



HQ Task Force Recommendations

Presentation to the AIA Oregon Board
January 19, 2024

Today's agenda

- Project background & methodology*
- Findings*
- Recommendations
- Financial overview
- Next steps

*This presentation provides an overview of the project background, methodology and findings. See the [Recommendations Report](#) for a thorough discussion.

Background & Methodology

AIA Oregon has completed an 18-month visioning, outreach, and engagement process focused on determining how to serve members better.

What started as a conversation about creating one or multiple new headquarters spaces has evolved into a recommendation to focus the organization's resources on engagement, programming, and capacity building.

The effort kicked off in the midst of significant changes that significantly impacted our community:

- Transition to a statewide chapter in 2019 and ongoing efforts to build a unified chapter while strengthening the five sections
- Loss of Portland's Center for Architecture and Eugene's "Octagon" space
- COVID-19 pandemic
- A spotlight on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Climate change and resiliency

At the foundation of our methodology was an agile approach and a commitment to including a wide range of voices.

AIA Oregon staff, a consultant team and the HQ Task Force drove the process, providing expertise, consistency, and a deep knowledge of the chapter and this initiative.

The core group also solicited input from:

- hundreds of members from diverse backgrounds and all five sections
- AIA Oregon Board and Executive Committee
- five section steering committees
- past AIA Oregon executives
- AIA executives from other chapters

Timeline



Findings

The summer events shifted our understanding of members' priorities.

We began to focus on programming and capacity building instead of multiple physical locations.

Across sections, members said AIA Oregon should:

- (Re)build community and foster connection.
- Prioritize agile, reliable and engaging programs.
- Elevate and celebrate existing spaces.
- Create public visibility and impact.
- Invest resources wisely.
- Expand partnerships.

Each section has unique strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

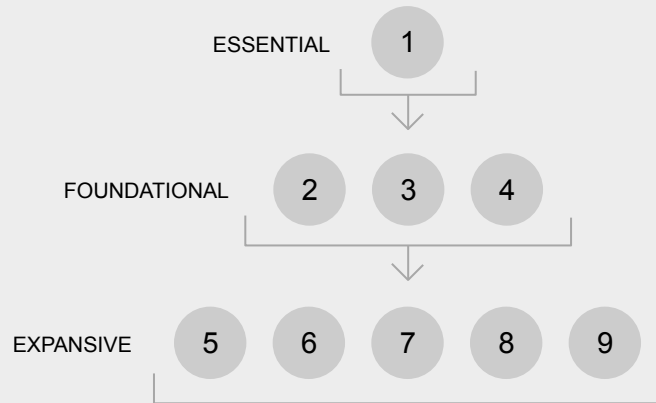
Through focused conversations with steering committees, plus insights shared at summer events and in the survey, we gained insight into each section, honing in on local needs and opportunities for connection and local leadership. These learnings are reflected in the recommendations.

Please see the [Recommendations Report](#) for a thorough discussion of each section's strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

Recommendations

We urge the Board to implement the recommendations roughly in the order presented. They build on each other: It would be difficult to implement the later recommendations without the foundation established by the top priorities, in particular recommendations 1 to 4.

See the [Recommendations Report](#) for a more thorough discussion of each recommendation.



1: AIA Oregon should not pursue ownership or long-term leases of spaces for use by staff or members.

Members and staff said leasing or owning space was unnecessary for the success of the chapter and likely to be cost-prohibitive. AIA Oregon staff do not require central or section-based office space for their roles. And permanent public-facing storefronts or gallery spaces are not essential for engaging local communities or demonstrating impact.

1: AIA Oregon should not pursue ownership or long-term leases of spaces for use by staff or members.

Action steps:

- Build organizational capacity by hiring new staff (Recommendation #2).
- Work with local sections to map local space assets and potential partnerships to support additional access to spaces (Recommendation #4).
- Encourage advocacy and civic involvement by elevating these priorities at the Board level and launching a mini-grant program that supports architectural innovation within communities (Recommendations #6 and #7).
- Determine any accommodations necessary for staff to continue working remotely (stipends, WeWork memberships, utilities and equipment, etc.).
- Research and examine digital tools to support community building statewide.

2: Create 2-3 new AIA Oregon staff positions to support membership engagement and provide logistical support to local sections.

One of the clearest needs that came out of this process was the urgency to build capacity for programming, member engagement, advocacy, and partnership development across sections. New AIA Oregon staff would increase member engagement, provide logistical support for existing programming, expand programming offerings and deepen relationships with firm leaders and allied partners — particularly in smaller sections where volunteer capacity is strained.

2: Create 2-3 new AIA Oregon staff positions to support membership engagement and provide logistical support to local sections.

Action steps:

- Analyze workload of existing staff, including decision-making processes
- Determine geographic focus of new staff, if any
- Assess financial feasibility and FTE recommendations
- Vet with board and section steering committees
- Write and post job descriptions for new positions

3: Develop a set of toolkits (one statewide, and one for each section) that support programming logistics in each section.

Members said they want more clarity about the kind of support they can request from AIA Oregon staff and the resources and relationships available in their section. The toolkits would provide this information in an organized, actionable format, helping volunteers plan and put on successful events. They would be living documents updated annually with AIA Oregon staff and section steering committees.

3: Develop a set of toolkits (one statewide, and one for each section) that support programming logistics in each section.

Action Steps:

- Determine sequence of toolkit development in relationship to hiring of new staff
- Determine AIA Oregon staff/consultants responsible for leading toolkit development in collaboration with section steering committees
- Offer training to section steering committees on how to use the toolkit and work with staff to fulfill section ambitions
- Develop toolkits and update them annually

4: Craft a consistent welcome for new members and re-engage existing members.

A welcome strategy consisting of clear communication tools paired with personal outreach will support members to advance their careers and connect with opportunities and grow their volunteer participation. This strategy should also include an invitation to existing members to re-engage with AIA Oregon, showcasing new and existing opportunities to get involved.

4: Craft a consistent welcome for new members and re-engage existing members.

Action Steps:

- Assess current membership welcome and create recommendations for improvement
- Investigate what motivates people to participate and use this understanding to inspire engagement and volunteering
- Build from successes of other chapters
- Create and implement a communications and engagement plan

5: Reimagine the steering committee structure to foster more engaged and robust section leadership.

Only a handful of volunteers are responsible for section activities. Reconsidering this model would help create more volunteer capacity to meet each section's ambitions. Reimagining section steering committees could include adding new positions on each committee, reinforcing sections' autonomy over their own budgets, and other actions to clarify roles and offer additional support to sections.

5: Reimagine the steering committee structure to foster more engaged and robust section leadership.

Action Steps:

- Convene section steering committee leaders to make action step recommendations
- Board: consider and approve new steering committee structure
- Work should happen in tandem with hiring of new staff and determining staff roles

6: Elevate advocacy and civic involvement as a critical part of the AIA Oregon ethos — from membership to the board.

Great things happen when architects are part of the conversation. From legislative advocacy to emergency planning with neighbors to accessible design, there are many ways for architects to become more civically involved. AIA Oregon can expand its community impact and support a more inclusive future by creating new board positions focused on statewide advocacy and civic involvement and developing strategies to elevate these critical priorities.

6: Elevate advocacy and civic involvement as a critical part of the AIA Oregon ethos — from membership to the board.

Action Steps:

- Board: Consider and approve new positions: 1) Statewide Advocacy Director Board Member At Large (liaison to legislative affairs committee), 2) Statewide Civic Involvement Director Board Member At Large
- Recruit two new board members
- Consider local roles in section steering committees that could serve as liaisons to statewide leadership about local priorities
- Determine priority activities and messages for membership, emphasizing an EDI lens

7: Adopt a mini grant program to support architectural innovation with communities.

Public engagement and social impact were clear priorities for members. Sections have adequate resources for member-focused activities and events, but there is a missing piece — sparking innovation and impactful connection to communities. AIA North Carolina’s ACTIVATE program is a mini-grant program designed “to help architects guide, listen, observe, advocate, connect, and envision with the public and their communities.” Building on AIA North Carolina’s program, AIA Oregon could adopt a similar mini-grant model.

7: Adopt a mini grant program to support architectural innovation with communities.

Action Steps:

- Meet with AIA North Carolina for guidance and lessons learned on structure and process
- Conduct financial assessment to determine granting frequency and amount (North Carolina allocates up to \$40k per year)
- Determine initiative values and, if needed, specific issue areas to focus on

8: Reimagine chapter-wide events with an eye toward creating unity, belonging and connection across the state.

Members crave connection and want to experience the benefits of a statewide chapter with diverse perspectives and expertise. This creates an opportunity to strategically build out events that bring members together across sections. The events could include a speaker series, a statewide lunch and learn, field trips, site tours, or promotion of talks hosted by partners (like universities and colleges).

8: Reimagine chapter-wide events with an eye toward creating unity, belonging and connection across the state.

Action Steps:

- Develop communication and outreach plan for crowdsourcing possible speakers, event types and projects
- Analyze existing statewide events and look for opportunities to layer on a statewide connection
- Pilot one new statewide event series in 2024

9: Grow the Allied Professional membership to strengthen partnerships.

Allied Professionals are a vital part of the A/E/C community. Promoting or reimagining the allied professionals membership will support AIA Oregon's goals to boost membership, diversify the membership base, expand sponsorship options and increase opportunities for space and event collaborations. To be successful, architects and allied professionals will need to understand the benefits of allied professional memberships.

9: Grow the Allied Professional membership to strengthen partnerships.

Action Steps:

- Revisit Allied Professional membership benefits and adjust, as needed
- Analyze existing Allied Professional membership base in each section to identify existing and new potential members
- Develop communications and outreach plan to promote membership opportunity in each section

Naming What's Next

Naming the strategic efforts that will follow these recommendations will help rally AIA Oregon members around the work ahead. Since the recommendations do not center on physical space, “Our New HQ” no longer fits the bill.

We need a new name that:

- Looks toward a promising future
- Acknowledges our sturdy foundation
- Encapsulates the variety of efforts embodied in the recommendations
- Represents and celebrates the thoughtful changes happening over the next few years

Name recommendation: AIA Oregon Elevate

Financial Overview

Discussion & Next Steps

Our Next Steps

- Approve/adopt recommendations, celebrate and share completion of HQ Task Force
- Decide first action steps
- Determine ownership of first action steps
- Determine timeline for implementation