

# **SMITHGROUP**

## **SMITHGROUP DETROIT**

### **Office Wellness Guide**

**October 18, 2024**

# SMITHGROUP

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# SMITHGROUP

## INTRODUCTION

Our mission at SmithGroup is to create a legacy of inspiring places that enhance the environment and enrich the human spirit. We deliver sustainable solutions to create a healthy and prosperous future for our clients and communities, balancing the needs of a thriving society, economy and environment. In fact, we view this as more than a mission: Designing for the overall health of people is a fundamental responsibility of our profession.

Our Detroit office is a collection of big thinkers and hard workers. SmithGroup's Detroit office looks out to the city's remarkable skyline from the historic Guardian Building designed by SmithGroup in the 1920s. We are a fun-loving group that gives our talent great opportunities to work on cutting-edge design as well as be involved in collaborative, integrative design work. Our culture creates an environment that encourages you to think outside the box.

An important aspect of our culture is our commitment to providing a safe, comfortable, and healthy working environment for our people. This commitment is reflected in our choice to pursue both LEED and WELL certifications for the office, implementing evidence-based design and operational strategies that support the well-being of our colleagues and clients.

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## SMITHGROUP'S MISSION

Since 1853 we have embraced opportunities to work alongside clients, partners and colleagues who dare to push boundaries and pursue bold “what if” dreams. Enamored with architecture, our founder Sheldon Smith pursued unique design opportunities throughout the 1800s that carried our firm forward for 170 years through a diverse portfolio of projects found across the globe. Whether it’s creating a space to heal patients, advancing research and discovery, inspiring through learning environments, building businesses or protecting resources, our goal is to design a better future for everyone. This promise comes alive through a diverse team of experts that balance imagination, innovation and technical excellence to design solutions to meet the needs of tomorrow and beyond. By creating partnerships with clients that share our goals, values, and visions, we are yielding outstanding results in shaping the future for generations to come.

## OUR VALUES

Our values are the intangible, yet defining, characteristics that shape who we are and how we work. They are the heartbeat of our brand and guide everything we do. These values bind us together and are present in every aspect of our work. They drive how we work with our clients, the way we interact with our communities, and they reflect the type of people we want as part of our culture.



EQUITY

**We believe in creating a design culture grounded in empathy, dignity, and excellence.**



PASSION

**Our passion for design excellence drives us to solve complex, meaningful problems for clients.**

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## SUSTAINABILITY

We design to create a healthy and prosperous future for clients and communities.



## CURIOSITY

We relentlessly explore, test and learn in order to innovate and solve today's emerging challenges.



## COMMUNITY

We are leaders where we live and work. We share our energy, our time, and our knowledge to advance our clients and professions.



## INTEGRITY

Trust is the foundation of all great design solutions. The only way to serve our clients and one another is with bedrock integrity.

**SmithGroup's** commitment to a healthy and prosperous future includes employees, clients and the greater community as well. We design healthy environments to support people and planet, which includes the design and operation of our own offices across the country. Additionally, our commitment to employee wellness is bolstered by supportive policies and benefits that include paid time off, health benefits, and helpful resources.

Our overall organizational mission is to “**Design a Better Future**” which centers around supporting human health in the built environment. Our projects are centered around providing healthy indoor environments through ventilation and air quality, healthy building materials, thoughtful thermal comfort strategies and flexible lighting design among others.

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## SMITHGROUP DETROIT

**SmithGroup** has a rigorous process for selecting locations for office expansion and relocation, using both LEED and WELL requirements as guidelines. Locations that are accessible to walkable amenities and public transportation are given priority. Additionally, office leadership works with building managers and personnel to ensure that operational policies and procedures are in alignment with these requirements.

These factors were integral to the decision to renovate our office in the historic Guardian Building (designed by Smith, Hinchman & Grylls in 1928) rather than relocating to another building.

### LOCATION

Situated in the bustling urban environment of downtown Detroit, the building is conveniently close to public transit stops, bike and scooter rentals, and a variety of facilities such as restaurants, banks, and retail stores. Commuters can easily walk to the office from nearby public transit stops or run errands during the workday. The building also features a variety of shopping and dining options in its historic first-level promenade, which is accessible to both building occupants and the general public.

Additionally, the building is just a few steps from Spirit Plaza, a vibrant public gathering space with seating and interactive features. It's also a short walk to Campus Martius, a year-round hub for outdoor activities, offering concerts and social programs in the warmer months and ice skating in the winter. Additionally, it is only  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from the Detroit International Riverwalk, a 3.5-mile stretch of outdoor activities and entertainment, perfect for a walk, run, bike ride, or simply relaxing.

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## CONCEPTS & STRATEGIES

The **SmithGroup Detroit** office integrates all 10 concepts of the **WELL Building Standard: Air, Water, Nourishment, Light, Movement, Thermal Comfort, Sound, Materials, Mind, and Comfort**. Here are some highlights of how these concepts have been incorporated into the Detroit office:

- **AIR**  
The dedicated outdoor air system (DOAS) guarantees high indoor air quality for occupants. The ventilation design adheres to ASHRAE 62.1 standards and was meticulously tested and balanced before occupancy. Regular enhanced air testing is conducted to maintain superior air quality.
- **WATER**  
Ensuring access to healthy drinking water is a priority, with water filters used as necessary to reduce contaminants. Healthy handwashing practices are integrated into kitchens and toilet rooms. Regular inspections prevent mold and moisture issues in the building, complemented by a Legionella management program to reduce the risk of occupants facing health issues related to contaminated water and water-related problems.
- **NOURISHMENT**  
The office design includes dedicated dining areas with access to healthy food storage and preparation spaces. Employees are also provided with nutrition education resources to encourage healthy eating habits.
- **LIGHT**  
Access to natural daylight and views with glare control measures are important to the office environment. Electric lighting is thoughtfully designed to supplement daylight and support working tasks.
- **MOVEMENT**  
The office location encourages walkability connectivity, while active interior design features like communicating stairs and active workstations are integrated to promote movement. Additionally, ergonomic furniture and seating supports a healthy working environment.

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- **THERMAL COMFORT**

Mechanical systems were designed to comply with ASHRAE 55 guidelines to maximize flexibility and indoor thermal comfort year-round.

- **SOUND**

Stringent acoustical control is achieved by incorporating acoustical treatments in both working areas and meeting rooms. Employees have a variety of workstations to choose from, supporting activities that range from collaborative to quiet and focused tasks.

- **MATERIALS**

Low-emitting interior finishes and furnishings were chosen to avoid chemicals of concern, reduce VOC emissions, and enhance indoor air quality.

- **MIND**

Biophilic design elements and a connection to nature are integrated into the office design to support mental health. A wellness room offers quiet spaces for employees to relax and re-focus.

- **COMMUNITY**

An integrative design process that prioritizes stakeholder engagement and post-occupancy feedback was crucial to the project's development. Universal design strategies and accessibility measures ensure an equitable environment for everyone.

Operations and maintenance plans have been developed and refined to align with WELL Certification standards. Facility managers and personnel responsible for health and wellbeing policies maintain these plans and related documents.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS FEATURES

This guide outlines the health and wellness strategies implemented in the SmithGroup Detroit office. The highlighted features exemplify the health and wellness-focused mission and demonstrate SmithGroup's commitment to health and wellbeing within the building and beyond.

### INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Exposure to air pollutants, including toxins from building materials and finishes, as well as combustion sources like tobacco products, leads to poor indoor air quality. Inhaling these pollutants can result in short-term effects such as coughing or headaches, and more severe long-term effects like respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Given that we spend over 90% of our time indoors and breathe more than 15,000 liters of air daily, it is crucial to mitigate these pollutants, particularly in our work environments. The following features were targeted and successfully implemented at the SmithGroup Detroit office.

#### **Smoke-Free Environment**

- Smoking and the use of e-cigarettes are prohibited inside the building and on the property.

#### **Air Quality**

- The project meets thresholds for particulate matter like smoke, dust, and pollen, and hazardous organic and inorganic gases like carbon monoxide.

#### **Ventilation Effectiveness**

- The ventilation design meets the following:
  1. Ventilation rates comply with all requirements set in ASHRAE 62.1 (ventilation rate procedure or IAQ procedure).
  2. The HVAC system was tested and balanced before occupancy.

#### **Pollution Infiltration Management**

- Cleanable walk off mats at main building entrances and revolving doors reduce the infiltration of outdoor contaminants.

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## **Source Separation**

- Bathrooms and cleaning storage rooms are ventilated separately.

## **Low-Emitting Materials**

- Low-emitting materials were utilized to reduce the off-gassing of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and other harmful chemicals. The following materials and building products were rigorously reviewed to ensure they met emission thresholds.
  1. Interior adhesives and sealants
  2. Flooring
  3. Insulation
  4. Wall panels
  5. Ceilings
  6. Furniture

## **Construction Pollution Management**

- To address indoor air quality (IAQ) issues arising from construction or renovation and to enhance the comfort and well-being of both construction workers and building occupants, the project implemented an IAQ management plan during construction.
- As part of the IAQ plan, measures included ventilating enclosed spaces, protecting absorptive materials from moisture damage, and replacing filters before occupancy, along with other requirements specified by the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning National Contractors Association (SMACNA) guidelines.

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## WATER

Occupants in a traditional office setting face various water-related health risks, including inadequate hydration, contaminated water, and mold presence. Insufficient hydration is linked to higher obesity rates, while toxic water contaminants increase the risk of cancer and other adverse health effects. Mold growth, due to excessive moisture, can lead to respiratory issues. SmithGroup has implemented the following features at the Detroit office to target and effectively mitigate these risks.

### Drinking Water Quality

- Water is available to all employees through filtered bottle-filling stations on each level. Water quality is tested regularly to confirm acceptable thresholds for water quality, including:
  - Turbidity (clarity),
  - Coliforms (bacteria)
  - Hazardous contaminants (lead, mercury, etc.)
  - Additives (fluoride, chlorine)

### Hand Washing

- Fragrance-free, non-antibacterial liquid soap in dispensers with disposable, sealed soap cartridges and disposable paper towels are provided at all hand sink locations.

### Base Building Maintenance

- The base building performs regular checks of all relevant systems and spaces to mitigate leaks and mold and moisture issues.
- The base building maintains a Legionella program that is maintained regularly.

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## NOURISHMENT

According to the International WELL Building Institute, poor nutrition is a leading contributor to the global burden of noncommunicable diseases and a modifiable risk factor for many preventable chronic diseases. Americans, in particular, face numerous diet-related health issues, including obesity, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease. By implementing the following strategies, occupants are encouraged to reflect on how their food and beverage choices affect their overall health and well-being.

### **Mindful Eating Provisions:**

- Designated eating spaces on each level are provided with seating and tables (to accommodate at least 25% of peak employees) for staff and visitors, and a meal break is provided within the daily schedule.

### **Food Preparation Provisions:**

- A generous kitchen prep area is provided on Level 18 adjacent to the Union social area with cold storage, counter surfaces, sink amenities, microwaves for reheating, dedicated storage, and reusable utensils, plates, and cups.

### **Special Diets:**

- Catered meals include at least one main course option meeting specific requests for dietary preferences. Staff may request a meal to accommodate a particular diet (such as vegetarian or vegan) by responding to a sign-up sheet provided before each event where food is provided.

### **Local Food Availability:**

- A variety of healthy food options are available for purchase on the main level of the building or within walking distance (including Plum Market across Woodward), as the SmithGroup office is in the heart of downtown Detroit.

### **Nutrition Education:**

- Educational materials both physical and digital, like cookbooks and dietary health resources are available all employees to promote healthy eating habits.

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## LIGHT AND SOUND

Poor lighting and acoustics can negatively affect mood, well-being, productivity, and overall happiness. Issues such as dim lighting, glare, lack of daylight, excessive brightness, and loud noises can disrupt sleep schedules, cause strain and anxiety, and create an uncomfortable working environment. By implementing the following features at the Detroit office, SmithGroup has created an optimal environment for workers' visual, mental, and biological health.

### Visual Lighting Design

- Lighting was designed to meet the illuminance recommendations from the IES Lighting Handbook, considering the types of tasks, the height of the work plane, and the age ranges of the occupants.
- All lighting fixtures have LED lamps with a Color Rendering Index (CRI) value of 90 (0-100 scale with 100 being equal to natural daylight).

### Daylight and Glare Controls

- 70% of workstations are located within 25 feet of exterior windows with views to the outdoors.
- All exterior windows have shading that is manually controllable by occupants and are manually raised/retracted at least twice per week

### Acoustic Control

- Acoustic treatments have been applied to reduce background noise from building equipment and external sources, tailored to specific tasks and space types.
- Ceiling treatments in open work areas, dining areas, and conference rooms have a noise reduction coefficient (NRC) of at least 0.7 on a scale from 0 to 1 for sound absorption.

### Sound Mapping

- The office is divided into acoustic zones: loud zones for social interactions, quiet zones for focused work, and mixed zones for collaboration and presentations.

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## MOVEMENT AND COMFORT

A sedentary lifestyle is linked to numerous negative health impacts, such as depression, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Additionally, an uncomfortable work environment can cause aggression, frustration, and a subsequent loss of productivity. By implementing the strategies detailed below at the Detroit office, SmithGroup has reduced the risk of employees experiencing the adverse effects of an uncomfortable, sedentary work environment.

### Active Building and Community

- The office is conveniently situated within walking distance of numerous local amenities (restaurants, banks, stores, etc.), transit options (Ddot and SMART Bus, Q-Line, People Mover), and outdoor activity spaces. It is also within half a mile of several green spaces and walking/biking paths, such as the Detroit Riverwalk.

### Movement and Circulation:

- A prominent communicating stair between floors is located adjacent to the lobby, accentuated by natural daylight and accent lighting to encourage active movement throughout the office.

### Visual and Physical Ergonomics

- Workstations feature height-adjustable monitor arms, and 40% of desks can be adjusted from sitting to standing. The chairs meet multiple adjustability requirements, and occupants have access to ergonomic consultations to optimize their working environment.

### Enhanced Thermal Performance

- The office utilizes a Dedicated Outdoor Air System (DOAS) for heating and cooling, adhering to ASHRAE 55 thermal environmental conditions. These conditions assume office-appropriate clothing insulation and metabolic rates in design calculations, with regular monitoring of thermal performance

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## MIND AND COMMUNITY

The International WELL Building Institute highlights that mental health and substance use conditions, such as anxiety, depression, and substance abuse, are significant global health concerns. Additionally, designing built spaces to enable all individuals to access, participate, and thrive within community systems and structures is crucial for shaping individual and collective health outcomes. By implementing the strategies outlined below, the holistic and collective wellbeing of all occupants is addressed.

### Feedback & Engagement

- Stakeholder engagement played a crucial role in the design process and the orientation of staff to the new space. The project design incorporated elements that celebrate place, culture, and human delight.
- To complete the feedback loop, an occupant survey is issued annually to all employees, covering general features, ergonomics, maintenance and cleanliness, productivity, and health. The results are reported and made available to all occupants.
- This feature guide is available to all occupants, detailing the WELL features in the office design and operations. It is complemented by educational communications about resources and health-related policies.

### Health & Wellness Promotion

- SmithGroup provides all employees with access to physical and mental health programs and screening opportunities, as well as educational materials.
- The office design incorporates and promotes access to nature through the use of plants, natural daylight, natural materials, colors, and biophilic spatial elements.

### New Mother Support

- A wellness room is available for all occupants, catering specifically to the needs of new mothers for lactation support.

### Accessibility and Universal Design

- The office complies with all required building and accessibility codes and embraces universal design concepts.
- Single-user toilet rooms have been provided that meet accessibility requirements as well as sanitary amenities

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## **Emergency Preparedness**

- Emergency resources and response protocol have been coordinated to address a range of potential situations affecting occupant wellbeing, including first aid kits, AEDs, and CPR training.

## **Spreading the Word**

- Educational tours of the office are offered to the public to highlight the WELL features and healthy design strategies described in this feature guide.
- Signage is placed throughout the office to highlight design features and explain sustainable and wellness concepts.