AIA Austin COTE

**Committee Evolution:**

Austin’s COTE group founded in 2003 by Michele Van Hyfte, who also founded the local USGBC Chapter.

The Committee’s activity levels have ebbed and flowed over the years, however the focus of the Committee, to educate the community, has stayed consistent. From 2010-2014 the Committee collaborated with USGBC and AEGB (Austin Energy Green Building) to promote green building in Austin, specifically focusing on the residential sector, which makes up the majority of the local market. Programming consisted of a series of tours of LEED and AEGB rated buildings and presentations given by local leaders in sustainability on subjects such as energy efficiency and the LEED accreditation process. There was also some participation with the local University’s Sustainability Fair as well as Austin’s SXSW Eco events.

In 2014 the Committee was almost dissolved due to low activity. The board was investigating turning it into an email listserv. The local USGBC chapter was experiencing a similar problem during this time. The hypothesis for this inactivity is that people were beginning to feel burnt out on the focus specifically on LEED. The Committee was sustained from 2014-2018 by a single Chair. In 2015 the Chair focused the Committee’s agenda around COTE National’s agenda: “Sustainability Opportunity Leadership Scan”........

In 2017 a new leader was recruited to help reinstate the Committee. In order to successfully do this the existing Chair and new Chair Elect did the following:

1. Organized several brainstorming sessions with local sustainability-focused organizations such as USGBC, Austin Energy Green Building, PHAUS, and local consulting firms to define what Austin COTE could to be based on what the AEC community needed,
2. Spoke with the leaders of San Antonio COTE to obtain tips for starting and sustaining a committee successfully,
3. Evaluated the local Chapter’s engagement with COTE and their sustainability-related agendas, and
4. Recruited members (AIA and non-AIA).

**Committee Programming:**

Planning meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month. There are 10-12 consistent members that join these meetings.

The frequency of social and educational events varies per year, based on the agenda. There are typically 20 to 30 attendees per event. Attendees are required to sign in, therefore giving the Committee the chance to reach out to

The most successful events have been outside speaker presentations, workshops, and collaborative social get-togethers.

Communication for these events are promoted through the ever-growing listserv and via social media.

**Committee Organization:**

The Committee falls under the Advocacy Commission.

The Committee is led by a Chair Elect, Chair, & Outgoing Chair. (3 years of commitment)

The Committee support is provided by the Sub-Committees: *Sustainability in Design Awards, Environmental Justice, Health and Wellness, Energy Technology and Building Science, Sustainability in Homes Tour, and AIA 2030 Working Group* andby AIA Austin Staff Liaison.

**Achievements:**

**Lessons Learned:**

Choose a theme or topic for the year to base programming off of. This significantly reduces stress and anxiety regarding filling the calendar.