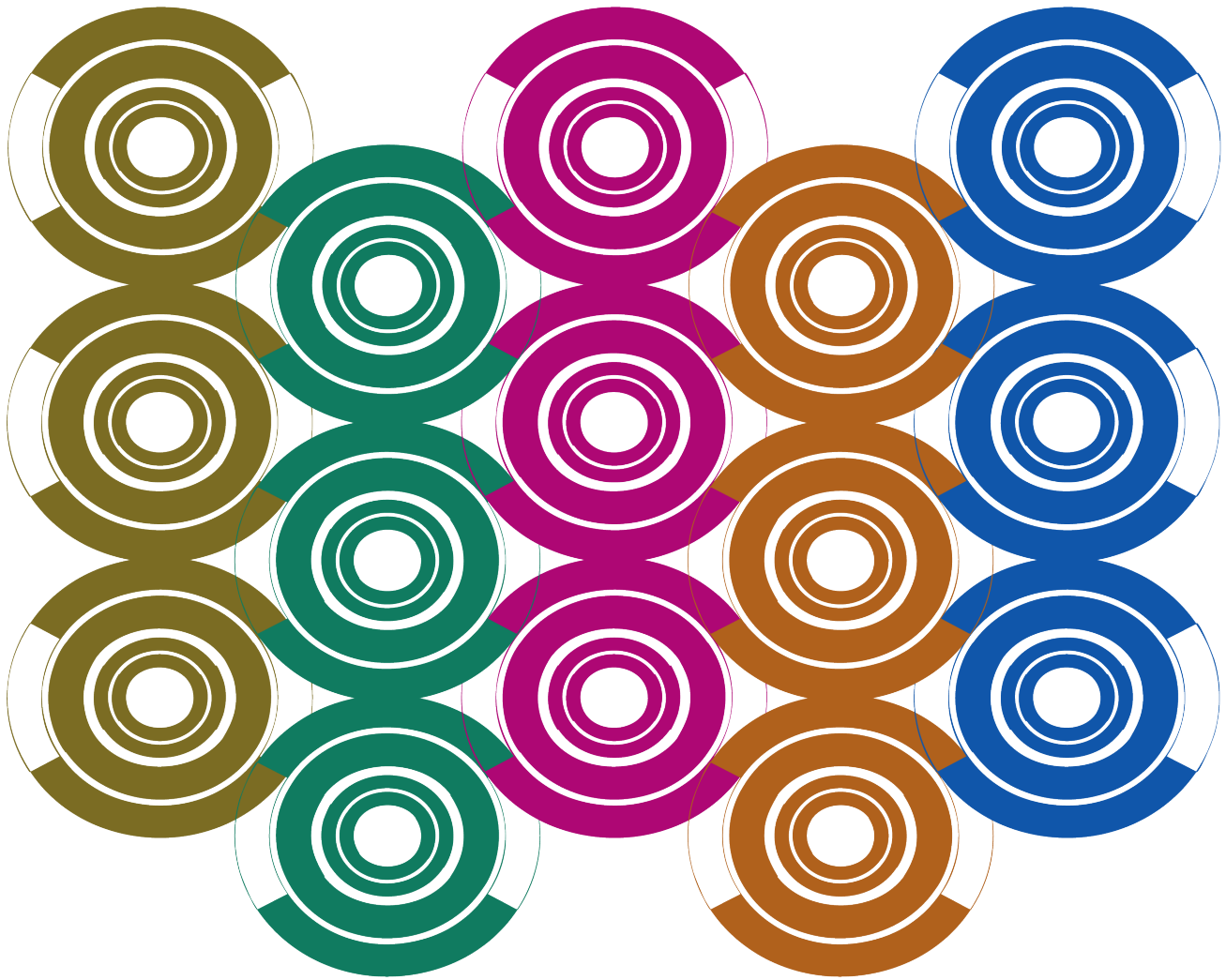




# Los Angeles

Strategic Plan  
2025-2028



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# Executive Statement

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## Strategic Plan 2025–2028

The membership of the American Institute of Architects Los Angeles and its Board of Directors recognize both the urgency of our social, economic, and environmental challenges, and the many opportunities as we look to the future.

With the 2028 Olympics approaching, we feel a renewed energy to make Los Angeles its best for the world to see. We recognize, our city will undergo significant change in the next four years. We are grateful for the honest and candid feedback and inspired by our membership’s passion for the future. Through this process, we identified key themes:

- **Climate Action is Imperative.** Architecture directly impacts sustainability and social, economic, and environmental justice. Our members are committed to making durable change.
- **Architecture Takes a Village.** Our members want to expand AIA|LA membership to include all those involved in shaping the built environment. We seek more voices, perspectives, and experiences in AIA|LA.
- **Large and Small Firms Are Vital.** Our members value learning from each other and want more opportunities for cross-pollination of ideas and expertise.
- **The Future is Our Youth.** There are many paths to becoming an architect, and the value of architectural education fuels the creative economies of Los Angeles. We can meet our goals of Diversity and Inclusion by starting with early engagement.
- **Focus is Needed.** We do a lot. Members appreciate the work and communication of AIA|LA. Now is the time to focus efforts and empower our member-leaders to engage in timely, meaningful ways.
- **Architecture as Aspiration.** Our members believe they can change the world for the better through architecture. They want to share these stories and see what is possible through the built work around the world.

This Strategic Plan provides direction for the AIA Los Angeles as we plan for 2025-2028. Let us realize a shared mission together.

The 2024 AIA|LA Strategic Plan Taskforce: Heather Renee Barker, Chair, Nathan Bishop, Vice Chair (for 2025 succession), Christiana Kyrillou, Past Chair, Tara Barauskas, Dr. Giovanna Brasfield, Ismar Enriquez, David Frey, Carlos Augusto Garcia, Will Wright, Staff Liaison.

# Introduction

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The American Institute of Architects, Los Angeles (AIA|LA) is committed to empowering its members and shaping the future of architecture in Los Angeles. To ensure the organization remains healthy, aligned with its mission, and responsive to a changing world, the Strategic Plan Taskforce leads a cyclical strategic planning process as standard procedure.

This plan reflects the urgency of today’s social, economic, and environmental challenges, as well as the exciting opportunities ahead—particularly the transformative impact of the 2028 Olympics on the city’s built environment.

Over the past eight months, the strategic planning process has been shaped by member feedback gathered through surveys, listening sessions, and direct conversations. This co-creative approach identified member needs, incorporated their insights, and established shared aspirations for the future of architecture in Los Angeles. The resulting AIA|LA Strategic Plan 2025-2028 synthesizes this input into a plan that reflects the voices and ideas of our membership.

The plan is grounded in five core pillars: Value, Impact, Inspiration, Inclusion, and Advocacy. These pillars will guide AIA|LA’s work over the next three years, ensuring the chapter remains responsive to industry shifts and the evolving demands of the profession.



# Methodology

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## Methodology

Following two years of determining metrics and optimizing structures, the Strategic Plan Task Force of the AIA|LA Board of Directors conducted a “Summer of Strategy.” This included the “10 Questions for the Future of AIA Los Angeles” survey, a listening session, and informal conversations at numerous events.

Guided by a human experience design methodology, we listened, gathered data, synthesized the information, and ground-truthed the resulting outcomes which ultimately guide this AIA Los Angeles 2025-2028 Strategic Plan.

# Member Voices

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## Member Voices

Our approach was to start from the shared values of the prior strategic plan, still largely intact, and adapt them for the future. Through hours of discussions and written feedback, we identified shared ideas and values.

***"Architecture that lifts spirits, people of the street, and the environment."***

"Many of our newer housing efforts are beginning to show inspired design."

**"Advocacy for Olympics legacy projects that improve quality of life are designed for reconnecting communities"**

"Effective planning, urban design, and enhancement of places that creates beautiful, functional, dense, vibrant, and more sustainable neighborhoods and commercial centers."

***"Affordable Housing and Public spaces."***

**"I feel like larger firms have a big role to play, and they need to involve smaller firms and smaller businesses into the whole system."**

"Community engagement, effecting change for our environment, government outreach, mentorship, exchange of ideas, and being a nexus for opportunities to participate and connect."

**"Exhibitions, resources for business development"**

*"Everybody needs their own voice to be heard, having more stakeholders involved in the process, like I am also a general contractor - so I also build."*

**"I think we need to talk about these these problems we're gonna face. If we don't do anything about it, [in] 4 or 5 or 10 years, it's it's gonna be a big, huge problem."**

*"I prioritized...advocacy and inclusivity, because Los Angeles is a vibrant and diverse city, and we have to be able to create spaces that are welcoming and supportive."*

*"Architecture driven by local community needs."*

***"I hope to see it at the 2028 Olympics here in Los Angeles."***

**"Hybrid, In Person and Online integrations for the community to create a social hub and innovative think space to share, teach, learn, collaborate and present ideas for the future of LA."**

*"...after school programs for the neighborhood youth."*

"Hold more developer round tables combining forces with organizations like ULI to help spur the power of design, the opportunities we can foster with a larger development community"

**"I can assist with the development of planting a seed to grow roots for the future students and professionals to better integrate in the workforce."**

# Synthesis / Analysis

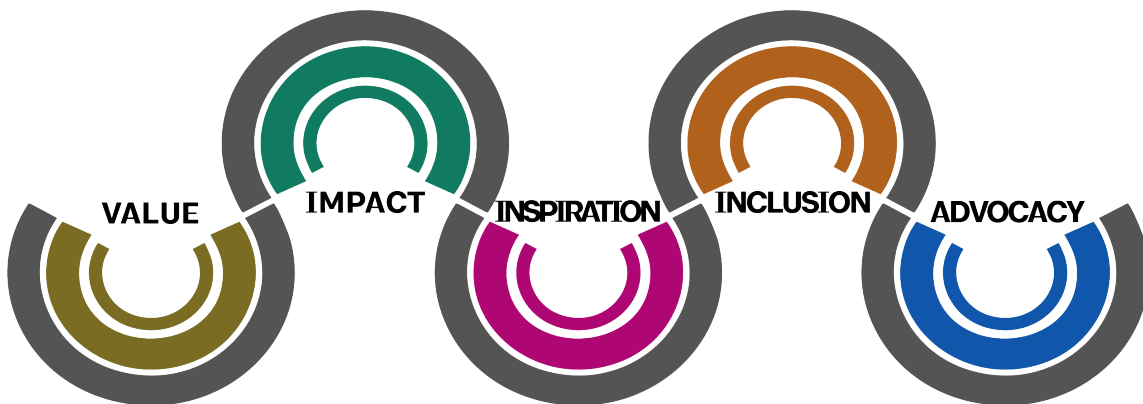
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## Synthesis and Analysis

As a member-driven organization, the American Institute of Architects, Los Angeles, acts on behalf of its membership. We analyzed and synthesized the range of needs, ambitions, and the desire for action into a plan for the next three years. This includes refining our Mission, Vision, and Strategic Pillars. Through this strategic plan, we aim to empower our members as they make a difference for our profession, communities, and planet.

Two key principles that informed this plan include:

- **Aligning with Our Values.** The main activities of AIA|LA must be intentional, clearly structured, membership-driven, and focused on meaningful experiences that elevate architecture in the community.
- **Working from Our Strengths.** Since the previous strategic plan, much has changed. We have a new space, and our nonprofit organization, Architecture for Communities Los Angeles (ACLA), has established impactful programs across Los Angeles. AIA|LA and ACLA are housed in a new Center for Communities, located in the historic West Adams district in the heart of Los Angeles. Together, we provide programming that celebrates architecture and design and educates communities about design's positive impact.





# Mission

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Mission (Our Purpose)

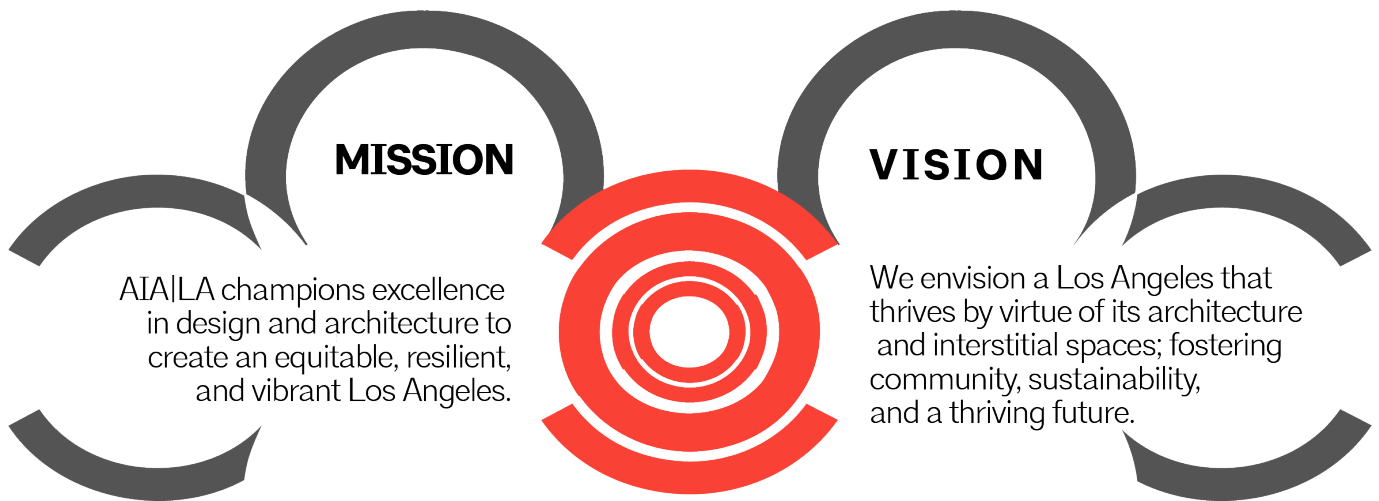
AIA|LA champions excellence in design and architecture to create an equitable, resilient, and vibrant Los Angeles.

# Vision

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Vision (Our Aspiration)

We envision a Los Angeles that thrives through architecture and the spaces in between; fostering community, sustainability, and a vibrant future.



# Strategic Pillars

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## Strategic Pillars (Guiding Principles / Key Performance Indicators)

- **Value** Leverage the shared intelligence of the AIA|LA to support professional success for all members.
- **Impact** Enable and expand climate action to build resilient and sustainable communities.
- **Inspiration** Showcase design that innovates in the face of challenges and inspires future possibilities.
- **Inclusion** Broaden engagement opportunities to promote equity and diversity in design.
- **Advocacy** Ensure our members have a strong voice in shaping policy that impacts the built environment.



# Shared Ideas / Values

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## Shared Ideas and Values

For AIA|LA, Design and People are critically important. Architecture questions, supports, engages, and brings value to industry and the community through advocacy, events, and connection.

In order to assess the impact we make, we set objectives aligned to our shared ideas and values.

# Objectives

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## Objectives (What We Measure)

- **Mobilize for Impact:** Focus and align programs, member services, and resources to create solutions to global challenges.
- **Enhance Quality of Life for All Angelenos Through Design Excellence:** Emphasize the value of architecture to benefit the community.
- **Foster a More Inclusive Profession:** Increase representation and diversity within AIA Los Angeles and the architecture and design industries.
- **Increase Member Value and Engagement:** Improve communication and event accessibility, while supporting smaller, member-led initiatives.
- **Political Advocacy:** Engage frequently and consistently with political leaders.

# Tactics

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## Tactics (How We Take Action)

### Action for VALUE

1. **Architecture Takes a Village.** Expand AIA|LA membership to include all those involved in shaping the built environment. We seek more voices, perspectives, and experiences in AIA|LA.
2. **Empower Small Practices and Emerging Professionals:** Provide targeted resources, mentorship, scholarships, and networking to support smaller firms and individuals, while bridging to larger firms.
3. **Large and Small Firms Are Vital.** Activate programs for creative cross-pollination of design ideas and expertise. Our members value learning from each other.

### Action for IMPACT

1. **Adapting to Industry Needs:** Respond to industry changes, including new technologies and practice areas, reflected in the events and programming available to members.
2. **Climate Action is Imperative.** Architecture directly impacts sustainability and social, economic, and environmental justice. Show how our members are committed to making durable change.
3. **Develop a Policy Platform Addressing Key Urban Design Issues:** Engage with government through an urban design issues platform focused on sustainable development and accessible public places.

### Action for INSPIRATION

1. **Architecture as Aspiration.** Share stories of what is possible through the built work around the world. Our members believe they can improve lives through architecture.
2. **Elevating Architecture's Value:** Increase engagement, exhibition, and recognition by highlighting architecture's importance to shaping the future.
3. **The Future is Our Youth.** There are many paths to becoming an architect. Emphasize the value of an architectural education as fueling the creative economy of Los Angeles. Diversity and inclusion start with early engagement.

### Action for INCLUSION

1. **Cultivate a Dynamic and Inclusive AIA|LA Community:** Create welcoming physical and virtual spaces and informal networking events among members, encouraging interaction, knowledge sharing, and growth.
2. **Enable Interaction through Online Platforms and Social Media Groups:** Facilitate communication and resource sharing among AIA|LA members.
3. **Enhance Mentorship Programs Connecting Experienced Professionals with Emerging Architects:** Facilitate knowledge transfer and career guidance within the AIA|LA community.

### Action for ADVOCACY

1. **Advocate for Equitable Design Solutions:** Champion people, policies, and projects addressing societal challenges and promoting inclusive design.
2. **Engaging with External Events:** Lead the discourse on design and the 2028 Olympics, AIA|LA should be a strong voice for the work that will affect the city's future.
3. **Fostering Collaboration and Mentorship:** Establish programs to share resources that support architecture and design practice growth at every level.

# Implementation

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## Implementation

The AIA|LA Board of directors will implement this strategic plan by:

1. Allocating resources dedicated to realizing the objectives of this plan.
2. Develop a timeline for fulfilling the actions described in this 2025-2028 Strategic Plan
3. Evaluate and measure success by tracking engagement, attendance, and member feedback on AIA|LA Initiatives.

# Recommendations

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## Recommendations to future Strategic Plan Task Force members

The SPTF is the steward of the AIA|LA Strategic Plan. As the facilitators of this current planning process, the 2024 task force identified many valuable engagements with membership. We make the following recommendations to the future task force members:

- Conduct annual joint community listening sessions to assess and gain input from membership;
- Highlight elements from the Strategic Plan at the Annual Board Retreat;
- Create a standing Finance and Budget committee, one member should also sit on the STPF;
- Align Financial Metrics to Strategic Plan;
- Measuring and assessing our Guiding Principles (Value, Impact, Inspiration, Inclusion, and Advocacy) as Key Performance Indicators.

Continued feedback will guide AIA|LA in addressing the evolving needs of our members and the profession, directing adjustments to be made, and ensuring AIA Los Angeles remains a vital force in shaping our city's architectural landscape.

# Executive Summary

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## Summary

The engagement and feedback we received show a strong desire for AIA Los Angeles to leverage the power of design and architecture to benefit all Angelenos.

Our members envision an inclusive AIA that represents a broader spectrum of voices, fostering an equitable and collaborative industry that embraces small firms.

## Mission

AIA|LA champions excellence in design and architecture to create an equitable, resilient, and vibrant Los Angeles.

## Vision

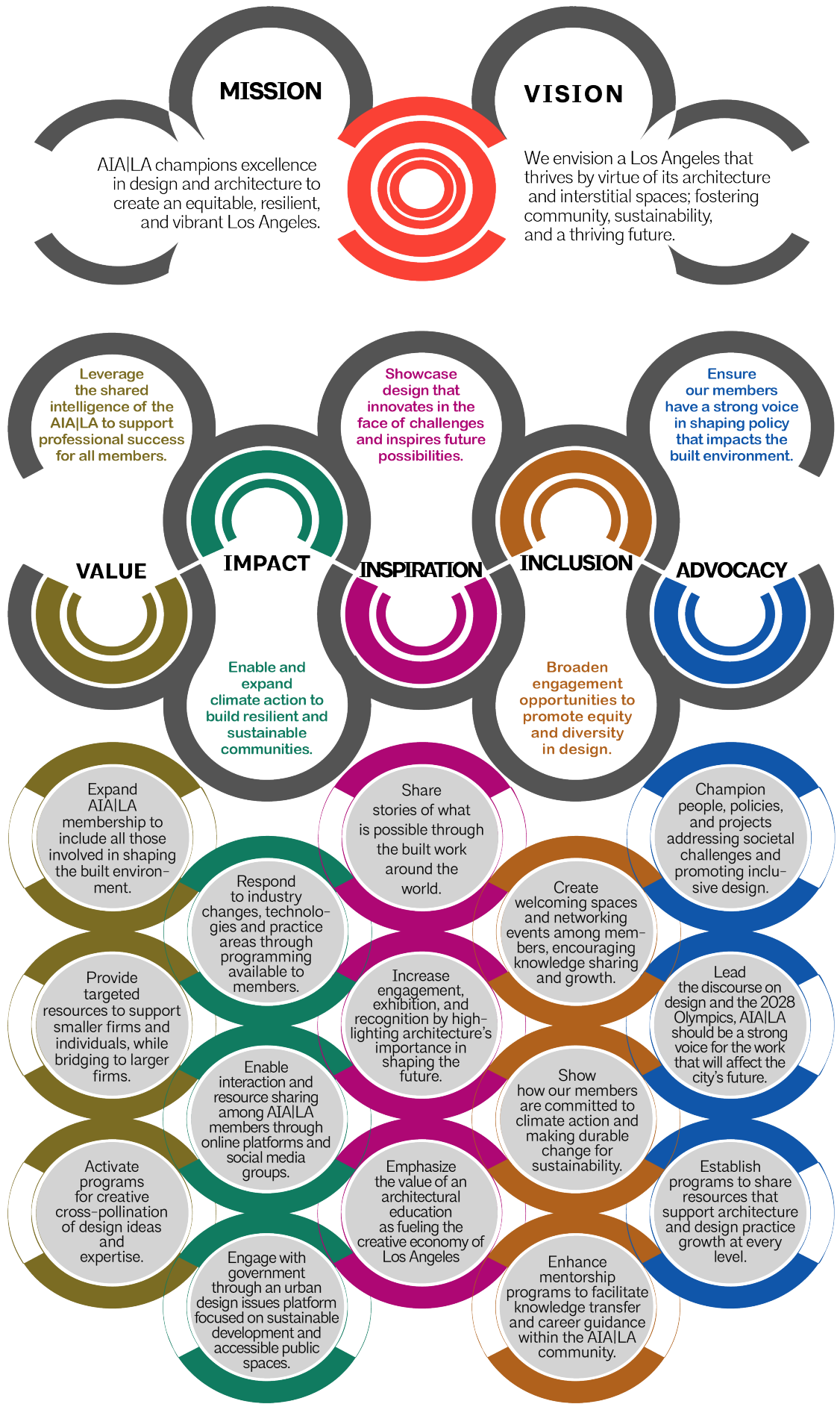
We envision a Los Angeles that thrives by virtue of its architecture and interstitial spaces; fostering community, sustainability, and a thriving future.

## Strategic Pillars (Core Values)

Value, Impact, Inspiration, Inclusion, Advocacy

Key themes and actionable insights aligned to our core values include:

- **Elevating Architecture's Value:** Members advocate for increased outreach to highlight architecture's importance.
- **Supporting Small Practices:** Providing resources and advocacy for small architectural firms is essential.
- **Fostering Collaboration and Mentorship:** Members seek mentorship and collaboration to share knowledge and support growth.
- **Adapting to Industry Needs:** AIA|LA must respond to industry changes, including new technologies and practice areas.
- **Engaging with External Events:** With the upcoming Olympics, AIA|LA should be part of the dialogue affecting the city's architecture.
- **Strengthening Community Engagement:** Members desire more informal networking events, building a connected and vibrant AIA community.



# Acknowledgements

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*With thanks from the AIA|LA Strategic Plan Task Force*

## Strategic Plan Task Force Members 2022-24

Heather Renee Barker (Chair '24)  
Nathan Bishop (Vice Chair '24 for 2025 succession)  
Christiana Kyrillou (Past Chair '24, Chair '23)  
Ziba Ghassemi (Past Chair '22)  
Tara Barauskas  
Dr. Giovanna Brasfield  
Ismar Enriquez  
David Frey  
Carlos Augusto Garcia  
Will Wright (Staff Liaison '24)  
Cyrice Griffith (Staff Liaison '23)  
Steve Tanner (Staff Liaison '22)

## Acknowledging leadership and service to the AIA|LA

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Chava Danielson, AIA  
(Vice President '24, Secretary '23, '22)  
Toni Lewis, AIA, LEED AP, CASp  
(Treasurer '24, '23)  
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Leslie Sydnor, AIA, NOMA, LEED AP  
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Mitra Memari, AIA  
(Past President '23, President '22)  
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