



2025-2030 Strategic Plan

Executive Summary



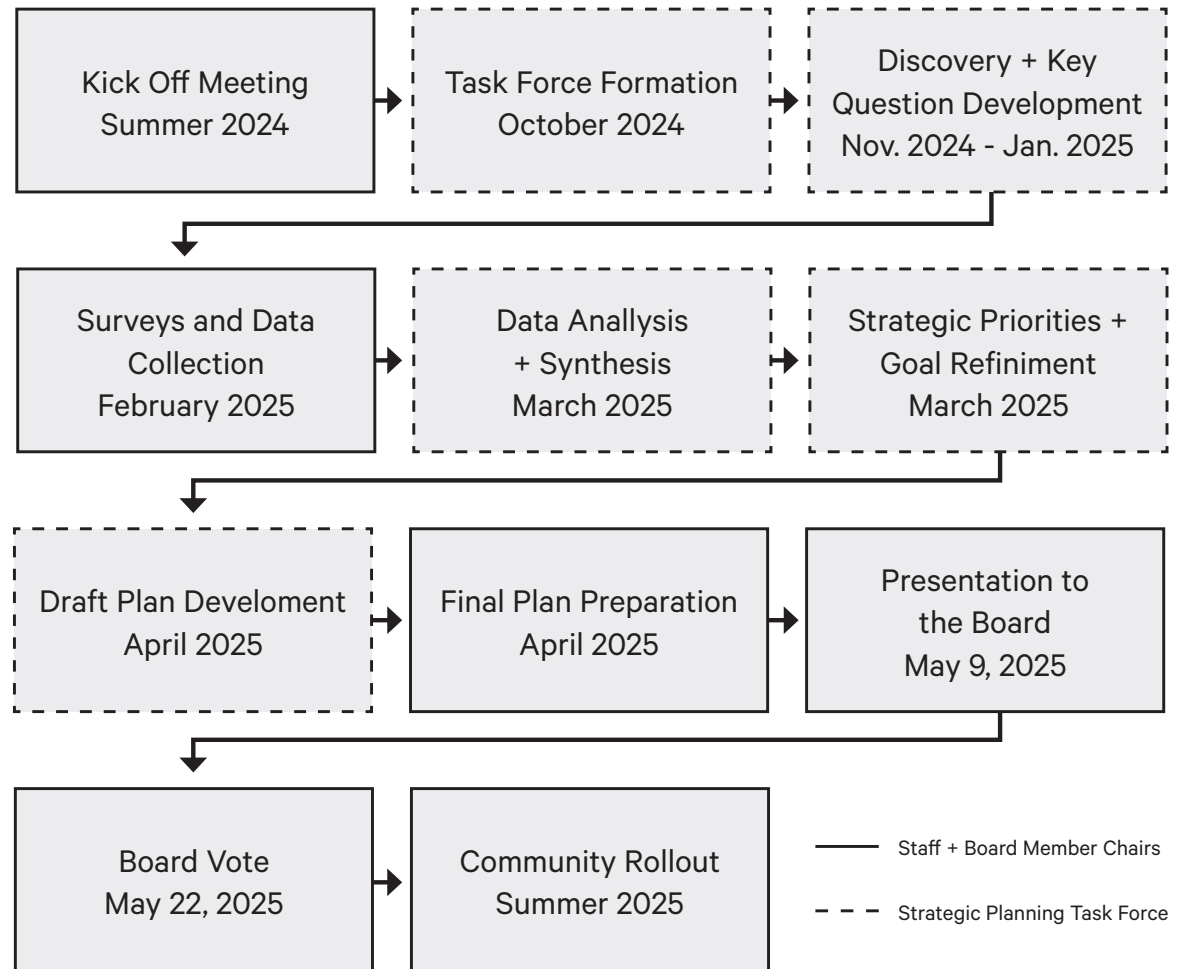
Background + Board Directive

The 2020-2024 Strategic Plan served AIA Seattle by providing a framework for creating annual plans that advanced the organization's mission and responded to member needs. However, the plan was primarily AIA Seattle-centric, which limited integration with the Seattle Design Festival (SDF). Additionally, its specificity restricted organizational agility during unpredictable times.

In 2024, the AIA Seattle and SDF Boards instructed the planning task force to:

- Evolve the existing strategic plan rather than create something entirely new
- Better integrate both organizations under a shared vision while honoring their distinct missions
- Create a higher-level, more adaptable framework that could respond to changing conditions
- Deliver the plan by the May 2025 board retreat

Process Timeline



Strategic Planning Task Force

AIA Seattle and Seattle Design Festival would like to acknowledge the individuals who devoted many hours to developing this strategic plan. The Strategic Planning Task Force was comprised of a diverse group who represent the various constituencies of both organizations. This group met from October 2024 to April 2025 to develop the aligned 2025-2030 strategic plan.

- **Marlene Chen AIA**
Seasoned Professional
- **Rachael Cicero**
Past Festival Planning Team Leader
- **Denise Henrikson**
Past Festival Partner
- **Matt Hutchins AIA**
Small Firm Principal
- **Moris Moreno**
Allied Member
- **Melissa K. Neher**
AIA Staff
- **John Rodezno Assoc. AIA**
Emerging Professional
- **Kristen Scott AIA**
Large Firm Principal
- **Annalee Shum**
AIA Staff/SDF Program Manager
- **Heather Skeehan**
SDF Sponsor

Task Force Objectives

- Review and approve discovery questions and methodologies
- Identify key documents to include in historical review
- Help engage peers to participate in planning activities
- Review and provide feedback on data collection findings
- Assist in defining strategic priorities and initiatives
- Communicate strategic planning progress throughout the process

Discovery Process

The task force conducted a comprehensive discovery process that included:

- Surveys of members, volunteers, and stakeholders
- Review of historical data and past strategic plan outcomes
- Landscape analysis of peer organizations
- Focused discussions around key strategic questions

Both organizations already have a wealth of information in the form of evaluations, stakeholder feedback, and annual plan debriefs. However a handful of unknowns were brought forward as key discovery questions.

Key Discovery Questions + Strategic Priority Areas

Deploy Design to Make a Difference

- How can AIA Seattle leverage advocacy to amplify design thinking's impact?
- How can SDF increase public engagement and understanding of design's value?

Prepare Our Communities to Lead

- What activities have been most effective in preparing the profession to lead?
- What emerging trends will impact the built environment ecosystem by 2030?
- How can SDF support a pipeline for diverse design talent?

Sustain Healthy Organizations

- What actions have most effectively increased organizational visibility?
- How can we sustain and grow essential resources, relationships, and communications?
- How can we grow membership and better communicate member value?

2025-2030 Strategic Plan: Strategy on a Page

AIA Seattle

champions the central role of architects in creating and sustaining a better built environment.

Together, we envision a culture of design that fosters equitable, resilient, thriving communities.

Seattle Design Festival

unleashes the design thinker in everyone to illuminate Seattle's challenges and ignite action.

Deploy Design to Make a Difference

Increase visibility through digital outreach, communications, celebrations, and engagement across diverse communities.

Expand regional advocacy presence in and beyond City of Seattle.

Explore ways for ongoing community connections beyond the annual Festival.

Prepare Our Communities to Lead

Support next generation leadership with continued investment into youth partners, diverse perspectives, and emerging designers.

Deepen peer-to-peer learning networks across career stages, expand low-cost education offerings, and strengthen ARE support.

Embrace innovation & emerging trends to position our community at the forefront of the industry.

Sustain Healthy Organizations

Diversify revenue streams, exploring expanded sponsorship tiers and new funding opportunities.

Increase member value by better communicating existing benefits, and expanding leadership and networking events.

Optimize operational efficiency by leveraging in-kind contributions, volunteer support, and strategic partnerships.

Distinct Roles, Aligned Vision

While AIA Seattle and SDF share a vision, they fulfill distinct roles. Together, they create a powerful ecosystem that supports both the profession and public engagement with design. Each organization contributes uniquely to advancing the shared vision without duplicating efforts.

The Power of a SOAP

The Strategic Objectives, Actions, and Priorities (SOAP) framework provides a high-level, adaptable approach that:

High-Level Guidance	Offers clear strategic direction without overly prescriptive details
Durability	Provides a stable five-year framework while allowing tactical flexibility
Integration	Aligns both organizations while respecting their distinct missions
Actionability	Directly informs annual planning processes with measurable outcomes

This balance of stability and flexibility is especially valuable in today’s rapidly evolving professional environment.

Strategic Plan to Annual Plan Connection

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