

INTEGRATED STRATEGIC PLAN

2022 - 2025



CONDENSED VERSION • JANUARY 2023



ABOUT THE PLAN

For several years, AIA Austin and Austin Foundation for Architecture (AFA) have imagined a center for design in Austin. In April of 2022 both boards adopted an integrated strategic plan to establish *The Center* (another name is forthcoming).

The Center will be both a virtual and a built place and its programs will be offered onsite and all around the region. Its foundational principle is to expand the understanding and appreciation of design excellence and its myriad applications on behalf of diverse communities.

For the next several years, both AIA Austin and AFA will be substantially transformed by the focus on *The Center*.

MISSION: THE CENTER

The Center illuminates the impact of design for all. Here, we explore, imagine, and shape the future.

It is important to note that The Center is NOT simply for architects nor is it simply about architecture. Indeed, the mission statement references neither architecture nor architects but rather the broad expanse of approaches to and impacts of design. As such, The Center will engage and highlight the diverse community of designers, foster creativity and understanding, inform the curious public, and influence decisions regarding the design of places and spaces in the community.

VISION: THE CENTER

The Center is a lively and engaging cultural entity that inspires people to discover why design matters. It welcomes people, sparks learning, and ignites passion for design.

Those who experience the work of The Center develop new knowledge and curiosity about myriad related and intersecting fields of design and their potential to improve the world.

Programming is both playful and serious. Curated experiences and pop-up projects invite visitors of all ages and interests to design and critique solutions to challenges facing our community (such as the impact of climate change, social and economic injustice, affordability, and mobility, among others). It uses technology to take visitors places within and beyond the immediate context. It inspires people in this rapidly growing region to actively participate in the building of vibrant, beautiful communities, and to demand the highest standard in urban design.

The Center puts design in the context of arts, culture, science, and technology. And it serves people as diverse and fascinating as the worlds it reveals.

The Center has many impacts — on individuals and on the design of the community we live in. It spawns innovative new work and collaborations, stimulates community conversations that result in breakthroughs in public and private placemaking. It is radically relevant, igniting the capacity of great design to shape Austin's future.

The Center is both a think tank and a place for exploration and learning — both virtual and constructed — so that all persons can be changed by their expanding understanding of the importance of design.

And then change the world in turn.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: *THE CENTER* 2022-2025

1 | LEADERSHIP

Build an outstanding team of well-known, respected, diverse, and impactful leaders committed to realizing the destiny of *The Center* as a compelling cultural destination.

The Center is a heretofore unknown entity in the Austin community; in fact, nothing quite like it has existed before anywhere. It will require a big lift to gain the financial and reputational support needed. From the onset, the core leaders will be seen as the endorsement of *The Center's* legitimacy, brand, and likely success. This demographically diverse group may well be composed of professionals currently or formerly affiliated with AIA Austin, with AFA, professionals within the larger design community, as well as other prominent community leaders and donors in Austin. This core group will be composed of proven leaders who can offer guidance and oversight on behalf of Austin's large, growing, and increasingly diverse community.

2 | FUNDING

Secure both capital and operating funds for *The Center's* launch.

During this initial phase, funds will be required to hire key staff, secure a site, develop a design for *The Center* (perhaps, also to begin to build *The Center*), and initiate programming. Importantly, a financial base will also be critical to recruiting essential early leaders and donors.

No solid cost estimates exist currently. The initial requirements, however, for preliminary staffing, brand development and ongoing marketing and communications, financial development, and launching signature programming—separate and apart from the expenses associated with a physical location—will be substantial.

3 | BRANDING

Develop, launch, and live a compelling brand.

For Austin, *The Center* is a bit of a unicorn. A name and brand strategy will be necessary to support leadership development, fundraising, and programming. The brand will build awareness and understanding of *The Center*, as well as serve as the basis for developing audiences. A strong brand will contribute to favorable perceptions and build expectations regarding extraordinary and impactful experiences.

The brand itself will require expression in a wide range of marketing and communications endeavors, ranging from a website to development materials, from public relations to social media campaigns. Nothing, however, will be more definite expression of the brand than *The Center's* programming, or the experience of being in an exciting new place. The brand for *The Center* will capture and express its vision, its mission, and its core values.

4 | MANIFESTING

Launching *The Center* virtually and (perhaps) structurally will offer collaborators and visitors an exceptional sense of place with captivating programming about design and placemaking—explicitly addressing the impact of design on the overall quality of life. The programming and the place are both important—each has an independent impact. In combination, their impact increases exponentially.

To date, Austin lacks a singular place where design is illuminated and elevated as a priority. *The Center* will be the embodiment of that place. *The Center* will be relevant and engaging for the public in the broadest sense—schoolchildren and developers, community planners and policy makers, artists and creatives who are both novice and renown. It will be the convener that elucidates the value of design excellence well beyond the traditional limits of architecture.

The strength of *The Center* will lie in its manifestation in three ways: through in-person programming, through virtual programming, and within the physical space itself.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: AIA AUSTIN 2022-2025

1 | MEMBERSHIP

1 | Maximize member size, value, and engagement; increase diversity and inclusion.

The chapter will continue to grow and meet the evolving needs of its members even as it balances the demands associated with supporting the launch of *The Center*—ever mindful that supporting the launch of *The Center* will serve and place demands on AIA Austin leaders, members, and staff.

AIA Austin will consider all existing and evolving programs and events to assess whether and how to expand, contract, eliminate, or adopt new programs. Committees will examine their synergy with *The Center* and some will likely evolve as a result.

2 | PUBLIC VOICE

2 | Impact decisions that shape the built and natural environment.

AIA Austin's impact will expand beyond traditional advocacy efforts. Two simultaneous efforts will be undertaken:

1. A strategic communications campaign to communicate the value and impact of architects.
2. Bring a unified and influential voice, often based in public input or engagement, to specific, important design matters in the community.

3 | THE CENTER

3 | Support the establishment of *The Center*; invest in its success financially, programmatically, reputationally, and operationally.

The chapter will be essential to the success of *The Center*. The goal is that all AIA Austin members take pride in *The Center* and invest in its success—for the sake of the profession and the broader community.

MISSION: AIA AUSTIN

AIA Austin is the voice for our region's architecture community. We advocate for our members, the profession, career development, and design excellence. We influence public opinion and the policies that shape our built and natural environment.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: AFA 2022-2025

1 | TRANSFORM

1 | Support the Creation of The Center

AFA's legacy will be manifest in *The Center*. Important aspects of its mission and much of its programming will, over time, be embedded in the mission and program of *The Center*. The 501(c)3 status of AFA will transfer to *The Center*.

MISSION: AFA

The Austin Foundation for Architecture is dedicated to recognizing, celebrating, and promoting the positive impact of architecture for all Austinites. Our mission is to increase the public's awareness and appreciation of Austin's built environment, and to promote excellence in the field by fostering leadership within the professional community.

WORKING PARTY

The Working Party was assembled from AIA Austin and AFA board members, as well as prominent architects, non-architects, and members of the cultural community. The group met over a 10-month period, guided by consultant Marie Crane and Associates: Marie Crane with Annika Ostrom.

MEMBERS

Chris Cobb, AIA
Milton Hime, FAIA

Denisse Hudock, AIA
Camille Jobe, AIA

Mell Lawrence, FAIA
Murray Legge, FAIA

Stephi Motal, AIA
Minta Stohrer, Assoc. AIA

Melba Whatley, Hon. TxA
Daniel Woodroffe, ASLA



Front and above: LUNA presented by Austin Foundation for Architecture, Waterloo Greenway Creek Show 2022. Project Team: Ximena Alayo-Reyes, Assoc. AIA; Stephanie D' Arienzo; Brianna De Leon, Assoc. AIA; Gerardo Gandy, Assoc. AIA; Dani Williams; Kyle Wilson. Front image © Alicia Moore. Above image © Suzanne Cordiero.