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## ASLA 2025 Conference on Landscape Architecture Call for Presentations Education Tracks

### BIODIVERSITY

The intertwined climate and biodiversity challenges are among the most pressing of our time, impacting ecosystems, communities, and economies. With one million species at risk of extinction and nearly half of global biodiversity potentially lost by 2050 without action, the need for solutions is critical. Human activities have significantly altered natural habitats, through development and agricultural land use, making conservation and restoration essential.

The "30x30" goal—protecting 30% of land, freshwater, and marine habitats by 2030—is a vital benchmark for preserving biodiversity and maintaining ecosystem health. Beyond preservation, integrating biodiversity into the built environment offers transformative benefits for both people and nature.

Landscape architects are uniquely positioned to lead in this effort, designing resilient spaces that conserve and enhance biodiversity.

We invite proposals showcasing design and planning approaches that support and restore healthy ecosystems, and protect, conserve, and enhance biodiversity. Submissions featuring multidisciplinary collaboration and post-occupancy biodiversity evaluations are highly encouraged.

#### 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
- Indigenous knowledge and co-management practices
- Effective teaming with conservation or biological scientists
- Projects that showcase measurable improvements in biodiversity, or lessons learned
- Practical methods of assessing biodiversity before and after occupancy
- Biodiversity changes over time after construction
- Successes and challenges in promoting biodiversity with clients



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## 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 initiatives laid out in the Climate Action Plan – Carbon Drawdown, Climate Resilience, Climate Agency, Cultural Empowerment, Climate Leadership and Global Alliance.

### Topics within this track might focus on:

- Demonstration of performance metrics and methodology on carbon drawdown and sequestration
- Promoting climate positive work
- Advocating for landscape architects leading resilience work
- Carbon accounting 101
- Innovative approaches to financing climate-resilient projects
- Tools to identify community vulnerabilities
- Economic case for nature-based solutions
- Specifying the best materials to align with climate and ecological goals
- Effective public outreach for equitable solutions
- Practical and cost-effective methods for achieving carbon drawdown
- Best practices and specifications for repurposing site materials
- Strategies for influencing local policies to support sustainable initiatives
- Assembling collaborative teams for impactful climate action projects
- Collaborating with Indigenous people on climate equity and justice
- Lessons learned from managed retreat and resettlement initiatives
- Lessons learned from climate action strategies in other parts of the world

## 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 big ideas. Creativity has no beginning or end—it is shaped by the sites themselves, their broader context, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the insights of users, clients, and the public we serve, all influenced by how we engage with them. 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 (**continued on next page**).



### **Topics within this track might focus on:**

- Exploring analog and digital workflows for enhancing efficiency and creativity in design
- Examining the opportunities and challenges AI presents for the future of design
- From small-scale solutions to big ideas-exploring the transformative power of design at all levels
- Transformative engagement methods that prioritize inclusive, participatory approaches
- Addressing gaps in creative practice between education and professional work
- Using narratives to build agency, advocacy, and identity in design
- Building consensus and navigating interdisciplinary team dynamics
- Land acknowledgment, Indigenous perspectives, and cultural ways of seeing the landscape
- Integrating Indigenous cultural knowledge and values into planning and design processes
- Accessibility, universal design, and equity as foundational principles in practice
- Research-driven methodologies that inform and elevate the design process
- Prioritizing the core values of health, safety, and welfare in all aspects of landscape architecture
- Strategies for engaging the right partners and fostering effective project collaborations.
- Innovative approaches to team building and collaboration
- Best practices for design and communication in virtual and hybrid environments, including with community stakeholders
- Lessons from international landscape architects working outside the U.S.
- Navigating cultural complexities and opportunities in international design

## **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 –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



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## EQUITY AND INCLUSION

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
- Practice in a diversity of geographies
- Culturally informed ways of knowing, planning, design, and engagement

## LEARNING TO LEAD AND GROW IN YOUR CAREER

Navigating the challenges of running a successful landscape architecture and planning firm requires thoughtful decision-making, adaptability, and innovative strategies. How does one decide about growth, both in size and in revenue? Which tools, techniques, and systems have allowed your business to thrive?

Share the lessons you've learned from starting a firm, stepping into leadership, or navigating career transitions to help others make informed decisions about their own paths and create inclusive, forward-thinking workplaces. This track explores actionable strategies for businesses of all sizes and leadership at any level.

### Topics within this track might focus on:

- **Work culture and team cohesion**
  - Balancing remote vs. in-person collaboration — What's working?
  - Emerging professional voices on leadership, mentorship, and entering the profession
  - Meeting government mandates like DEI reports and sustainability plans
  - Managing and funding pro-bono and research work (**continued on next page**)



- **People**
  - Effective recruiting, training, and career development practices
  - Learning to lead — How do we inspire and train-up the next generation of leaders?
  - Career transitions and advancement
  - Mentorship, sponsorship, and professional coaching
- **Firm operations**
  - Mastering financial planning, project management, and operations
  - Exploring alternative business models and risk management strategies
  - Planning for firm transitions and legacies
  - Leveraging technology, from data security to cloud-based tools
- **Business development and marketing**
  - Communicating the value of landscape architecture and planning services
  - Promoting landscape architecture beyond our clients
  - Lessons learned from both start-ups and established firms
  - Building collaborative relationships with clients, consultants, and stakeholders

## THE FUTURE OF THE PUBLIC REALM

Successful urban design, infrastructure, and public space projects require bold visions and multidisciplinary approaches to create hybrid and innovative places. This track invites proposals that highlight strategies, policies, projects, and programs that meaningfully engage the public throughout the planning process. How can community voices shape solutions that respect cultural contexts, restore ecological systems, promote economic development, and champion equity and environmental justice? How are landscape architects leading efforts to create equitable, healthy, safe, and resilient spaces?

Topics include integrating diverse perspectives into planning, fostering partnerships, and designing places that meet public needs while enhancing service levels, inclusivity, and beauty in the public realm.

### Topics within this track might focus on:

- Successful partnership projects with municipalities and funding agencies
- Multi-disciplinary holistic planning, design, infrastructure projects
- Innovative approaches to addressing policy in design
- Strategic master planning and regional planning and design
- Housing, affordability, and urban development
- Multi-modal / bicycle and pedestrian-centered circulation systems (e.g. greenways)
- Transit-oriented development planning and creative approaches to development projects
- Public process and community engagement in planning and urban design
- Environmental and racial justice in planning and infrastructure projects
- Enhancing connections and access to natural resources