AIA Michigan

President's Message
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The American Institute of Architects

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One of the biggest questions that so many designers are faced with is how all of the changes that occurred in 2020 will affect future design and architecture. Developers across the country and the world are faced with a rapidly changing society. I can think of so many topics and questions to ponder. Questions like these are limitless for almost any topic:

- Retail: The question is how will retail areas, i.e square footage be reinvented and re-invigorated? We see evidence of permanent change around us wherever we shop. What will the Amazon delivery of the future look like? What will stores look like? How long will curbside pickup be sustained?
- Workplace Design: How long will our "pandemic memory" last? How long until the progressive companies forget their promises that workers will never have to return to the office, or will they? Will there be a glut of office space, and how will it be re-utilized? What does the office of 2030 look like?
- Civic spaces and government: Will Zoom meetings permanently replace public hearings? After all, so many more people participate than ever before. Will outdoor spaces continue to evolve as more useful spaces, considering how much we have come to appreciate and treasure them? Will we appreciate a walk in the park, or down the sidewalk for that matter, ever matter as much as it did last year?
- Schools: Where do I begin on that topic? Anyone's guess.

And there are but a few of the topics to be pondered. So, I suppose it is obvious where I am going with this verbal jaunt. As architects and designers, we are challenged more than ever to be dreamers and help re-invent and evolve our environments. We see the value of design more than ever, I believe. I think that it is more evident, and most people can more clearly realize the value of their environment. They now have experienced how that environment affects both their physical and mental health.

As architects, we have always sought to create a newer, better future for our clients and for our community. With each project we now are thinking not only of our clients and their visitors and users, but we are also asking ourselves and our clients how they are blending into and aiding their neighbors and their community. I would go one step further, and say that we should use our imaginations as tools to build better communities, to be that voice who can bring reasonable and creative solutions to our communities in any way possible. The AIA refers to architects and its members who are willing to do so as "Citizen Architects." The AIA's definition of Citizen Architects is as follows, direct from aia.org:

What is a Citizen Architect?

The term "Citizen Architect" is a title informally bestowed on AIA members, given with great pride and representative of a call to action for Architects to take greater role in the civic advocacy of their communities. As defined in 2008 by the AIA National Board of Directors, the Citizen Architect:

- uses his/her insights, talents, training, and experience to contribute meaningfully, beyond self, to the improvement of the community and human condition

- stays informed on local, state, and federal issues, and makes time for service to the community

advocates for higher living standards, the creation of a sustainable environment, quality of life, and the greater good

- seeks to advocate for the broader purposes of architecture through civic activism, by gaining appointment to boards and commissions, and through elective office at all levels of government.

Those talents can be used at many different levels, establishing ourselves as advisors, or becoming involved directly in government positions. We can be leaders in many different ways, and none of them come without any prescription. Challenge yourself and see how your voice can make a difference.

As a reminder, the AIA Michigan Board will be drafting a state lobbying agenda to make a statement about what we feel is important to us as architects. We can be leaders, and as mentioned, even this collaborative voice can make us leaders. As I have mentioned in the past, I hope that you are conveying your input into your local chapter or section leaders so that your voice can be combined with all of ours to convey our collective thoughts to our local and state leaders. Please speak up and make us heard.

Regards.



Robert A. Hoida, AIA

2021 President

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