

SCHENKEL
SHULTZ



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STEWARDSHIP ACTION PLAN

SCHENKEL
SHULTZ

Vision

Inspire our
community
through
impactful
design

Introduction

Welcome to the Schenkel Shultz **Stewardship Action Plan**. As stewards of our community, environment, and professional practice, we recognize that purposeful action today shapes the landscape of tomorrow. This plan serves as our strategic roadmap, translating our core values into measurable, impactful outcomes. By aligning our organizational vision with responsible stewardship, we aim to foster sustainable growth, strengthen community resilience, and uphold the highest standards of design excellence.

This document also guides our firm's dedication to sustainable, high-performance design. We believe that intentional architecture shapes a resilient and equitable future. This action plan translates our environmental values into measurable design outcomes. By anchoring our practice in accountability, we ensure that every project leaves a positive legacy for our clients, community, and planet.

To achieve this vision, our practice embraces the American Institute of Architects (AIA) three Undertakings:

- The **Commitment**: Operationalizing the AIA 2030 Commitment to track progress and target net-zero emissions across our portfolio.
- The **Pledge**: Honoring the AIA Materials Pledge by selecting products that actively support human, ecosystem, and climate health.
- The **Framework**: Embracing the AIA Framework for Design Excellence as our overarching standard for holistic, high-quality architectural solutions.

Through these core pillars, we transform aspirational intent into actionable standard operating procedures. We look forward to advancing these initiatives to deliver meaningful, lasting change across the built environment. Through the collective dedication of our leadership, staff, and partners, this Action Plan is not merely a statement of intent, but a dynamic commitment to driving positive, lasting change. Together, we look forward to executing these undertakings and building a more sustainable and equitable future.

Commitment

The firm has signed the **AIA 2030 Commitment** to support the industry in lowering energy consumption, moving to renewable energy sources, and to drive a change in consumerism that reduces embodied carbon in manufacturing by our choices. The **Commitment** is a voluntary climate strategy framework established by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) that targets net-zero emissions across all design portfolios by the year 2030. The initiative focuses heavily on maximizing architectural energy efficiency.

The **Commitment** has two focus areas:

- **Operational Carbon:** is the total volume of greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere during the daily use, management, and ongoing maintenance of a building. It is measured by the predicated energy use intensity (pEUI) or actual energy use intensity (EUI).
 - Specifically, we are targeting the Commitment's operational carbon goals of 90% reduction by 2025 and carbon neutral projects by 2030.
 - Currently this requires reduction strategies along with the addition of renewables. Many Florida cities and communities have adopted the AIA 2030 targets and require, at minimum, a design that incorporates an on-site photovoltaic solar array. When that is not physically or economically possible, we work with the municipality to identify other options.
- **Embodied Carbon:** is the total volume of greenhouse gas emissions released during the manufacturing, transportation, construction, maintenance, and eventual disposal of building materials and structures. Unlike operational carbon, which accumulates over time as a building uses energy, embodied carbon represents the upfront environmental cost that is permanently locked in place the moment a project is completed.
 - We have adopted the embodied carbon goals and aspire to a 65% reduction by 2030. The overall goal is to have zero embodied carbon emissions by 2040. We are currently under 15% reduction overall on our portfolio.
 - We have embarked on updating our specifications to consider the embodied carbon of our selections.

Our approach is benchmarking activities to inform our standards and operating procedures, including:

- **Integration:** We have firm-wide climate and sustainability documents to formally include our benchmarks. Each project type has a pEUI target.
- **Office Culture:** We build Carbon literacy through staff education, training series- aka Spotlights once a year (minimum), group discussions, and specifications improvement meetings with our spec writer, standards committee, and project managers.
- **Design Policies:** We have used carbon modeling programs that help inform massing, orientation, daylight, and window size and placement. We update our in-house Stewardship Guide for higher R-value and more stringent glazing SHGC, at each code increase to maintain a higher design standard over code.
- **Reporting:** We meet mandatory firm-level annual reporting and when measured, we report embodied carbon.

Pledge

The firm has signed the **AIA Materials Pledge** to further our pursuit of healthy, environmentally friendly products and to drive a change in consumerism that reduces embodied carbon in manufacturing.

The **Pledge** has five impact areas:

- **Human Health:** Eliminating hazardous substances and prioritizing life-safe products.
- **Climate Health:** Reducing carbon emissions and seeking carbon-sequestering alternatives.
- **Ecosystem Health:** Regenerating natural air, water, and biological cycles.
- **Social Health:** Supporting human rights across manufacturing supply chains.
- **Circular Economy:** Designing for adaptability, disassembly, resilience, and reuse.

We have created Material Action standards and operating procedures. They include:

- **Integration:** We have firm-wide climate and sustainability documents to formally include material health benchmarks.
 - Currently we have a minimum requirement of HPD/Declare and preference with an EPD for entry of interior finishes and a minimum of an EPD and preference given to HPD/Declare for exterior and structural products.
 - Our Master Specifications include these items for our most used specifications; more specs will be updated yearly. We are also adding language to every spec section that outlines our substitution requirements to maintain integrity.
- **Office Culture:** We build material literacy through staff education, training series- known as “Spotlights” twice a year (minimum), and manufacturer discussions.
- **Library Policies:** We have updated all libraries (in our three offices) physical, and our collective digital sample library based on transparency and optimization.
 - Interior finishes are up to date.
 - Exterior Materials are being updated for EPD and carbon reductions. Preference is given to Product- specific EPD but industry-wide EPD will suffice when products lack specific EPD.
 - If a product is referenced in client standards, and does not meet our requirements, we will use it only if we cannot offer a better acceptable substitution.
- **Reporting:** We meet mandatory firm-level annual reporting and have begun voluntary project-level tracking.

We signed the **Pledge** because it aligns with the **Framework** and the **Commitment** and positions us to plan, measure, improve, and achieve results.

Framework

The **AIA Framework for Design Excellence** organizes architectural quality into 10 core principles. It structures how design teams balance aesthetic impact with ecological and social performance. The **Framework** has ten overarching principles. We evaluated each principle and established actionable key performance indicators (KPIs) including incremental targets to help us progress towards meeting the **Commitment** and the **Pledge**.

The ten **Framework** principles are:

- **Design for Integration:** The core philosophy of the framework that blends beauty, function, and performance into a single, cohesive architectural concept.
- **Design for Equitable Communities:** Creating inclusive, accessible spaces that actively respect local culture, promote social equity, and positively impact diverse populations.
- **Design for Ecosystems:** Designing a project to coexist with local ecology by protecting native habitats, encouraging biodiversity, and restoring damaged natural systems.
- **Design for Water:** Managing water responsibly through low-flow fixtures, capturing rainwater, treating stormwater on-site, and reducing overall indoor and outdoor water consumption.
- **Design for Economy:** Maximizing project value and long-term cost-efficiency through optimized building sizing, durable material choices, and smart lifecycle budgeting.
- **Design for Energy:** Reducing operational energy use through passive design strategies, high-efficiency mechanical systems, and the integration of renewable energy sources.
- **Design for Well-being:** Enhancing human health and comfort by prioritizing indoor air quality, thermal control, natural daylighting, and views to nature.
- **Design for Resources:** Minimizing waste and environmental impact by selecting sustainable, low-carbon materials and sourcing non-toxic products with clear lifecycles.
- **Design for Change:** Building flexible, resilient structures that can easily adapt to future programmatic uses, climate risks, and shifting community needs over time.
- **Design for Discovery:** Engaging in post-occupancy evaluation to track actual building performance, learn from design choices, and share data to advance industry knowledge

We have created **Framework** integration standards, procedures, and project repositories. They include:

- **Integration:** Stewardship Guide with probing questions for each standard.
 - Flashcards with major questions for each principle that reside in each meeting and collaboration room.
 - Framework worksheet with a requirement to fill in Integrative Process, Equitable Communities, and Wellbeing alongside Energy and Water.
- **Office Culture:** We build framework literacy through design reviews, our yearly firm-wide design pin-up, and AIA regional and national awards pursuits.

We design using the **Framework** because it aligns with the **Commitment** and the **Pledge** and positions us to plan, measure, improve, and achieve results.

Action, Long-term Goals, and Roadmap

The execution of the **Stewardship Action Plan** relies on a clear, time-bound roadmap. By syncing our initiatives with the AIA 2030 Commitment, the AIA Materials Pledge, and the AIA Framework for Design Excellence, we turn our sustainable design vision into measurable metrics.

The **Commitment:** Energy & Operational Carbon. Our design process prioritizes rapid decarbonization across our entire active project portfolio.

- **2030 Target:** Achieve a 100% Predicted Energy Use Intensity (pEUI) reduction for all new buildings and major renovations, meeting the net-zero operational carbon standard.
- **2040 Target:** Maintain a net-zero active portfolio while expanding our scope to track and offset grid-tied operational emissions across completed projects.
- Tools: Inhouse - Enscape Impact, Consultants – IES-VE, Trane, HAP

The **Commitment:** Embodied and Whole Building Carbon. We target structural and architectural material footprints during early-stage design planning.

- **2030 Target:** Secure a minimum 65% reduction in embodied carbon across all structural and enclosure systems compared to regional baselines.
- **2040 Target:** Accomplish zero net embodied carbon by utilizing carbon-sequestering materials and advanced circular construction methods.
- Tools: In house – EC3, Consultants - One-Click LCA

The **Pledge:** Currently we mandate Human Health (HPD/Declare/C2C) and are working this year to require Climate Health (EPD) to all our exterior, structural, and interior finishes: By our 2030 milestone, we propose systematically integrating all five impact categories of the AIA Pledge Starter-kit Guide into our standard master specifications:

- **Ecosystem Health:** Require materials harvested via verified regenerative, sustainable, and restorative supply chains. We are currently doing this on a client priority basis through biobased products and FSC wood.
- **Social Health & Equity:** Partner with manufacturers that transparently secure human rights and fair labor practices.
- **Circular Economy:** Achieve full transparency by sourcing reusable, salvaged, or highly recyclable closed-loop products.
- Tools: In-house - Ecomedes, LEEDv5 Calculator, Calculators for each certification pursuing.

The **Framework:** Currently we evaluate Design for Energy and Design for Water in every project. By 2030, 100% of our design options will track performance metrics aligned with the top three foundational principles of the AIA Framework:

- **Design for Integration:** Balance beauty, function, and performance through mandatory early-stage energy modeling, prioritizing synergistic strategies, and capturing the unique story of every project.
- **Design for Equitable Communities:** Enhance local neighborhoods by executing structured stakeholder engagement plans for every civic project.
- **Design for Ecosystems:** Build resilient outdoor spaces that support local biodiversity and natural water cycles.
- Tools: Flashcards, Custom Excel spreadsheet, COTE spreadsheet

By integrating these benchmarks into our practice, actively updating and evaluating standards, we show our clients, partners, and staff that our practice remains accountable, innovative, and deeply dedicated to the health of people and the built environment.

Appendix 1: Definitions

Commitment

The **AIA 2030 Commitment** is an actionable climate strategy that gives us a set of standards and goals for reaching net zero emissions in the built environment. Since the built environment creates a staggering 40% of the world's emissions, architects, engineers, and owners play a key role.

Pledge

AIA developed the Architecture & Design **Materials Pledge** to inspire members to shift the way in which we evaluate the products and finishes that we specify daily. The A&D Materials Pledge considers five aspects when evaluating products and finishes: human health, social health & equity, ecosystem health, climate health, and a circular economy.

Framework

Comprised of 10 principles and accompanied by searching questions, the **AIA Framework for Design Excellence** seeks to inform progress toward a zero-carbon, equitable, resilient, and healthy built environment. These are to be thoughtfully considered by designer and client at the initiation of every project and incorporated into the work as appropriate to the project scope.

WELL

The **WELL Building Standard®** is a performance-based system for measuring, certifying, and monitoring features of the built environment that impact human health and wellbeing, through air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort, and mind.

WELL is managed and administered by the International WELL Building Institute (IWBI), a public benefit corporation whose mission is to improve human health and wellbeing through the built environment.

Green Globes

A series of rating and certification systems that encourage improved environmental and health performance for all types of buildings except residential structures. Green Globes™ is administered in the United States by the Green Building Initiative.

Living Building Challenge

Launched in 2006 by Seattle architect Jason F. McLennan and an organization then called the Cascadia Green Building Council, the LBC currently requires projects to produce more clean water and more clean energy than they use, and to send less waste to the landfill than the amount of salvaged material used in the building.

JUST

Just is a “nutrition label” for socially just and equitable organizations. As a voluntary disclosure tool for organizations rather than a certification program, it is a transparency platform for organizations to disclose their operations, including how they treat their employees and where they make financial and community investments.

ILFI

Zero energy is recognized worldwide as one of the highest aspirations in energy performance in the built environment. The International Living Future Institute's (ILFI) Zero Energy (ZE) Certification was created to allow projects to demonstrate zero energy performance, building an advanced cohort of projects with the integrity of third-party performance certification.

This program, the only international zero energy certification:

- certifies that the building is truly operating as claimed, harnessing energy from the sun, wind or earth to produce net annual energy demand through a third-party audit of actual performance data
- provides a case study platform for your project to inform and accelerate other zero energy efforts throughout the world
- celebrates a significant accomplishment, and differentiates both the building and those responsible for its success in this quickly evolving market

Red List Free

Red List Free means that textiles used for upholstery, walls, windows and panels are free of the Living Building Challenge's identified concerning chemicals and compounds. Commonly used chemicals on the Red List:

- Pollute our environment
- Bio-accumulate up the food chain until they reach toxic concentrations
- Harm construction and factory workers

FGBC

The Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC) is a nonprofit 501 (C)3 Florida corporation dedicated to improving the built environment. Mission is to lead and promote sustainability with environmental, economic, and social benefits through regional education and certification programs.

GBCI

GBCI is the premier organization for independently recognizing excellence in green business industry performance and practice globally, through third party verification services for certification and credentialing.

USGBC

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), co-founded by Mike Italiano, David Gottfried and Rick Fedrizzi in 1993, is a private 501(c)3, membership-based non-profit organization that promotes sustainability in building design, construction, and operation.

Green Apple Day

Started in 2012, Green Apple Day of Service is an international movement of over 1 million volunteers in 80 countries celebrating the central role that schools play in preparing the next generation of global leaders in sustainability.

***CEU:** One **Continuing Education Unit** is defined as 10 contact hours of participation in an organized, relevant continued education experience. Often CEUs earned as part of state regulation can also count toward association requirements (Arch. Digest).

***COTE:** The AIA Committee on the Environment works to advance, disseminate, and advocate design practices that integrate built and natural systems and enhance both the design quality and environmental performance of the built environment (AIA).

***EPD:** The **Environmental Product Declaration** is a report resulting from a life cycle assessment based on standardized product category rules. An EPD is initiated by a product manufacturer, and documents the ways in which a product, throughout its lifecycle, affects the environment (AIA).

***ESPM:** EPA's **Energy Star Portfolio Manager** is a no-cost, interactive energy management tool that allows users to securely track and assess energy and water consumption across a building portfolio.

***EUI: Energy Use Intensity** expresses a building's energy use as a function of its size or other characteristics. Generally, a low EUI signifies good energy performance (Energy Star).

***HPB: A High Performance Building** is a structure that integrates and optimizes all major sustainability attributes, including energy efficiency, durability, life-cycle performance, and occupant productivity (Energy Policy Act, 2005).

***HPD:** Products used in the built environment should meet specific criteria for the health and safety of all occupants. These are called Health Product Declarations (HPDs) and are the standardized way of reporting the contents of building products (Archtoolbox).

***LPD: Lighting Power Density** is the amount of power used by lighting per unit of building area. In the United States, LPD is measured in watts per square foot (Archtoolbox).

***pEUI: Predicted Energy Use Intensity** describes the energy use for a project based on modeled site energy. pEUI equals the site kBtu per year divided by the project's square footage (AIA KnowledgeNet).

$$pEUI = \text{site kBtu/sf-yr}$$

***VOCs: Volatile Organic Compounds** are compounds that have a high vapor pressure and low water solubility. VOCs are emitted as gases from certain solids or liquids. Concentrations of many VOCs are consistently higher indoors (up to ten times higher) than outdoors (US EPA).

***MEP 2040 Commitment** is a pledge to reduce operational and embodied carbon across MEP Systems on all projects targeting zero by 2040.

***SE 2050 Challenge** is to transform the practice of structural engineering in a way that is holistic, firm-wide, project based, and data-driven. By prioritizing reduction of embodied carbon, through the use of less and/or less impactful structural materials, participating firms can more easily work toward net zero embodied carbon structural systems by 2050.

***Contractors Carbon Commitment** addresses the following categories: carbon reduction, jobsite wellness, waste management, water management, and material selection.

