

2024 Conference on Landscape Architecture Call for Presentations Education Tracks

BIODIVERSITY

The interlinked climate and biodiversity crises are the most pressing challenges facing humanity, causing interconnected and cascading environmental and economic crises. One-million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction, and it is estimated that up to 46% of all biodiversity will be gone by 2050 if we don't change our current trend. Habitat destruction and fragmentation is the number one cause of biodiversity loss, with seventy-five percent of the Earth's ice-free land surface and two-thirds of its oceans significantly altered by humanity. Protecting 30 percent of land and freshwater and 30 percent of oceans by 2030 (30X30) is the minimum amount required to conserve remaining biodiversity and ecosystems functions. Landscape architects have a unique skillset that allows them the ability to understand unique threats and find innovative solutions to this crisis, and they can make direct impacts to biodiversity as designers and shapers of the environment.

We invite proposals that highlight design and planning processes that align with the functions of healthy ecosystems. We encourage proposals that share strategies to restore ecosystems and protect, conserve, and enhance biodiversity.

Topics within this track might focus on:

- Biodiversity Positive Design and planning practices
- Biodiversity conservation and nature-positive practices
- Landscape performance metrics, impact driven design, Sustainable SITES Initiative
- Green and blue infrastructure and its impact on biodiversity
- Ecological restoration
- Soil conservation and plant communities
- Native plant selection and production
- Regenerative systems (food, energy, natural habitats, ecosystems, etc.)
- Habitat creation and wildlife management
- Conservation, restoration, and mitigation policies
- Biodiversity in urban and suburban environments
- Biodiversity 101 (the basics)
- Indigenous knowledge and co-management practices

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CHANGING THE CULTURE IN PRACTICE

As landscape architects strive to improve the livability and viability of communities through thoughtful design, we are grappling with both our evolving understanding of equity, and our preparedness to enact it. Through this track, we invite proposals that explore the challenges of embracing this ethos in practice, to promote just futures for all. How are landscape architects advancing equity and inclusiveness? How are you creating an inclusive environment in your own firm? What does it mean to be equitable in practice?

Topics within this track might focus on:

- Equity in education and practice – who is in the room and who is at the table?
- Intentionality in ADA and universal design
- Design for accessibility as a social justice issue
- Trends and methodologies in community-first design
- Diversity and resilience—promoting environmental justice at different scales
- Placing inclusivity at the intersection of public health, safety, and welfare
- Cultural sensitivity, appropriateness, and appropriation
- Designing for all ages: age disparity and inclusion
- Socioeconomic impacts of environmental and land-use decisions
- Bridging socio-cultural divides in engagement
- The role of landscape architects in elevating social justice discourse
- Advocacy in practice – environmental justice, adequate project funding, community advocacy
- Practice and academia – breaking down the barriers to higher education

CLIMATE ACTION

Together the [ASLA Climate Action Plan and the Climate Action Field Guide for ASLA Members](#) chart a pathway for landscape architects to achieve zero greenhouse gas emissions in their projects and operations and increase carbon sequestration by 2040. ASLA envisions communities becoming healthier and economically stronger because they have committed to drawing down carbon, restoring ecosystems and increasing biodiversity, and reducing reliance on vehicles – all while ensuring everyone in their community has equitable access to these benefits.

We invite proposals that showcase innovative, tangible, and replicable approaches, project examples, and interdisciplinary team efforts working towards the following initiatives laid out in the Climate Action Plan:

- **Carbon Drawdown:** Attain zero emissions by 2040 and double carbon sequestration
 - **Climate Resilience:** Enhance capacity, biodiversity, and resilience of livable cities and communities
 - **Climate Agency:** Advocate for climate justice and social well-being
 - **Cultural Empowerment:** Learn from Indigenous cultural knowledge systems and practices of care
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- **Climate Leadership:** Galvanize climate champions - collaborate with clients, suppliers, and allied professions to champion climate positive design
- **Global Alliance:** Advance the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and expand international collaboration

DESIGN AND THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Landscape architecture projects may differ in scale and complexity, but they all begin with research and questions that evolve into a big idea. Creativity has no beginning or end—it is fed by the public we serve and how we engage with them, by the sites themselves and their broader context, and by collaboration across disciplines. How do various creative methods translate visionary ideas into reality? How does the design process influence outcomes in our built environment? We invite proposals that share insights on how research methods, site documentation, engagement, ideation, experimentation, design decision-making, and design execution tell a story of creative discovery.

Topics within this track might focus on:

- Creative ideation tools and methods - analogue and digital (technology workflows and efficiencies)
- Transformative engagement methods and community-driven design approaches
- Gaps in creative practice between academia and practice
- Power of storytelling and narratives that build agency and advocacy for design and design identity
- Building consensus and making decisions with interdisciplinary and collaborative teams
- Social and cultural landscapes, land acknowledgement, and indigenous ways of seeing
- Accessibility, universal design, and equity
- Research-based methodologies
- Health, safety, and welfare
- Partnership approaches, programming, and financial strategies
- Design collaboration and communication through remote / virtual methods (design team and community stakeholders)
- Collaboration with Indigenous people to use cultural knowledge in planning and design

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DESIGN IMPLEMENTATION

Material selection, specifications, and maintenance guidelines allow landscape architects to ensure that their designs are faithfully and successfully brought to life. How can landscape architects be empowered in the studio and on the construction site? How do client needs and wishes influence design choices and outcomes? We invite proposals that share tools and methods for communicating design intent through successful documentation, innovative strategies, and new technologies for the design, construction, and post-construction life of projects. We encourage proposals that showcase lessons learned from completed work.

Topics within this track might focus on:

- Design detail and material innovation
- Technical documentation and specifications
- Construction, constructability, and construction administration practices
- Maintenance and operations, lifecycle assessments
- Standards, codes, and permitting process
- Technology and software – new skill sets, training, design document coordination, workflow efficiencies
- Planting design and selection, soils, and irrigation
- Sustainable products, materials, and carbon footprint
- Monitoring long-term maintenance, management goals, and design intent
- SITES® strategies and performance metrics
- Design-build and residential landscape architecture
- Project financing through local, state, or federal funding; grant-funded project examples

LEADERSHIP, CAREER DEVELOPMENT, AND BUSINESS

In a competitive market, many landscape architecture firms are working to develop and grow their businesses. Which tools, techniques, and systems have allowed your business to thrive? What lessons have you learned from starting a firm or stepping into a leadership role that can help others make important career decisions and acquire sound advice for the next phase of their career, alternative career paths, or building an inclusive work environment? Share your insights for developing successful business operation strategies for small, medium, and large firms.

Topics within this track might focus on:

- Firm operations – hiring and training, planning and executing growth
 - Career transitions and advancement
 - Mentorship, sponsorship, and professional coaching
 - Business development and marketing
 - Alternative business models
 - Contract management, risk management
 - Technology infrastructure (security 101, cloud-based software, data management)
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- Transition and legacy planning for small business
- Best practices for new start-ups from the perspective of existing businesses and new businesses
- Emerging professional voices on leadership, mentorship, and entering the profession
- Collaboration and communication techniques among colleagues, clients, and stakeholders
- Small-business strategies for mentorship, career development, and just futures (specifically, anti-racist action plans, gender equity plans, white supremacy culture, and anti-racism policies)
- How diversity, equity, and inclusion are manifested in public and private practice at various scales

PLANNING, URBAN DESIGN, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The planning and implementation of landscape architecture projects is now, more than ever, at the forefront of addressing global issues that impact communities seeking environmental, economic and social stability. Landscape architects continue to lead in efforts that have the capacity to improve not only the health, safety and welfare of individual citizens across the globe, but future generations. It is through the critical knowledge, skill, care and experience of planning, designing and building within the public realm that landscape architects thrive, create, and plan for the future of our complex built environments.

We invite proposals that highlight exemplary landscape architecture projects (built and unbuilt) with intentional and strategic vision, commitment to interventions that improve society, respect and celebrate cultural context, promote economic development, embrace equity and environmental justice, and create more resilient and livable communities from the scale of the site to a city or region at-large.

Topics within this track might focus on:

- Strategic Master Planning
- Conservation of Natural Environments
- Adaptive Landscapes
- Housing, Affordability, and Urban Development
- Multi-Modal and Transportation-related Planning Projects (Greenways and Trails)
- Public Process and Community Engagement Planning and Urban Design
- Environmental and Racial Justice in Infrastructure Projects
- Enhancing Connections and Access to Natural Resources
- Innovative Approaches to Addressing Policy in Design
- Collaborative and Cross-Disciplinary Planning and Design Projects