The Architecture Lobby
2017 National Strategic Plan Proposal
Drafted by the Lobby Organizing Committee

**Agenda** (Keefer to chair)

1. Statement of purpose

2. Updates
   a. Non-Profit Status Update
   b. Board of Directors
   c. Website

3. Yes/No Vote
   a. Administrative
      i. Membership structure
      ii. Chapters
      iii. Public Communications
   b. Programs
      i. Think-Ins
      ii. AIA Convention 2017
      iii. (re)Working Architecture Screenings
   c. Project
      i. Legal Primer/Hotline
      ii. Good Labor Practices
      iii. School/Space Exploratory Committee
      iv. Unionizing Exploratory Committee
   d. Upcoming Elections

1. **Statement of Purpose: About This Document** (Peggy introducing)

   This document is presented to the membership of the Lobby by the organizing committee for consideration and approval. The organization committee, as of June 2015, consists of Elaina Berkowitz (legal and development), Ben Martinson (financial comptroller), Pierce Reynoldson (Communications), Quilian Riano (Strategy and Design), Manuel Shvartzberg (Strategy and Research) and Peggy Deamer (Content). In addition, Keefer Dunn has taken on the role of Organization Coordinator.

   Besides briefly covering the changes made to our non-profit status, part of which relies on the result of a vote at this meeting, the document proposes a plan for our activities, aims, and goals in 2017 as well as administrative changes moving forward. Each proposal is subject to a vote and members are free to propose amendments and additions during the national meeting where we will be discussing the document. This plan covers only our national scale initiatives and projects; chapters are still encouraged to pursue projects relevant to their membership and locality.
Importantly, this document also proposes procedures for electing the Lobby leaders which consists of the organizing committee and our board of directors, both of which are nearing the end of their terms. A new organizing committee will need to be elected by the end of the year, and board members will need to be (re)elected as their terms begin to expire in 2017.

2. Updates

a. Non-Profit Status and Funding of Lobby & Initiative Programs (Ben introducing)

Until now, funding of Lobby and Initiative programs has been managed in a fairly ad-hoc manner. Now that the legal framework establishing the Architecture Lobby (supporting advocacy for the profession; doesn't allow tax-deductible contributions) and the Architecture Initiative (supporting education of the public; allows tax deductible contributions) as two distinct non-profits is complete (for the latter) and nearly complete (for the former; it requires our decision membership definition), differentiating the activities funded by the two entities will be critical. To that end, the Board of Directors and Organizing Committee are developing criteria and procedures to be used when funding for a project or reimbursement for funds spent on behalf of the Lobby or Initiative is required.

Related to the need for procedures governing the disbursement of funds we will be developing a method for allocating funding based on the stated strategic needs of the national and local chapters. It will be necessary to establish a yearly budget at the national level, as well as guidelines for local chapters to request funding.

Membership initiative was passed allowing the Architecture Lobby phase to move forward in its non-profit pursuit.

b. The Board of Directors (Keefer introducing)

The Board of Directors for the Architecture Lobby and the Architecture Initiative overlap, with variety in responsibility. There will be a future proposal for a set of procedures to elect Board Members as their terms expire.

c. Website (Peggy introducing)

A front-end graphic designer (Sean Yendris) and a back-end technical designer (Neil Freeman) are working together on a new website to be launched, again, on October 1. The new website will foreground current events and campaigns which also collecting resources and allowing information sharing between chapters.

Note that Peggy and Keefer have seen preview of new site, “looks sharp”.

Notes that previous website was flawed in the lack of current events per chapter and at a national level. The new site will incorporate that information.

3. VOTE

Each underlined proposal will be voted on individually. The proposal passes with a simple majority. Time will be allotted at the end of this section for additional proposals.
a) Administrative Proposals

i. Membership (Quilian introducing) APPROVED

At this moment, there are no established formal criteria for membership in the Lobby. However, given our growth, the increasing size of our audience, and the ambitiousness of our project, it is important that we do so. Establishing criteria for membership will help us stay organized (knowing who should receive emails, and who might be available to help work on projects) and more importantly, help us stay true to our democratic principles by ascertaining who has a voting say in the organization.

This proposal for membership guidelines establishes two groups within the Lobby: members and supporters:

- **Members** are those who engage in work on Lobby projects at the chapter or national scale. They have voting rights in the Lobby, receive a bi-weekly member’s newsletter, have access to our discussion platforms (presently, Slack), gain access to our research network, and have access to mutual support resources (ie. the labor lawyer we hope to retain in the future, a copy of our Asymmetric Labors booklet, and any other booklets that might come out in the future). Members are also asked to pay a minimum yearly **dues** at $10 base rate + 1/10 of a percent of yearly income (ie. the unemployed would pay $10 a year, and a person making $50,000 a year would pay $60 a year). Dues will go to a central account for distribution to chapters and project expenses. The dues structure is designed to be not prohibitive, and to ensure that the financial burden of Lobby projects is shared democratically.

- **Supporters** are allies of the Lobby who have made monetary donations to the Lobby. Supporters do not have voting rights in the organization or access to the member communications platform. Supporters will receive periodic supporter updates.

The plan for rolling out the above proposed changes can be found [here](#). It includes the technical aspects of how members enroll, and pay dues, as well as a proposal to switch our communications platform from Slack to Mobilize.io, a service which will integrate more seamlessly with email thereby ensuring that all of our discussions are accessible to all members.

Some discussion of various platforms to reconcile limit reached in Slack. Open to suggestions of other potential platforms.

ii. Chapters (Keefer introducing) APPROVED

Chapters are essential to fulfilling the mission of the Architecture Lobby and maintaining our grassroots, democratic ethic. To further support chapters, a formal process whereby chapters can request funds from the national organization in bi-monthly meetings with the organizing committee and chapter stewards to support operations, events, and other projects will be instituted. The formal process will be proposed and ratified at the next national meeting.
General discussion on an official form/decision making procedures. It was suggested to have a selected number of national members present to approve/discuss budget for proposed project with chapter stewards proposing project.
A note that there is a limit to the budget allocated per project/chapter TBD at a later date.

TBD at the next National Meeting - more specifics on process/forms related to funds, etc…

iii. Public Communications (Peggy introducing) APPROVED
It has been agreed by the organizing committee that a paid Communications Coordinator is necessary to keep track of and disseminate the work of the Lobby. We have funds for 5-month push that coincides with the launch of our new website, due October 1. It is hoped that a portion of membership dues will allow this position to be ongoing. Vittorio Lovato has agreed to be our 5-month Coordinator.

b) Programming Proposals

i. Think-Ins (Peggy introducing) APPROVED
After the Tampa Think-In, we want to bring the conversation laid out there to other cities. The Think-In debates proposals on 4 issues: staff/labor/wages; owners/management/fees; institutions (AIA, NCARB, NAAB, etc); and the public/media. The proposed cities for 2017 are San Francisco, Los Angeles, and/or Chicago. These are in addition to the possible National Think-In we proposed as a session for the AIA convention 2017 (below).

[The Lobby wants to allow for debate around these issues in a non-academic setting where these four issues/stresses allow for conversation]

Suggestion to reach out to the AIA in the proposed cities to gain more network and include interested parties who may not be familiar with the Architecture Lobby.

ii. AIA Convention 2017 (Peggy introducing) APPROVED
4 different sessions topics for the 2017 National AIA Orlando convention were put forward: Talent and Success (how to attract and retain talent by good labor practices); Labor Law 101; New Forms of Firm Ownership and Management; and a National Think-In (half day workshop).
All 4 have advanced to the next round of application vetting.
Second stage of proposal would be who speakers are, what content will be, etc...
It will take resources to get people to Orlando
What happened in Philadelphia: attended as agitators (rather than be outside/third party as in protest like in Chicago) attended as many different discussion related to specific lobby issued of interest, tried to speak a public voice in the sessions.
More help will be appreciated for future work.

iii. (re)Working Architecture Screenings (Manuel introducing) APPROVED
The film has screened in Philadelphia and Chicago. Proposal to screen it in LA (coinciding with Think-in?) and NYC at some point in the next few months.

(re)Working Architecture is a 30-minute film based on performance at Chicago biennial available on youtube channel.

The Chicago screening: “Least amount of effort for the most turn out” Chicago’s screening had a 20 person turnout

- Proposal to show it in SF
- Develop corresponding discussion guide - almost passed - but opposition to put it into bullet points/give it too much structure
  - Suggestion to just have printings of information about the lobby, what the Chicago chapter passed out pre-screening
  - Agree on principle of not putting this as formal amendment on vote but acknowledge that discussion points are helpful

c) Project Proposals

i. Legal Primer/Hotline (Keefer introducing) APPROVED

This project is about the Lobby providing an infrastructure of free, accessible information concerning labor laws for architectural employees and employers.

- The Legal Primer explains basic state and federal legal rights for architectural workers in a short (5-10 page) document that has already been started. It should be an informative quick reference guide for employees and employers that helps identify labor law violations, including unpaid internships, stipend internships, misclassification of employees. The Primer also explains how to avoid violations and what to do if the violation has already occurred. People working on this project would coordinate with Lobby members in individual states to develop inserts into the primer elucidating relevant state laws.

Comment that this only covers federal legislation. People working on this project would work with lobby members in individual states to make an appendix to be inserted into document to be more specific per state.

- The Hotline connects people with an actual lawyer. It could be a toll free number, chat room / hangout, or email correspondence. Real legal advice could be a retainer, pro bono agreement, or contact at the Department of Labor.

Note that it would take funds to support lawyer
Note that whichever chapter takes part will have to coordinate with other chapters

ii. Good Labor Practices (Quillian introducing) APPROVED
This project will first develop a series of standards and protocols which can be used to gauge the relative labor-friendly policies of various architectural practices that may lead to a better work/life balance. Transparency and accountability in the standards and protocols will be key in gaining legitimacy among the architectural field and academia. We will then use those standards and protocols to maintain a comprehensive list of these practices to help budding architects make decisions about their careers. Once we have a comprehensive and vetted list of standards and protocols as well as the beginnings of a list of offices that meet them, we will work with media and other groups to publicize the list, and work to embed it to existing job listing sites (Archinect). Ultimately, we will develop a proprietary certification process to ‘approve’ firms for the vetted list (i.e., similar to the WAGE model).

The first steps to move forward with the Good Labor Practices is to form a committee to explore standards and protocols. We will then begin to format the actual list of offices that meet the standards and protocols we develop. For the list there is already a proposal to create a full firm profile, include individual testimonials and highlight a specific labor practice. We can also create other features such as highlighting a Firm of the Month, etc. NYC chapter will take the lead in this campaign.

Format for sharing findings still TBD.
Commentary that this doesn’t mean that there is only one chapter participating, followed by a discussion of what it means to take the lead on this project.

iii. School/Space Exploratory Committee (Manuel introducing) APPROVED

It is proposed that the Lobby establish a framework for two related long-term initiatives to help establish, develop, and integrate the organization:

- **Lobby School**: This initiative would develop a new, experimental pedagogical project in line with the Lobby's manifesto. The School could begin as a summer retreat/workshop spanning between a weekend and a month and be offered for free (or at affordable rates). It would feature a set of both instrumental and non-instrumental courses, from history and theory classes, to progressive managerial training, to design workshops, to activist methods. The idea is to supply architecture students and others (users, community-organizers, developers) with the kind of in-depth critical discourse and practical tools that they are not getting in their formal architectural education.

- **National Lobby Space/Gallery**: This proposal would seek to establish a permanent, physical space for the Lobby. The space could be used to curate exhibitions in line with the Lobby's activities and research, to host special events like annual retreats or fundraisers, and to provide a public library for architectural workers. At a symbolic level, it would raise the visibility of the Lobby as an organization. Practically, it could also provide the venue for the school idea noted above, and possibly as a shared co-working space offered to members.
While these initiatives would take some time to come to fruition, it is proposed that the LA chapter act as a \textit{preliminary} leading committee to explore and flesh them out over the next year. Los Angeles \textit{potentially} offers two valuable conditions to host the school and gallery: plentiful cheap space, and a lively scene of experimental architects, artists, activists, and academics sympathetic to our aims. It would also establish a stronger Western presence for the Lobby. Eric Rogers, not at meeting but a friend of the Lobby, has a co-op network in SF and analyzes alternative economic models that overlap with interests of the lobby, similar to triple canopy in NYC (share with public school); Tyler - suggested members to keep an eye out for spaces, private or shared with other people, Maybe a space where every chapter exists?

Proposed Amendment - to strike the specific language about LA, strike out that LA chapter is leading this other than \textit{preliminarily}, to be an inter-chapter effort
Maybe decouple school proposal from gallery proposal?

Next national meeting to have updates on whatever is the leading committee, adding preliminary suggestion

\textit{iv. Unionizing Exploratory Committee} (Peggy introducing) APPROVED
The formation of a union is item 5 of our manifesto. It is not an idle issue and it is a contentious one. Does the Lobby want to pursue this? The proposal on the table is that we initiate a debate on our communications platform to determine a decision at a later and better-informed date. The Chicago chapter is proposed to form a leading committee to explore this issue. The lobby want to pursue this in the form of an exploratory committee, exploring what a union of architects can be, what that means with the lobby. An initial position paper is available from Keefer Dunn on Google docs.

\textit{d. Upcoming Elections}

\textbf{Organization Committee} (Keefer introducing) APPROVED

We will put forward a slate to cover the following positions for the Organizing Committee: Content Coordinator, Communications Coordinator, Research Coordinator, Design Coordinator, Financial Comptroller, Secretary, Organization Coordinator. These are variations of what was agreed upon in June 2015. \textit{The organizing committee will clarify the responsibilities and descriptions associated with those roles, or make a proposal to generalize some roles by October 1st.} Anyone wishing to volunteer for one of these positions should identify themselves by November 1, 2016. At that time, a slate will be agreed upon for vote at our December national meeting.
Moving forward, organizing committee meetings (typically held over conference call) will be held on a regular basis with conference call numbers and times published in advance so all members can participate, although attendance is only mandatory for organizing committee members. 

Formalize schedule for how we can work better as an organization

Need written description of each position within the organization committee - responsibilities Amendment - will clarify roles of membership by October 1; Vote in December to elect new members, will have 2 meetings prior.

Additional Business

Reportbacks
The body of members in charge of leading the above projects and programs will report back at each national meeting.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

ALL IN ATTENDANCE:
Keefer Dunn
Peggy Deamer
Will Martin
Vittorio Lovato
Tyler T.
Manuel Shvartzberg
Quilian Riano
John P.
Chelsea
Aaron
Eric Peterson
Ashton Hamm
Marienla
Skylar Moran
Shota Vashakmadze
Khoudia Sylla
Elaina Berlowitz
James Heard
(guest: Nell Gluckman)