

# AIA 2030 **SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN**

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# COMMITMENT LETTER

06.11.10

Christine W. McEntee, EVP/CEO  
The American Institute of Architects  
1735 New York Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20006-5292

Dear Christine:

Helix Architecture + Design, a 26 person firm located in Kansas City, Missouri, is hereby signing on to the AIA 2030 Commitment program and its goal of carbon-neutral buildings by the year 2030.

The places where we live, work, and play represent the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in America, as well as around the world. The design and construction industry has made significant strides toward creating high performance buildings of all types and uses. As a result, the industry is positioned to have a profound impact by continuing to foster high building performance and reducing building-related greenhouse gas emissions.

As architects, we understand the need to exercise leadership in creating the built environment. We believe we must alter our profession's practices and encourage our clients and the entire design and construction industry to join with us to change the course of the planet's future. A multi-year effort will be required to alter current design and construction practices and realize significant reductions in the use of natural resources, non-renewable energy sources, and waste production and promote regeneration of natural resources.

We therefore commit Helix to take the following steps which are part of the AIA 2030 Commitment program:

- Within two months of the commitment date, establish a team or leader to guide the development and implementation of the firm's plan.
- Within six months of signing the commitment, the firm will implement a minimum of four operational action items from the list provided. These actions will be undertaken while the long-term sustainability plan is in development.
- Within one year of signing the commitment, the firm will develop a sustainability action plan that will demonstrate progress toward the AIA's 2030 goals.
- Make a summary of our sustainability action plan and annual progress reports available publicly by providing them to the AIA for website posting and distribution.

We also support the critical need for more consistent and more rigorous metrics related to actual building performance. We further commit our firm's assistance to the AIA and others in the ongoing development of effective metrics and standards for reporting purposes. It is understood that reporting through the AIA 2030 Commitment program must respect the confidentiality of information about specific clients, projects, and proprietary tools.

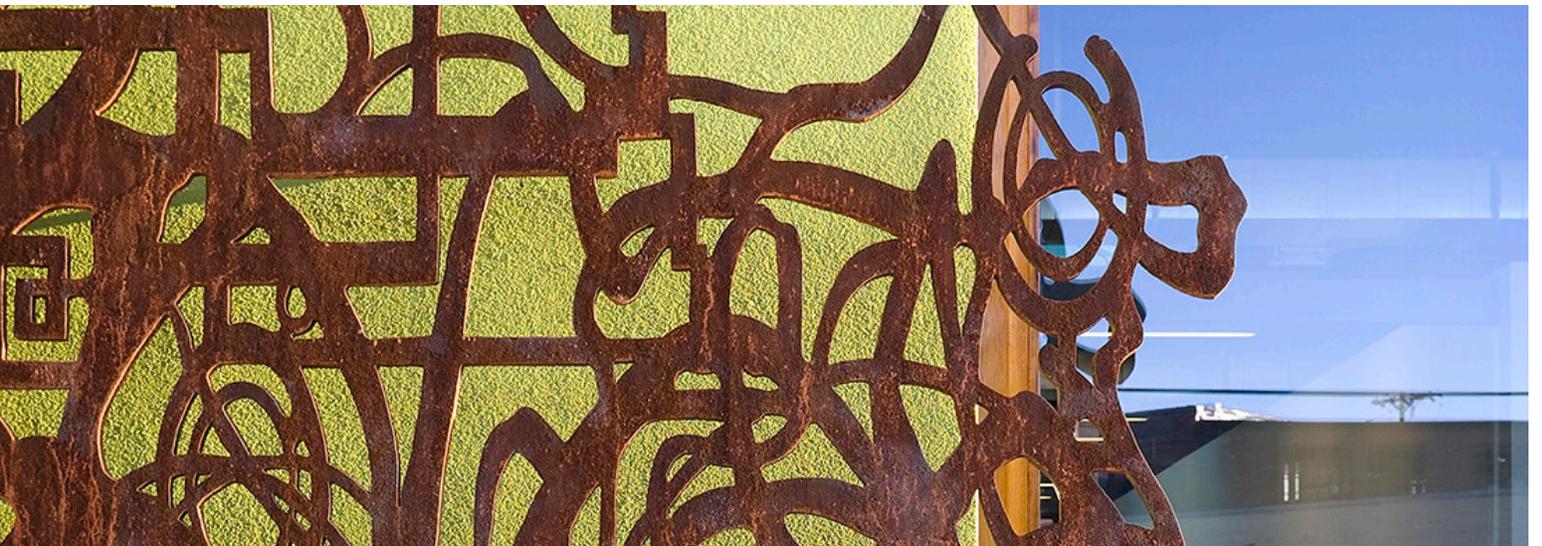
We look forward to working with you and our professional colleagues to achieve the goals of the 2030 Commitment.

Sincerely,



Michael J Heule, AIA LEED AP  
Principal  
Helix

DESIGN THAT  
SUPPORTS  
THE CAPACITY  
TO ENDURE

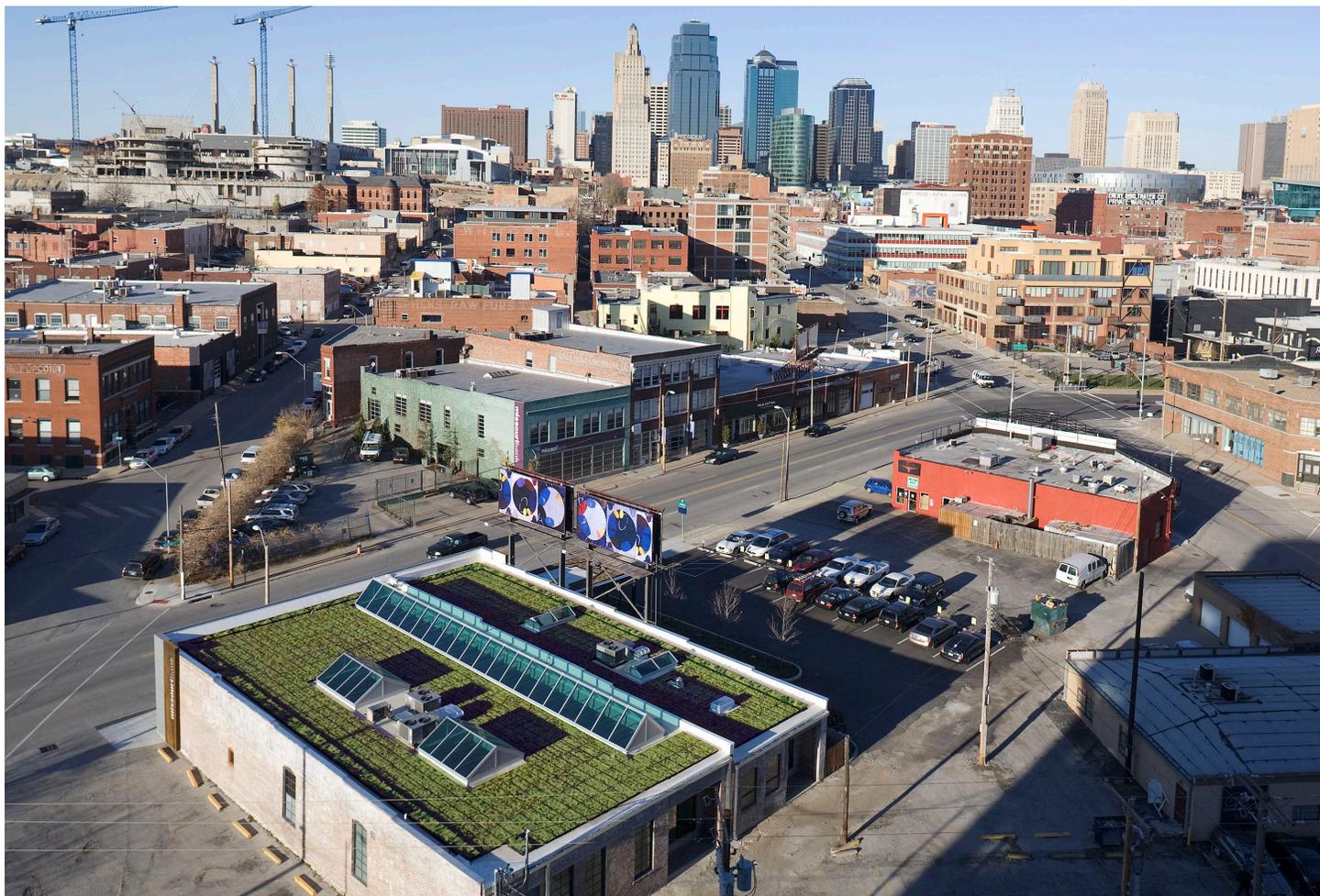


# SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AT HELIX

We define sustainability as “the capacity to endure.” This idea not only reflects a desire to rigorously pursue a design aesthetic that is timeless and positively impacts the human experience, but also an interest in high-performance place-making that recognizes sustainability as a key component of enduring architecture.

Through a thoughtful and deliberate design process, we seek to create environmentally responsible solutions that comprehensively address issues directly related to the designed environment: they promote well-being, enhance communities, and use the world’s resources wisely.

Because of our professional role as architects, we believe we are uniquely equipped to serve as leaders and pioneers, to truly integrate sustainability into everything we do – from our projects, to the way we run our operations, to how we live our lives.



From its inception our practice has understood sustainability as a prerequisite for good design. In recent years we have focused even more intently on greening our own operations. Among the measures we have implemented are:

**ENERGY USE**

Purchasing 100% green power in the form of RECs

Installing occupancy sensors in the restrooms, supply closet, and copy room

General office lighting that works

on a multiple switch system allowing employees the choice of turning on one, two, or three lamps within a zone of fixtures

Using only Energy Star-rated monitors and cpu's

Providing task lighting at all employee workstations

Implementing an office-wide policy of shutting down computers at the end of the work day

Replacing incandescent lamps with compact fluorescent

Replacing CRT monitors with LCD monitors

**ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION**

Participating in Kansas City's green commute challenge, encouraging employees to use alternative means of transportation

Providing free single-use bus passes for all employees

Creating a carpool map displaying the location of the homes of all employees to encourage carpooling

Providing a bicycle storage area to

HELIX BELIEVES IN  
SUSTAINABILITY  
AS AN APPROACH  
TO EVERYDAY LIFE.

# SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

encourage employees to ride to work

## WASTE REDUCTION

Implementing electronic submittals during the construction administration phase of our projects

A recycling bin at every work station and in the copy and supply rooms

Encouraging vendors to minimize the use of individually packaged lunches for their presentations

Eliminating the use of plastic ware, water bottles, and paper plates by providing glassware, silverware, and

non-disposable plates for employees and guests, and a stainless steel water bottle for all employees

Using recycled content paper for all copy machines

Eliminating paper copies of earnings statements. Employee statements are sent via email.

## INDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Providing incentives for employees who quit smoking

Purchasing all-natural, fragrant-free,

biodegradable hand and dish soaps and non-toxic dishwasher detergent.

Contracting with a green cleaning service that uses only green cleaning products and methods

Contracting with a pest-control service to replace the use of harmful chemicals with an integrated pest-management system

Providing views to the exterior for all employees

Providing natural daylighting for all employees





# STAFF TRAINING & EDUCATION

In 2008 Helix created SEEDS, a group of sustainably focused employees who act as a resource-based committee to help bring Helix to its greatest sustainable potential, both in the way the firm operates internally and in the design work it produces for clients.

Among the resources and initiatives created by SEEDS are:

Lunch & Learn sessions focused on sustainability

An intranet page with resources to help project teams incorporate sustainability into their work.

Templates for project-team use, including a Project Narrative, Survey,

and Powerpoint presentations focused on identifying sustainable opportunities for clients.

Bonus incentives for employees who earn LEED AP+ accreditation

Study materials for the LEED AP exam

Commitment to the AIA 2030 Challenge

HELIX PROMOTES  
EDUCATION AS  
THE FOUNDATION  
OF SUSTAINABILITY.



WE WORK FOR THE  
LONG-TERM WELL  
BEING OF PEOPLE &  
THE ENVIRONMENT.

# SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PROCESS

We will conduct sustainability charters for all projects

All building projects will meet the prerequisites and credit requirements for minimum LEED certification regardless of whether certification is an actual project goal

All projects will have a LEED AP on the project team

All projects will utilize materials in a careful and essential manner, including the incorporation of recycled content material, salvaged material, and products with low VOC levels.

We will challenge engineers and design consultants to creatively maximize sustainable strategies

We will actively urge our clients to incorporate local artists and craftsmen

