

2024
2026

SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

**BEYER
BLINDER
BELLE**

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COMMITMENTS

Sustainability has been inherent to the ethos of Beyer Blinder Belle from the very beginning—from our earliest days we have been committed to planning and design that preserves, enhances, and builds upon existing contexts.

Out of this foundation we have developed a comprehensive vision of sustainability, based on five core values that shape every project:

URBANISM

Whether at the scale of a city or within a single building, we create spaces that are fundamentally urban—that is, spaces for inclusive and diverse communities, where civic life is both an aspiration and a practice, where resources are distributed efficiently and equitably, and which are resilient in the face of challenges.

CULTURE

We uphold the existing cultures in which we work, in all their diversity. We believe that acting with respect for the qualities of a place—made possible by engaging with those who know the culture best—creates more socially and environmentally just communities.

CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

We practice contemporary design, whether in new construction, renovation, or adaptive reuse. Using leading technology, we design programmatic, aesthetic, and performance innovations for today, with flexibility to meet the needs of future generations.

AIA 2030 Commitment

The latest climate data tells us that reducing carbon emissions is not enough—to make the biggest impact, we must commit to net-zero emissions by 2030, a path that requires strong, immediate action. The AIA 2030 Commitment is an industry-wide, actionable climate strategy that gives architects, engineers,

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

Recognizing that the built environment is one of the greatest causes of—and source of potential solutions to—climate change and other ecological challenges, we preserve and restore natural environments, by designing high-performance buildings and communities to beneficially impact ecosystems, and thus human health and well-being.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Finally, we support our clients' and communities' fiscal responsibility. We know that designers play a crucial role in the responsible stewardship of resources—not only during project delivery, but also long afterward, in a project's ongoing maintenance, use, and eventual decommissioning or repurposing.

We are passionate about sustaining the world through our work. Our role as designers, therefore, is to thoughtfully curate and manage human impact, to the benefit of our clients, our communities, and the planet—knowing that the living world is what sustains us and what must be sustained by us in turn.

and building owners a set of standards and goals for reaching net-zero emissions in the built environment, which creates a staggering 40% of the world's emissions. BBB has been a signatory to the AIA 2030 Commitment since 2017 and we continue our efforts to make good on that pledge.

> [The AIA 2030 Commitment](#)

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

OUR CHALLENGE

We understand that much more needs to be done—both in the world and within our organization—in order to improve our impact on the environment. To meet our challenge, we will pursue these internal drivers to make greater impact through our projects:

- Recognizing that our people are able to drive sustainability forward with competence and confidence to do so, we will invest in **staff capabilities** through training, certification, and project experience.
- Recognizing that staff capabilities will increase with BBB's **institutional support**, from both leadership and the organization as a whole, we will build sustainability into our practice and project processes, as well as offer financial support for staff training and certification and sustainability-focused fellowships and research.
- Recognizing that architects, designers, and planners accomplish far more with the buy-in of their clients, we build our **clients' trust** in us and in the sustainability strategies we recommend by proving the financial and ecological benefits of sustainability, by delivering excellent projects and service regardless of sustainability goals, and by aligning sustainable solutions with our clients' organizational cultures and institutional missions.

To these ends, this Sustainability Action Plan defines five steps we will take to operationalize, quantify, and improve upon our passion for sustainability:

- We will improve our projects' impact on the climate.
- We will improve our projects' impact on natural environments.
- We will improve our projects' impact on human health.
- We will structure our practice to make these improvements possible.
- We will commit to transparency in our goals and progress.

By committing to making progress in these areas, we will hold ourselves and our clients to greater accountability for the impacts we make—and more fully realize the sustainable ethos that has guided us since our founding.

If we are to fully aid the industry-wide transformation of architecture into a sustainable endeavor, we must institutionalize support at the firm management level, to build sustainability into our business planning, practice, and project processes, and to measure, manage, and improve over time.

GOAL 0.1: Sustainability Planning Process

- 2024 – 2026 Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) Goals & Initiatives are adopted and will be implemented through the active pursuit of Design Impact (external) and Firm Impact (internal) goals and initiatives.
- Budgets & Outcomes for SAP initiatives are integrated into annual business planning and budgeting processes.
- 2027 – 2029 SAP development will be initiated in Q3 2026 for adoption before Q1 2027.

GOAL 0.2: Business Planning Integration

- Prepare quarterly and annual (FY 2024, FY 2025, FY 2026) progress updates, acknowledging not only successes and insights but also barriers or challenges, and escalating issues for partner decision that will aid further successful SAP implementation.
- Partners receive quarterly progress updates on the SAP and are responsible for advancing BBB's sustainability goals through quarterly business planning and budgeting decisions as well as marketing, business development, and client pursuits.

GOAL 0.3: JUST Assessment

- Complete Just 2.0 self-assessment and report outcomes and recommendations to Partner group by Q3 2023.

The effects of climate change—warming temperatures, more frequent and severe weather events—already affect the communities within which we work. Because buildings account for 40% of climate change-causing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions globally, we have adopted climate action goals consistent with the American Institute of Architects (AIA) 2030 Commitment, which aim to reduce GHG emissions from buildings by 90% by 2025 and achieve net zero emissions by 2030. Even if these goals are met, we recognize that buildings must increasingly be designed for resilience in the face of storms, floods, fires, extreme temperatures, droughts, and other catastrophic events.

GOAL 1: Zero Carbon Development

Initiative 1.1: Meeting the 2030 Challenge (Operational Emissions Reductions)

- Establish baseline predicted Energy Use Intensity (pEUI), using online tools like Zero Tool, for all applicable architectural projects to inform energy design and reduction goals and standardize obtaining/reporting data.
- Define and publish internal guidance for BBB's iterative energy design processes (modeling vs prescriptive) for typical BBB project types and for “pathway to zero carbon” throughout entire design, construction, and post-occupancy performance verification phases. This includes methods for collecting energy information from external consultants, collecting applicable energy compliance data (i.e.: COMcheck), and providing guidance on BBB-recommended prescriptive energy design analysis tools evaluated in collaboration with DCT and RED (i.e., cove tool).
- Utilize Passive House, Zero Carbon Certification or other relevant frameworks for six projects. Document the iterative energy design process to both refine internal guidance and guide clients in the cost-benefit analysis to meet the pEUI reduction targets.
- Record and report annually to the AIA Design Data Exchange (DDx) portal to visualize BBB's portfolio performance and compare progress with other AIA 2030 Commitment signatories across the world.

Initiative 1.2: AIA-CLF Embodied Carbon Toolkit Pilot (Embodied Carbon Emissions Reductions)

- Commit staff time to engage in Carbon Leadership Forum (CLF) and AIA industry efforts to develop building-level Lifecycle Analysis (LCA) benchmarks. Target participation in at least one industry event/quarter.
- Pilot implementation of the AIA-CLF Embodied Carbon Toolkit and develop recommendations for measuring and reducing embodied carbon emissions on six projects. Compile and communicate pilot lessons learned, to inform firmwide adoption of best practices.
- Develop six Whole Building Life-Cycle Analyses representative of typical building types in BBB's portfolio, to establish baseline understanding of embodied carbon emissions and communicate impact and reduction opportunities to clients.

GOAL 2: Climate Resilient Design

Initiative 2.1: Hazard Risk Assessment Case Studies

- Research, pilot, and develop internal resources or case studies for discussion at firmwide BBB Sustainability events using project hazard risk assessment frameworks (e.g., FEMA, EPA, IFRC) for three BBB projects, to introduce climate change-related risks and engage clients on incorporating climate adaptation measures into the design.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

While biodiversity loss is mainly caused by expansion of human activities into undeveloped land, climate change accelerates extinction risks by altering habitats and species migration patterns. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at COP15 in Montreal, Canada, called on national governments to commit to ambitious global conservation and biodiversity goals, including protecting 30% of terrestrial, coastal, and marine ecosystems by 2030. BBB can support these goals by designing built environments that support increased biodiversity and the preservation and restoration of natural habitats.

GOAL 3: Design for Biodiversity

Initiative 3.1: Biodiversity Precedent Case Studies

- Develop precedent case studies for discussion at firmwide BBB Sustainability events for six BBB projects that integrate native reference ecosystem/habitat for the project site or elements within the buildings.

GOAL 4: Sustainable Growth

Initiative 4.1: Define Sustainable Growth Criteria

- Define and publish BBB's Sustainable Growth criteria (i.e.: LBC Place Petal, LEED ND Smart Location criteria, or others) prioritizing locations on infill sites, demonstrating connectivity to previous development and transit infrastructure, and preserving or restoring functional habitat. By Q1 2024, establish project reporting on sustainable growth criteria for all applicable new projects.

HUMAN HEALTH

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Americans, on average, spend approximately 90% of their time indoors, where concentrations of some pollutants may be two to five times higher than outdoors. Furthermore, physical inactivity is a significant risk factor for obesity, chronic disease, and premature death, per the World Health Organization (“Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030”). In light of these trends, we seek to improve human health and wellness in our projects by drawing on the insights of organizations like the New York-based Center for Active Design (CfAD) and the International Well Building Institute (IWBI).

GOAL 5: Healthy Buildings & Active Design

Initiative 5.1: WELL & Fitwel Practices

- Research, pilot, and develop precedent studies for discussion at firmwide BBB Sustainability events on six WELL or Fitwel building certifications.

Initiative 5.2: Healthy Materials Selection Practices

- Target at least two firmwide educational sessions/year on the principles outlined by the AIA Materials Pledge including human health, social health & equity, ecosystem health, climate health, circular economy.

Initiative 5.3: Biophilic Design Practices

- Research and pilot six projects on the introduction of principles of biophilia (“Biophilic Design,” Stephen R. Kellert) into design, for the purpose of integrating more frequent and higher-quality human interactions with nature in the built environment.

GOAL 6: Social Justice in Design & Development

Initiative 6.1: Social Justice in Design & Development Practices

- Define and publish BBB's Social Justice in Design & Development practices and develop case studies on six projects that exemplify BBB's approach to Social Justice in Design & Development.

OUR PRACTICES

We know that we need to make deliberate, structural changes to our practice if we are to improve our projects' sustainable performance, support climate action, create more natural environments, and enhance human health. These changes will enable us to more aggressively drive sustainable outcomes with our clients.

GOAL 7: Sustainability Leadership

Initiative 7.1: Establish Director of Sustainability Position

- Formalize in-house Sustainability leadership, including an interim and permanent Director role, responsible for leading the implementation of the SAP, organizing firm-wide technical resources through the Sustainability Leaders, overseeing relevant professional development/accreditation of staff, and assisting teams across offices as the central point of contact for directing firm sustainability resources and related consultant support in areas of subject matter expertise including:

1. Energy / Operational Carbon Reduction
2. Materials / Embodied Carbon Reduction
3. Sustainable Materials & Specifications
4. Resilience / Climate-Adaptive Design
5. Green Building Certifications
6. Healthy Building Certifications
7. Natural Environments / Biodiversity
8. Sustainable Communities
9. Social Justice in Design

Initiative 7.2: Establish Sustainability Leadership Group (SLG)

- Formalize in-house group of 3-5 key individuals as Sustainability Leaders responsible for researching and organizing firm-wide technical resources, assisting the Director of Sustainability in prioritizing relevant professional development/accreditation of staff, supporting teams across offices in applying specific areas of technical resources or advising on use of consultant support. Sustainability Leaders shall be identified for the areas of subject matter expertise listed in Initiative 7.1 and are responsible for reporting progress, successes and identifying challenges to the Director of Sustainability on a quarterly basis.

GOAL 8: Sustainability Expertise

Initiative 8.1: Increase Sustainability Credentials to 80%

- Increase the number of employees with sustainable design credentials to 80% by 2025, focusing on accreditations that support BBB's Sustainability Leads and a robust internal expertise and external resource network.

GOAL 9: Sustainability Consultants

Initiative 9.1: Optimize External Expertise

- Director of Sustainability, with the support of Sustainability Leaders, is responsible for advising teams on the selection and use of external consultants, as a complement to the development and optimization of internal capabilities and resources. Energy modeling, Embodied Carbon and WBLCA analysis, Envelope Performance, Ecological Systems, Green Building Certification Management, Charrette Facilitation and Materials Research are examples of services for which BBB may leverage outside consultants, in combination with internal leadership, to deliver the best results and increase internal capability over time.

GOAL 10: Project Sustainability Planning

Initiative 10.1: Initial Sustainability Review

- Establish internal initial sustainability review meeting for all applicable new projects to outline approach to project sustainability goals including how to initiate with team (charrette), how to foster interest or commitment from clients, what design software and tools are needed by project teams, what outsourced analyses will be needed (consultants), and how to document and advance goals (metrics/certifications/frameworks).

GOAL 11: Specification of Sustainable Materials

Initiative 11.1: Sustainable Materials Selection Criteria

- Develop standard BBB methodology for defining “baseline-better-best” products in BBB product library. Leverage existing third-party rating systems such as HBN “informed,” Mindful materials, or Red List methodology and integrate with specifications as appropriate.

TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY

We are committed to transparently communicating our progress toward the goals outlined in this Sustainability Action Plan. By holding ourselves accountable, we will build trust in our sustainability impact and enable ourselves to further align our design solutions with the organizational cultures and missions of our clients and stakeholders.

GOAL 12: Project Data

Initiative 12.1: Sustainability Data Collection Platform

- Develop a project data collection platform and process in order to benchmark progress of Goal 1: Zero Carbon Buildings, validate achievement of client goals, and inform and improve future client engagements. Platform will accommodate priority performance metrics, as applicable: pEUI, LPD (for interiors projects), Embodied Carbon, and as applicable for goals 1-6.

Goal 13: Project-Portfolio Insights

Initiative 13.1: Establish Forum for Sustainable Project Feedback

- Define a quarterly review and insights forum to identify and disseminate cross-firm lessons and insights that support BBB's (and thus our clients') sustainability goals. Insights should reflect project-specific progress of BBB's initiatives under climate action, ecological restoration, and human health.

Goal 14: Sharing Platforms

Initiative 14.1: Establish Internal and External Sustainability Channels

- Celebrate growth and accomplishments from the SAP internally firmwide and externally with clients through communications. Develop and maintain a Teams channel for supporting internal communications on initiatives. Share updates and celebrate individuals and accomplishments at full-firm meetings. Develop external communications (blog posts, conference representation with clients, white papers) to celebrate project sustainability accomplishments with clients.

High-performance sustainable buildings require a high-performance sustainable team. BBB is a learning and evolving organization, seeking continuous improvement on sustainable outcomes through this SAP. While BBB's greatest opportunities for impact are external—through clients and projects—looking internally at our team's diversity, equity, and inclusion, and our wellness and employee benefits ensures we are investing in our people and serving our clients over the long-term.

(Upon the completion of the Just 2.0 framework assessment (Goal 0.3) and the adoption of recommendations to improve Just levels in multiple categories by the Partners, BBB received a Just label as of November 2023, reflecting and committing to the thresholds described in this section.)

Goal 15: Diversity Equity & Inclusion

Initiative 15.1: Perform annual assessment of Diversity & Equity as defined by the Just aligned thresholds.

- “Ethnic Diversity” – Maintain Just Label Level 2, whereby minorities at BBB represent at least 50% of the minority population in the region.
- “Gender Diversity” – Maintain Just Label Level 3, wherein women represent at least 40% of the workforce and 30% of senior leadership. Work towards Just Label Level 4 (at least 50% of the workforce and 35% of senior leadership).
- “Inclusion” – Maintain Just Label Level 2, with a written policy documenting BBB's commitment to an inclusive workplace, supported by survey of staff.
- “Employee Engagement” – Maintain Just Label Level 4, with a written policy documenting BBB's commitment to employee engagement, supported by survey of staff.
- “Full Time Employment” – Maintain Just Label Level 4, wherein BBB will exceed 85% full-time employees.
- “Pay-Scale Equity” – Maintain Just Label Level 4, with a written policy committing to an equitable compensation scale for all employees, with a maximum compensation scale ratio of 1:15.
- “Freedom of Association” – Maintain Just Label Level 2, with a written policy that documents freedom of association principles and workplace democracy and not resisting employee self-organization and/or unionization for collective bargaining purposes.

- “Living Wage” – Maintain Just Label Level 2, wherein BBB will exceed the minimum living wage for employees.
- “Gender Pay Equity” – Maintain Just Label Level 4, wherein BBB will ensure a maximum variance of 5% between genders in each pay scale class.

Goal 16: Wellness Initiatives

Initiative 16.1: Perform annual assessment of Employee Health as defined by the Just aligned thresholds.

- “Physical Health” – Maintain Just Label Level 4, with a written policy that documents a commitment to optimizing the physical health [of employees and the completion of Steps 1-4 of the CDC Workplace Health Model.
- “Well-Being” – Maintain Just Label Level 4, with a written policy that documents a commitment to optimizing the emotional, social, and spiritual well-being of employees and a comprehensive well-being program supported by survey of staff.

Goal 17: Employee Benefits

Initiative 17.1: Perform annual assessment of employee benefits as defined by the Just aligned thresholds.

- “Employee Healthcare” – Maintain Just Label Level 4, wherein BBB is responsible for 100% of a comprehensive health care plan including medical, dental, and vision.
- “Retirement Provision” – Maintain Just Label Level 2, wherein BBB offers a defined contribution plan with default contribution of 6% and immediate eligibility for employer match.
- “Family/Medical Leave” – Maintain Just Label Level 3, wherein BBB provides up 6-12 weeks of paid family and medical leave for childbirth, adoption, foster placement, or dealing with a serious health condition of staff's own or a loved one, with flexible work arrangements available upon employee request.
- “Training and Education” – Maintain Just Label Level 4, wherein employees are allotted \$2,000 annually for employee training and continuing education benefits.

OUR OFFICES

BBB offices are our “living labs” to experiment with the same sustainable operations issues other companies and our clients are experiencing in a changing workplace, giving us first-hand knowledge of contemporary best practices.

Goal 18: Office Operations

Initiative 18.1: Track office energy use, establishing firmwide understanding of baseline metrics and progress towards reduction targets.

Initiative 18.2: Assess opportunities to minimize food waste generation through more effective recycling and composting programs in all offices.

Goal 19: Purchasing

Initiative 19.1: Annual assessment of Purchasing/ Supply Chain to Just aligned thresholds.

- “Equitable Purchasing” – Maintain Just Label Level 2, wherein BBB purchases at least 10% of goods and services from locally owned and operated businesses.
- “Supply Chain” – Maintain Just Label Level 1, with a written policy on socially and environmentally responsible supply chain management.

Goal 20: Transportation

Initiative 20.1: Define and publish BBB’s Sustainable Business Travel Policy by Q3 2024.

- Perform an assessment of baseline business travel data from 2023 and calculate associated greenhouse gas emissions to inform guidelines for alternative modes of travel, remote meetings, or low-emissions car rentals and flights to target reductions in carbon footprint.

BBB STEWARDSHIP

BBB is capable of offering valued insights and resources on issues our communities face, at the local, state, and federal levels. BBB encourages its people to be active in their communities, to thoughtfully contribute resources or a voice to positively influence important issues facing the profession and the communities we serve.

Goal 21: Volunteering & Giving Back

Initiative 21.1: Annual assessment of Stewardship as defined by the Just aligned thresholds.

- “Volunteering” – Maintain Just Label Level 2, wherein employees are allotted 8 hours of paid time off per year to participate in volunteer activities. Work towards Just Label Level 4 (24 hours per year).

Initiative 21.2: Annual assessment/benchmarking of BBB Foundation Stewardship as defined by the JUST aligned thresholds.

- “Charitable Giving” – Maintain Just Label Level 4, wherein BBB donates at least 3% of net profits to charitable organizations.

Goal 22: Advocacy

Initiative 22.1: Annual assessment of Stewardship as defined by the Just aligned thresholds.

- “Local Communities” – Maintain Just Label Level 2, wherein BBB has described the means by which stakeholders are identified and how the firm engages with stakeholder groups that are particular to the community.

