
- AIA 2030 Commitment sign-on page: <u>https://2030ddx.aia.org/registerFirm</u>
- AIA 2030 Commitment Signatories: <u>https://www.aia.org/2030-directory</u>
- Examples of Sustainability Action Plans from other 2030 Signatories: <u>https://www.dropbox.com/sh/cq0g3s5f3ua3scj/AACfREITsLk5GKhHgUga5fAda?dl=0</u>
- AIA 2030 By The Numbers reports: <u>https://www.aia.org/resources/6676-aia-2030-commitment-by-the-numbers</u>
- DDx website: <u>https://2030ddx.aia.org/</u>