

**September 9, 2025**

**Honorable Mayor Karen Bass:**

The City of Los Angeles  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

CC: Rachel Freeman, Deputy Mayor for Business and Economic Development

**Subject: Standard Plan Pilot Program**

**Dear Honorable Mayor Karen Bass:**

On behalf of the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA|LA), representing over 4,500 architects, designers, emerging professionals, and students, we are writing to express deep concern with the recently launched Single Family Home Standard Plans Pilot Program for fire rebuilds.

This initiative, as currently presented, simply does not recognize the complexity of the design, engineering, and documentation required in the process of producing a single-family home, nor does it respect the professional expertise required to realize a successful project. As the most important voice of the architecture profession, we feel we cannot recommend that our members or colleagues participate in this program, in its current iteration.

Every project constructed in Southern California has a specific relationship to its site; to the conditions of the land, its soil and topography; to its climate and orientation; to the zoning of that neighborhood. Each project represents the orchestration of the needs of a client, the requirements of the context, and the regulations that public agencies have overlain regarding energy usage, water retention, seismic requirements, and neighborhood concerns.

We do want to work with the Mayor's office, and absolutely are committed to helping our city heal and our residents rebuild. We are not opposed to a standard plan program with fast-track permit approvals for this purpose. A number of firms and groups of architects have themselves initiated a kind of predesigned plan program available to homeowners, and a number of material suppliers have initiated programs offering deep discounts. However, in each of these cases, the work of completing the design and engineering of a set of plan-check-ready documents is not taken up without regard for the site, without a client, and with no professional fees for that portion of the work.

Los Angeles County has also begun a process that we feel better acknowledges both the process and the expertise of the professionals involved and, because of that, stands a better chance of successfully

assisting homeowners who suffered losses in the fires to rebuild and return to their neighborhoods. The ‘road to recovery’ portion of the Los Angeles County website includes the following descriptions:

*To begin the construction process, your proposed project will need to be accurately defined in detail by preparing design plans. These plans need to be prepared by a design professional. A California-licensed architect or engineer may be required to prepare the design plans. For complex soil conditions, foundation/site work, or structural designs, detailed engineering may also be necessary to support the proposed design*

And, to introduce their standard plan program:

*Selecting a [pre-approved plan](#) is also an option. Before you begin:*

- *Every property is unique. A pre-approved design may not work for your property due to site-specific constraints. Verify with Planning and the Building and Safety Division the pre-approved design works for your property before you contract with a professional.*

We feel strongly that the involvement of the architecture community in the crafting of this program is essential to its effectiveness and future success. It is in our interest to both ensure that homeowners do not misunderstand the process and are not disappointed at being promised a way forward that simply will not materialize, and to engage architects in a way that leverages the full depth of our experience and our expertise. Our staff and our membership are available to meet and help craft a program that is a more responsible way forward, equitable to our community of architects and allied professionals, and honestly engages the needs of residents who are looking to return and rebuild.

Please contact Will Wright – Director, Government & Public Affairs, at [will@aialosangeles.org](mailto:will@aialosangeles.org) or at (213) 639-0764 for deeper coordination.

Truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chava Danielson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Chava Danielson, AIA**  
**2025 President, AIA Los Angeles**