

SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

ma architects



2019



ENRICHING LIVES THROUGH INNOVATIVE DESIGN



BUILDING A SUSTAINABLY-MINDED CULTURE

At M+A Architects, we are designing for the future with infinite possibilities. We approach this challenge with a core vision of enriching lives through innovative design. Our commitment to the AIA 2030 demonstrates our dedication to the execution of sustainability, now, and in the future. It is a combination of this dedication and M+A's relentless execution that will ensure steps towards a sustainable future are taken.

Our Sustainability Action Plan begins with our expertise and design process, showcasing our background and thought leadership. Then it launches into different areas of focus within our projects that will enable us to achieve our goals, such as: energy, health and wellness, materials, resilience and adaptability. The action plan wraps up with M+A's approach to educate internally and advocate externally.

As architects and designers of the built environment, it's our responsibility to reduce the impacts that our buildings have on the environment and to position ourselves as creators of positive change in our communities. At M+A, we hold ourselves accountable for working toward sustainability—now and in the future.

The creation of this Sustainability Action Plan comes at a critical time in our firm, following a company-wide survey that showcases a strong desire to do more with sustainable design in our firm and our projects. Therefore, this plan gives us a guidepost as we make changes and integrate sustainable practices in our projects more frequently.

As you read through this document, we hope you get a sense of how sustainable design is about healthy people and a healthy planet. Many of our strategies showcase how we must address both of those components in order to effect real change in our communities, and the world.

Read along and change the world with us.



Sustainable
design leadership

6



22



10



26

INSIDE

6

FIRM COMMITMENT

Staying true to our firm's vision and mission, on the leading edge of creating sustainable design for a healthier future.

10

DESIGN APPROACH

We approach sustainability with a holistic view as we design for the present and the future.

14

EVALUATION + REPORTING

Measuring, analyzing, and developing reports to evaluate our performance.

22

TRAINING + EDUCATION

Our in-house sustainability team leads the firm in initiatives, trainings, and distribution of resources.

24

OPERATIONS + OUTLOOK

Our commitment to our community with a set plan of action.

26

ADVOCACY

Our steps to reach externally and get involved in our communities.

COMMITMENT

The building sector is the single largest contributor of US CO2 emissions, the primary greenhouse gas (GHG) emitted through human activities and a main contributor to climate change worldwide. In addition, human beings spend approximately 90% of their time indoors. These are facts that are driving the sustainable design industry to affect change. It is clear that the building sector offers the largest cost-effective GHG mitigation potential, with net cost savings and economic gains possible through implementation of existing technologies, policies, and building design.

By implementing sustainable design practices in every project, we can reduce the impact our buildings have on the environment, and the people that live in them. Through research and innovative design, buildings can maximize positive health habits and reduce negative influences. Buildings can reduce stress, and increase comfort, performance, and sleep. By building healthier indoor environments, we can make a positive impact on health and well-being.

At M+A, it's not enough to help create healthier and more sustainable communities; it's critical to serve as leaders through our own practices, both within our offices and at home.

Our commitment to sustainability transcends any certification process. While those have their place, we realize that certifications do not fit for every project. We are committed to customizing sustainable design frameworks to fit the project and client desires. As such, we are dedicated to educating clients on the possibilities for their projects by making the business case for sustainable design, administering green building certifications as goals align, and communicating the impact of buildings on people and the planet.

VISION

Enriching lives through innovative design.

MISSION

We design for the future, evolving and organically growing through strategic relationships with our respected client partners.

By influencing design on a national level, we seek to enhance communities and to elevate human experiences.



Our experience in sustainability and sustainable design has led us to approach each project with green building in mind, including:

Energy + water performance

Health + wellness performance

Material selection

Resilient design and adaptability



DESIGN EXPERTISE

We believe that building performance, in all its forms, is for people and our planet. Sustainable design is simply a best practice. Our objective is to promote healthy communities and a cleaner environment.

M+A has knowledge about the most rigorous green building standard, the Living Building Challenge, which paves the way for the future of sustainable design and its evolution into regenerative design. Philosophically based, the Living Building Challenge asks the question: “What does good look like in the built environment? How can we, as building professionals, make a positive impact in our communities?”

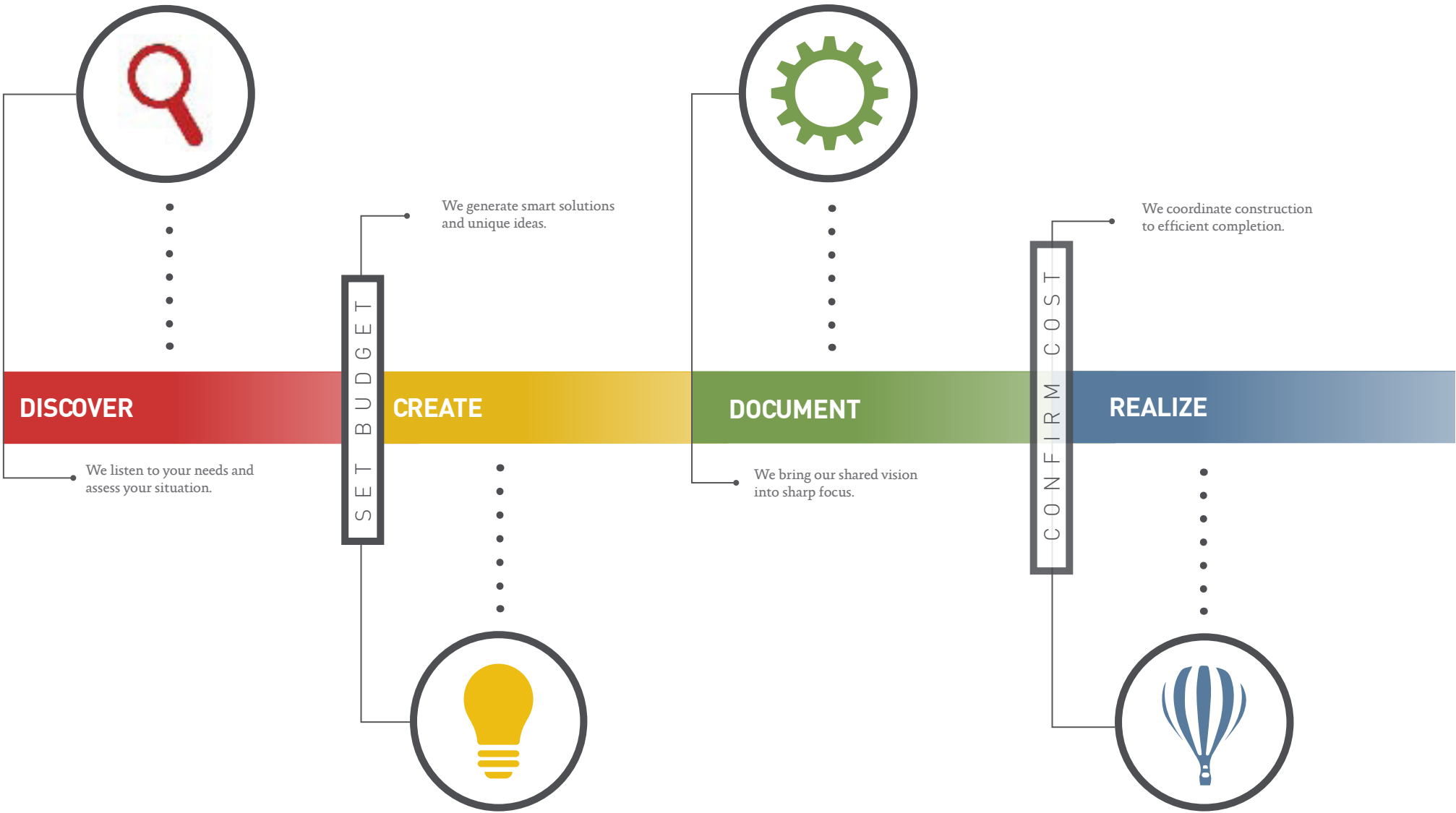
At M+A, we bring the knowledge of green building certifications and philosophies to achieve the sustainability goals of each project, whether pursuing certification or not. Each project has its own goals, big or small, and we work with our client partners and team to ensure our work meets these goals.



DESIGN APPROACH

We advocate for human health and environmental stewardship in our communities, achieving client goals for sustainability, and demonstrating design excellence through the lens of sustainability.

M+A’s sustainability team provides support services for our projects through research, leading sustainable design project charrettes, providing design consultation, green certification programs, consulting, and certification administration. In addition, through other specialists at M+A, we provide sustainable design solutions with lighting design, health and wellness, and green material specifications.



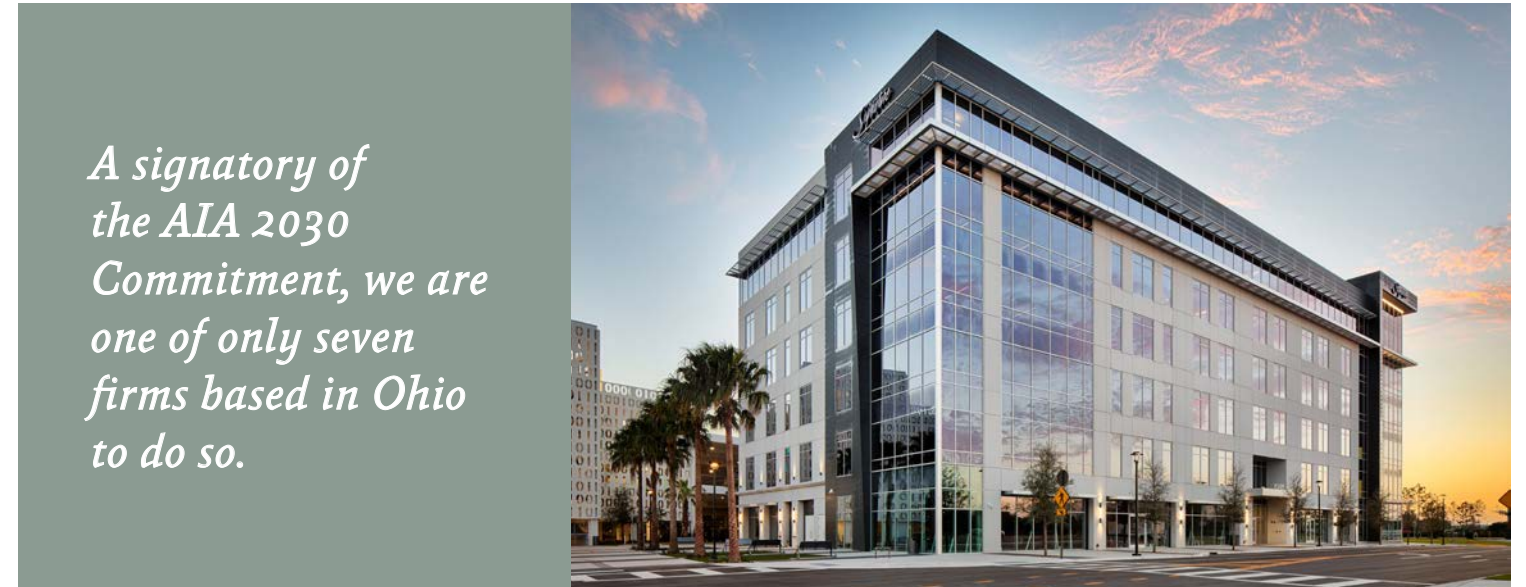
Design charrette for net-zero energy model home design with C-TEC - Career and Technology Education Centers of Licking County





IMPACT

“At M+A, we are designing for the future with infinite possibilities. We push boundaries to find ways to be more innovative, and while strategy is important, execution is everything.”



A signatory of the AIA 2030 Commitment, we are one of only seven firms based in Ohio to do so.



It is a combination of dedication and M+A's relentless execution that will ensure steps towards a sustainable future are taken.



Our commitment to the AIA 2030 demonstrates our dedication to the execution of sustainability—now, and in the future.



ENERGY

INTENT

To elevate the energy performance of our building portfolio and decrease energy use.

GOAL

Reduce energy demand by 5% more than current building code on an average annual basis.

DESCRIPTION

With the building sector taking up more energy than any other sector in the United States, this is an important topic. We are addressing this problem through a series of strategies that encourages innovation. By engaging in integrative design charrettes, we can more efficiently arrive at passive heating and cooling strategies, more effecient lighting systems, and improved building envelope. All of this is made possible through the use of Building Information Modeling (BIM), which enables parametric thinking and collaboration among all of the project team members.

STRATEGIES

- Integrative design charrettes
- Passive heating + cooling strategies
- Efficient lighting + controls
- Improved building envelopes
- BIM/parametric model



By engaging in integrative design charrettes, we can more efficiently arrive at passive heating and cooling strategies, more efficient lighting systems, and improved building envelope.



HEALTH + WELLNESS

INTENT

To elevate wellness and the user experience.

GOAL

Incorporate health and wellness strategies above the standard.

DESCRIPTION

Health and wellness are important considerations to a project. In sustainable design, occupant health and wellbeing are integrated and considered in every aspect of the project. We address occupant health and wellbeing by optimizing the quality of daylight through Spatial Daylight Autonomy (sDA) analysis and smart programming. Furthermore, we enhance indoor air quality, thermal comfort, and acoustic quality.

STRATEGIES

- Optimize quality of daylighting through sDA
- Enhance indoor air quality from construction through occupancy
- Enhance thermal comfort
- Enhance acoustic environment
- Encourage movement



MATERIALS

INTENT

To elevate each building above the standard.

GOAL

Implement green materials and specifications for every project.

DESCRIPTION

Material selection and specifications are critical to creating a healthy indoor environment for occupants. The materials chosen also influences carbon emissions and more because of their location, extraction methods, and transportation from cradle to grave. At M+A, we are giving preference to materials that are found within the Mindful Materials database, and update our project specifications to reflect: construction waste management, construction indoor air quality management, and low-emitting materials.

STRATEGIES





RESILIENCE + ADAPTABILITY

INTENT

To prepare for a future life with the consequences of climate change.

GOAL

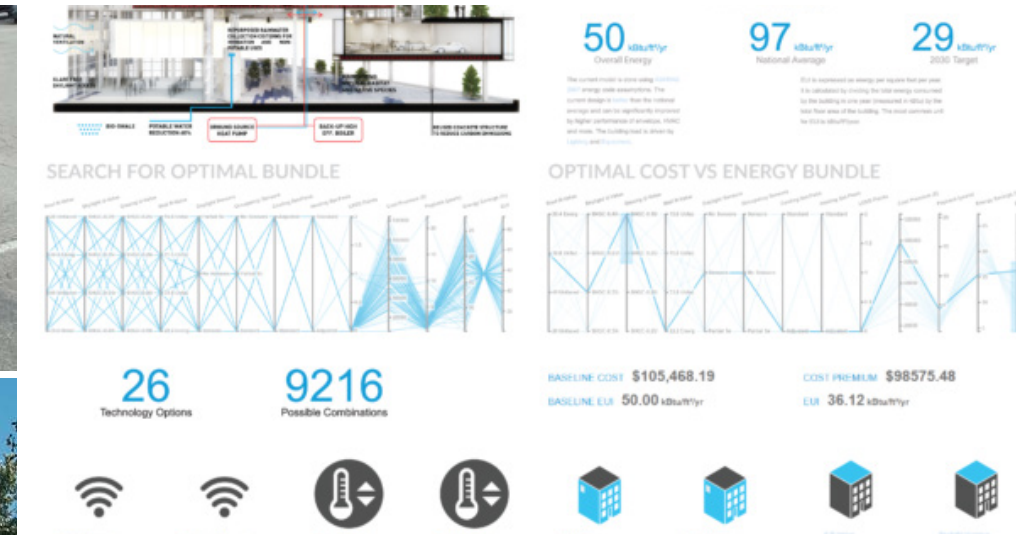
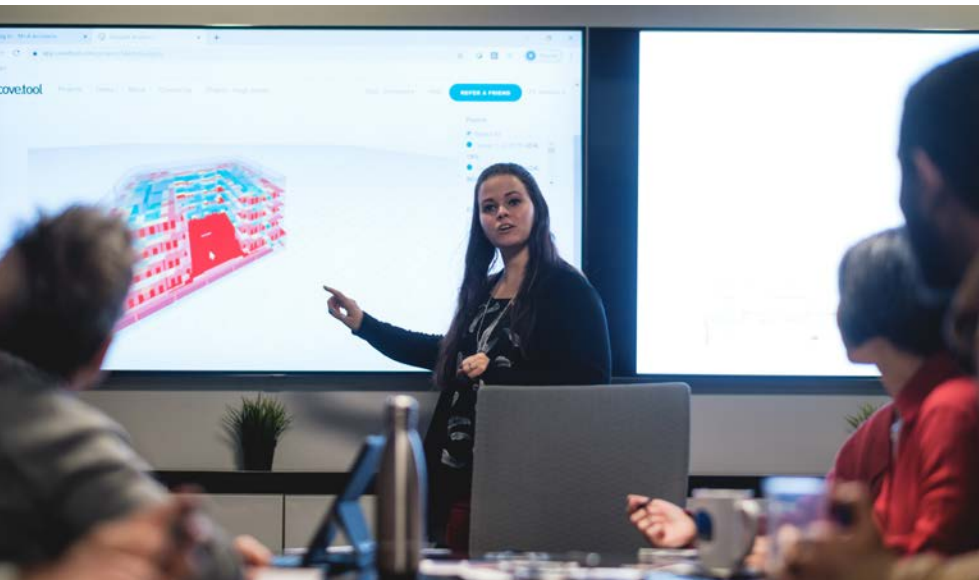
Design every project to be cognizant of future environment.

DESCRIPTION

Resilience and adaptability revolves around a project's ability to respond to natural disasters. With the consequences of the climate crisis still largely unknown, we need to prepare for an uncertain future environment. We can do this by incorporating stormwater management strategies, encouraging sustainable site development through habitat protection and rehabilitation, and biodiversity in plant selection. Furthermore, as water is a precious resource, our projects are designed to be water-conscious and consider storage and treatment options relevant to each project.

STRATEGIES

- Stormwater management strategies
- Sustainable site development done through:
 - Habitat protection and rehabilitation
 - Biodiversity
 - Water-conscious design, storage, and treatment



TRAINING + EDUCATION

INTENT

To demonstrate exemplary leadership by reporting operational data and workplace environment information.

GOAL

Increase internal awareness of sustainability practices.

DESCRIPTION

An important aspect of growing our sustainability team and policies, requires that all members of our firm are involved and aware of the initiatives and practices. We engage our employees through company-wide initiatives.

STRATEGIES

- Sustainability committee company-wide initiatives
- Recycling, composting, e-waste recycling
- Alternative transportation and carpooling programs
- Fair trade coffee

OPERATIONS + OUTLOOK

INTENT

To broaden our commitment to creating and supporting a diverse culture of sustainable design leadership by engaging in education and training.

GOAL

Engage every client in sustainable design.

DESCRIPTION

Engaging clients in the sustainable design process is key for the success of the project. By determining sustainability goals early in the project, every effort can be made to efficiently arrive at solutions to energy, water, health and wellness, materials, tenant retention, and more.

STRATEGIES

- Discuss sustainable goals with clients during initial meetings about high-performance building strategies such as:
 - Energy and water savings
 - Waste management
 - Health and wellness
 - Location and site features
 - Tenant retention



INTENT

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GOAL

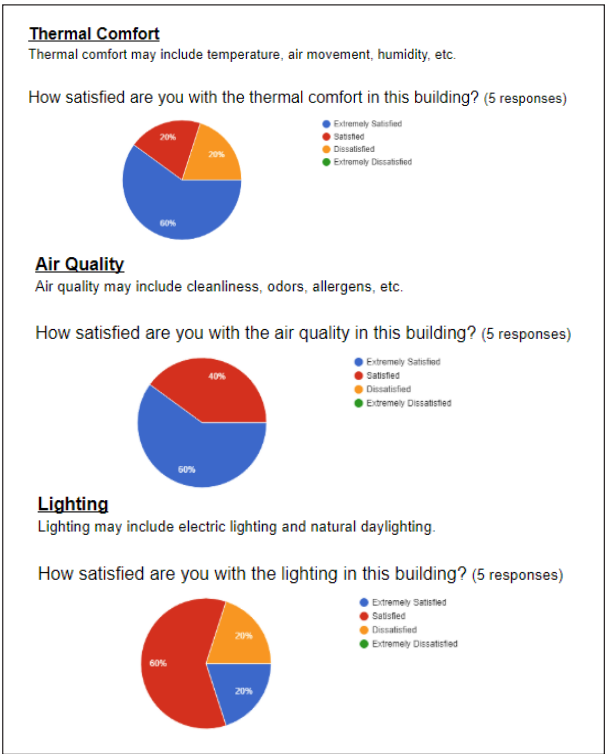
Evaluate implemented green building features.

DESCRIPTION

In order for M+A to grow in sustainable design, we must engage in post-occupancy evaluations to learn where changes need to be made on future projects. This feedback can help us internally, as well as help us understand the true impact of our designs on occupants and the client's bottom line.

STRATEGIES

- Post Occupancy evaluations (POE)
- Internal post-mortem discussions about design principles related to sustainability that can be transferred to other applications and projects



OUTREACH + ADVOCACY

INTENT

To broaden our commitment to creating and supporting a diverse culture of sustainable design leadership by engaging in education and training.

GOAL

Sustainability-literate employees.

DESCRIPTION

In an effort to advocate for sustainability and encourage sustainability-literate employees in our firm, we get involved in local organizations that engage our communities around the topic of sustainable design.

STRATEGIES

- Company-wide educational programs
- Study groups for accreditations
- Involvement in:
 - USGBC
 - Living Future Collaboratives
 - Green Umbrella
 - 2030 Districts
 - AIA COTE



LEAD BY EXAMPLE

We partner and collaborate with local communities and businesses to lift up those with sustainable practices. We not only demonstrate but lead others in sustainable design. We continue as thought leaders by attending conferences, green building events, and volunteer within community organizations:

USGBC Ohio

AIA COTE

Columbus Living Future Collaborative

Cincinnati Living Future Collaborative

DesignColumbus

Cincinnati 2030 District

Columbus 2030 District

Green Umbrella

SUSTAINABLE INTERNAL + EXTERNAL INITIATIVES

Reduce M+A's offices carbon footprint by 10% more than industry standard

Ensure office is meeting green building standards and policies per certifications

Engage in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to initiate and increase staff engagement

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