



# 2022 - 2024 Strategic Plan

Adopted:  
SOLID PLANNING



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## Members of the Board

Tian Feng, Board President, Architect Member  
Nilza Serrano, Board Vice President, Public Member  
Robert C. Pearlman, Jr., Public Member  
Malcolm “Brett” Gladstone, Public Member  
Ronald A. Jones, Architect Member  
Mitra Kanaani, Architect Member  
Sylvia Kwan, Architect Member  
Ebony Lewis, Public Member  
Charles “Sonny” Ward, III, Architect Member

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Gavin Newsom, Governor  
Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez, Secretary, Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency  
Kimberly Kirchmeyer, Director, Department of Consumer Affairs  
Laura Zuniga, Executive Officer, California Architects Board

## Message from the Board President

On behalf of the California Architects Board, I am pleased to present our 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. It has been an honor to serve as Board President for the past two years. I have been very fortunate to lead an outstanding team of my fellow board members and staff, and to collaborate with allied professional organizations and stakeholders. They have made significant contributions to the preparation of this Strategic Plan.

This Plan advances the Board's commitment for continuing improvement in all aspects of business of the board, with several emphases including communications with the communities we serve, modernization of business practice, and understanding of evolving concerns for professional competency such as responding to climate adaptation. I look forward to working with my fellow Board members and Board staff to implement this Plan, and I invite all stakeholders to join in working with us over the next three years to achieve the goals outlined in this Strategic Plan

## About the Board

- The California Architects Board (Board) was created by the Legislature in 1901.
- The 10-member Board consists of 5 architects and 5 public members. Eight gubernatorial appointees, one Senate Rules Committee appointee, and one Speaker of Assembly appointee for a term of four years.
- The Board is proactive and preventive, as is evidenced by its work to improve the experience and examination components of its licensing system.
- The Board has a strong history of creative problem solving and collaboration with key constituencies, such as local building officials, educators and students, related professions, and collateral organizations.
- The Board is committed to a strong enforcement program as a part of its mission to protect consumers and enforce the laws, codes, and standards governing the practice of architecture.

On March 23, 1901, the Governor of California approved “An Act to Regulate the Practice of Architecture,” thus creating the State Board of Architecture. The Governor appointed 10 architect members to the Board. Initially, the Board was comprised of two districts: Northern and Southern. The district offices acted independently to some degree and made recommendations to the full Board on matters relating to applicants for certification. Each district office elected its own officers from the officers elected to the full Board.

Initially, individuals who could demonstrate to the satisfaction of the district board in which they would be practicing that they were practicing architecture in the State of California as of March 23, 1901, and who were in good standing, could apply for certification with the Board without examination. Over 250 of these initial “A” licenses were issued. Six months after the approval of the Act, it became unlawful to practice architecture or call oneself an architect in the State of California unless certified by the Board. However, the Act made a significant exemption to this rule by allowing individuals to prepare plans, drawings, specifications, instruments of service, or other data for buildings, provided that the individual fully informed the client in writing that he or she was not an architect. This exemption made the Act a quasi-title act instead of a true practice act. At that time, the Board also began issuing “B” licenses to individuals who had passed either a written or oral examination. Almost 1,950 “B” licenses were issued between 1901 and 1929.

In 1929, the Board’s name was changed to the California State Board of Architectural Examiners. That same year, the Board began issuing licenses to individuals who passed both a written and an oral examination. The Board’s main office in Sacramento was established in 1956 and the district offices remained as branches. In 1963, the Act was revised making the actual practice of architecture by an unlicensed individual a misdemeanor. This revision made the Act a true practice act, restricting the practice of architecture to only licensed architects.

Through 1984, the Board also had the authority to issue a temporary certificate to practice architecture to an architect licensed in another state for a stipulated structure in California

upon satisfactory evidence of his or her architectural competence and payment of the applicable fee.

From 1964 through 1985, the Board also regulated registered building designers. The registration process began in 1964 and continued until 1968. The Board continued to regulate the practice of registered building designers through 1985, although no new registrations were granted after 1968. Effective January 1, 1986, it became a misdemeanor for individuals to represent themselves as “registered building designers.” Of the estimated 700 active building designers registered at the time, about 300 applied for and were granted licenses as architects. The Board now licenses only architects and has one office in Sacramento.

Since 1997, the Board has also overseen the duties, responsibilities, and jurisdiction of the Landscape Architects Technical Committee (LATC). The Board is charged with regulating landscape architects and managing all of the affairs of the former Board of Landscape Architects. The LATC is structured as a committee of the Board. The Board views this structure as very positive and has found the relationship between the two related professions to be mutually beneficial. Opportunities for collaboration between the two regulatory programs and the efficiencies associated with combining our efforts wherever possible are the main advantages. The Board and LATC maintain an ongoing practice of providing regular updates regarding key issues at each other’s respective meetings to sustain understanding of each entity’s priorities. Moreover, the Board appoints an LATC liaison, who attends LATC meetings on behalf of the Board. Likewise, an LATC member attends Board meetings to ensure ongoing Committee representation. The Board is not aware of any consumer-related issues with respect to the structure, and the respective professions and their organizations appear to be pleased with the current structure.

In 1999, Assembly Bill (AB) 1678 (Committee on Consumer Protection, Government Efficiency and Economic Development, Chapter 982, Statutes of 1999) changed the Board’s name to the California Architects Board. This change was designed to reflect the fact that, in addition to examining candidates, the Board maintains a wide range of programs to protect consumers and regulate the practice of architecture.

## How the Board Achieves its Mission

### Regulation

The Board establishes regulations for examination and licensing of the profession of architecture in California, which today numbers approximately 22,000 licensed architects and approximately 10,000 candidates who are in the process of meeting examination and licensure requirements.

### Licensing

A candidate must have five years of education equivalents\* to be eligible for the Architect Registration Examination (ARE). Candidates must complete the Architectural Experience Program (AXP) as administered by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), and the ARE prior to receiving eligibility for the California Supplemental Examination (CSE). Successful completion of the CSE is required to fulfill the Board's requirements for licensure. All applicants are required to successfully complete a criminal background check prior to licensure.

\* Credit for education and training is outlined in the Table of Equivalents contained in California Code of Regulations, title 16, Division 2, section 117.

### Enforcement

The Board has an active enforcement program designed to ensure the laws governing the practice of architecture are enforced in a fair and judicious manner. The program consists of a local building official contact program, consumer education, and professional information outreach designed to prevent and assist in the early detection of violations. The Board enforces legal compliance for licensees by taking disciplinary actions against those in violation of laws and regulations.

The Board's enforcement program works to address three main goal areas:

1. Establishing regulatory standards of practice for those licensed as architects
2. Increasing public awareness of the Board's mission, activities, and services
3. Protecting consumers by preventing violations, and effectively enforcing laws, codes, and standards when violations occur

The Board is responsible for investigating complaints against licensees and unlicensed individuals. The Board retains the authority to make final decisions on all enforcement actions.

## Significant Accomplishments

- Updated the *Building Official Information Guide*
- Released a *New License Information Guide*
- Implemented an online license renewal option

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## Mission, Vision, and Values

### Our Mission

The California Architects Board protects consumers by establishing standards for professional qualifications, ensuring competence through examinations, setting practice standards, and enforcing the Architects Practice Act.

### Our Vision

The California Architects Board will be the national leader in the regulation of architectural practice.

### Our Values

- Collaborative
- Professional
- Innovative
- Proactive
- Diversity

## Goal 1: Professional Qualifications

*Ensure the professional qualifications of those practicing architecture by setting requirements for education, experience, and examinations.*

- 1.1 Amend existing regulations to revise and expand the types of degrees accepted for licensure to remove barriers to licensure.
- 1.2 Collaborate with legal to implement AB 1010 in developing regulations and aligning committee findings to provide more consistency and make continuing education requirements more relevant to current licensing requirements.
- 1.3 Communicate with staff to include climate resiliency as a priority subject matter for the California Supplementary Exam to protect consumers and licensees.
- 1.4 Communicate to the public what the professional qualifications committee has suggested to the Board to promote the work the committee has done.

## Goal 2: Regulation and Enforcement

*Establish regulatory standards of practice for California architects and protect consumers by preventing violations and effectively enforcing laws, codes, and standards when violations occur.*

- 2.1 Provide more detail on decisions made in enforcement cases in the Executive Officer report during board meetings and inform consumers.
- 2.2 Develop narrative discussions and case studies of common violations to educate and inform consumers and architects on what violations to avoid.
- 2.3 Better educate practitioners on standards of practice during the renewal process to protect the public.
- 2.4 Educate the public and practitioners regarding their roles when contracts are signed with a third party (contractor/developer).
- 2.5 Review the current threshold for fines to determine if they are appropriate to deter violations.
- 2.6 Monitor social media to proactively enforce against unlicensed advertising.

## Goal 3: Communications

*Increase public and professional awareness of the Board's mission, activities, and services.*

- 3.1 Resume regular communication with the American Institute of Architects (AIA) by attending joint meetings once a year to give a consistent message to architects, candidates, and consumers in California.
- 3.2 Develop outreach plan to educate licensees and candidates on information needed to acquire and maintain a license.
- 3.3 Develop communication regarding accessory dwelling units to clarify to the public how the current architects practice law requirement is not affected by Senate Bill 9.
- 3.4 Develop an outreach plan for academic and private institutions to continuously provide students and educators with relevant information.
- 3.5 Spotlight other ethnicities/minorities in the profession to promote the profession.
- 3.6 Create social media posts educating licensees on violations to increase compliance within the profession.
- 3.7 Survey higher educational institutions for data on their architect student populations to understand their plans for creating space for US resident students to mitigate a possible vacuum of professionals in the future.
- 3.8 Provide information in multiple languages to increase accessibility to licensees and candidates.

## Goal 4: Organizational Relationships & Effectiveness

*Enhance relationships with related organizations in order to further the Board's mission and goals. Increase organizational effectiveness and further develop the quality of customer service in all programs.*

- 4.1 Synchronize the Architects Board committees to meet in the same quarter to foster more collaboration and discuss key issues at board meetings.
- 4.2 Evaluate, and adjust if necessary, the need for certain committees, to increase the efficiency of the Board.
- 4.3 Streamline, and further coordinate the work of, the California Architects Board and Landscape Architects Technical Committee to function more as one organization to effectively use resources.
- 4.4 Work with DCA to implement the business modernization project to improve service to applicants, licensees, and consumers.
- 4.5 Engage in debate regarding the relationship of interior design to the practice of architecture to increase education and consumer protection.
- 4.6 Digitize records and document files for improved efficiency.
- 4.7 Create a calendar of association meeting and events so staff and board members can attend and maintain a Board presence.
- 4.8 Collaborate with similar allied professional boards and boards outside of California to share knowledge and align policies.
- 4.9 Invite affinity groups to board meetings to promote awareness of each other's activities and foster collaboration.
- 4.10 Increase the Board's presence with National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) to make sure NCARB's voice matches California's constituency.

## Strategic Planning Process

To understand the environment in which the Board operates and to identify factors that could impact the Board's success, the California Department of Consumer Affairs' SOLID Planning unit (SOLID) conducted an environmental scan of the internal and external environments by collecting information through the following methods:

- Interviews were conducted with nine members of the Board, as well as the Executive Officer, and three members of board management, and were completed during the months of June and July 2021.
- An online survey was sent to the board's staff members during the month of June 2021. Thirteen board staff participated.
- An online survey was sent to a Listserv of external board stakeholders in June 2021. One thousand five hundred and thirty-four stakeholders completed the survey.

The most significant themes and trends identified from the environmental scan were discussed by the board members and the executive officer during a strategic planning session facilitated by SOLID Planning on October 29, 2021. This information guided the Board in the review of its mission, vision, and values while directing the strategic goals and objectives outlined in its new strategic plan.