

Social Equity Roundtable: Developing an Envisioned Future for a Socially Responsible Built Environment

January 18, 2023 | Session Overview

Participating Agencies

Association of Facility Engineers
American Association of Blacks in Energy
American Institute of Architects
American Institute of Steel Construction
American Society of Civil Engineers
ASHRAE
ASTM International
Associated Builders and Contractors
Associated Builders and Contractors
Association for Women in Science
Building Owners and Managers Association International
Building Talent Foundation
Construction Management Association of America
CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women) Network
Design-Build Institute of America
Green Building Initiative
Home Builders Institute
Insurance Institute for Building and Home Safety
International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials
International Institute of Building Enclosure Consultants
International Living Future Institute
National Building Museum
National Low Income Housing Coalition
New Buildings Institute
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
Society of Women Engineers
U.S. Green Building Council
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
U.S. Minority Contractors Association

Moderators

Glenn Tecker, Chairman and CEO, Tecker International
Dan Tecker, Senior Consultant, Tecker International

Social Equity Roundtable Overview

On January 18, 2023, NIBS hosted 30 built environment executives at NIBS headquarters in Washington, DC, to discuss and define social equity in the built environment. The roundtable was an initiative of the Consultative Council.

Moderators Glenn and Dan Tecker, of Tecker International, carried participants through some exercises to develop an envisioned future of the built environment. These exercises involved breaking out into four different groups to discuss the following:

- The year is 2033, and we have achieved a socially equitable built environment. What does it look like?
- For whom is it different?
- What will be the benefit to them?

With the answers to these questions, participants then were able to extract a set of goals – long-term and high-level commitments.

Creating an Envisioned Future

The assignment: The year is 2033 and our key stakeholders are pleased with the accomplishments of our organization. A coalition of leaders is receiving an award for their collective contribution to our stakeholders and their communities. The award lists the positive characteristics of the relevant world in 2033.

The question to answer: How is the world different as a result of what was done?

Built environment leaders came up with a plethora of answers. These include:

- Minority, women, disadvantaged business enterprises (MWDBEs) enjoy equal treatment as skilled

professionals in the design and construction industry.

- Women have parity in the work place – salary, opportunity, and work/life balance that enables them to succeed.
- Individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds/communities have greater opportunities in the built environment through employer-led internships, apprenticeships, and role-modeling.
- Families with low incomes have quality homes that are accessible and affordable in communities of their choice.
- Community members, especially those who have not been historically involved, are actively and intentionally engaged in co-designing and co-creating their built environment so that it reflects their values, meets their needs, and facilitates thriving.
- A resilient building stock for occupants in every community.

For Whom Are Things Different?

Executives found that the world is different because communities are vibrant, diverse, and collaborative, with all valuing differences and embracing cultures.

This future world is different mostly for the following: women, people of color, disadvantaged individuals and businesses, veterans, and lower income/marginalized groups.

The benefit to these individuals and communities would include belonging, ownership, sustainability, equality, and opportunity.

Built Environment Goal Statements

The next step in the roundtable process involved coming up with goal statements that ultimately would serve as commitments.

Participants were able to like the most important goal

statements that were compiled through the four work groups.

The highest-performing goal statements were:

- The built environment will embed inclusion, diversity, equity and opportunity into all aspects of its operations.
- Communities will thrive! (Residents have equitable access to opportunities, meaningful employment, quality education, accessible healthcare, and affordable housing.)
- All community members will have access to safe and healthy working, living, and learning environments
- Community members, especially those who have not been historically involved, will be actively and intentionally engaged in co-designing and co-creating their built environment so that it reflects their values, meets their needs, and facilitates thriving.
- Employment demographics in the built environment will match what our population looks like.
- All citizens will have access to clean water, clean air, sanitation, transportation, communications, healthy food, broadband, healthcare, energy, etc.

What's Next

NIBS is partnering with Avenue M Group to conduct a biannual survey of the building industry to take the pulse on where things stand, with regard to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This work will begin immediately, and study results will be released in May 2023.

Also in May, NIBS will reconvene the roundtable group to develop strategies and action plans. These strategies will need to be adjusted over time, Glenn Tecker said.

“We’re building a high-level longer-term strategy – one that functions more like GPS than a roadmap,” he said.

Learn more about NIBS’ commitment to [diversity, equity, and inclusion](#).