
2030 Sustainable Action Plan





Introduction

Founded in 1967, ELS is an award-winning architectural practice with a 57-year tradition in the design of extraordinary buildings and spaces that enhance the experience of urban life. Our portfolio and expertise encompass a diverse array of building types: civic and community, recreation and sports, historic renovation, performing arts, education, mixed use, retail, planning, and urban design. Thoughtful, compelling design translates emotion, excitement, vision, and connection into places that engage people and nurture community.

ELS initiates each project with the belief that environmentally sensitive design results in a better structure overall, one that brings long-term benefits and reduces operating costs. We integrate a whole-building design approach, implementing sustainable design strategies at the outset to create projects that tread more lightly on the earth. The ELS portfolio includes current projects that are certified or working towards LEED Platinum, WELL, or Zero Net Energy. Our in-house LEED- and WELL-accredited staff collaborates with the design team and client to maximize performance within budget and meet sustainability goals.

The development and implementation of this document, our Sustainable Action Plan, demonstrates ELS' commitment to realizing the goals of the Architecture 2030 Challenge and the AIA 2030 Commitment.



Firm Commitment

Since its inception, ELS has viewed design in relation to a broader urban and social context. We consider the influence of our projects on the physical, natural, and social environments in which they are built. Sustainability at ELS is understood through the broader lens of social connectivity, durability and enduring places, equity, and how all of these are enhanced through the best practices of environmental building.

FOUR PRIMARY TENETS OF THE ELS DESIGN APPROACH

1. Ecological Sustainability: Sustainable performance guides design.
2. Sustainable Urbanism and Placemaking: Design beyond the building. Understand the larger ecosystem of people and place.
3. Diversity of Practice: No two projects or clients are alike. Every project is designed in response to the unique conditions of a specific site.
4. Social Responsibility: Design for the benefit of all.

As leaders in social and sustainable practice, ELS perceives community as the medium for the communication of sustainable ideas.

PRINCIPLES OF ADVOCACY & ENGAGEMENT

- Sustainable leadership: Lead by doing.
- Community: We understand architecture as a means to support and build healthy communities.
- Relationships: Long-standing partnerships strengthen our sustainable practice.
- Collaboration: Teaming with experts brings out the best in all disciplines.



Design & Approach

Early implementation and ongoing evaluation of sustainable strategies are standard practice for ELS projects across all sectors.

INTEGRATING THE 2030 COMMITMENT ACROSS ELS

- Sustainable strategies are integral to the ELS design process. They are to be implemented at the concept phase for all projects.
- Sustainability charrettes draw upon the collective insight and experience of all ELS staff. These charrettes involve the entire office in contributing to the LEED process to share innovative ideas and advance sustainability on a project-by-project basis.
- Design team leaders schedule a charrette early in the process to allow time for testing and implementing of the ideas that are generated.
- Design teams must be prepared for aggressive project schedules with a repertoire of sustainable design strategies and practices. Design teams draw upon experience as well as resources such as the AIA COTE Top Ten Toolkit and 2030 Palette.

INTEGRATING ENERGY MODELING INTO OUR DESIGN PROCESS

- Our energy models test various design options at the concept and schematic design phases. These models are to be compared with energy models by engineering consultants.

GREEN CERTIFICATIONS

- ELS projects consistently target and attain a variety of sustainability-oriented certifications. These include LEED, Savings by Design, and the WELL Building Standard. We have projects that are ZNE and/or all-electric.



Evaluation & Reporting

We track the firm's progress across diverse project types to evaluate efficient practices and understand which areas we can target in the future.

CURRENT PORTFOLIO PREDICTED ENERGY USE INTENSITY (PEUI) AND/OR LIGHT POWER DENSITY (LPD)

- Our pEUI reduction for 2023 is 68.6% compared to the 2030 benchmark goal of 80%. We have seen an increase in our pEUI reductions most years since we began tracking the data through AIA 2030 in 2018.

GOALS/TARGETS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ELS aims to study the typical energy use for project types across all sectors and identify sustainable strategies appropriate for each.

PROJECT EVALUATION AND 2030 REPORTING

- Report Predicted Energy Use Intensity and check target EUI against 2030 goalpost.
- Perform post-occupancy evaluation.

APPROACHES TO REACHING ENERGY TARGETS

- Establish goals with the client and consultants at project kick-off to achieve an integrated approach.
- Consider mechanical, lighting, daylighting strategies and envelope design holistically.
- Energy Modeling and Daylighting Tools: Insight 360, Energy 2D.
- Embodied Carbon and Life Cycle Analysis Tools: TallyLCA.



Outreach & Advocacy

ELS aims to attract and engage potential clients and staff as partners in our sustainable design practice.

COMMUNICATING STRATEGIES TO CLIENTS

- Market projects and specific approaches to potential clients as part of a complete building approach.
- Create sector- or client-specific packages showing typical approaches to education on potential.
- List recent energy-modeled projects on our communications platforms.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE SUSTAINABLE DESIGN COMMUNITY

- Recognize and support staff volunteer efforts toward sustainable practices.



Mueller Town Center

Training & Education

As sustainable technologies evolve, we maintain the currency of the ELS knowledge base to find the best solutions for each project.

STAFF GROWTH IN SUSTAINABLE DESIGN DISCIPLINES

Provide resources and opportunities for staff development and mentorship.

- Provide resources to grow LEED- and WELL-accredited staff
- Support current LEED GAs/APs with continuing education to maintain certification.
- Create opportunities to share sustainable project experiences with the entire office.
- Provide resources for the development of our in-house energy modeling practice.



Operations & Outlook

ELS recognizes that a sustainable practice begins in our workplace. We continue to look for new ways to reduce our carbon footprint and increase our handprint.

WAYS TO REDUCE OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT/INCREASE OUR HANDPRINT

- Double-sided printing/reduced paper use
- Officewide computer energy saving policy
- Purchase 100% recycled office/+printer paper
- Telecommuting opportunities/working from home
- Green business certification
- Green commuting
- Teleconferencing



Conclusion

ELS signed on to the AIA 2030 Commitment as a statement of aspirational intent. The ELS Sustainable Action Plan outlines the best practices by which we may follow through on the intent and realize the aspiration. We look forward to what's next.





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