

AIA IN CALIFORNIA DISASTER ASSISTANCE PLAN

MEETING REPORT - JANUARY 30, 2025



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A COORDINATED RESPONSE

On January 30, 2025, leaders from AIA Los Angeles, AIA Pasadena & Foothill, AIA San Fernando Valley, AIA Long Beach/South Bay, and AIA California gathered to create a unified plan for response, recovery and rebuilding in the communities that were devastated by the southern California wildfires. Bolstered by hundreds of members and allied professionals who quickly volunteered to assist, the goal of this coordination meeting was to develop a plan to help the organization – at every level – to provide meaningful, actionable, and sustainable contributions to this recovery effort.

The proposal acknowledges the limitations of time, resources, and member capacity in AIA components but emphasizes the crucial role of uniting architects in building a more just, equitable, and resilient future. To maximize impact, five areas were identified:

1. **Advocacy:** develop a unified policy playbook with real-world applications to guide local advocacy efforts.
2. **Education:** of architects, clients, and policymakers about both the current and future state
3. **Communication:** create a unified message from the architectural profession about issues impacting recovery and rebuilding.
4. **Coordinated Resources:** establish a central hub for education, resources, and volunteer coordination to streamline and avoid duplication and speak with a consistent voice across all components engaged in disaster assistance.

The group believed by organizing efforts effectively, AIA can demonstrate leadership and ensure meaningful, sustainable contributions to the recovery process across the region.



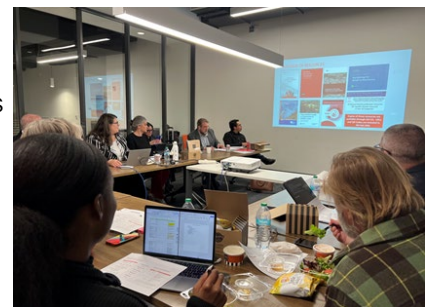
Brainstorming together, the group developed lists of tactical responses and then refined to create specific next steps and responsibilities:

WHAT ONE THING CAN AIA DO?

1. Outreach/make contacts with city officials
2. Create a 1-page document for clients about the value of an architect (in layperson terminology)
3. Position AIA as a single source of truth
4. Position AIA as a trusted resource
5. Increase AIA voice in public realm
6. Create a MOU with FEMA/CalOES when disasters strike, solidifying architects as a built-in resource
7. Become trusted partners within communities
8. Connect with and mobilize allied professionals
9. Mobilize 1000 architects speaking together to increase visibility
10. Serve as the trusted source for the membership/provide information = reinforces WHY AIA
11. Help articulate how to manage client expectations
12. Develop media campaign – public radio, newspapers
13. Draft a set of principles – THIS WE BELIEVE
14. Vocalize architects' perspectives as a resource to government, clients and the public
15. Advocate with insurance agencies
16. Leverage everything to get members involved in policy making (citizen architects!)
17. Mobilize 1000 members to engage as advocates in front of public officials!
18. Encourage members to get involved
19. Provide clarity and focus of architects' agenda on behalf of the built environment
20. Become a “think tank” for resilient design
21. Identify AIA's point of differentiation

ADVOCACY – position architects as thought leaders for the built environment by designing sustainable, inclusive, and resilient I spaces that enhance communities and promote well-being

1. Position statements
2. Public comments – engage local government process
3. Messaging for use at local agency level (ex: LA Department of Building & Safety)
4. Identify connections with elected officials
 - a. Ex: Mobilize female AIA LA contributors \$ to Karen Bass
5. Develop innovative solutions to problems
6. Coastal Commission webinar (March 20- AIA Long Beach hosting)
7. Outreach to other organizations about education about fee structures
8. Outreach to collateral organizations (coordinate efforts)
 - DBIA
 - ASLA
 - CalFire
 - APA
 - SEAOC
 - Civil Engineers
 - ICC
 - AGC



EDUCATION / CLIENTS – tools and info/materials to help members assist their clients

1. Manage expectations
2. Understanding of “soft costs”
3. Gap between insurance payout and rebuilding
4. Insurance impacts

EDUCATION / MEMBERS – serve as an information hub with accurate information about the impact of changing policies and regulations on design and delivery of projects

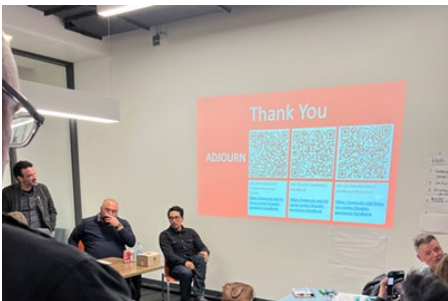
1. Real world implications of current situations
2. Opt-In/opt out process
3. Foundation inspections – SEAOC
4. Understanding insurance process/issues
5. Process and timeline
6. Impacts of pro bono design services (and potential liability)
7. Resilient design principles

COMMUNICATIONS – create public perception AIA and the architects voice is relevant

1. Produce Op Eds (re: issues impacting the built environment)
2. Coordinated media campaign
3. Draft a “vision” for the future of the region – what’s the “good” that could come out of this disaster?
 - a. In 15 years – what will neighborhoods look like?
 - i. Visualize a community that can co-exist with fire events
 - ii. What does the future look like?

WHAT’S NEEDED?

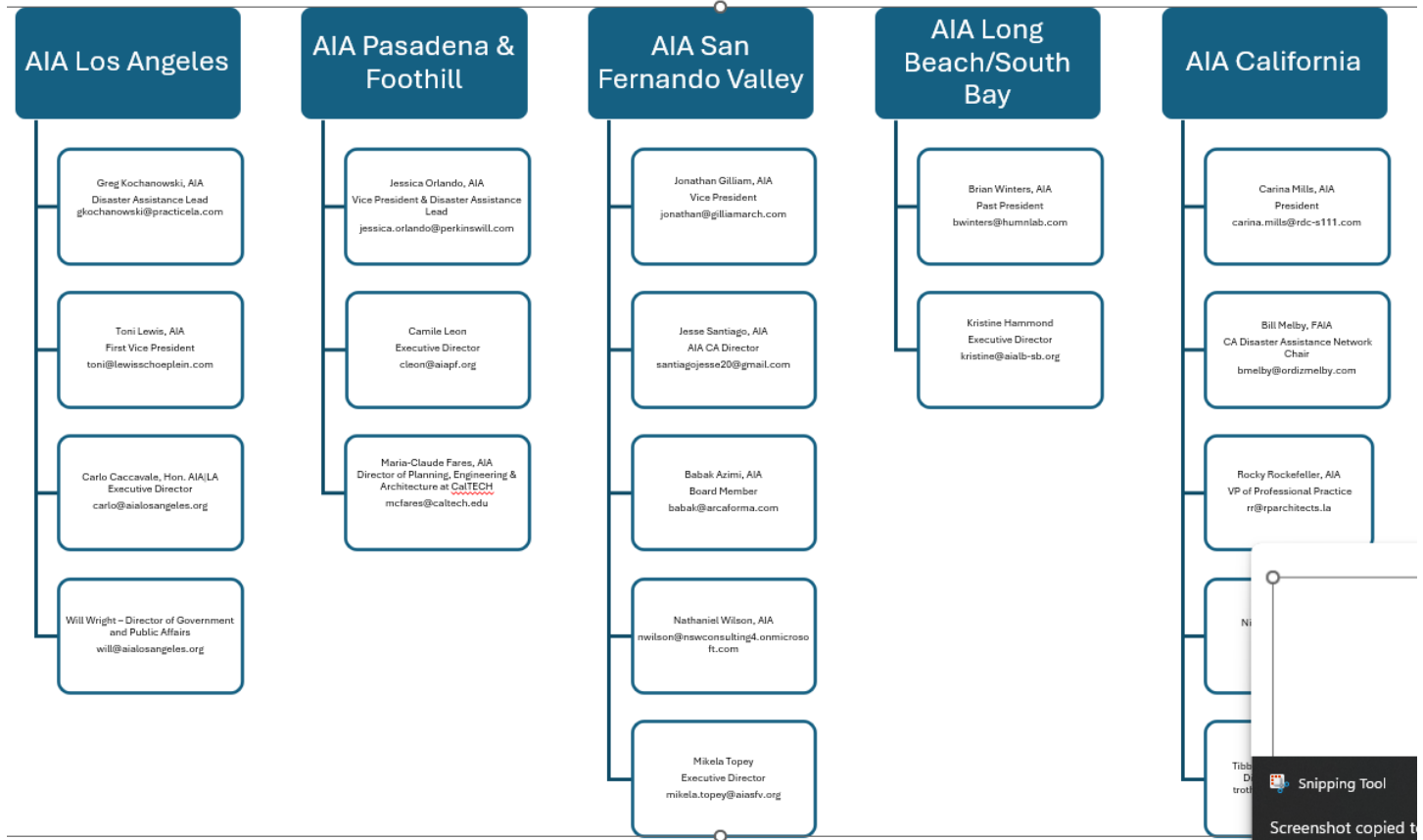
1. Summary documents of public policy changes LA municipalities have already adopted (and impact of these decisions; position architects as trusted advisors)
2. A unified media outreach plan
3. A directory of elected officials (who knows who?) – AIA P&F has started
4. An understanding of the rebuilding process and timeline
 - a. Utilize existing resources and partner with allied organizations (ex: So Cal NOMA started this too)
 - b. Julia Donohue, FAIA as a resource/Tubbs Fire experience



ACTION PLAN

Action Item	Action
AIA P&F	Directory of elected officials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share and populate existing GoogleDoc • Consider developing a “form” to solicit membership wide information (identify who’s serving in local appointed/elected positions)
AIA LB/SB	Summary document of policy changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific Crest Consultants • Kimberlina Whettam • Psomas
AIA LA	Education session about recovery/rebuilding efforts for members (hold by March 15) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy changes • Process and timeline • Our positions about each issue (THIS WE BELIEVE)
AIA (in partnership with ACLA)	2x8 exhibition/competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student design competition to focus on resiliency/rebuilding
Greg & Jessica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guiding Principles (THIS WE BELIEVE) • “Best of” from allied organizations
AIA CA	Consolidate Volunteer List <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify where we can utilize volunteers – ask to ID specialty • Design • Visualization • Getting clients through the process
AIA CA	Communicate with volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Message to consolidated list • Share plan • How to engage with specific projects
AIA SFV	Organize “Minute Man Team” – Four Chapter Leaders (as designated by the chapter) to respond to proposed changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group to take a position/provide technical expertise/AIA positions on proposed changes
AIA CA	Education session about involvement
AIA P&F	Resource document for clients <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 page – process overview (what to expect) • Working with an architect
	Communication campaign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 page – scope of work
AIA CA	Research grants for community wildfire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leslie & James to send information (due by end of February)
AIA CA	Communication with members within 48 hours

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APPENDICES

1. Presentation deck (attached)
2. [Component Disaster Assistance Toolkit](#)



AIA California

AIA Los Angeles

AIA Pasadena & Foothill

AIA San Fernando Valley

AIA Long Beach/South Bay

AIA Fire Response in California

One Vision, One Effort, One Voice