

ASLA ADVOCACY DAY

FAQs on the ASLA Advocacy Day Legislative Issues

National Park Service Centennial Challenge: Preserving America's Iconic Recreational Spaces

- ASLA supports the mission of the National Park Service (NPS) to preserve the national park enterprise for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of current and future generations.

Why is the NPS important to landscape architects?

- Landscape architects have a deep connection to the NPS. The profession played a key role in the passage of the National Park Service Organic Act, legislation that established the NPS in 1916. For nearly 100 years, landscape architects have used design and ingenuity to preserve America's natural treasures.
- Today, there are iconic parks and recreational spaces covering 84 million acres of land for the public's enjoyment. Landscape architects are excited about the NPS Centennial, and feel it is a perfect opportunity to recognize the agency's rich legacy of preserving America's natural, historic, and cultural spaces and the work of the landscape architecture profession.

Is there Centennial Challenge legislation pending in Congress?

- House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop (UT) and Ranking Member Raúl Grijalva separately introduced the National Park Service Centennial Act. Both pieces of legislation establish a Centennial Challenge Fund, which will maximize private donations, allocate resources to finance signature construction projects, and address the NPS maintenance backlog.
- To date, there is NOT a companion bill pending in the U.S. Senate. A bipartisan effort led by Senators Rob Portman (OH), Maria Cantwell (WA), and Lisa Murkowski (AK) to introduce legislation to enhance our national parks for the centennial is under way.

Will the Centennial Challenge address the NPS maintenance backlog?

- Due to inadequate funding, NPS is facing a \$12 billion deferred maintenance backlog, equally divided between roads and facilities. Congress addressed some of the maintenance concerns in the recent surface transportation reauthorization bill, the FAST Act, with the establishment of the FASTLINE competitive grant program for nationally and regionally significant highway projects. Funding to address NPS's maintenance backlog has also been included in several Department of Interior funding bills, omnibus spending bills, and is addressed in a provision in the Senate Energy Policy Modernization Act (S. 2012).

What's going on with NPS and the Senior Pass?

- Currently, adults age 62 and over may purchase a lifetime Senior Pass for \$10, which allows them access to all NPS facilities for their lifetime. Chairman Rob Bishop's Centennial Challenge bill includes a proposed provision to increase the fee of the Senior Pass to \$80 for a lifetime, with \$70 going to the Challenge. The measure also includes an option for a \$20 annual Senior Pass with \$10 going to fund the Challenge. Congressional leaders are still negotiating this provision, and ASLA is not taking a position on this specific proposed provision.



ASLA ADVOCACY DAY

Resilient Streets: Creating a Transportation Network for the 21st Century

- As Congress begins consideration of a fiscal year 2017 funding bill for transportation projects, landscape architects want to stress the importance of including integrated vegetation management (IVM), also known as green infrastructure, in our rights-of-way. IVM is a critical component in creating resilient streets throughout our nation's transportation network.

Why should Congress spend money on highway beautification when our roads are crumbling?

- Integrated vegetation management (IVM) projects, also known as green infrastructure, are **NOT** highway beautification projects. Many highways, roads, and streets are purposefully designed using green infrastructure to stabilize the project and prevent erosion. Eliminating vegetation management, a core part of the project design, from these types of transportation projects could leave them unstable and lead to premature deterioration of the project.

Has the U.S. Senate addressed this issue?

- Currently, there is **NOT** a Senate companion bill to H.R. 2606, the Roads Not Roses Act. However, in the past, there have been Senate amendments filed to eliminate green infrastructure in all federal transportation projects.

What about the cost of maintaining IVM on our transportation networks?

- Landscape architects, using their education and technical expertise, have the ability to design IVM systems on our highways, roads, and streets that can use specific plant palettes that do not require maintenance, including mowing. These well-designed systems provide tremendous savings to communities and state departments of transportation and provide other multiple benefits.

Do arid regions of the country benefit from vegetation management in transportation projects?

- Vegetation management can be particularly beneficial in arid climates helping to recharge groundwater and helping mitigate the impacts of flash flooding events. Vegetation management can also help mitigate the effects of dust storms on roads and highways, which reduce visibility and can create hazardous driving

conditions. Also, in many circumstances, vegetation management that uses specific plant palettes can help reduce the spread of wildfires.

Are IVM projects more fitting for volunteer groups like Adopt-a-Highway?

- Non-governmental and community organizations like Adopt-a-Highway can be important partners in establishing and maintaining community transportation projects, including helping to engage citizens during project planning stages, assisting with the maintenance of the project, and, in some instances, providing local matching dollars. However, planning, designing, and implementing integrated vegetation management systems on transportation projects requires science as well as mathematical calculations on grading, drainage, slope, and other technical details. This in turn requires trained, licensed professionals such as landscape architects, who are certified to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare.



Houston, TX | Design Workshop | Bagby Street Reconstruction

First GreenRoads certified project in the State of Texas

- 33% of stormwater enters into rain gardens
- 14% decrease in surface temperatures
- 42% more shade, 276% more pedestrian areas
- Approximately \$30m in private development in first year since the project was announced
- 20% rental market increase and 25% property value increase since the project was announced