

Landscape Architects Design Healthy, Safe, Resilient Communities



Landscape architects plan and design healthy, safe, and resilient outdoor spaces for all. As STEM professionals, they blend science and creativity to enhance our communities, making them vibrant places to live, work, and play. From small towns to the largest cities, landscape architects engage with communities to create cherished spaces.

Landscape architects have designed some of the most iconic projects across the nation, including:

- Central Park in New York City
- The grounds of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.
- The grounds of the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Missouri
- Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia

Good design does not happen by accident. Achieving an outdoor environment that is accessible, useful, and enjoyable for all requires the knowledge, experience, and unique skill set of landscape architects. All 50 states and the District of Columbia require landscape architects to be licensed to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

Becoming a professional landscape architect (PLA) requires:

- Rigorous STEM education
- Experience under the direct supervision of a PLA
- Passage of a comprehensive national licensing examination

Landscape architects have the training, education, and expertise to lead the design, planning, and implementation of community infrastructure projects in a way that fosters sustainable development, generates jobs, encourages healthy lifestyles, and creates equitable and economically vibrant communities.

In Charlestown, Massachusetts, landscape architects at Offshoots, Inc. designed a park that addresses coastal flooding, mitigates air and groundwater pollution, and serves as a multimodal transportation hub.

Image credit: ASLA 2023 Professional General Design Honor Award. Hood Bike Park, Charlestown, Massachusetts. Offshoots, Inc. Peter Vanderwarker Photography/Offshoots, Inc.

About ASLA

Founded in 1899, the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) is the professional association for landscape architects in the United States, representing more than 16,000 members.

ASLA Mission: Empowering our members to design a sustainable and equitable world through landscape architecture.

ASLA Fund Mission: Investing in global, social, and environmental change through the art and science of landscape architecture.

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**American Society of
Landscape Architects**

Landscape Architects Design:

WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Communities often face hazardous floods, severe droughts, and other water management issues. Landscape architects plan and design bioswales, green roofs, rain gardens, constructed wetlands, living shorelines, and other nature-based solutions to help effectively manage and conserve water. According to the Congressional Research Service, these proven technologies can be built for 5 to 30 percent less—and maintained for 25 percent less—than conventional gray infrastructure.



Landscape architects keep students at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona safe from dangerous flooding.

Image credit: ASLA 2021 Professional General Design Honor Award. Orange Mall Green Infrastructure. Tempe, Arizona. COLWELL SHELOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / Arizona State University

OUTDOOR RECREATION SPACES

Parks, trail systems, and other recreational landscapes are critical to communities. Landscape architects plan and design local, state, and national park projects in ways that protect and advance human, environmental, and economic health. They apply specific design techniques to affect trail grades, species habitat, locations of natural and human-made structures, and access to cultural resources. These park projects enhance the outdoor recreation economy, an area that—according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis—contributes \$1.1 trillion to annual GDP.



In Omaha, Nebraska, OJB Landscape Architecture designed a space that brings the community together.

Image credit: ASLA 2023 Professional General Design Honor Award. Remaking a 1970's Downtown Park Into a New Public Realm. Omaha, Nebraska. OJB Landscape Architecture

TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS

Landscape architects are leaders in designing transportation systems that serve all people and include all modes of transportation, including transit stations, bike lanes, pedestrian walkways, trails, and more. These active transportation projects reduce reliance on cars, which in turn reduces traffic, improves air quality, and promotes healthy lifestyles. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, active transportation projects provide many economic benefits, from increased tourism dollars to improved property values and reduced daily commuter costs.



In Detroit, Michigan, SmithGroup designed a street safe for all people.

Image credit: ASLA 2023 Professional Analysis and Planning Honor Award. Joe Lewis Greenway Framework Plan, Detroit, Michigan. SmithGroup

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Landscape architects use their education and experience in science and environmental design to address the realities of a changing climate, including extreme heat, drought, fires, flooding, and sea level rise. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reports that climate- and weather-related events have cost the U.S. an average of \$123 billion each year. Landscape architects plan and design nature-based infrastructure that reduces weather-related impacts, mitigates ecological harms, and improves public health, safety, and welfare.



Landscape architects with RIOS used trees to create shade and cool the air in downtown Palm Springs, California.

Image credit: ASLA 2022 Professional General Design Award of Excellence. Palm Springs Downtown Park. Palm Springs, California. RIOS