Sustainable Architectural Practice

The AIA recognizes a growing body of evidence that demonstrates current planning, design, construction, and real estate practices contribute to patterns of resource consumption that seriously jeopardize the future of the Earth's population. Architects need to accept responsibility for their role in creating the built environment and, consequently, believe we must alter our profession's actions and encourage our clients and the entire design and construction industry to join with us to change the course of the planet's future.

Explanation

Altering current practices of design and construction to realize significant reductions in the use of natural resources, non-renewable energy sources, and waste production and promote regeneration of natural resources will require a multiple-year effort in conjunction with clients, industry partners, and concerned organizations. To achieve these changes, the AIA will act through all its Board Committees, Knowledge Communities, Task Forces, Working Groups, and related activities to:

1. Promote sustainable design including resource conservation to achieve a minimum 50 percent reduction from the current level of consumption of fossil fuels used to construct and operate new and renovated buildings by the year 2010, and promote further reductions of remaining fossil fuel consumption by 10 percent or more in each of the following five years;
2. Collaborate with other national and international organizations, the scientific research community, public health community, and industry leaders engaged in issues related to sustainable / restorative design to facilitate the dialogue, share knowledge, and accelerate the rate of change for all those seeking to improve the industry's current practices and utilize integrated approaches to achieve a sustainable future;
3. Develop and promote the integration of sustainability into the curricula for education of architects and architectural students to enhance their design skills;
4. Develop standards for the architectural profession that incorporate greater sustainability into design, education, management, and licensure standards and provide resources to assist integrating these standards into the daily practices of all architects;
5. Promote documentation of the measurable contributions resulting from implemented sustainable design and construction approaches to the health of humankind and the planet to promote the value and achievements of increased use of sustainable design;
6. Promote research by industry, scientific, and governmental entities to provide the design and construction industry with full life cycle assessment data for all products and assemblies used in the construction of the built environment at every scale in

order to facilitate decision-making and communicate benefits to all;

7. Promote the AIA's building performance design targets to local, state, and national governments;
8. Communicate possible beneficial economics of environmentally responsible design to both public and private sector clients; and
9. Assume a global role as advocates for sustainable design freely sharing knowledge and actively promoting sustainable practice throughout the world.

Sustainable Rating Systems

The AIA supports the development and use of rating systems and standards that promote the design and construction of communities and buildings that contribute to a sustainable future.

Explanation

The AIA encourages through the efforts of its Board Committees, Knowledge Communities, Task Forces, Working Groups, and related activities the inclusion of the following features in “green building” rating systems, standards, or regulations for the design and construction of the built environment. That it:

1. Is developed and renewed on a regular basis through a consensus-based process, in which all interested parties can participate;
2. Require clearly defined design documentation to demonstrate compliance;
3. Require compliance to be validated by an independent third party;
4. Require the development of sustainable sites avoiding the conversion of prime agricultural lands or wetlands, regenerating brownfield sites, or those that result in regenerative benefits to the natural environment;
5. Require specific goals in the efficient use of water resources that promote application of new wastewater technologies;
6. Require specific goals for significant reductions in energy use, especially non-renewable energy sources, with enhanced performance assured through commissioning of building systems;
7. Promote the use of renewable energy sources;
8. Require reduced use of non-renewable natural resources through the reuse of existing structures and materials, reductions in construction waste, promotion of recycled content materials, and use of materials independently certified as from sustainable sources;
9. Require specific goals for improved indoor environmental quality through enhanced indoor air quality, thermal comfort, acoustics, daylighting, and pollutant source control and use low emission materials and building system controls;
10. Promote the development and application of innovative designs and collaborative processes intended to improve environmental performance;
11. Recognize the life cycle value of a community or project in addition to construction first costs, including assessment of impact on climate change, acid rain, water pollution, resource depletion, and toxicity factors;
12. Utilize life cycle assessment data as the basis for design and construction decision making;
13. Acknowledge national, regional, and bio-climatic differences;
14. Reduce (and eventually eliminate) on site and off-site toxic elements in the built environment;

15. Require specific measurable reductions in CO2 production in the built environment; and
16. Require documentation of actual building energy and operational performance.