



# ***SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN***

*Firm Strategies to Address Climate Change, Human Health, and Resource Conservation | 2022*





## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>04</b>	<b>Overview</b>
<b>06</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b>
<b>07</b>	<b>Our Commitment to Sustainability</b>
<b>08</b>	<b>Our Work</b>
08	<i>Project Goals</i>
08	<i>Energy Efficiency</i>
08	<i>Embodied Carbon</i>
09	<i>Human Health</i>
10	<i>Resource Conservation</i>
<b>11</b>	<b>Project Benchmarking</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Featured Projects</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Our Design Process</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>Outreach and Advocacy</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Training and Education</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Operations</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Future Goals</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>Acknowledgments</b>



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*We have been given a gift, an opportunity to provide leadership and creativity in the stewardship of the built environment, to make well the relationship between people and the earth. LSW's sustainability action plan is a critical tool that will guide us and hold us accountable to our sustainability goals.”*

**Casey Wyckoff, AIA**  
CEO, LSW Architects



## OVERVIEW

**Human activity will continue to influence the health of our world.** *Climate change, air and water quality, and the state of natural resources are all impacted by our decisions.*

**Motivated by our love and a sense of duty to current and future generations,** *we are committed to providing opportunities that will have a positive environmental impact.*

## OVERVIEW

*As architects, we are in a position to address climate change by channeling our efforts toward sustainable and resilient design practices. This is why we are committed to researching, implementing, tracking, and refining processes that make our current and future impact a key decision-making priority and a benchmark for project success.*

*Across the firm, we've focused our efforts in three directions:*

***Internally:*** Publishing our plan and equipping our team with the tools, re-sources, and information needed to act in response to climate change

***Professionally:*** Communicating our position on sustainability to broaden the conversation and activate our plan

***Community-wide:*** Holding ourselves accountable to the communities that we love and serve

***This document serves as a record of what we are currently doing to address climate change through sustainable design practices. As an annual practice, we add, revise, and update the information. You are currently reading version 2.***



*Collaboration plays a key role in achieving internal, professional, and community-wide success. Green Team member, Farleigh Winters, shares sustainability information with her team.*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Our Commitment

- We have made sustainability a part of every aspect of our business, projects and operations alike, to facilitate continual improvement internally and across our work
- We continue to track and refine metrics and processes to support achieving sustainability goals
- We are committed to bringing our focus on sustainability to new and existing relationships, in order to create and expand opportunities where we can have the greatest potential to create a ripple effect

### Our Work

- Our body of work includes K-12 education, higher education, multi-family and mixed-use housing, healthcare, and tenant improvements
- The majority of our work complies with Washington Sustainable Schools Protocol (WSSP) or Washington State Energy Code (WSEC)
- In moving towards Architecture 2030's EUI targets on all projects, we track, measure, and submit EUI results to the AIA 2030 Design Data Exchange to demonstrate our commitment to the AIA 2030 Challenge

### Featured Projects

- RiverWest: 323,693 sf, Multi-Family Mid-Rise, LEED™ Platinum
- VPS - King Elementary: 67,816 sf, K-5 Elementary, WSSP
- Clark College - STEM Building: 70,000 sf, Higher-Ed Building, LEED™ Gold

### Our Design Process

- Sustainability is part of our process from the beginning of design to occupancy and beyond; this includes a robust kick-off to assess the potential of each project and set goals, check-ins at each stage of the project, and a thorough post-occupancy evaluation once the building has been operational for a year
- All major educational projects will include a life cycle analysis, and every project will include energy use benchmark comparisons

### Our Design Process (Cont.)

- We have identified the role of Sustainability Champion on project teams to help execute roles and responsibilities related to sustainable design and hold the team accountable to the identified sustainability goals
- We are committed to regularly reviewing our metrics and sustainability action plan for additional rigor and opportunities for improvement

### Outreach and Advocacy

- We are engaging partners and policy advocates working within our city, region, and state to advance standards we believe best support the environment and human health
- We are investing in education for students within our communities through Design CoMission (teens) and LSW Design Summer Camp (ages 7-12)

### Training and Education

- LSW has budgeted time and resources for office-wide participation in sustainability efforts
- Opportunities include tools, resources, and support to explore the boundaries of sustainable design - with the goal of increasing baseline sustainability literacy across the firm

### Operations

- Continue to implement initiatives and policies that promote employee health and wellness and cultivate a diverse and inclusive culture
- Consistently measure and improve our operational practices with an emphasis on making sustainable purchasing decisions

### Vision for the Future

- By grounding our processes and decisions in research and a defined value system, the firm's work must reflect what is best for people and the environment. Our goal is to inspire hope and urgency within our community and bring people together in order to take action.

## OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

LSW is supported by a multi-generational team of architects, planners, and designers who are united by a commitment to the health, vitality, and resilience of our community. As we look toward the future and our firm's place within it, we view sustainability as a through-line to the story of our work, our design processes, and our values.

This is a matter of urgency. We hold ourselves accountable to our clients and to the public through the quality of the built environment we design. This means carefully considering the long-term impact of our work and how it will serve, benefit, and provide meaningful opportunities. It means creating a system of checks, balances, and metrics that reflect this commitment by showcasing what we are doing in response to the science behind climate change.

### **Beliefs: Design Matters & We Love One Another**

*The urban built environment is responsible for 75% of annual global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.<sup>1</sup> Responsible stewardship of our planet is a moral imperative for the survival of future generations.*

### **Values: Leadership & Giving Back**

*The path to a sustainable future is challenging and requires us to hold community health and well-being as the key priority; this is the ultimate incentive for us to enact plans with a sense of gratitude and creativity.*

### **Accountability: Integrity & Stewardship**

*Meeting the targets of the AIA 2030 Commitment is a matter of integrity; this is about creating a firm for future generations.*

### **The Collaborative Way: Speaking Straight, Listening Generously, & Honoring Commitments**

*Sustainability issues can be thorny. We will discuss them, contribute to educated decision-making, and uphold our commitments.*



*The Columbia Credit Union, completed in 2020, features a rainwater harvesting tank.*

## OUR WORK

Our work is an expression of our values. It is a combination of the criteria, goals, and processes we employ that determine project success. To make sustainability a key consideration with every project, we organize our efforts into the following categories:

### Energy Efficiency, Embodied Carbon, Human Health, and Resource Conservation

#### Energy Efficiency

As architects and designers, we know that our work has a significant impact on green house gas (GHG) emissions and climate change. Energy efficiency is one of the most straight-forward ways to measure, monitor, and improve the performance of the buildings we design. This starts at the project evaluation stage, where we work with clients to set aggressive Energy Use Intensity (EUI) goals and prioritize energy efficiency in our design solutions (see graphic representation, right).

#### Project Goals:

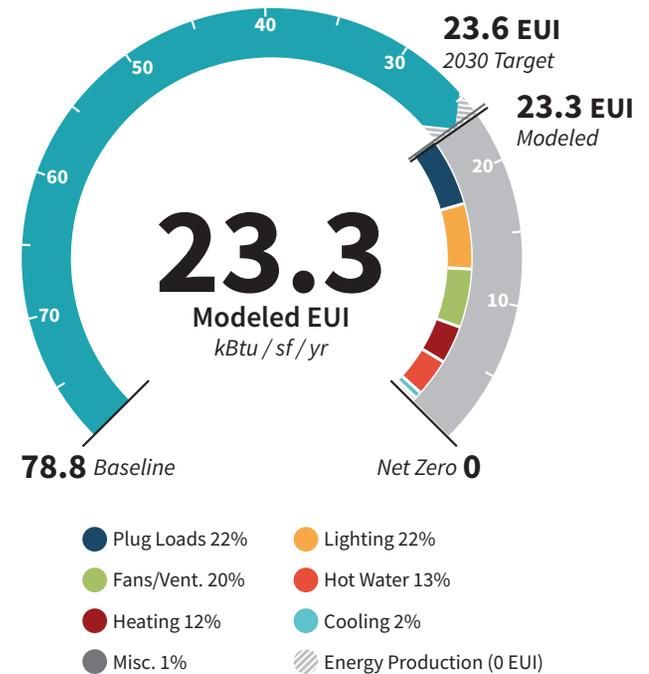
- Target 60% EUI reduction on all projects; annually select three projects to target 80% EUI reduction
- Year-over-year improvement of portfolio EUI reduction to catch-up to the 2030 Challenge
- Provide energy modeling analysis on all projects over the course of design
- Measure and communicate how the project is performing to clients

#### Embodied Carbon

To reduce the amount of embodied carbon in our materials and construction, we design with a mindset to optimize, evaluate, and specify appropriate materials. We recognize the need to track carbon produced during a project's material extraction, manufacturing, transportation and construction through life cycle assessments. We are committed to researching alternative, low-carbon materials and updating our specifications for an attributes-based approach to embodied carbon reductions. We communicate directly with manufacturers to request Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) to build transparency around material impacts.

#### Project Goals:

- Prioritize carbon-smart, efficient structural systems
- Require a minimum percentage of supplementary cementitious materials (SCMs), such as slag and fly ash, when using concrete
- Encourage steel that is manufactured in domestic electric arc furnaces (EAFs) using high percentages of recycled content



Graphic illustrates RiverWest's (see pages 12-13) modeled EUI surpasses the 2030 target.

## OUR WORK



### Human Health

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**Occupant Well-Being:** Good design is the result of art and process in action. It creates the intangible quality that makes a space feel welcoming, comfortable, safe, and right for the people who will use it. We are committed to designing spaces with people in mind. To us, this means considering health, comfort, and environmental quality. We must be aware of context and maintain a sensitivity to the acoustics, light quality, and thermal comfort of a space. Finally, the use of biophilic design principles can lift moods while inspiring curiosity and promoting cognitive performance.

**Healthy Materials:** Our drive to be great designers is an extension of our desire to be good citizens. To support this broad goal, we prioritize products that have publicly available material ingredients disclosures - such as those with Health Product Declarations (HPDs). We aim to continuously improve and update our specifications and procurement processes to require transparent and healthy products.

**Fostering Community:** Design decisions have the power to shape and impact our communities. Knowing this, we strive to leverage research and self-driven forums to ensure that our design process is equitable and culturally sensitive. We work to cultivate diverse, multimodal, and human-scaled communities that feel connected to the environment around them.

#### Project Goals:

- *Perform daylight modeling to balance daylight opportunities with glare mitigation*
- *Specify low/no VOC materials, including architectural coatings, sealants, and adhesives*
- *Provide bicycle infrastructure and opportunities for movement*
- *Include program elements that serve the greater community*
- *Incorporate Universal Design principles*
- *Prioritize views to nature and access to public outdoor spaces*



*LSW's work on the Vancouver Plaza Neighborhood Clinic, completed in 2019, has set the new standard for community experience for all Vancouver Clinic locations.*

## OUR WORK



### Resource Conservation

This category includes promoting sustainable and regenerative materials, salvaging or reusing materials where possible, and protecting local water resources and ecosystems.

**Materials:** We aim to reduce the quantity of materials used on any given project, look for opportunities to use reclaimed materials and design using simple and elegant palettes. The materials we specify should conserve and protect the environment while demonstrating sensitivity to ecosystems throughout their life cycle. We select durable, long-lasting materials that reduce our material use in the long run.

**Habitats and Ecosystems:** A site's natural biodiversity and ecosystem forms part of our overall design consideration. We believe it is essential to develop an understanding of the site context in order to design a building that is responsive and supportive to natural systems. Our approach is to first consider native plantings, carbon sequestering vegetation, and landscapes that support and protect fragile ecosystems. Then, we address forms of pollution, like light and noise, that are detrimental to wildlife.

**Water-Use and Watersheds:** Water is one of Earth's most valuable resources. Potable water use reduction can be addressed by incorporating low-flow fixtures and dual flush toilets. Rainwater and stormwater must be handled responsibly. Rainwater can be harvested and reused as greywater. Stormwater systems should slow the water down and filter it to minimize the amount of contaminants flowing off site. We look for opportunities to include rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable surfaces across our projects to help with stormwater management.

#### Project Goals:

- Start with a thorough site analysis to understand existing ecosystems
- Prioritize on-site stormwater mitigation and management
- Implement habitat protection strategies, such as Bird-Safe design
- Set a water use intensity target for each project
- Measure and communicate how the project is performing to clients



The Uptown Apartments, completed in 2018, feature drought tolerant plants (top). The site at Vancouver iTech Preparatory created a learning opportunity for students through its stormwater management approach (bottom).

## PROJECT BENCHMARKING

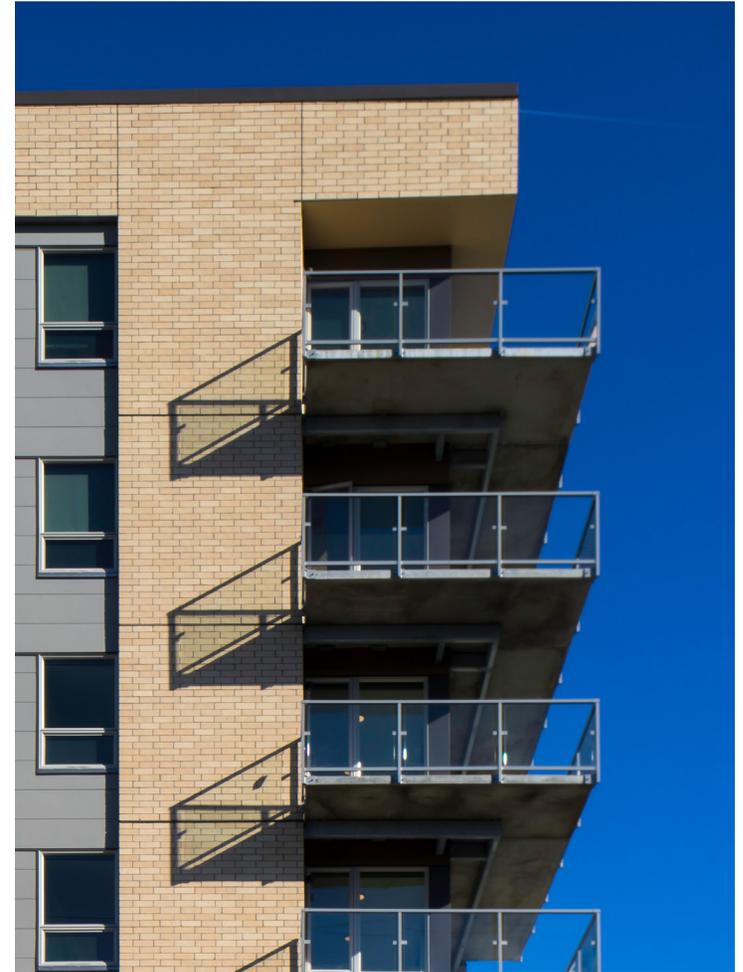
We are in the fortunate position of having robust building and energy codes that provide a baseline for each project to meet. Additionally, we work with third party certification programs that require a particular standard of excellence. With each of these in mind, the question must always go back to how each project supports our goals as they relate to reducing operational energy use, reducing embodied carbon emissions, protecting human health, and conserving resources.

**LSW and the AIA 2030 Commitment<sup>1</sup>:** In 2018, LSW became a signatory to the AIA 2030 Commitment. Since then, we have successfully submitted all of our qualifying projects to the AIA 2030 Design Data Exchange and will continue to do so moving forward.

**Washington Sustainable Schools Protocol (WSSP):** State-funded major school construction projects are required to meet this green building standard. This protocol gives priority to areas such as site planning, energy use, material specifications, and indoor environmental quality<sup>2</sup>.

**LEED™:** The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) building certification program provides a widely accepted certification standard to focus efforts on selected projects. We have designed LEED™ Silver, Gold, and Platinum buildings including the first LEED™ Platinum multifamily mid-rise in Vancouver, Washington (RiverWest).

**Washington State Energy Code (WSEC):** Washington's energy code is significantly more restrictive in comparison to others, providing a high standard for us to reach as a baseline. We support the progressive attitude of our state legislature in requiring buildings to meet high performance standards.



*The Uptown Apartments, completed in 2018, received a LEED™ Silver Certification.*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aia.org/resources/202041-the-2030-commitment>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/school-buildings-facilities/school-facilities-programs/high-performance-school-buildings-program>

*FEATURED PROJECTS | RIVERWEST*





### Overview

RiverWest is setting new precedents at a historic location. Sited along the Columbia River and adjacent to the BNSF railway, the project is a catalyst of the new Vancouver Waterfront development. In an area that was previously cut-off from downtown, the reinvigorated waterfront benefited from the collaboration and shared vision of the City, BNSF Rail Line, and Development team. This partnership became a source of inspiration in developing the design concept for the project; a connector of old and new context.

### Design Considerations

**Connectivity:** Fronted by the Columbia River and separated from the city by the BNSF rail line, the context was both a barren brownfield and a beautiful waterfront opportunity. Unprecedented collaboration between the city, the railroad, and the developer reunited this piece of land with the existing urban fabric and created a vision for a destination waterfront.

**A Unique Living Experience:** The building consists of 206 units with over 20,000 square feet of commercial space. There are three levels of parking (238 spaces) with the upper parking deck providing direct access to apartment units; an activated experience for residents.

Building amenities include EV charging stations, pet washroom, secure bike parking, package lockers, Bluetooth access control hardware, a workout room, and a third-floor clubhouse that opens to the exterior courtyard with dramatic river views.

### Sustainability Features

In keeping with the Waterfront's commitment to sustainability, innovation, and community, RiverWest was designed to meet the USGBC LEED™ Platinum rating and was awarded building certification in 2019. This is the first in Vancouver, WA for the Multi-family Mid-rise classification. Key features that contributed to the LEED™ Platinum Certification include:

- **High-Performance Systems:** HVAC, envelope, and windows
- **Resilient Landscaping:** 90% drought resistant plants and drip irrigation
- **Reduced Lighting Load:** LED lighting throughout
- **Efficient Heating:** Centralized high-efficiency boiler system
- **Brownfield Redevelopment:** Barren riverbank to beautiful mid-rise
- **Resource Reduction:** Precut lumber packages to control waste
- **Healthy Materials:** Locally sourced and low VOC materials

### Key Stats

**Total Square Footage:** 323,693 sf

**Project Completion:** 2019

**Apartment Units:** 206

**Retail Square Footage:** 22,000 sf

**FEATURED PROJECTS** | MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



## FEATURED PROJECTS | MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

### Overview

Planned and executed in close collaboration with student representatives, teachers, staff, and District stakeholders, the team began by imagining ways to empower its pre-K to grade 5 students through nurturing, accessible spaces, flexible learning environments, and lively gathering points. Drawing from this set of goals, the design team poured these ideas into a design that would embrace students, families, teachers, and invite all to make lasting memories at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary (King Elementary).

### Design Considerations

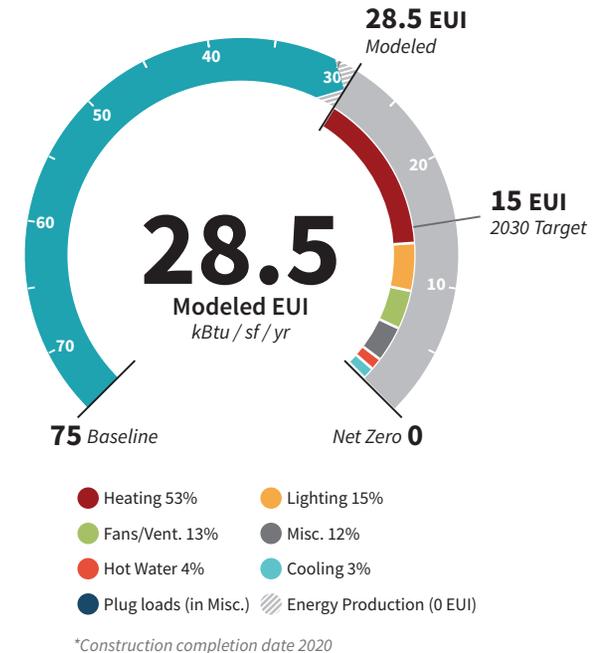
**A Place to Celebrate Diversity:** Inviting, whimsical, and instantly familiar, the design for King Elementary takes its cues from the school's passionate, diverse community of students, staff, and visitors

**A Dynamic Learning Environment:** The programmatic layout of the school is structured to create many opportunities for interaction between students and staff, with flexible spaces that accommodate various group sizes as well as gradations of acoustic and visual privacy. Classrooms have operable walls that can be opened for team teaching and collaboration, as well as sliding glass doors that open to collaboration space in CO-OP Studios

Bright colors, shapes, and textures have been used to create a light, vibrant atmosphere that positively impacts emotional support. The relationship between environments is flexible and connected, inviting students to safely learn, play, and move about the space in a way that best suits their individual needs.

### Key Stats

**Total Square Footage:** 67,816 sf  
**Project Completion:** 2020  
**Area per student:** 158 sf/student  
**Predicted EUI:** 28.5 kBtu/sf/year



### Sustainability Features

King Elementary followed the benchmarks set forth by Washington Sustainable Schools Protocol (WSSP). Key sustainability features include:

- **Connection to Nature:** All the classrooms have windows that frame views to surrounding landscapes.
- **Natural Ventilation:** All the classrooms have operable windows for fresh air.
- **Habitat Creation:** A butterfly garden was designed to connect students with native habitat and stages of development.
- **On-site Stormwater/Rainwater Management:** Bioswales filter stormwater to protect the health of local streams while grey water is harvested for irrigation.
- **Optimized Daylighting:** The majority of classrooms receive light from two sides; direct northern light through tall, view windows and refracted light from the large, south facing Studios. Exterior shading on south-facing glazing prevents unwanted glare and additional daylight is brought into the Commons and Gallery through clerestories.

**FEATURED PROJECTS** | CLARK COLLEGE - STEM BUILDING





### Overview

The Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) building provides an enhanced learning environment for Clark College students in Vancouver, WA. Brightened by an abundance of natural light and a dynamic program, the 70,000 sf building features modern spaces that cater to the multidisciplinary needs of its students.

### Design Considerations

**Light and Outdoor Access:** The STEM building maximizes the neurological, physical and energy savings aspects of daylighting, while minimizing any detrimental aspects, such as unwanted heat and glare. A rooftop plaza and an outdoor classroom provide alternative learning and studying venues in an outdoor setting.

**Movement:** The prominent staircases encourage student use when moving between floors. Additionally, the centrally located bike racks and lockers are intended to promote alternative transport options to and from campus.

**Sound:** Successful acoustics are vital to the learning process. Areas of circulation benefit from the energy and sound of activity, while learning spaces need to enhance the spoken word and encourage focus. Additional care was given to dedicated and informal learning areas to create acoustically appropriate environments.

### Sustainability Features

The STEM building received LEED™ Gold Certification in part because of the following:

- **Recycled Waste:** 97.5% of construction waste was recycled.
- **Brownfield Redevelopment:** The new building replaces an antiquated building that had outlived its useful life and contributes to improved environmental quality by addressing asbestos contamination in the soil, which was removed from the site prior to construction.
- **Reduction of Water Use:** Low-flow and sensor activated plumbing fixtures were selected to achieve a 30% reduction in water usage over a standard building.
- **Enhanced Commissioning:** Ensuring the building systems are functioning as designed.
- **Responsible Material Use:** 50% of the wood used on the project was certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.
- **VOC:** Interior finishes selected meet stringent guidelines for VOC content.

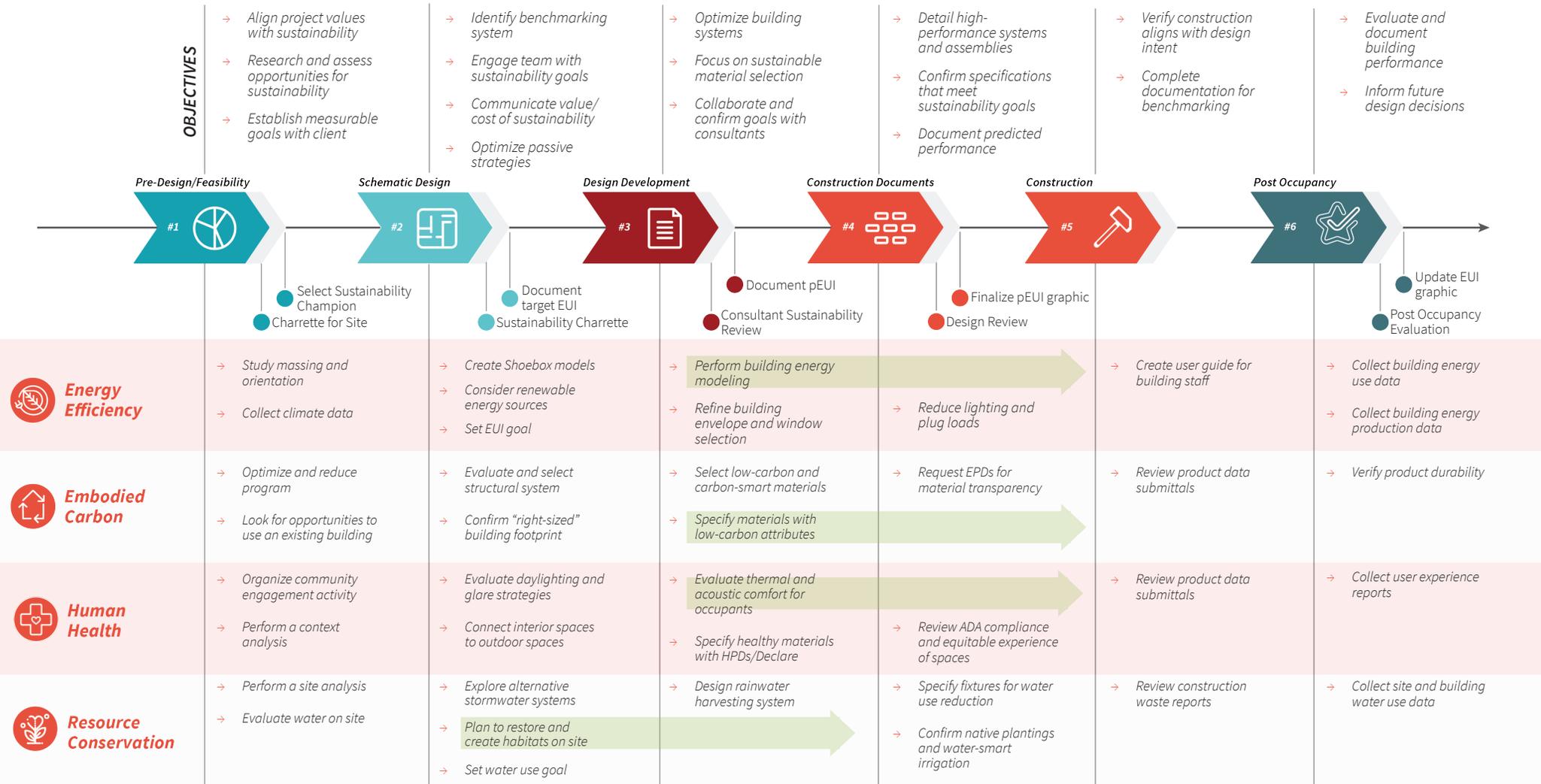
### Key Stats

**Total Square Footage:** 70,000 sf

**Project Completion:** 2016

# OUR DESIGN PROCESS

To ensure our design work supports our goals and deepens our collective knowledge base, we have implemented a number of activities and strategies that serve to inform, track, and revise our design process. These processes are deployed across projects in order to connect our values with project goals, to measure the impact of our work, and share the results with our community.



## OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY



*Design CoMission Director, Kyle Rogers, leads students in a community project addressing homelessness.*

As sustainability continues to shape the internal landscape of LSW and influence the designs we produce, we see it shaping the relationships we build, and the way we work with external parties. It is our responsibility to use our findings and resources to raise awareness and advocate for practices that support the sustainability goals in this plan. These efforts will be coordinated in the following areas:

- *Engaging partners and policy advocates working within our city, region and state in order to bolster our collective knowledge, to become more efficient in navigating building codes, and to support standards we already know to be in alignment with our values*
- *Investing in the education of students within our communities through Design CoMission (teens) and LSW Design Summer Camp (ages 7-12)*

## TRAINING AND EDUCATION

We are committed to providing our employees with tools, resources, and support to explore the boundaries of sustainable design and bring their knowledge to the firm. It is our intention to advance both individual and collective expertise in sustainability. This past year, we brought on a new team member with a focus in sustainability to further assist the firm's developing expertise.

### LSW Resources

**AIA:** LSW currently has 21 registered AIA members, including all principals and associate principals. The firm fully covers the annual state and national dues of all AIA-registered architects and supports staff attendance at AIA events or honoring AIA commitments. Additionally, LSW volunteers its office and community facilities to house AIA study materials and support regional CEU events.

**LSW Green Team:** The LSW Green Team is dedicated to learning, sharing, and pushing the company's knowledge base and capabilities around sustainability, both for design practices and internal operations. Their function is to better equip us to serve our communities and advance the firm's green agenda, in order to promote and celebrate a healthy lifestyle that extends to our buildings, environments, business practices, and staff - implementing environmentally conscious design.

The team members are also avid ambassadors within the Vancouver community and various organizations, promoting awareness in the ever-evolving world of sustainability, utilizing technological, and research-based resources to continually elevate our performance and keep us inspired.

**Sustainable Accreditations:** LSW encourages participation in sustainability certification programs like LEED™, the Living Building Challenge, and WELL™ by providing 100% reimbursement for accreditation and study materials.

**Learning and Development:** LSW provides a variety of learning opportunities for all team members. We filter product presentations and trainings based on their sustainability accreditation and provide specific training sessions for those who are project Sustainability Champions.

**Social Impact:** We design with people in mind. With every project, LSW sets aside a percentage of its profit to invest in local organizations. The funds are used to match employee contributions to non-profit organizations of their choosing. This is a manifestation of our commitment to a more equitable, just, and environmentally conscious society. In 2021, we matched donations to 37 organizations, including:

- *Community Foundation for Southwest Washington*
- *Clark County Food Bank*
- *NW Association for Blind Athletes*
- *SHARE Vancouver*
- *Council for the Homeless*
- *Habitat for Humanity*

**LSW's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee:** The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee was formed out of a desire to learn, grow, and advance social change at the firm and across the communities we serve. This committee is dedicated to researching, sharing, and championing our firm's collective and ever-growing knowledge base. It aims to provide exposure-to and leadership-in allyship, the dismantling of institutional racism, and continuing personal and professional growth. Their function is to better equip us to serve our communities in order to promote and celebrate a more just and inclusive society.

## OPERATIONS



*The Esther Short Building, home to LSW Architects, was renovated in 2014 and features large, open windows providing natural daylighting for its tenants.*

Although our office footprint is much smaller than the design impact we have in our constructed work, carrying the same values in our office operations that we champion in design is a critical step towards establishing credibility. Evaluating how we function, the reasons we take action, and the way we make decisions is an important internal process for our firm.

Our operational practices at LSW act as a connection point between our work, lifestyles, and values. Our sustainability goals intersect with all of these areas in a variety of ways. To this end, we have implemented a number of goals and processes to guide how we consume, use, and navigate our workspace.

## OPERATIONS

### **Employee Health and Benefits**

**Fitness and Health:** We offer a variety of incentivized and flexible fitness programs that are designed for a more healthy, active, inclusive, and joyful work environment. At all times, there are avenues for employees to suggest and advocate for new programs that respond to seasons, trends, research, and changes to personal preferences.

- **Move Your Feet Campaign:** An annual reimbursement program for staff to purchase shoes for exercise-related activities
- **Office Bikes:** Employees are invited to participate in an in-house bike-sharing program to use for exercise or recreation during work hours.
- **Annual Company Rafting Trip:** Every summer, the entire LSW family heads to the White Salmon River for a day on the rapids. We laugh, we scream, and revel as a team.
- **Best Place to Work Committee:** A committee established to nurture our office culture, environment, and operations. This committee serves the LSW team by bringing timely and new initiatives to the office and pushing for a more engaged and inspired design culture.

**Financial Benefits:** We strongly believe that health extends beyond physical wellness; financial health plays an important role in the well-being of employees. At LSW, we match 100% of employee contributions up to 5% through a safe harbor 401(k) plan. Furthermore, we provide an ESG fund, a sustainable investment option, through the 401(k) investment portfolio.



*Architect, Christian Korta, tests his new hiking boots from the Move Your Feet Campaign (top). LSW's employees participate in the company-wide, annual white water rafting trip (bottom).*

## OPERATIONS

### **Employee Health and Benefits (Cont.)**

**Mental Health:** Mental health is a core part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and achieving excellence in our work. It's a part of daily life that has to be maintained, destigmatized, honored, and nourished. We are committed to providing the resources and facilities needed to work in a way that promotes health and happiness. We partner with the Vancouver Wellness Clinic to provide holistic support opportunities through a corporate mental health program.

**Access to Nature:** Biophilic elements in and around the office provide a connection to the natural world. The floor-to-ceiling windows bring natural daylight into the space and allow for great views of the trees and waterfront. Plants around the office enhance the air quality and have the benefit of enhancing peoples' moods. Additionally, Esther Short Park and the Vancouver Waterfront provide easy access to natural settings for walks, picnics, or a place to spend moments alone.

**Flex Hours:** To accommodate a variety of schedules, reduce unnecessary commuting time, and allow for employees to utilize the hours they feel most productive, LSW has flexible scheduling across its workforce.

**In-Office Facilities:** We are committed to providing the resources and facilities needed to work in a way that promotes health and happiness. This includes things like standing desks, ergonomic chairs, and healthy snack options available to staff.

**Strategic Coach™:** The Strategic Coach™ Program provides an opportunity for LSW employees to plan for their future, determine how best to get there, and how to most effectively move toward personal and professional goals.

**RYD (Rethink Your Drive):** LSW partners with an alternative transportation service to provide employees with a cost-efficient, safe, and user friendly commute option. RYD is an environmentally friendly (100% electric) way to shuttle our team members to and from the office and throughout the downtown area was developed.



*The RYD mobile app officially launched this year, expanding its services throughout downtown Vancouver.*

## OPERATIONS

### Stewardship

**Energy:** As part of our commitment to running an energy-efficient office, we've implemented systems to reduce our energy use. These include daylight sensors, occupancy sensors, and LED lights. These incremental steps are the first in a longer journey toward running a net-zero office space.

**Carbon-Neutral Operations Plan:** The long-term vision at LSW is to achieve carbon-neutral operations. To date, we have purchased carbon offsets for 2019 and 2020 to account for our electricity-based carbon footprint. Moving forward, the intent is to purchase carbon offsets based on data collected regarding the carbon footprint of electricity use, water use, commuting emissions, flight emissions, and material use for the office. The greater aspiration is to reduce our pre-offset footprint as much as possible and develop our own carbon offset initiatives internally, allowing us to transition away from purchasing offsets through third parties.

**Reduce, Re-use, Recycle:** We strive to lessen our impact on the natural world by doing as much as we can to limit the amount of materials we use. Whenever possible, we prioritize digital deliverables and maintain a digital materials library. Our office has implemented thorough recycling resources including educational signage and a variety of receptacles at key office locations.

**Purchasing Protocol:** The supplies and technology we use in the office are connected to our sustainability goals. For example, technology selection can reduce plug loads and recycled content in paper can reduce the environmental impact of printing and copying. A purchasing protocol is being developed to help integrate sustainable purchasing with the firm's values.

**Commitment to Equity and Inclusion:** LSW's core mission is grounded in the truth that all people deserve justice, acknowledgment, and access to opportunities. Our upcoming Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan expands on the ways that we prioritize inclusive design to advance social equity, with the aim of creating spaces that will enhance and facilitate human dignity as well as the health, safety, and welfare of both individuals and the broader public. To us, this critical work can only be accomplished with a network of systems and processes that inform the way we design, how we interact with our internal and external stakeholders, who we partner with and support both directly and indirectly, and our overarching vision for any project.



*The Esther Short Building's community room opens to a large outdoor patio offering building tenants a place to connect and access to nature.*

## FUTURE GOALS

Our goals are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the internal growth and external commitments of the firm. We evaluate the objectives that have been successful and reflect on the areas that need improvement. As we look towards the future, the necessity for sustainable interventions in our work and the way we work is only increasing. We have identified three goals that build upon the work we are already doing, encourage us to tackle new metrics, and push us to continue to honor the commitments we have made.

**Reaching for New Benchmarks:** There are two additional sustainability certifications we would like to target in our future projects: Living Building Challenge<sup>1</sup> (LBC) and the WELL Building Standard<sup>2</sup>. Our goal is to design and certify one project for each of these certifications by 2025. A stepping stone to complete certification through the Living Building Challenge will be pursuing Petal Certification in projects. We are taking action to support and encourage members of the firm to go through the required education and testing to become Living Future Accredited and WELL Accredited, respectively. We hope to have at least two individuals accredited in each certification.

**Embodied Carbon Tracking:** The amount of embodied carbon in a project is a direct responsibility of the design team. Architects play a key role in selecting structural systems, sizing programmatic spaces, and specifying materials. To date, we have been consciously considering the impacts of these decisions on the embodied carbon in our projects, but we have not had specific metrics or goals surrounding embodied carbon tracking. Our aim in 2022 is to select an assessment tool and begin gathering data on embodied carbon baselines for our projects. Then, in subsequent years we can establish embodied carbon targets across all our project typologies.

**Carbon Offsetting for Operations:** The decision to address our operational contributions to the global environmental crisis will require continued effort to fully account for our carbon footprint. Our goal for the next decade is to implement systems for tracking, reporting, and offsetting carbon emissions related to the way we work. We have identified a timeline for successfully meeting this goal which includes calculating a comprehensive carbon footprint, selecting a third-party organization to partner with, and purchasing carbon credits.



*King Elementary School, completed in 2020, inspires students to dream about their future and provides opportunities to achieve their aspirations.*

	Electricity Use	Water Use	Commuting	Flights	Supplies
2019	✓				
2020	✓	✓			
2021	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2022+	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Timeline for tracking a comprehensive carbon footprint at LSW.*

<sup>1</sup> <https://living-future.org/lbc/>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wellcertified.com/about-iwbi/>



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*I am honored to work for a firm that prioritizes sustainable practices and is willing to invest today, in the future of our community. It is our job as we design for future generations to consider how we can protect our environment and change what's considered the standard practice and integrate sustainable efforts into everything we do.”*

**Naleigha Williams**

*Designer, LSW Architects*



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*At LSW, we have an important opportunity: to provide thoughtful leadership on what it means to be a steward of our community and environment. What we design has an impact that often extends far beyond our own lives. When we consider our communities and the people who will benefit or suffer because of our work, it's clear that sustainability must be wholly integrated in our practice.*

*Publishing the first version of our Sustainability Action Plan in 2020 was an important milestone for LSW. This effort was driven by a cohort of passionate designers who modeled the grit and determination needed to create a positive cultural/professional shift that benefited everyone. We are so grateful and proud to support their efforts.*

*As we release version two of the Sustainability Action Plan, our call to action is broader and more urgent. This work is not for the impassioned few; it's too big and too important. Our challenge is to make the ideas, lenses, and goals within this document as integrated and natural to designers across the firm as drawing with a sharp pencil. And from there, to create a meaningful change across our community, which elevates the experience of all people in it.*

*To everyone who has devoted their time, energy, and love to this plan and all that it represents for the future, both at the firm and across our community, I am truly humbled and grateful to work alongside you.*

Sincerely,



**Esther Liu, AIA, LEED AP**  
President, LSW Architects



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