



2030 COMMITMENT: SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

Revised SPRING 2021

PYATOK
architecture + urban design

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Office visit of modular housing factory, Vallejo, CA



Office team meeting, Oakland



Community open house for Balboa Reservoir Design Standards & Guidelines, San Francisco

FIRM COMMITMENT AND OVERVIEW

PYATOK works to foster the development of vibrant, sustainable, inclusive communities through sensitive architecture and urban design, education, service, and technical innovation.

Rooted in Oakland, California, PYATOK is a pedagogical and action-oriented architecture and urban design studio known locally, nationally, and internationally for innovative sustainable housing solutions that promote social and environmental equity.

With decades of experience developing housing to fit and enhance neighborhoods, we have learned that designing inspired environments cannot be done by us alone. The success of a project depends on our ability to engage with local communities to find the intersection of local needs and global concerns of environmental impact. With a strong commitment to a collaborative participatory design process, we have been able to create award-winning projects that improve the lives of their residents and neighbors.

As we undertake careful research and community collaboration, a place-based sustainability grows within our projects. This place-based sustainability is centered on hard-to-measure qualities such as the appropriate application of typology to density, adaptability, and pride of place. Early in the design process we center our investigations on four key considerations – community engagement, culture and history, local uniqueness, and the ecological environment – to develop an appropriate design approach for each project. Leveraging this built-in, pre-existing commitment to identifying the implicit and explicit sustainability of our projects, our goal going forward is to maintain the built-in, place-based sustainability that comes with well-made and well-loved places while also practicing the technical sustainability that comes with the thoughtful selection of building systems, orientation, and material choice.

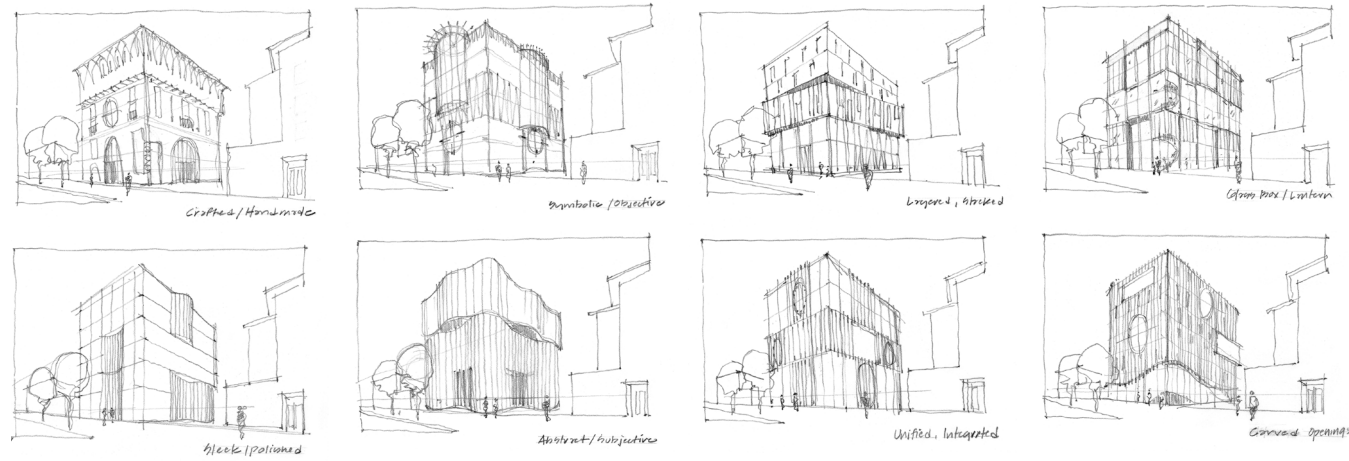
Just as PYATOK is known as a leader in multifamily housing design, we are striving to become known as a leader in sustainability, and to help push the standard in multifamily housing in a more sustainable direction. We have an internal sustainability committee dedicated to driving sustainable design within the office. We have weekly “Skull Sessions” where various guests, including sustainable developers and experts, come to discuss proven practices, emerging innovations, and everything in between. We work hard to produce projects that are all-electric or LEED Platinum because that is simply good architecture. We are beginning to have access to data and metrics in ways we could not before, and look forward to using those to measure the success and achievement of our work.

OUTLINE

By focusing our efforts in the following four areas, we can strategically work toward meeting the 2030 Commitment.

- [1] Design & Approach
- [2] Evaluating & Reporting
- [3] Knowledge Growth & Sharing
- [4] Office Operations & Outlook





Concept for The Village @ 80 Julian, San Francisco (mass timber construction)

1. DESIGN & APPROACH

a. Overview:

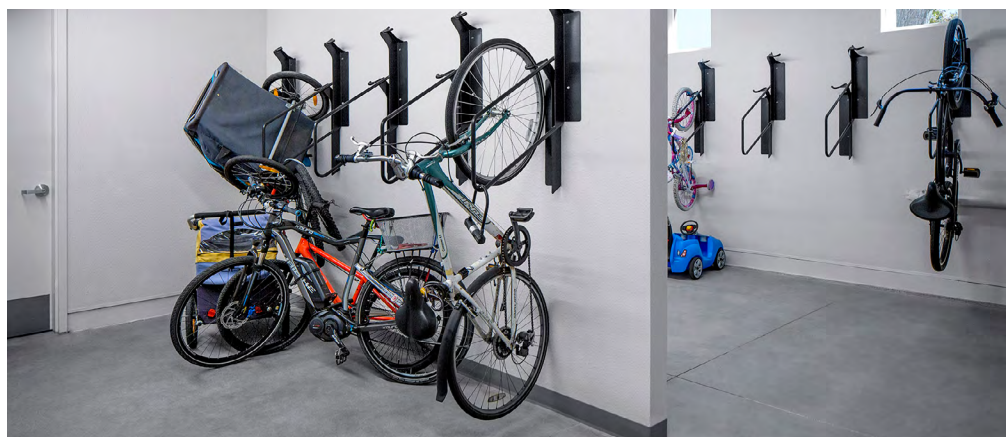
- We aim to start each project with an in-depth participatory and research process, with the goal of uncovering insights and knowledge not typically accessible to designers. Through the use of an Eco-Charrette we study how a building relates to the environmental and social context of its neighborhood, and identify both the implicit measures (such as density) and explicit measures (such as solar orientation and wind directions) that we want our project to respond to.
- Each team is then required to write a design brief, which focuses one of its four pillars on the topic of sustainability. Design Briefs are then used for the remaining duration of the project to help guide decisions.
- PYATOK prioritizes creating well rounded architects while also supporting staff's interests. This helps create individuals with broad, overlapping knowledge on everything from housing policy to energy use, and passion for what they are learning and working on.
- Our collaborative culture, which thrives on group reviews and pin-ups of work in progress, lends itself to innovative and thoughtful discussion that causes the best ideas to rise to the top.
- We currently collaborate with energy consultants on all projects, frequently going beyond simple compliance modeling. Our current work and relationships with energy consultants will provide a great foundation for deeper and earlier collaboration in the future.
- By utilizing planned, inter-disciplinary meetings and agendas, we implement a technical follow-through process that enables us to coordinate successfully with engineers and integrate new building technologies in cohesive ways.



Balboa Reservoir Design Standards and Guidelines, San Francisco



Concept and execution of bioswales at Avalon Hayes Valley, San Francisco



Bike room at St. Paul's Commons, Walnut Creek

b. Action Areas:

- **Early Action:** Through collaboration and integrated design methods, we help steer teams to make decisions about sustainability goals early in the design process. Sustainable design drivers are incorporated in each project's Design Brief, to ensure they are prioritized in the design process.

Goal #1: Use basic and important sustainability measures as default project baselines, such as high performance wall assemblies and mechanical systems.

Goal #2: Use an eco-charrette on every project during conceptual / schematic design to identify sustainability and building performance goals and actions that go beyond the baseline metrics.

Goal #3: Engage Energy Consultants in the earliest design phases. This will better leverage energy modeling as an early design tool, when major project decisions are made and passive strategies can be most easily implemented.

- **Support Clients:** We can help the client make progressive decisions relating to sustainability by supporting them with research, information, and documentation.

Goal #1: Identify sustainability goals and priorities and build a prioritized list of actions that can be taken to meet them.

Goal #2: Use precedents from successful projects to help persuade clients of the benefits of sustainable architecture.

Goal #3: Use committee time and industry partnerships to research cost-benefit to clients of various sustainable materials and techniques.

- **Continual Innovation:** By bringing excitement and engagement to every project, and by taking educated risks in trying new things, we can continue to find new and better ways of designing buildings and communities.

Goal #1: With our collaborators, present and share completed projects that have met high sustainability goals at conferences and lectures.

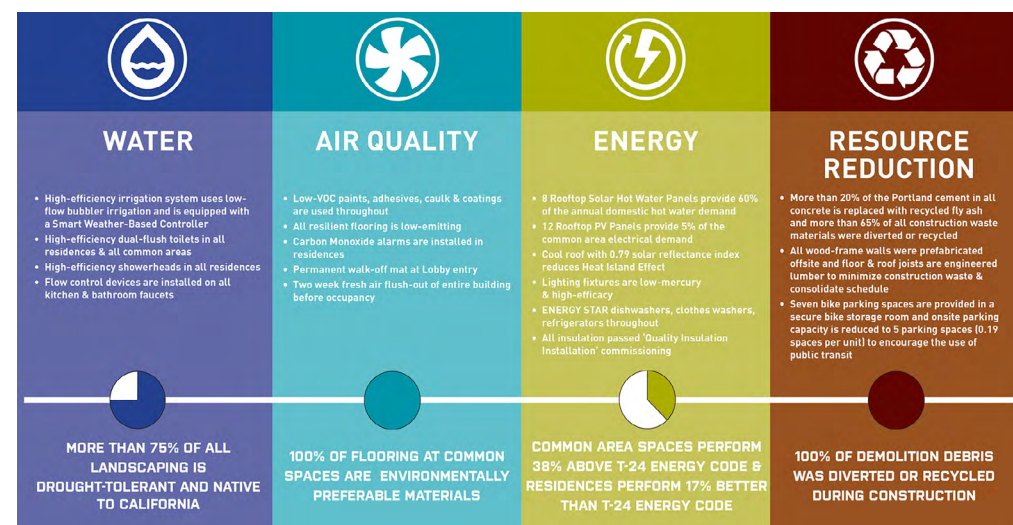
Goal #2: Build usable in-house expertise with energy modeling programs like Sefaira or Insight360.



Solar array at Red Cedar Apartments, Yesler Terrace, Seattle



All-electric systems at St. Paul's Commons, Walnut Creek



Sustainability synopsis for 1701 MLK Special Needs Housing, Oakland

2. EVALUATION & REPORTING

a. Overview:

- We value the analysis of building performance metrics to help us understand how we are to doing in setting and reaching our goals.
- We are currently in early phases of basic data collection and analysis, where we gather the full range of relevant metrics. These include EUI and other metrics important to multifamily projects like beds per acre, parking amounts, and whether the project is all electric.
- A key part of sustainability is a building's ability to serve the needs of the occupants over the long term and reducing the need for modifications and repairs, but this information requires post-occupancy research with the involvement of owners and management.

b. Action Areas:

- DDx Reporting:** Our DDx reporting is currently limited to the most active projects, and the reporting information is gathered expressly for reporting.
 - Goal #1:** Report our entire portfolio of active projects to DDx.
 - Goal #2:** Report our entire portfolio of historic projects to DDx.
- Internal Data Collection:** We are implementing a new effort to collect and analyze data from current and completed projects. The process of harvesting information from Project Managers has been successful, but recording and cataloguing information has not historically been part of our workflow.
 - Goal #1:** Implement standardized collection and recording of data as a normal part of the project team's work.
 - Goal #2:** Perform basic early-stage energy modeling on all projects.
- Data Collection Partnerships:** Having access to building water and energy use data from completed projects can provide the most accurate snapshot of our building performance. By building on the long-term relationship we have with repeat clients, this information can be accessible.
 - Goal #1:** Conduct a metrics-based Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) on a recently completed project.
 - Goal #2:** Build in POEs into our contracts as a basic service.
 - Goal #3:** Use our long-term relationships with repeat clients to gain better access to actual energy usage data and other relevant information, and share that information back with the client.



USGBC Northern California Rising Leaders committee event
"Increasing Impact: Equity in the Sustainable Built Environment"



Community workshop for Kashia Band Family Housing, Windsor, CA



Weekly office "Skull Session" in Oakland

3. KNOWLEDGE GROWTH & SHARING

a. Overview:

- PYATOK currently runs vibrant and critical all-staff learning sessions every week called Skull Sessions, where an internal or external speaker presents on a topic relevant to our work in housing and urban design. A handful of these every year relate directly to sustainability. It is a great forum to share knowledge.
- PYATOK provides financial support for staff to build our collective knowledge base by attending conferences and pursuing licensure.
- The Sustainability Committee provides research and best practice support to project teams, helping them with sustainable building knowledge and encouragement throughout all project phases.

b. Action Areas:

- **Internal Knowledge Growth & Sharing** — PYATOK currently provides support for staff to build our internal knowledge base both in the form of stipends and time, and these can be used to continue to leverage the firm's knowledge on Sustainability.

Goal #1: Annual plan for staff time to be spent researching topics and building knowledge, and collate into internal sustainability best practices to be disseminated through the office.

Goal #2: Expand the monetary support already provided to staff for conferences and licensure by providing monetary support to Staff seeking green certifications.

Goal #3: All principles and associates of the firm to have LEED or other sustainability accreditation.

Goal #4: All members of the office Sustainability Committee to have LEED or other sustainability accreditation.

- **External Involvement** — The firm is very active in affordable housing advocacy as well as volunteer design and construction networks, but less so in sustainable development networks.

Goal #1: Participate in a sustainability focused presentation at a conference annually.

Goal #2: Further leverage our labor pool for sustainability focused pro bono work.

Goal #3: Identify forums through which to advocate for the affordability of sustainability.



Martin Luther King, Jr., Day Community Service, Oakland



Construction site tour of Alta Waverly Market-Rate Mixed-Use project, Oakland



Photoshoot at Casa Arabella Affordable Family Housing, Oakland

4. OFFICE OPERATIONS & OUTLOOK

a. Overview:

- We currently collect and analyze internal printer use data. We have begun an annual survey of the commute, diet, and waste habits of all PYATOK employees, and plan to compare results year-to-year to see trends and inform policies.
- We are a Certified Alameda County Green Business since 2014, and support waste reduction, water conservation, and energy efficiency in the office and operations.
- The office is conveniently located in a very transit and bike friendly area of downtown Oakland.
- PYATOK provides assistance to both public transit users and cyclist commuters.
- We promote ourselves as experts in housing and urban environments and we strive to amplify our leadership in sustainable multifamily housing.

b. Action Areas:

- **Operations:** Continue to evaluate the office operations and renew our commitment to sustainable practices within the office.
 - Goal #1:** Maintain Green Business Certification
 - Goal #2:** Identify additional ways to provide additional assistance to employees striving to live healthy and sustainable lifestyles.
- **Marketing:** Ensuring that our marketing materials highlight the sustainable achievements of our projects will help us be known as a leader in high performance multifamily housing.
 - Goal #1:** Integrate sustainability measures into project “cut sheets” and the website.
 - Goal #2:** Participate in a net-zero project within the next 5 years, as part of a portfolio and experience building measure.

