

HOUSING (1964, R1992, R2000, R2001, R2011)



Policy Statement

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that people should have adequate and affordable housing choices in livable communities. Housing should be sited and designed optimizing natural light, fresh air, and energy efficiency in communities that foster a sense of belonging and are integral to the overall public health, safety, and welfare.

Proximity to open space and vegetation is important for residents' mental and physical health. These can be provided in private yards, shared community gardens, public parks, and natural areas. A community's residential choices should be built and sited sustainably, incorporate universal design, and have access to transportation options. The Society further believes that residential developments should include a mix of land uses to support the residents; take advantage of infill and redevelopment opportunities; and minimize suburban sprawl and environmental impacts.

Rationale

Quality siting and design of housing environments is essential to healthy and livable communities. Landscape architects minimize the impact of housing on the environment, provide "green streets," use innovative stormwater management techniques and assure the integration of open space throughout the project. Spaces ranging from backyards to community areas become social gathering places linked by accessible circulation systems.

The sense of the outdoors should be integrated into the interior of the home. Landscape architectural design makes the most of small yards by providing a journey through well-designed multi-functional spaces filled with a variety of site furniture and planting. Landscape architects contribute to climate modification and energy efficiency through design that provides shade, wind blocks, solar access and planting for water conservation. Fire protection is enhanced through the proper siting of homes and design of fire-resistant landscapes. Planting design provides wildlife habitat on individual lots and throughout the community. Stormwater flow is managed with creative solutions that include rain gardens, bio-retention beds, porous paving and appropriate plants.

Landscape architects provide environmental awareness through sustainable design and education. Residents become aware of the potential adverse impacts to the environment of some fertilizers, pesticides, and invasive plants. Good landscape design and management mitigates these impacts while providing functional, aesthetically-pleasing surroundings.

Research indicates that direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development and for the physical and emotional health of children and adults. Public health is improved when residents recreate and play in private or public outdoor spaces including community trail systems, playgrounds, and everyday nature. Landscape architects design healing gardens in parks, hospitals and assisted living residential complexes where people are comforted by the setting, including the sound of water and the color, texture, and scent of plants.