

Report

from the Strategic Council

From:

Jessica O'Donnell, AIA, 2025 Moderator
Abigail Brown, FAIA, 2025 Vice Moderator

To:

AIA Leadership

Mission: *The AIA Strategic Council advances the architectural profession by informing the AIA Board and other Institute bodies about important professional issues, opportunities, and threats. The Council has an outward and forward-focused vision with an emphasis on long-term goals and outcomes.*

What Does the Strategic Council Do? *To learn more about the role and activities of the Strategic Council, click [HERE](#).*

From the Moderator + Vice Moderator

The past month on the Council has been filled with robust discussion and elections for our new At-Large Representatives to the Council, our 2026 Moderator, and our 2026 Moderator-Elect/2027 Moderator. Additionally, we held elections for the At-Large Director on the AIA Board.

We are excited to welcome Samantha Markham, AIA and Carl Sergio, AIA as our incoming At-Large Representatives for 2026-2029.

Matthew Barnett, AIA was elected as the 2026 Moderator-Elect/2027 Moderator and Jessica O'Donnell, AIA was elected as the 2026 Moderator.

Congratulations to Jeffrey Seabold, FAIA who was elected as the At-Large Director to the AIA Board for 2026-2029.

The coming months will also be action packed. Each of our seven study groups are preparing their report outs to the Council, which are slated to occur between mid-August to mid-September. Shortly after those wrap up, we will have our September full Council Assembly where we will prioritize the collective recommendations from the Council to the AIA Board.

We recently provided Strategic Council updates to AIA Leaders across the country on the August Leadership Exchange Calls. Attached to this monthly report is the expanded Council slide deck, including updates from each of our seven study groups for your reference. As always, please reach out to your Council Representative, or any Councilor with questions or comments.

Jessica M. O'Donnell, AIA 2025 Moderator + **Abigail R. Brown**, FAIA 2025 Vice Moderator

*Special thanks to our **committee chairs** who help guide our work and inform our decision-making process: **Jeff Seabold, FAIA** (Best Practices Committee Chair), **Mary Womble, AIA & Marc Mondor, AIA** (Communications Co-Chairs), and **Mike Daly, AIA** (Elections Chair).*

Council News

STUDY GROUP UPDATES

AIA OF THE FUTURE

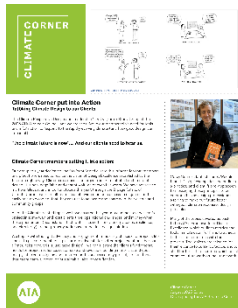
This group is synthesizing their SWOT analysis and conversations with Allied organizations. Looking at potential expansion of AIA membership tent and what that could look like (ie: what can Framework for design excellence tell us about who to connect with or ways for members to be more engaged?)

ARCHITECT OF THE FUTURE

This team broke into 3 groups of synthesize work to date (research & inspiration incorporates previous AIA personal work; person exercise breakdown; verbalization of AIA25 outreach and survey).

CLIMATE RESPONSIVE DESIGN & LEADERSHIP

This group is digging into Regenerative Design, what it is, what it is not. How it can be inclusive and additive to the Framework for Design Excellence as another layer.



ENHANCE YOUR SUSTAIN-ABILITIES this August with tips and methods to talk with clients about Climate Design. Link to the PDF can be found [here](#).

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

This group is working on their image generation for their report. The three subgroups are diligently working to refine their work to date and preparing for the council report out.

DIGITAL ARCHITECTURE

The group is working towards Council report out in August and refining the synthesis of all work into the 3 page summary. 3 subgroups are continuing their work, but also diligently tying aspiration of AI into tangible realities of implementation into the practice of architecture.

RESILIENT PRACTICE MODELS

This group is having final meetings with staff members to gut check our recommendations are complete. Final surveying complete and the study group presentation draft is underway. The Research in Practice report is complete and will be issued after our presentation next week. Continuing our evaluation of executive orders issued through the rest of the year to continue to advise the Board.

10-YEAR VALUATION & FUTURE BLUEPRINT

This group has been meeting weekly since AIA25 and things are moving forward at lightning pace. Current work includes conceptual draft org charts and possible bylaw edits needed for this proposed version of the council to become real. This group did meet with the Governance Task Force Chair and Council representatives on that Task Force in early August.

Institute News

AIA OPPOSES EPA'S NEW POSITION ON GREENHOUSE GAS DEREGULATION

AIA strongly opposes the EPA's anti-science decision to rescind the long-standing finding that greenhouse gas emissions endanger planetary, ecosystem, and human health. No matter what the EPA implements, AIA is committed to partnering with the private sector, state and local communities, property owners, and developers to champion the creation of innovative, cutting-edge buildings.

The full press release can be found [here](#).

CALL TO ACTION: to submit a public comment expressing opposition to the EPA's position on greenhouse gas, [visit this link](#) or email a-andr-Docket@epa.gov, include in the subject line: **Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2025-0194**. Comments must be submitted on or before September 21, 2025.

AIA ADVOCATES FOR PRESERVATION AND TRANSPARENCY IN PROPOSED \$200 MILLION WHITE HOUSE EXPANSION

AIA has issued a formal recommendation to the Committee for the Preservation of the White House regarding the proposed \$200 million East Ballroom addition to the iconic structure. The recommendations are grounded in its Framework for Design Excellence, which links design decisions to measurable outcomes for preservation, building performances, occupant health and safety, and long-term stewardship.

The full press release and AIA's recommendation to the Committee for the Preservation of the White House can be found [here](#).

AIA AWARDS PROGRAMS

The 2026 AIA Awards season continues to open the application period for award programs that define architectural excellence by highlighting exemplary people, organizations, and projects. For the most up-to-date requirements, please visit the [online application portal](#).

More information on the awards and application periods can be found [here](#).

REGIONAL & URBAN DESIGN KNOWLEDGE COMMUNITY: URBAN MORPHOSIS

Registration is now open for Urban Morphosis: Reimagining Cities through Adaptation for October 28-29, 2025, in Dallas, Texas.

Hosted by the AIA Regional and Urban Design Knowledge Community (RUDC), the symposium features fast-paced talks and dialogue with architects, urban designers, planners, technologists, community advocates, investors, and others. Speakers will deliver 10 to 12-minute presentations that address one of the four focused themes outlined below, each framed by open questions that reflect the pressing challenges of 2025.

For more information, [visit the RUDC Symposium website](#).

Upcoming events

Date	Event	Location	Link
November 3-5	Women's Leadership Summit	Atlanta, GA	Registration
December 3-5	AIA Governance Week	Washington, D.C.	

For more events, visit the AIA events page at: <https://www.aia.org/community/events>

Feedback

We value your input! If you have questions or ideas for the Strategic Council, email us at StrategicCouncil@aia.org. To learn more about the work of the Strategic Council, please visit the [Strategic Council webpage at AIA.org](#).

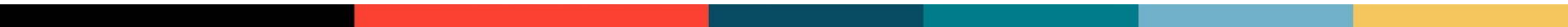
Attachments

- Strategic Council – August 2025 Leadership Exchange Call slides



Strategic Council Update

Leadership Exchange Calls - August 2025



The Strategic Council

Where we are as of August 2025:

- We have made a point to include short study group updates in each of our Monthly Council Reports to keep all members apprised of how our work is progressing;
- We are wrapping up our work for 2025 with 45 minute study group report outs scheduled every other week from the middle of August through the middle of September;
- A full Council Assembly will occur on September 23 and the Council will meet in-person during Governance Week in December;
- We just wrapped up our internal Council elections. Thank you to all who expressed interest and campaigned for these important positions...and congratulations to the five elected individuals!

Strategic Council Elections



Jeffrey
Seabold, FAIA

**2026-2029 At-Large
Director to the AIA Board,**
elected by the Strategic
Council



Samantha
Markham, AIA

**2026-2028 At-Large Representatives to the
Strategic Council**



Carl
Sergio, AIA, NOMA



Jessica
O'Donnell, AIA

2026 Moderator



Matthew
Barnett, AIA

**2026 Moderator-Elect/
2027 Moderator**

Strategic Council: Updates & Engagement





AIA of the Future

Paolo Campos
Robert Easter

Ashley Thornberry
Heather Wilson
Ignacio Reyes
Nathan Kalaher
Sarah Broughton
Scott Gaudineer
Thierry Paret
Winston Thorne

YAF-Chelsea Davidson
NAC-Rachel Wiesbrook
AIAS-Hudson Meyn

Prompt: photorealistic illustration of an oversized umbrella sheltering a diverse group of people from the AEC industry including architects, students, engineers, contractors, and clients standing together in unity. The group is ethnically and gender diverse, symbolizing collaboration and building a better world. Flat, stylized, inclusive, professional setting, harmonious atmosphere.

Image created in Midjourney.

The Big Idea: *To elevate the relevance of AIA to our members, to the profession, and to society at large, so the voices and work of architects lead the way towards the development of a more sustainable and equitable built environment.*

August 2025 Study Group Update: This group is synthesizing their SWOT analysis and conversations with Allied organizations. Looking at potential expansion of AIA membership tent and what that could look like (ie: what can Framework for design excellence tell us about who to connect with or ways for members to be more engaged?)



Architect
of the
Future

- Trevor Anderson
- Tony Rangel
- Angie Brooks
- Brien Graham
- Eugenio Ramirez
- Greg Galbreath
- Kathy Hancox
- Leah McMillian
- Patty Boyle
- Randy Palculict
- Steven Alano
- Stephen Panzarino
- Saakshi Terway (NAC)

- YAF-Alex Oetzel
- AIAS-Vivian Rendon

The Big Idea: *Illuminate how architects can better serve communities, adapt to emerging challenges, and enhance their value in an ever-changing world; to shape a future where architects are seen not just as designers but as key agents of societal progress.*

August 2025 Study Group Update: This team broke into 3 groups of synthesize work to date (research & inspiration incorporates previous AIA personal work; person exercise breakdown; verbalization of AIA25 outreach and survey)



Climate
Responsive
Design &
Leadership

*Gwen Fuertes
Matthew Green*

Ben Ward

Corey Squire

Jean Carroon

Kimberly Dowdell

Rebecca Fletcher

Richard Polk

Sheldon Pennoyer

Tim Lock

Verity Frizzell

Gilberto Lozada Báez (AIAS)

YAF-Erin Agdinaoay

NAC-Ifreet Rahima

AIAS-Juanita Libreros Foronda

The Big Idea: *Identify and curate information that practitioners need to realize the vision of Design Excellence. Address multiple relevant and important topics simultaneously, enabling and nourishing climate-responsive design and leadership within firms, forecasting future impacts.*

August 2025 Study Group Update: This group is digging into Regenerative Design, what it is, what it is not. How it can be inclusive and additive to the Framework for Design Excellence as another layer.

AI-generated image with Chat GPT prompted by Wellbe Bartsma. "Connected Communities" study group captures architects working collaboratively with public agencies and private organizations to create equitable, walkable, and tech-integrated communities. The image highlights the architect's role in leading public infrastructure and urban development while ensuring technology benefits all.



Connected Communities

*Bruce Herrington
Stephanie Leedom*

Andre Brumfield

Galen Lif

Jamie Crawley

Jason DeMarco

Matt Hutchins

Marc Mondor

Mary Womble

Ryan Morse

Trey Wheeler

YAF-Brady Laurin

NAC-Cooper Moore

AIAS-Kody Cheung

The Big Idea: *By engaging public agencies, the public at large, and private sector organizations, architects advance overall well-being and create well-connected communities through: Planning and design of **housing** with equity; Application of **technology** to help (not harm) communities & Advocate and facilitate the community's vision as **Chief Architect**.*

August 2025 Study Group Update: The three subgroups are diligently working to refine their work to date and preparing for the council report out.



Digital
Architecture

Michael Daly
Leap Chear
Ayo Yusuf
Lewis Miller
Matthew Breakey
Melissa Schulteis
Nathalia Ellis
Peter Wehner
Tommy Watts
Wellbe Bartsma

YAF-Matt Jennings
NAC-Chien-Yi Chu
AIAS-Kinda Hawash

Prompt: A futuristic, cyberpunk-themed digital artwork depicts a diverse group of architects and engineers observing a split city from an elevated platform at night, representing two contrasting futures. On one side, a bleak, dystopian industrial city of uncertainty, inefficiency and pollution, while the other offers a vibrant, sustainable utopia of bright innovation of smart, thriving communities. Both cities framed by cascading binary code that reflects the distinct atmospheres of each world.

Image created by Chatgpt

The Big Idea: AI is reshaping architecture and we are identifying ways AIA should and can lead in ensuring its ethical, equitable, and sustainable adoption.

August 2025 Study Group Update: The group is working towards Council report out in August and refining the synthesis of all work into the 3 page summary. 3 subgroups are continuing their work, but also diligently tying aspiration of AI into tangible realities of implementation into the practice of architecture.



Resilient Practice Models

Leah Bayer

Laura Wake-Ramos
Leanne Meyer-Smith
Molly Jacobs
Peggy McDonough-Jan
Tom Hysell
Rex Cabaniss

YAF-Andrew Gorzkowski

NAC-Christine Olshan

AIAS-Emily Yeow

Nine AIA Strategic Councilors and liaisons research and evaluate trends affecting architectural practice in the future, focusing on impacts related to the economy, business, and research.

The Big Idea: Support practice evolution to help firms thrive amidst the economic, environmental, and social challenges facing the profession in the next 20 years through the lenses of: External Pressure, Internal Pressure and Professional Pressure.

August 2025 Study Group Update: Final surveying complete and the study group presentation draft is underway. The Research in Practice report is complete and will be issued after our presentation next week. Continuing our evaluation of executive orders issued through the rest of the year to continue to advise the Board.

AI-generated image with Chat GPT prompted by Wellbe Bartsma. "10-Year Valuation and Future Blueprint" study group. It captures a council of architectural leaders reflecting on past progress while shaping a strategic vision for the next decade, with holographic displays, data analysis, and governance discussions.



10 Year Valuation & Future Blueprint

Matthew Barnett

Garfield Peart

Gloria Kloter

Hallie Crouch

Jeff Seabold

Shannon Christensen

Tim Lock

The Big Idea: *Assess the Strategic Council's original intent, ongoing effectiveness, impact, challenges, and aspirations to strengthen and align the expectations of members, leaders, and councilors, paving the way for a prosperous strategic future.*

August 2025 Study Group Update: Current work includes conceptual draft organization charts and possible bylaw edits needed for this proposed version of the Council to become real. This group met with the Governance Task Force Chair and Council representatives on that Task Force in early August and is continuing those communications over the next several weeks.

The Strategic Council

What's next on Q3 and Q4:

- 2025 Moderator and Vice Moderator will be attending the September Board meeting
- 2025 Council recommendations will be prioritized at the September Council Assembly
- 2026 Study Topics will be determined this October
- Our 2025 Year in Review Journal containing more detailed information on each study group's efforts as well as a 10th Anniversary Council Retrospective document are forthcoming in Q4 of 2025.

How you can engage:

- Read the monthly Council Reports and share your thoughts or suggestions with your state Representative or any At Large Representative on the Council;
- Share your insights and feedback in just a moment to help us plan for 2026

The Strategic Council

Previous study themes (2015-2024)

- AIA Awards
- Innovative Business Models
- Workplace Culture
- Emerging Technology and AI
- Impact of technology on practice
- Forecast Knowledge
- Housing
- Wellbeing
- Equity & Accessibility
- Mental Health & Architecture
- Wellbeing
- Water
- Bias Free Profession by 2050
- Value of Architecture
- Economy
- Professional Development
- Public Awareness
- Beyond 2030

Current areas of study (2025)

- AIA of the Future
- Architect of the Future
- Connected Communities
- Climate Responsive Design & Leadership
- Digital Architecture
- Resilient Practice Models
- 10 year Valuation & Future Blueprint

Future areas of study (2026)

