



A Chapter of The American  
Institute of Architects

**AIA** Southwestern Oregon

# American Institute of Architects Southwestern Oregon Chapter



## Annual Report January 2011

On January 19, 2011, more than a dozen architects crowded around the conference table at the Midtown Arts Center to think about the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects — past, present and future. For a third of those in attendance, this was their first meeting as a board member. For another third, it was their last. The last third have been on the board, but had agreed to stay on for another year. The meeting could more properly have been called a retreat, except nobody was running away from anything. It did last almost four hours — longer, for those who attended a pre-meeting to look carefully at the proposed 2011 budget. AIA-SWO Executive Director Don Kahle facilitated, using tools from national AIA and his own management consulting experience.

## SWOT Analysis

Our First step was to consider things as they are. We used a tool called SWOT Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Each was written on large sheets and posted around the room.

### INTERNAL CONDITIONS

STRENGTHS – What is the organization currently good at? What does it have going for it?

WEAKNESSES – What needs improving internally? (Maybe it's not really hurting the organization — yet.)

### EXTERNAL CONDITIONS

OPPORTUNITIES – Looking around, what could we be doing better than anyone else?

THREATS – What external factors could make it harder for the organization to succeed?

## **STRENGTHS**

- We host a great conference
- We come together for a common purpose
- We get stuff done
- Bring architects together
- Sharing knowledge with other architects
- People's Choice Awards @ Eugene Celebration
- We develop multiple solutions to problems
- Networking
- We address issues about community, civic involvement & design excellence
- We multi-task
- Charrettes
- A credible presence
- Long history
- We bridge the age gap and the gender gap
- We're committed to pro bono work
- Student and university support -- giving & receiving
- Advocacy
- Connection to the Architecture Dept.
- Ability to look at the whole picture
- Camaraderie -- mutual support, collegiality
- Good public outreach
- Membership participation and numbers
- We have fun
- Good at making money
- Internal communication
- Taking stuffiness out of architecture

## **WEAKNESSES**

- Public awareness
- Vast area of membership
- Set in our ways
- Don't know our weaknesses (anosognosic)
- Not welcoming to other disciplines
- Accountability of members to the chapter
- Newbies don't get to see the big picture
- Not clear how newbies can get involved
- We don't get new people on committees (same faces all the time)
- Website sucks
- No strong hub -- website to see a face for organization
- Not accessible enough

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Downtown revitalization
- Growth of community
- Help community understand opportunities with growth
- City relies on us for building/planning issues
- We can offer how to implement with an eye to design
- Develop Eugene's identity as a city
- Envision Eugene
- Design Excellence
- There's room to improve on our weaknesses
- Transparent examples of sustainable design
- Already fluent in sustainability language
- Educating public about architecture
- Get word out about value of design excellence
- Transportation issues could use our skills
- Eugene & Corvallis (two university towns) are both in our area
- Help other communities - not just Eugene
- Tell the public what an architect does
- Convince public that value exceeds cost

## THREATS

- Economy
- Public misconceptions
- Neighborhood Councils have too much power
- Freeloaders -- non-AIA architects
- not knowing our weaknesses
- skyrocketing dues drives membership down



Next, Don asked everyone to look around the room and pick a handful of “Unique Strengths” for the organization — either real or hoped for. Considering the organization’s current situation, what good news do you see either now or sometime in the future? This could be continuing a strength, fixing a weakness, seizing an opportunity, or responding to a threat.



## 2 Mission Statement

American Institute of Architects STRATEGIC PLAN 2010-2015

The AIA **Vision** is an **Internal** statement ... It is our own hope about how we see the AIA being perceived one day



Our AIA **Mission** is an **External** statement ... It's what we tell the world about the AIA. Our **Mission** outlines who we must be and what we must do to get there ...

**Vision**  
American Institute  
of Architects – Driving  
positive change  
through the power  
of design

**Mission**  
The American  
Institute of Architects  
is the voice of the  
architectural profession  
and a resource for its  
members in service  
to society

- **Voice of the Profession**

- **Resource for Members**

- **Service to Society**

The **Mission** reaffirms the AIA's critical role as voice, resource, and service, broadly directing those roles towards our **AIA Positions Principles** of The Practice, The Architect, and The World ... or now Profession, Members, and Society.



Introduction

1 Vision

2 Mission

3 Goals

4 Strategies

5 Initiatives

The group liked the new Vision Statement quite well:

**“Driving positive change through the power of design.”**

The Mission Statement seemed a bit too global or lofty for our needs. The most elegant remedy offered was to change the last word from “society” to “the community”:

**“The American Institute of Architects is the voice of the architectural profession and a resource for its members in service to the community.”**

The group agreed that each of these statements might be improved for our purposes and that we should keep both in mind as we go about our work in the year ahead.

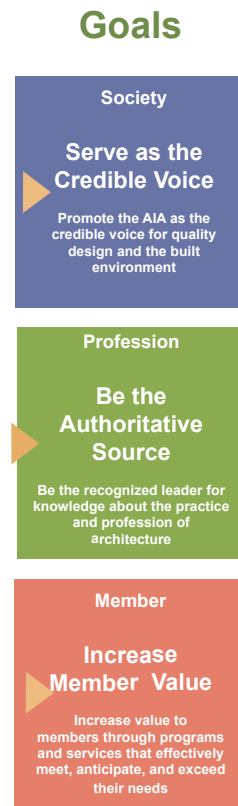
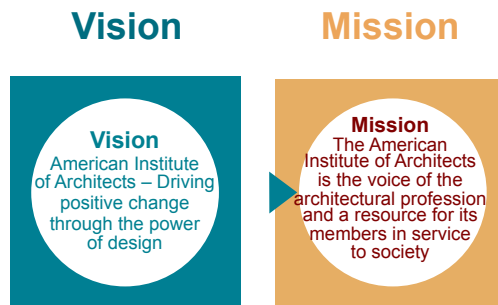
The National AIA Strategic Plan then outlines four key values, which are exhibited by how we focus on the profession, our members and the communities we serve:

**Knowledge**  
**Advocacy**  
**Communication**  
**Collaboration**

# 4 AIA Institute Strategies

American Institute of Architects STRATEGIC PLAN 2010-2015

The AIA **Strategies** create four broad areas where National and Components can develop Initiatives, independently or together, that have potential to further each of the AIA **Goals**.



## Strategies

- 1 Knowledge**  
Create, promote, and disseminate interdisciplinary study and research ensuring the AIA's members are leaders in the profession, the industry, and their communities.
- 2 Advocacy**  
Advance policies about design through political outreach, education, and engagement that are responsive to the public and the profession.
- 3 Communication**  
Elevate the voice of architects to promote the value of design and to enhance the public's understanding of the importance of architecture.
- 4 Collaboration**  
Align resources and empower networks of members, components, and allied professionals to build teamwork.



Now we were ready to put it all together, using a tool developed by AIA National called “The Weave.” Going back to our post-it notes, we arranged our strengths (real and hoped for) to express our goals and our values. We made our own “Weave.”



STRATEGIC PLAN TOOLKIT - The WEAVE

<p>Vision- The American Institute of Architects: Driving positive change through the power of design</p> <p>Mission- The American Institute of Architects is the voice of the architectural profession and a resource for its members in service to society.</p>	<p><b>knowledge</b></p> <p>Create, promote, and disseminate interdisciplinary study and research ensuring the AIA's members are leaders in the profession, the industry, and their communities.</p>	<p><b>advocacy</b></p> <p>Advance policies about design through political outreach, education, and engagement that are responsive to the public and the profession.</p>	<p><b>communication</b></p> <p>Elevate the voice of architects to promote the value of design and to enhance the public's understanding of the importance of architecture.</p>	<p><b>collaboration</b></p> <p>Align resources and empower networks of members, components, and allied professionals to build teamwork.</p>
<p><b>Serve as the Credible Voice</b></p> <p><b>Promote the members and their AIA as the credible voice for quality design and the built environment.</b></p>	<p>Educate community &amp; individuals on the value of good design &amp; planning</p> <p>Issue publications about architecture on a regular basis in local papers, etc.</p> <p>Questioning &amp; oversight of public/civil proposals that affect the built environment</p> <p>Community organization skills to identify &amp; solve problems</p> <p>Design Excellence locally</p> <p>Connection with UO - Architecture Dept &amp; AAA</p> <p>Credible presence &amp; experience</p>	<p>Ability to help create community vision -- the "big picture" folks</p> <p>Legislative interaction to craft laws to benefit communities</p> <p>Serve as resource to business districts on design-development issues</p> <p>Serve as resource to neighborhoods on design-development issues</p> <p>Civic engagement</p> <p>(Exemplify Sustainable Design)</p> <p>Proponent for design that is meaningful, sustainable, beautiful</p>	<p>Civic involvement (could be more but good when it happens)</p> <p>(Could serve as an even stronger "social network")</p> <p>A resource center for inspiration and community improvement</p> <p>"Taste is not just in our mouths"</p> <p>Serve on boards &amp; commissions related to physical development &amp; planning</p> <p>(Create a "speakers bureau" on topics of importance to AIA-SWO)</p> <p>Voice of architectural profession in our community</p> <p>Advocate for solutions in planning process that consider design</p>	<p>Charrettes - civic housing, transportation, urban planning</p> <p>Enhance alternate modes of transportation within Eugene and other</p>
<p><b>Be the Authoritative Source</b></p> <p><b>Be the recognized leader for knowledge about the practice and profession of architecture.</b></p>	<p>What an architect does</p> <p>Educate the public</p> <p>(Educate through the greenwash)</p> <p>(We have strong ties to the UO and the city)</p> <p>While misunderstood by many, the chapter is widely appreciated</p>	<p>Advocacy for members for community</p> <p>Creative problem-solving -- charrettes, workshops, committee participation</p>	<p>Become a transparent organization - show what we do / are doing</p> <p>Educating civic leaders in design</p> <p>Community engagement</p> <p>Educate the city -- city council &amp; planning commission</p> <p>AIAS support</p>	<p>Education of architects to community</p> <p>(Respond to disaster relief needs)</p> <p>Education &amp; outreach through charrettes</p>
<p><b>Increase Member Value</b></p> <p><b>Increase value to members through programs and services that effectively meet, anticipate, and exceed their needs.</b></p>	<p>Engaging &amp; interesting monthly meetings</p> <p>Bringing architects together &amp; sharing knowledge</p>	<p>We're good at supporting one another</p> <p>We're good at offering opportunities for chapter involvement to our members</p> <p>Create a Center for Architecture that would serve the community</p>	<p>Web presence, accessibility</p> <p>Broader chapter participation</p> <p>Strong executive director</p> <p>Public exposure opportunities for our members</p>	<p>Connection with membership outside Eugene</p> <p>Our members are our strength</p> <p>Currently, we seem to have a lot of good connections</p> <p>We're well-connected</p> <p>Resources within membership, including skills, community connections, experience, etc.</p> <p>Enthusiasm &amp; commitment to accomplish a given task</p> <p>Synergy of nationally ranked architecture &amp; engineering departments with chapter (underutilized)</p>

