

COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT (1964, R1984, R2001*, R2008, R2022*)



Policy Statement

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that public decision-making processes should be open, accessible, and participatory.

ASLA supports the active and intentional engagement of the community and stakeholders in all phases of planning, design, and implementation processes for projects that contribute to the public realm because we believe engagement helps to:

- Build consensus, trust, mutual understanding, and shared decision-making
- Solicit critical feedback and reflect the input of the community
- Guide programmatic, policy, planning, and design decisions

Justification

Landscape architects, through their education and training, are well-suited to lead and support open, accessible, and participatory community and stakeholder engagement processes. Landscape architects unify design elements between disciplines and use graphic, verbal, and written communication techniques to involve all populations in the decision-making process. These skill sets are used to convene, communicate, and incorporate diverse community and stakeholder feedback to achieve equitable and inclusive outcomes.

Issue

Projects undertaken by landscape architects positively impact the communities and environments in which they work. Community and stakeholder engagement is increasingly recognized as a critical strategy for advancing goals of inclusivity, social equity, and informed decision-making into these projects.

Consensus, Trust, and Shared Authorship

Community and stakeholder engagement is a powerful strategy for making informed decisions and generating spaces that are used and loved by the local community. An active, open, and accessible engagement process builds consensus, trust, and mutual understanding between clients, designers, planners, communities, and stakeholders. This process of sharing authorship helps to empower communities and to facilitate community stewardship. This stewardship is reflected in the community's care, belonging, and use of a space, which is vital to the long-term success and sustainability of a new or renewed place.

Meaningful and Equitable Participation

An open, accessible, and participatory community and stakeholder engagement process can amplify the voices of all communities and populations. Through community engagement processes, landscape architects collaborate with communities to create spaces that embrace and celebrate the cultures, identities, visions, and values in which they operate. Additionally, community members and stakeholders possess valuable knowledge of the conditions, needs, opportunities, and limitations of their communities and places. By engaging with communities early and often, project teams can make

* Replaces Art Commissions and Other Reviewing Authorities Policy

* Replaces Public Participation policy



informed design and planning decisions and avoid the missed opportunities and unintended consequences that can result from poorly informed decisions. An inclusive community engagement process is necessary to advance social, environmental, and racial equity across all stakeholders—including marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented communities. Public participation processes strive to be timely, to provide multiple opportunities for meaningful input, and to prioritize the accessibility and needs of diverse populations.

Guide programmatic, policy, planning, and design decisions

Smartly designed community and stakeholder engagement processes can guide programmatic, policy, planning, and design decisions. A successful engagement process will engage with stakeholders on their terms and will consider timeliness, accessibility, language, privilege dynamics, and shared decision making. Project teams can integrate accurate community and stakeholder input and avoid missed opportunities by engaging with the community early and often. By adopting these strategies, the planning, design, programmatic, and policy decisions that result from a project process can be better informed and can better reflect the needs and values of the local community.

Resources

Participatory Design Must Evolve, ASLA

<https://dirt.asla.org/2018/02/07/participatory-design-must-evolve/>

American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS); Why Public Engagement Matters

<https://www.aaas.org/resources/communication-toolkit/what-public-engagement>

Institute for Local Government (ILG); Inclusive Public Engagement

<https://www.ca-ilg.org/inclusive-public-engagement>

American Planning Association (APA)

APA Policy Guide on Neighborhood Collaborative Planning:

<https://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/neighborhoodcollaborative.htm>

Public Engagement: The Key to Building Inclusive Communities:

<https://www.planning.org/blog/blogpost/9113458/>

International Association for Public Participation

<https://www.iap2.org/>

Interrelated Policies

[Air Quality](#)

[Coastal Zones](#)

[Heritage and Historic Sites](#)

[Invasive Species](#)

[National Parks](#)

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[Rural Landscapes](#)

[State, Regional, and Local Parks, and Trail Systems](#)

[Vegetation and the Built Environment](#)

[Visual Character and Scenic Resources](#)

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