Landscape Architects Leading Community Infrastructure Design and Development

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) urges policy makers and stakeholders to support an infrastructure plan that not only addresses today's crumbling infrastructure, but also creates tomorrow's resilient systems.

ASLA recommends that the infrastructure plan includes the following:

FIXING OUR NATION'S WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Our nation's deteriorating drinking water and wastewater systems require extensive maintenance and repairs—more than $655 billion in investments, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Less-costly green infrastructure solutions designed by landscape architects naturally absorb stormwater runoff—the major contributor to water pollution and unsafe drinking water. ASLA urges policy makers to support a comprehensive infrastructure package that:

- Increases funding for the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds. These funds provide critical resources to states, localities, and water systems to improve water treatment infrastructure and help implement green infrastructure projects.

- Reinforces EPA's green infrastructure and low-impact development programs and policies, such as the Green Infrastructure Collaborative, Soak Up the Rain, Campus Rainworks, G3, and others, which provide communities with tangible, cost-effective solutions to address water management needs.

UPGRADING TO A MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Our nation's roads and bridges are crumbling and in need of repair. Using expert planning and design techniques, landscape architects are helping to create less costly, more convenient transportation systems that also include walking, bicycling, and public transportation options. To meet the demands of today's transportation users, ASLA urges policy makers to support a comprehensive infrastructure package that:

- Supports active transportation programs, like the Transportation Alternatives Program, Safe Routes to School, and Recreational Trails programs. Together, these programs are providing much-needed, low-cost transportation options for individuals, families, and communities across the country.

- Enhances the Transportation Infrastructure Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants program, which, with increased funding, will successfully assist more states and local communities with building multimodal projects that address congestion, improve safety, and expand economic opportunity.

- Invests in transit and transit-oriented development to meet the growing demand for expanded public transportation and intercity passenger rail systems across the country. Transit-oriented development is also critical to jump-starting local economic development.

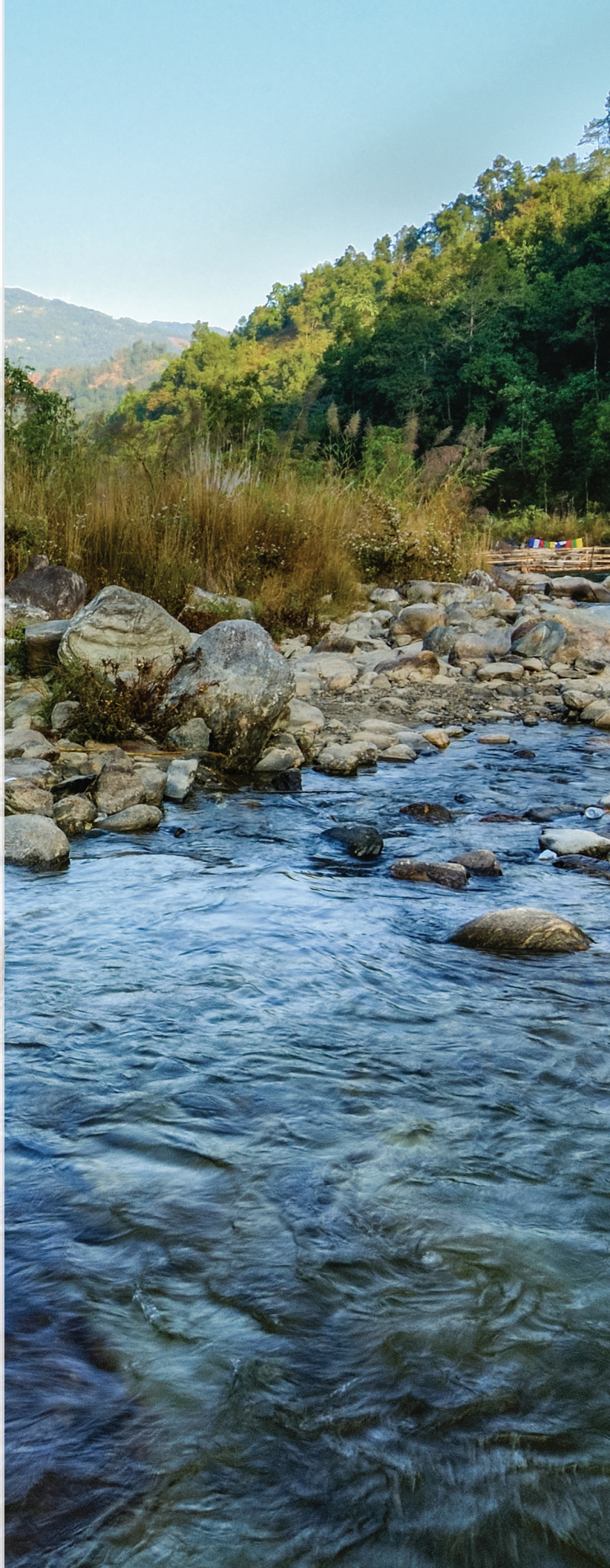
RECOGNIZING PUBLIC LANDS, PARKS, AND RECREATION AS CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

America's natural infrastructure should be protected, preserved, and enhanced. Our public lands are also economic drivers and support critical jobs, tourism, and other economic development, yet there is a $12 billion deferred maintenance backlog of projects. Landscape architects design parks, trails, urban forests, and other open spaces that enhance communities and augment the value of other types of infrastructure. ASLA urges policy makers to support an infrastructure plan that:

- Invests in our nation's public lands, including providing for construction, maintenance, and restoration projects at the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service.

- Increases funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which provides critical assistance to urban, suburban, and rural communities for local park projects. Community parks are essential infrastructure that address stormwater, air quality, heat island effect, and public health issues.

- Bolsters USDA's Urban and Community Forestry program, which focuses on the stewardship of communities' natural infrastructure and resources.



DESIGNING FOR RESILIENCY

Communities are increasingly faced with addressing hurricanes, tornadoes, severe flooding, wildfires, and other natural disasters. Landscape architects have the education, training, and tools to help these places rebuild homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure in a more resilient manner. ASLA urges policy makers to support an infrastructure plan that:

- Employs a sound planning and design process that incorporates disaster planning, which could greatly enhance a community's resilience to extreme weather, sea-level rise, and other natural events.
- Provides adequate funding to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to continue efforts that help communities adapt to and mitigate coastal hazards.
- Expands the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Rebuild by Design competition for additional regions affected by natural disasters. The Rebuild by Design competition is a multistage planning and design competition that uses the expertise of multidisciplinary design teams to promote resilience in the Hurricane Sandy-affected region.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Founded in 1899, the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), a 501(c)(6) organization, is the national professional association for landscape architects, representing more than 15,000 members in 49 professional chapters and 72 student chapters. Members of the Society use the "ASLA" suffix after their names to denote membership and their commitment to the highest ethical standards of the profession.

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Page 1: 2014 ASLA Professional General Design Honor Award Recipient. Hunter's Point South Waterfront Park. Thomas Balsley Associates and Weiss/Manfredi (Image credit: Wade Zimmerman)
Page 2: 2011 ASLA Professional General Design Award of Excellence Recipient. Portland Mall Revitalization. ZGF Architects LLP (Image credit: ZGF Architects LLP)
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