

THE 2023 AIA|LA ADVOCACY PLATFORM

Adaptive ReUse, Embodied Carbon, & Affordable Housing



Los Angeles

Our Mission & Values

As a professional organization with 4500+ members, AIA Los Angeles (AIA|LA) believes in the power of architecture to influence the well-being of Angelenos and to enhance the economic prosperity of our region. We are committed to creating a healthier, more beautiful, equitable, and resilient Los Angeles through design.

Our mission is to give the power of design and architecture to every corner of our Los Angeles.

Our vision is a city that flourishes from thoughtfully designed buildings and the spaces in between.

Expand Adaptive Reuse Citywide & Incentivize Office-To-Housing Conversions

- **Prioritize** a financial allocation in the 2024/ 2025 budget to model the success of Calgary's Downtown Incentive Program
- **Expand** citywide the Downtown Community Benefits Fee Ordinance to better accommodate the needs of adaptive reuse projects.
- **Clarify** the relationship between Form District Bonus FAR and incentive programs for maximum project potential.
- **Reduce** the rolling clock for the adaptive reuse program to expedite project financing and development.
- **Revise** the current NDC ordinance to encourage adaptive reuse housing conversions regardless of zoning.
- **Consider** the eligibility of all existing buildings for floor area incentives, regardless of historic status.
- **Implement** a tiered approach to Unified Incentives with increased floor area credits and flexibility for small sites.

Addressing our Housing Challenge w/ Procedural Reforms

- **Optimize** existing buildings. This could involve converting hotels or other buildings into temporary housing, or waiving ADA standards for existing buildings to make them more affordable.
- **Allow** adaptive reuse by right. This would make it easier to convert existing buildings into housing without having to go through a lengthy and expensive permitting process.
- **Create** a public list of multifamily housing with expiring covenants, city-owned land, and hotels that could be converted. This would make it easier for developers to find opportunities to develop new housing.
- **Pre-approve/standardize** plans that could be used to speed up the plan check process. This would save time and money for developers.
- **Push** for changes to design requirements that are too prescriptive. This would allow developers more flexibility in designing their projects.
- **Research** the feasibility of 3D printing for housing construction. 3D printing could potentially reduce the time and cost of building new homes.
- **Review** the structural code to identify areas where requirements could be reduced or simplified. This would make it easier to build affordable housing.
- **Advocate** for a change to 'commercial categorizing' in prevailing wage. Currently, any residential building over 5 stories triggers commercial rates. Changing this would make it cheaper to build taller and denser multi-family housing developments.

Lower Embodied Carbon in Our Built Environment

- **Require transparency** and disclosure of embodied carbon information at both the product and building levels. This can be achieved through the use of Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) and Whole Building Life Cycle Assessments (WBLCAs).
- **Set embodied carbon thresholds** for both products and buildings. This will help to incentivize the use of low-carbon materials and designs.
- **Adopt Buy Clean California** for all new construction and major retrofits. Buy Clean California is a program that sets limits on the embodied carbon of certain building materials.
- **Require Whole Building LCAs** for larger commercial buildings. This will help to identify and reduce sources of embodied carbon in new construction and major retrofits.
- **Incentivize low-carbon concrete.** Concrete is a major source of embodied carbon, so incentivizing the use of low-carbon concrete can have a significant impact.
- **Reduce minimum parking requirements.** Parking garages (especially underground) have a high embodied carbon footprint, so reducing minimum parking requirements can help to lower embodied carbon emissions.

LA 2028 & Empowering Communities

Recommendations for how to leverage LA 2028 Olympics & Paralympics to provide more equitable community-based outcomes that celebrate LA's cultural diversity:

- **Engage with the architecture and design community.** Partner with the AIA and other design professionals to develop inclusive and resilient urban design strategies, interim housing options, placemaking, and transportation alternatives.
- **Expand LA28's legacy mission.** Envision an inclusive legacy that benefits communities before, during, and after the Games. Leverage capital improvement projects, maintenance of sports facilities, and expanding the scope of Post-Games Surplus Distribution to empower local communities.
- **Partner with community stakeholders.** Leverage existing community outreach efforts to connect with local organizations and incorporate their feedback into the planning process.
- **Increase participation opportunities.** Utilize existing community engagement platforms, such as the Los Angeles Neighborhood Council system, to broaden participation in the Games planning process.
- **Promote international exchange.** Connect community stakeholders worldwide through international exchange programs, as encouraged by the IOC.
- **Develop a resilient and inclusive community engagement framework.** Collaborate on a framework that prioritizes community needs and ensures equitable outcomes.

Advancing The “Accelerated Equity Housing and Transit Development” Pilot Program

The AWTD Pilot Project is a public-private partnership that aims to accelerate housing development and economic growth around Metro stations. The project will start at the Slauson Avenue Metro station and will be phased in over time. The goal is to create vibrant and inclusive communities that are centered around transit.

The AWTD Pilot Project will focus on the following:

- **Housing:** The project will develop affordable housing that is accessible to transit. This will help to create a more equitable and inclusive community and provide more pathways to home-ownership in communities of color.
- **Infrastructure:** The project will invest in the infrastructure needed to support new development, such as utilities, water reclamation, streets, alleys, parks, playgrounds, open spaces, and public and private parking structures.
- **Inclusivity:** The project will ensure that the existing community is involved in the planning and development process and that they benefit from the project. This will be done through job training programs, affordable housing, and other initiatives.

Next Steps

- **Integrate design-thinking into policy discussions.** Architects can provide a holistic perspective that can help to solve multiple problems at once.
- **Create an advisory panel of architects and urban designers** that empowers Public Works & City Planning. This office would be responsible for coordinating design-based solutions across the city.
- **Appoint architects to boards and commissions.** This would give architects a voice in the decision-making process.
- **Have architects assist and advise in the review process of significant projects.** This would ensure that design considerations are taken into account early on.