

# AIA Oregon's New HQ Engagement Analysis

September 21, 2023

# Overview

# What We Did

Over the summer, the HQ Task Force participated in:

- 5 section steering committee meetings
- 8 summer events, 300+ attendees
  - Some overlap of attendees
  - Varying levels of participation at each event

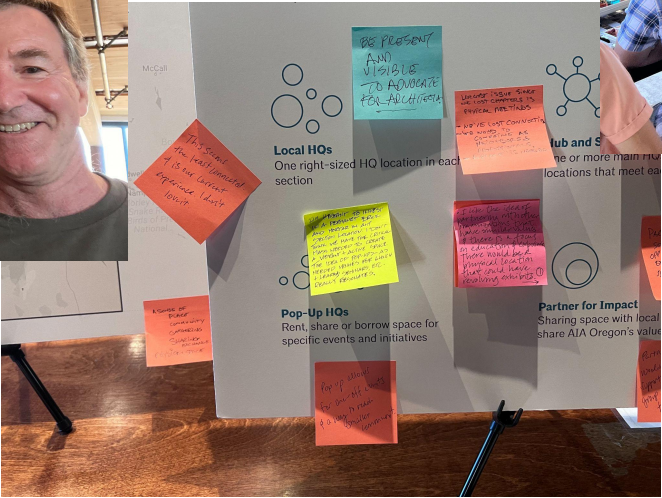
# Event Photos



Portland Happy Hour

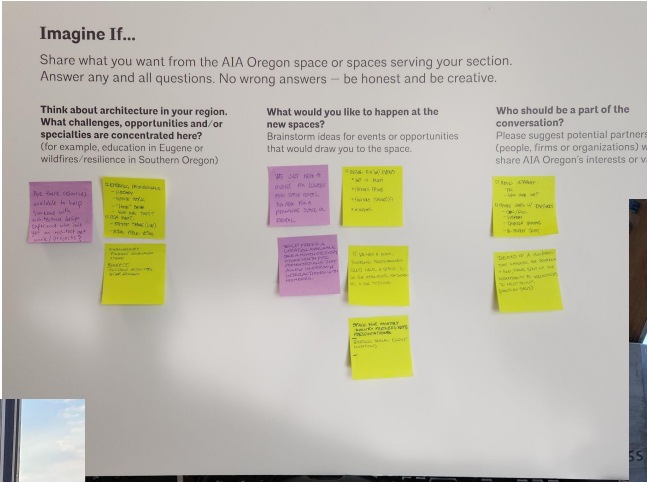


Bend Summer Social



Eugene Happy Hour

# Event Photos



Portland Summer Social



Salem Picnic



# What We Heard

Across sections, members say the HQ solution should:

**(Re)build community and foster connection.** COVID-19 arrived on the heels of AIA Oregon's new statewide structure, significantly interrupting local and regional activities and creating a barrier for in-person engagement. While online events are appreciated and should be central to AIA Oregon's offerings, people see the HQ process as an opportunity to foster more in-person connection, networking, and sharing—both locally and statewide, and with a strong emphasis on diversity, inclusion and creating a welcoming organization.

**Prioritize agile, reliable and engaging programs.** Rather than a fixed, AIAO-operated space, members are looking for programs that get them involved, engaged in their profession and connecting with each other. Section-based Lunch and Learns are of particular interest. One exception to the desire for programs over space is that emerging professionals likely need a location to access study materials. Members also want the reliability of regular, scheduled events, even if those events change locations or formats.

**Elevate and celebrate existing spaces.** The “pop-up” and shared space models were popular. Members see these options as agile, responsive and capable of reaching more members. They also create opportunities for members to be inspired by more architectural spaces, compared with fixed-space options.

# What We Heard (continued)

Across sections, members say the HQ solution should:

**Create public visibility and impact.** Members want to demonstrate the value of architects in the world and have a positive impact in their communities. They say programming should prioritize public engagement, outreach and interaction. Salem is emerging as a location for legislative advocacy as well as a potential geographic center.

**Invest resources wisely.** Financial feasibility remains a top priority. Members recognize that owning or renting a permanent space is expensive—especially when including the costs of programming and staffing. Members want to strategically use the organization’s resources to achieve the broadest and highest impact for professionals in the field and their communities.

**Expand partnerships.** More partnerships across the AEC community will provide opportunities for AIA Oregon to expand influence and engage new, potential members. Creating more connections to students and offering programs for emerging professionals is especially important. Partnerships beyond the AEC community could also enhance public visibility and create opportunities for community impact.



# Statewide Snapshot

1,700+ total members

## Program overview

### Ongoing programs

- Thursday Roundtable (as much as weekly, online, 5-30+ attendees)
- Statewide Lunch and Learn (monthly, online, 15-25 attendees)
- State Committee Meetings (monthly, online, 3-5 attendees)
- Digital Design Series (monthly or more, online, 20 attendees)
- Long-Format CE (varies, X attendees)

### Flagship programs

- Oregon Design Conference (biannually, in person, 165 attendees)
- Oregon Architecture / Prof. Achievement Awards (annually, online, 60-70 attendees)
- Procrastinators Day(s) (annually, online & in person, 30-60 attendees)
- Chris White Golf Tournament (annually, in person, 100-120 attendees)

# Statewide Snapshot: What We Heard

Flagship events like the Oregon Design Conference are serving members well, with speakers and content that engage members statewide.

Ongoing statewide programs are not serving members outside Portland as well as they could be. Although many of these events are held online, the content and speakers often aren't a draw for members.

Content of statewide offerings doesn't always include and elevate work being done across the state. Members want opportunities to connect and share with professionals across the state as well as locally.

The locations of in-person events need to consider travel time, especially for members in Southern Oregon and Bend.

Prioritizing local sections – their successes, needs and culture – could go a long way to helping to build participation in sections experiencing less engagement.

# Section Profiles

# Bend: Overview

**# Members:** 56

## **Current Programs:**

- Steering Committee Meetings (monthly, online, 5 attendees)
- Happy Hours (monthly, in person, 35 attendees, including AEC community)
- Summer Picnic (annually, in person, 40 attendees)

**Locations:** Rented + donated 3rd party spaces

## **Proposed Programs:**

- Career fair
- Principal meet & greet

## **Potential Local Partners:**

- Happy hours already involve entire AEC community
- Need to explore other partners more

# Bend: What We Heard

## **Emerging Regional Specialties:**

- Low-income housing
- Tiny homes

## **Local nuances:**

- Desire to build local capacity for leadership, community and programs.
- Bend is a new section, created just before the pandemic. More support is needed to bring folks together and create cohesion.

# Eugene: Overview

**# Members:** 206

## **Current Programs:**

- Steering Committee Meetings (monthly, online, 4 attendees)
- Thirsty Third Thursday + Emerging Professionals Social (monthly, in person, 15 attendees)
- People's Choice Awards (annually, 75 attendees)
- Holiday Party (annually, 50 attendees)
- Summer Picnic (annually, 50 attendees)
- Project Tours (quarterly, 5-10 attendees)

**Locations:** Rented + donated 3rd party spaces

## **Proposed Programs:**

- Local Lunch and Learn (quarterly, in person)
- Craftsperson Awards (every 3-4 years, in person)
- Regular section meetings (monthly, in person)
- Design annual (publication)
- Printed member directory
- Public outreach/booth

## **Potential Local Partners:**

- ASLA, Willamette Valley Chapter
- IIDA
- AFO
- AIAS, U of O chapter
- Saturday Market
- AEC community (contractors, product reps, etc.)

# Eugene: What We Heard

## Emerging Regional Specialties:

- University connection
- Affordable housing

## Local nuances:

- Space needed for regular Lunch and Learns. The Octagon did not serve this need well and was one of its major ideas for creation.
- Looking for regular monthly activities like they had pre-pandemic and pre-restructuring.
- Desire for involvement to go beyond the same 20 active members. Need to focus on diversity and inclusion.
- Emphasis on partnership and networking, both for social impact and to save money.
- Study materials are currently housed at Robertson Sherwood Architects. This model works well and could provide inspiration for other sections.

## Eugene: Quotable

“...no need for physical space except on an as-needed basis. NOT ALL architectural solutions need bricks and beams.”

“Online events are easy to commit to and don't add time for traveling.”

“I got into architecture to help solve people's problems. Would love to learn from the experience of others AND contribute to the PUBLIC.”

“What can we do for the public good?”



# Portland: Overview

**# Members:** 1,370

## **Current Programs:**

- Section, EPC and CoEDI Steering Committee Meetings (monthly, online, 6-10 attendees)
- Small Firms Exchange (weekly & monthly, online, 10 attendees)
- Emerging Professionals Social (monthly, in person, 10-24 attendees)
- InProcess Lectures (quarterly, online & in person, 50-75 attendees)
- Holiday Party (annually, in person, 50-60 attendees)
- Summer Social (annually, in person, 75-150 attendees)
- People's Choice Awards (maybe 2024)

**Locations:** Rented + donated 3rd party spaces

## **Proposed Programs:**

- Lunch and Learns (if there is a space)
- Portfolio Days (to showcase work)
- Public exhibit/gallery

## **Potential Local Partners:**

- Schools (high schools, colleges)
- ULI
- NAIOP
- Ace Mentor program
- NOMA
- PAM
- Portland BEC
- AFO
- Carbon Leadership Forum
- Art & culture orgs (Design Museum, Architectural Heritage Center, public library system, etc.)

# Portland: What We Heard

## Emerging Regional Specialties:

- Seismic resilience
- Affordable housing
- Mass timber projects
- Diverse communities

## Local nuances:

- The Emerging Professional community is vibrant in Portland.
- More context needed about the Center for Architecture and how we got to the current HQ conversation.
- Interest in multiple HQs, or recognition that Portland does not need to be central HQ for the state.
- Interest in Portland for an outward-facing exhibit or gallery for public outreach.
- Acknowledgment that other sections have fewer resources, and willingness to distribute resources equitably.
- Lots of firms willing to share/donate/sponsor space for events. Also lots of interest from members in seeing other firm's spaces and projects.

# Portland: Quotable

“We need to be visible to the public and our client communities.”

“I think a communal space would be most effective & welcoming to AIA members. Plus could boost membership!”

“Support existing organizations that have a community to provide them with a space they can count on.”

# Salem: Overview

**# Members:** 66

## **Current Programs:**

- Steering Committee Meeting (monthly, online, max. 10 attendees)
- Thirsty Third Thursday (monthly, in person, max. 10 attendees)
- People's Choice Awards (annually)
- Holiday Party (annually)
- Summer Picnic (annually)

**Locations:** Rented + donated 3rd party spaces

## **Proposed Programs:**

- Building tours
- Charrettes / Community blue sky ideas
- Architecture display/exhibit
- Policy advocacy day (statewide event, based in Salem)

## **Potential Local Partners:**

- AEC community (Architecture firms, contractors, engineers, construction industry)
- Non-profits
- Salem Arts Association
- CTEC/local high schools

# Salem: What We Heard

## Emerging Regional Specialties:

- State policy/government
- Affordable Housing

## Local nuances:

- There is strong interest from members around the state for more opportunities to advocate for legislation that matters to architects.
- Salem is seen as a more accessible location for Bend and Southern Oregon members.
- The Salem airport is expanding.
- Silverton has become a new “suburb” of Salem.
- Questions about Corvallis – should it be in the Salem section?
- In general, the AIAO Salem community is engaged and shows up, as long as there are activities and conversations that are of interest to them.

# Salem: Quotable

“Yes, there is a lot of free space.”

“Greater community involvement through art, architectural education, presentations, discussions of city planning / state planning.”

# Southern Oregon: Overview

**# Members:** 51

## **Current Programs:**

- Steering Committee Meetings (monthly, online, 5 attendees)
- Thirsty Third Thursday (monthly, in person, 5-15 attendees)
- Emerging Professionals Social (quarterly, in person or online, 5 attendees)
- People's Choice Awards (semi-annually, in person & online, 10-25 attendees)
- Summer Picnic (annual, in person, 10-25 attendees)
- Holiday Party (annual, in person, 10-25 attendees)

**Locations:** Rented + donated 3rd party spaces

## **Proposed Programs:**

- Local Lunch and Learns
- Exhibit space and public voting for People's Choice Awards

## **Potential Local Partners:**

- SOU/RCC
- Library
- Theater Troupes
- Oregon Energy Trust
- Art-n-Bloom
- Makers Faire
- Farmer's Markets
- Wineries

# Southern Oregon: What We Heard

## Emerging Regional Specialties:

- Outdoor activities year round
- Wildfire resilience

## Local nuances:

- Participation is low. Membership is evolving and there are new people who haven't yet had a chance to engage.
- Desire to rekindle the regular Lunch and Learn events with food and speakers.
- Having a location for study materials is important. ORW is acting as a library now. Funding is also needed to afford online resources.
- Travel is a barrier to participation in events held outside of the region, especially Portland.
- Members haven't felt included in larger statewide recognition opportunities. Would like more ways to engage with statewide leadership. Quarterly meetings would be ideal.



## Southern Oregon: Quotable

“We just need a budget for lunches and space rental. No need for a permanent space or rental.”

“There is a lot of interest in returning to in-person lunch and learns, and getting people together again.”

Next Steps

# What's Next

- Continue Fall outreach to members
  - Newsletter + Social + updated web page
  - Remind them of next steps in process and context
- Refine findings and develop recommendations... with you!
  - Draft: October
    - CACE members to join October Task Force Meeting
  - Refine recommendations with Task Force, steering committees & board: November-December
  - Share with membership: January
- Final feedback phase? Or begin implementation/work plan?
  - TBD during recommendation development
  - Early 2024