



# MiSITES

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 4 MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY  
OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

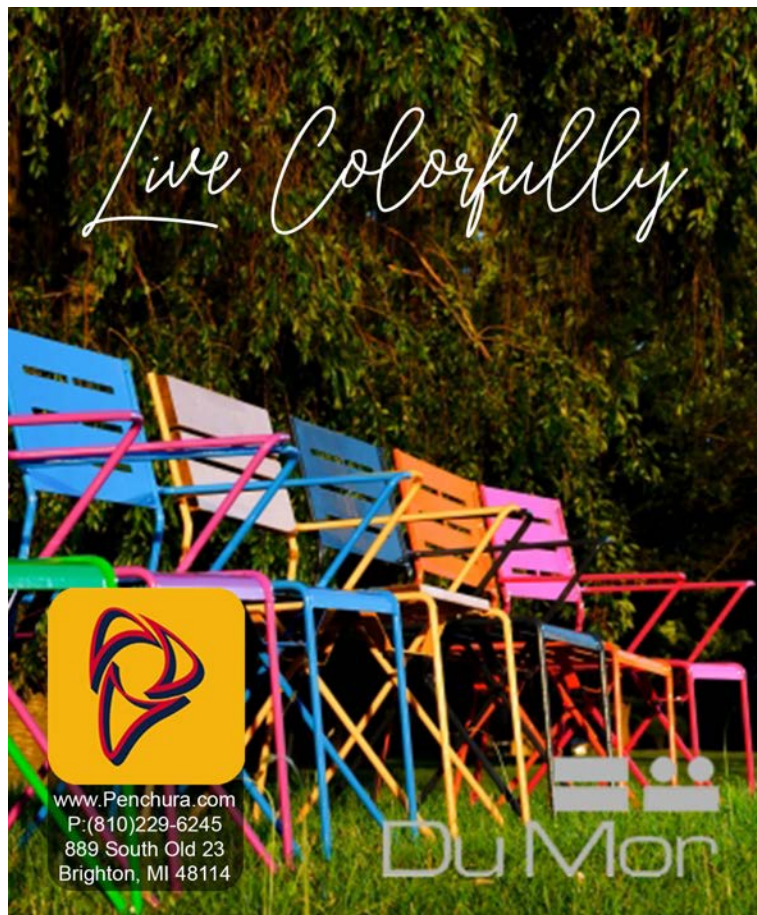


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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope you all are enjoying the new year and had a great 2019. I think I can speak for most of our profession, that the past year and decade brought exciting and rewarding work. In this issue, we celebrate the best of the best of Michigan landscape architecture as we present our 2019 Annual Award winners. Thank you to the Minnesota Chapter for their thoughtful deliberation and selection of this year's winners. The awards were presented during the Michigan Conference on Landscape Architecture on October 24th in Plymouth. Congratulations to each project, the design teams, and clients! Read all about them in the following pages.

Also, I was very proud to present four President's Awards to individuals who have gone above and beyond to serve the members of the chapter and the profession. Congratulations to: Alicia Adams, Emerging Professional of the Year Award recipient; Lindsay Fercho, Distinguished Member Award recipient; Amber Miller of the Ann Arbor DDA, Honor Award Recipient; and Landscape Architects and Planners, Firm of the Year Award recipient. It was inspiring to me to know the stories behind these individuals and how each was well-deserving of this honor. 2019 was personally rewarding for me, as I was able to continue to lead this chapter and provide guidance to a fantastic Executive Committee. I truly appreciate the volunteerism that goes into all of the events and advocacy on behalf of Michigan landscape architects.

Our new board for 2020 welcomes Joanne Westphal as President Elect, Joe Johnson as VP of Marketing, Scott Black as VP of Membership, Wendy Fry as Secretary, and Stephanie Onwenu as Associate Member at Large, Joane Slusky moving into the role of President and myself moving to Immediate Past President. Rounding out the board are Chet Hill continuing his term as Trustee, Tim Shoemaker staying on as Treasurer, Kyle Verseman returning as Member at Large, Dana Hernalsteen returning as VP of Education and Adam Fercho moving to VP of Government Affairs. Congratulations to our new and returning board members!

I wish much success to all of our members and friends of the profession in 2020. I was glad and grateful to serve you this past year and have found this to be a very rewarding experience. Thank you to all of our members who dedicated time to chapter events and continued or renewed membership.

Ben Baker, PLA, ASLA  
President, Michigan Chapter of ASLA

*Editor's Note: All images in this publication are used with permission of the author or advertiser.*

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The physical pattern and custom detailing of the streetscape reflects the Mid-Century Modern design heritage, represented throughout Midland in the architecture of Alden B. Dow. Source: Justin Maconochie





The DDA and Momentum Midland have already broadened their schedule of events to utilize Main Street's new flexibility. Source: Justin Maconochie

Merit Award [general design]

## DOWNTOWN MIDLAND STREETScape REDEVELOPMENT

Midland, Michigan | SMITHGROUP

The City of Midland's reimagined downtown increases pedestrian safety and usage, promotes bicycle connectivity, and creates flexible spaces for programmed and informal social interaction. Preserving their role as a gathering place for the community, they have enhanced non-motorized activity within the core and reflect the culture of design and innovation set forth over time by the Dow family.

Extensive public and stakeholder engagement shaped the design through multiple workshops and stakeholder meetings to identify the community's needs and develop concepts that reflect and celebrate them. Connectivity is

enhanced via the conversion of one-way streets to two-way and the addition of protected bike lanes to link the regional non-motorized system to downtown and the riverfront park network. The focus on programming open spaces and redefining the downtown lifestyle, this design plays an integral role in an effort to attract residents and retain a more diverse workforce.

### DESIGN INNOVATION

To facilitate downtown programming, three core blocks are curbsless with parking lanes integrated with the sidewalk patterning, bringing the perceived width of the street down while significantly widening the expanse dedicated to





The design focused on programming open spaces and redefining the downtown lifestyle.  
Source: Justin Maconochie

pedestrians. This additional area makes it possible to add amenities that enliven the street including fireplaces, overhead pergolas, chess tables, swings, and downtown entrance markers. These core 'Festival Street' blocks can convert to outdoor markets, performance venues, and community festivals that function year-round.

Drive lanes on Main Street are reduced throughout the overall seven blocks, and angled parking is converted to parallel in the three central Festival blocks to further prioritize pedestrians over vehicles.

The streetscape includes layers of trees and planters on the central blocks, establishing a series of programmable outdoor rooms. Linked rain garden planters allow green infrastructure to play an important role in protecting the Tittabawassee River, which flows just blocks from Main Street.

Protected bike lanes on McDonald Street link the riverfront park network to the non-motorized path to the northeast, which gets extended, as part of the plan, with new protected bike lanes on the primary east/west arterials of Indian and Buttles Street. By converting the one-way pair of Ashman and Rodd Streets to two-way, visitors can more easily navigate from this major thoroughfare to the downtown core and eliminate existing confusion.

## DESIGN INTENT

The community's primary goal is to attract and retain talent and build a more diverse community through a vibrant quality of life for Midland residents. By opening the street to a range of uses, including outdoor dining, informal socializing, and retail uses, the downtown will contribute to the attractiveness of Midland as a place to call home.

The community also aims to connect downtown to their open space network and cultural destinations including Dow Gardens, Midland Center for the Arts, Midland Country Club, and the East End. Building off the Pere Marquette trail, the plan establishes a connected non-motorized network through downtown via protected bike lanes and accessible pathway connections.

## COMMUNITY IMPACT

The widened walks enable restaurants to open outdoor dining venues. Downtown is more accessible, with curbless streets and decorative concrete walks, seniors are more comfortable meandering through downtown and new residents are enjoying the fresh, modern character of the custom lighting and furnishings.

A future which includes a more active downtown has already served to attract new businesses, development partners, and surrounding investment. These investments include downtown condominiums, several new restaurants, and a 77-bed hotel is now open on the site of a former parking lot. •



Design elements include curbless streetscape and flexible seating for outdoor dining and community events. Source: Justin Maconochie





Seating area and pedestrian corridor in municipal parking lot adjacent to new restaurant seating. Future plans call for a stage and other amenities for festival events and farm markets. Source: David Knight Photography





## MOSO VILLAGE

Sturgis, Michigan | WIGHTMAN

The Moso Village Project, truly a public-private partnership, was realized through a combined funding effort and resulted in the successful transformation of an entire city block. Formerly a brownfield site, Moso Village was home to an industrial building and municipal parking lot; it was surrounded by dilapidated streets with failing and inadequate infrastructure.

Moso Village created twelve new modern residential apartment units beside and above 19,000 square feet of new commercial space, surrounded by a new pedestrian friendly streetscape filled with unique and exciting seating areas. The completed design demonstrates reuse of a brownfield site, collaboration

and compromise with different design professionals, and notable integration with the existing downtown.

Downtown Sturgis is a growing and increasingly vibrant community. It is home to a variety of local businesses, restaurants, and living options. In the heart of downtown, at the corner of US-12 and M-66, Inquire Partners, LLC, recognized an opportunity to contribute to the growth, atmosphere, and success of the downtown area. Inquire Partners, the City of Sturgis, and Wightman jointly developed a master plan in 2013 with Moso Village, the first significant construction project toward implementing the vision to revitalize this part of





Streetscape elements include pavers, custom precast benches and seating cubes, concrete statues for children's play, as well as lighting and litter receptacles accenting the bamboo concept. Source: David Knight Photography



Downtown Sturgis.

Overlying new sanitary sewer, public water, underground electric and communications utilities, roads were completely reconstructed on all sides in order to spur development for this site and others. The existing street was completely removed and rebuilt to be an amenity space and to include new, narrower streets and clay paver cross walks to calm traffic and encourage a pedestrian friendly atmosphere.

The design team originally wanted a flush curb between the sidewalks and the new narrowed street to create a true blend of the pedestrian space and road. Since the city engineer required at least some curb, a 1" curb was the compromise reached. There is a 6' drop in elevation along the street from the east to the west; to compensate for the drop the street and sidewalk were terraced to provide flat entries for each of the six storefronts, which all have different finished floor elevations.

The design for the project utilized traditional building materials found along the main street but with a modern twist to create an identity for this sub-district. Materials were selected to complement the adjacent buildings and to also provide high visibility to pedestrian areas. Moso is a type of bamboo, and the building and streetscape carry its namesake and support the concept from the materials used inside the building to the entry canopy, the streetlights, bike rack and paving, as well as bamboo plantings at the rear entry of the building.

Moso Village creates a link between the residential neighborhood and the main thoroughfare of downtown and contributes to the growth atmosphere and success of the downtown area. The new shared street, site seating, and amenities have been utilized for the annual Sturgis Festival which shuts down this section of road, as well as many others, and draws strong attendance each year. •



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Over seven miles of deep water blueways provides ample recreational and hunting opportunities for kayaks, canoes and small boats. Source: Justin Maconochie





Merit Award [general design]

Materials such as wooden boardwalks and crushed stone were used to provide a cohesive natural aesthetic. Source: Justin Maconochie

## HOWARD MARSH METROPARK

Toledo, Ohio | SMITHGROUP

Howard Marsh, one of the newest parks within the Metroparks Toledo system, boasts a multitude of recreational opportunities across 750 acres of critical, restored coastal marsh wetland habitats. It is likely the largest green infrastructure implementation project within the Midwest region, providing water quality treatment for hundreds of upstream acres of residential and farmland use. Located approximately 15 miles from downtown Toledo, Ohio on the shores of Lake Erie, the park aims to draw visitors from the surrounding community – and well beyond.

Over seven miles of greenways are incorporated throughout the site for strolling, hiking, and running. The trails are looped in varying lengths to provide a variety of distances for users, and more importantly are interwoven within diverse

habitat areas to provide visitors varying visual experiences as they traverse the park. Designed to reconnect the park's coastal wetlands to Lake Erie, Howard Marsh also provides an array of opportunities to explore the area by water, including more than seven miles of blueways for kayaking or canoeing, and a small boat launch for access to fishing and seasonal hunting.

Located within a significant migratory bird corridor, birding opportunities at Howard Marsh serve as a significant tourism draw to the region and help boost economic activity within the community. Overlooks, resting and gathering spaces have been integrated within the trail networks to provide ample venues for observation. 226 bird species have already been observed in the park since construction was completed in Spring 2018.

The design provides diverse coastal wetland habitats within three units. The largest unit captures runoff from adjacent rural residential farmland while the two smaller units are the focus of the recreational opportunities. Source: SmithGroup





Howard Marsh Metropark is an excellent example of a large preservation area that has transformed over 750 acres of rural farmland into diverse coastal wetland habitats. Providing thoughtful recreational opportunities within beneficial habitats, the park does an exceptional job drawing nearby urban residents to visit. Habitat restoration and recreational programming can seem like competing activities at times, but through careful, intentional design both can succeed.

The park's unique design immerses park visitors into a total wetland experience with a spectacular 360-degree view of three interconnected marshland units interspersed with eight restored upland habitat islands. The main park drive allows visitors to pull off vehicles at any location for wildlife viewing without impeding traffic flow. All three wetland units and two habitat islands are interconnected through shared boardwalks and hiking trails with easy access canoe/kayak portage structures to allow paddlers to create their own routes, from short jaunts to day-long adventures.

This project occurs within a priority focus area of the Maumee Area of Concern (AOC), which was established in 1987 in accordance with the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. The US EPA and Ohio EPA determined the course of action necessary to improve water quality within the Maumee AOC, specifically to remove Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) within the AOC. Completion of this project will help lead to the delisting of the Maumee Area of Concern because it achieves specific measurable progress towards removing three of nine existing BUIs within the Maumee AOC.

By restoring 750 acres of high-quality coastal wetland habitat near the shores of western Lake Erie, this project helps achieve regional water quality objectives and creates new world class recreational opportunities for birding, boating, fishing and hunting in a region known for its abundant fish and wildlife. When the park opened in April 2018, it immediately became a premiere destination for birders and other outdoor enthusiasts, attracting 10,000 people in the first 10 days. •



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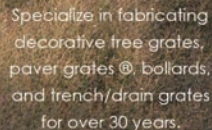
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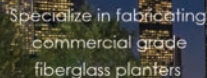
The logo for Ironsmith, featuring a stylized 'I' icon followed by the word 'IRONSMITH' in a bold, sans-serif font.

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A close-up photograph of a decorative tree grate installed on a sidewalk made of grey pavers. A young tree with green leaves is growing through the center of the grate. The grate has a circular design with a central opening for the tree trunk.

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A photograph of a rooftop garden at night. The garden features various plants, including tall grasses and small trees, and is furnished with outdoor seating. In the background, a city skyline with illuminated skyscrapers is visible under a dark sky.

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An aerial photograph of a park area. A winding path or stream cuts through a lush green landscape. The path is bordered by a low wall or fence. The surrounding area is filled with trees and vegetation.

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The concept plan transforms the riverfront with a fresh appearance that connects visitors, residences, and employees to the Maumee River. Source: SmithGroup



## TOLEDO RIVERFRONT TRAIL AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

Toledo, Ohio | SMITHGROUP

As Toledo reasserts itself as one of the premier Great Lakes cities to live, work, and play, the community is looking to re-establish its relationship to the Maumee River. The Maumee River touts a long and storied industrial history that has played a significant role in the development of the City of Toledo. Over the last couple of centuries, Toledo's riverfront has undergone multiple transformations; from a trading post and port, to an industrial hub, and more recently to a vacant and underutilized asset. The Toledo Riverfront Trail and Open Space Concept Plan (Concept Plan) builds on the river as the spine of the community to attract, energize, and support an integrated environment for humans and nature.

In 2018, ConnectToledo, a Downtown Development Corporation, hired the design consultant to develop a concept plan for a new riverfront trail. The plan lays the framework for the future of Toledo's riverfront by building on the 2017 Downtown Toledo Master Plan, which "creates a vision of a thriving riverfront city that celebrates and builds from its greatest natural asset outward into the surrounding neighborhoods, districts, and community."

A total of twenty-one Trail Treatment Types were defined; each based on its surrounding context to the district, anticipated levels of use, relationship to the river, future land uses, and safety. Each treatment type builds off the project's





Each of the 21 Trail Treatment Types builds off the project's minimum standards for trail width, material, stormwater management, and amenity locations. Source: SmithGroup



minimum standards for trail width, material, stormwater management, and amenity locations. Critical to the success of the plan are the vertical access strategies proposed for access to each of the three bridges. The bridge approaches are setback far from the river's edge, where the trail is proposed, and currently no connection is provided for pedestrians. Strategies proposed range from retrofitting existing stairs near the toe of the bridge approach, to adding in sculptural ramps, and even to adding elevators for a more direct access from the riverfront straight up several stories to the bridge.

The amenity guidelines reinforce the three leveled design approach and promote sustainable design practices. Notable practices include supporting local ecosystems through stormwater management, use of native plant material, and managing the material waste stream.

The Concept Plan has been well received in the community and is already on its way toward implementation. Metroparks Toledo has rallied behind the plan and is currently moving toward construction of the first phase of a new urban, waterfront park on a former brownfield along the route. Furthermore, at least one developer has stepped forward in the community and announced that they will be implementing the proposed treatment of their Downtown District parcel. Once the plan is fully implemented, residents and visitors will enjoy miles of publicly accessible riverfront, have access to a trail and open space network to improve their health and well-being, strengthen the district's identities, and provide a new look for the City of Toledo that may once again promote the river as a primary means to access the city.

The Concept Plan represents some of the defining characteristics of the profession of landscape architecture. It promotes a systems-based approach to design, uses graphics to clearly lay out a plan for how the community should proceed with implementation, promotes sustainable design practices, and provides strategies to overcome key public access challenges (both horizontally and vertically). Moreover, the plan shows how sustainable design with an emphasis on the human experience over infrastructure can inspire a community to move forward collectively. •



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Vibrant colors helps the park fit into context while signifying this is the main community gathering space, and simple, affordable finishes mimic existing character. Source: SmithGroup



Merit Award [research and communication]

## SOCIAL RESILIENCE AND INCLUSIVE DESIGN WEBPAGE

Online | SMITHGROUP

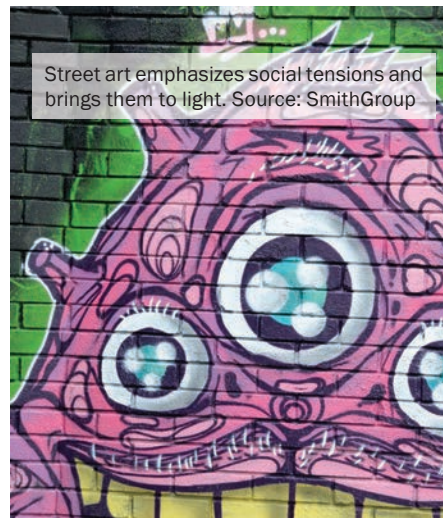
This project is focused on building social cohesion in communities by explaining how landscape architects can create inclusive spaces. The pursuit of inclusivity in public spaces is not only worthwhile, but necessary as in recent years, the United States has witnessed the rise of two conflicting social movements: an increase in white nationalism as well as a stated prioritization of diversity and inclusion.

Landscape architecture has been front and center in this conflict, as evidenced by the protests of confederate civil war monuments in public spaces across the United States. These icons are a reminder of oppression and make minorities feel unwelcomed. Yet the presence of these and similar design elements are not the only tactics that merit discussion. Just as well, omitting certain programmatic elements can make a park inhospitable to a minority group's needs – such as responding to a cultural group's practice of holding large family gatherings by designing a space too small to accommodate such events.

Whether implicit or explicit, the impacts of exclusive design cannot be overstated. Indeed, eliminating those impacts is the goal of the present project. Just as many public spaces have historically excluded others, their intentional re-design can be a subtle yet powerful way to say: “You are welcome here. You are safe here. You are wanted here.” Welcoming diversity further increases social cohesion by enabling interactions between different groups, which builds understanding, trust, and empathy. Articles documenting exclusive design

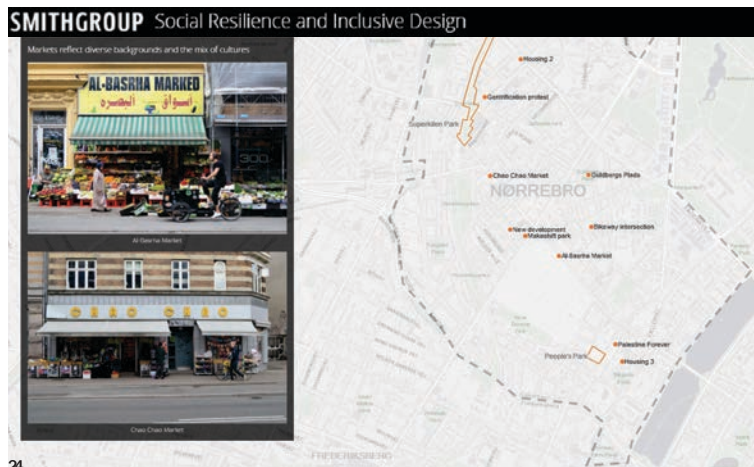
issues are abundant. This project fills a significant gap in the field by going beyond a discussion of the issues and articulating research-backed strategies for designing inclusive spaces.

To identify inclusive design strategies, the researcher conducted a review of



Street art emphasizes social tensions and brings them to light. Source: SmithGroup







academic and journalistic literature that informed case studies of three industry-leading examples of inclusive public spaces: Superkilen Park and Folkets Park in Copenhagen, Denmark and The Bearpit in Bristol, England. This project contributes to urban planning and design's growing movement to create inclusive cities by 1) delineating findings from the literature review; and 2) discussing inclusive design strategies that designers of these spaces utilized to shape the design philosophy, process, community engagement, and aesthetics of the spaces.

### WEBPAGE

The webpage acts as a starting place for practitioners to learn about inclusive design by overviewing the basic concepts of inclusivity and social resilience. This strategy invites viewers to see for themselves what makes the case studies exemplary and engage with these important concepts in a more meaningful and concrete way. The viewer is immersed in the research by scrolling through an interactive interface that eases comprehension by explaining one concept at a time. The content's organization mimics the evidence-based design process: a literature review, followed by a contextual analysis, and lastly inclusive design strategies.

### RESEARCH METHODS

The research was conducted over five months with three spent in Copenhagen and two in Bristol. Academic and journalistic literature provided four types of data that informed the present research: a theoretical basis, background information on the case studies, the latest academic research, and the current discussion among practitioners on inclusive design. Case studies were analyzed using the techniques of observation, photographic documentation, and informal interviews. To gain insight into the lived experiences of people frequenting the spaces, the researcher informally interviewed users, urban design professionals living in Copenhagen and Bristol, and Bjørnstjerne Christiansen, one of the artists that designed Superkilen Park. This interpersonal approach to data collection further embodies the spirit of inclusive design; inclusive design is all about people. Their impressions and first-hand expertise humanized the research, grounding the findings in personal stories. •

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The role of autonomous vehicles is a catalyst for removing existing parking lots, allowing stream daylighting, and linking people and natural systems. Source: Roberto Astudillo and Chuyi Yin







Source: Robert Astudillo and Chuyi Yin

Student Award [general design]

## CONFLUENCE: DESIGN AND INNOVATION FOR THE RESILIENT CAMPUS

University of Michigan | ROBERTO ASTUDILLO AND CHUYI YIN

Let's reconsider the underlying design concept of confluence. Confluence is where people, water, and nature meet, softening the edges between the natural and built environment. Harmonizing the relationships between advancing technologies and a changing climate, we have designed a campus that not only serves the research complex, but also becomes a cultural, educational, and technologically responsive future landscape.

In this research-driven, ecological master plan, CONFLUENCE: Design and Innovation for the Resilient Campus, is a collaborative and interdisciplinary endeavor consisting of landscape architecture, environmental engineering, and natural science students. Situated at a critical juncture point in a heavily impacted urban creekshed, the North Campus Research Complex (NCRC) at

the University of Michigan (UM) has the potential for outsized benefits to be resilient to climate change and responsive to surrounding natural features, while becoming a new core of campus life harmonized with the technology of the future.

The site reflects the conventional suburban corporate campus and makes our project a unique case study towards their transformation. Expanding on the innovation of Michigan's automotive history, the proposed interventions use autonomous mobility as the catalyst to redefine the role the suburban campus plays within the university and community context. Analyzing the watershed to the site scales, the team imagined a dynamic and responsive ecological and social landscape network, facilitating the flows of people, water, and wildlife

into novel and adaptive patterns.

The team stresses the importance of bringing an embedded intelligent system to the surface instead of allowing it to function “behind the curtain,” serving a critical goal of allowing visitors to mindfully interact with the unseen forces involved in shaping their environment. The plan looks ahead to emerging shifts in development trends and transportation technology that are already reducing the need for surface parking lots, which can be leveraged for flood storage during the increasingly frequent extreme storm events occurring under a changing global climate.

Nine distinct landscape typologies identified in terms of stormwater management are constructed wetlands, wet ponds, offline detention, stream restoration, bioswales, blue lots, blue roofs, green roofs, and cistern. Through the employment and integration of these typologies, three approaches are proposed: Demonstration, Water Systems, and Dynamic Landscapes. They respectively function as educational use, smart water systems, and resilient design in facing climate change.

The thoughtful application of technology can be one of the most robust tools at our disposal to confront environmental challenges. Just as exponential advances in computing have made our planet more and more connected, so too can the infrastructure in our urban landscapes be linked, responsive, and functional. This technology can help designers to build diverse, dynamic landscapes that are ecologically resilient, protect the watershed and its assets, and serve the human desire for engaging and restorative interactions with the world around us. It is the responsibility of landscape architects, planners, and engineers to seek innovative solutions to difficult challenges, and we hope that this design can be a case study in the development of a new paradigm for the intersection of infrastructure and the environment. •

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# 2019 PRESIDENT'S AWARDS

## Emerging Professional of the Year



**ALICIA ADAMS**

Alicia is a leader at SmithGroup's Detroit Urban Design Studio where she manages the development of complex urban design projects, and contributes to the formation of important redevelopment and open space strategies.

As a landscape architect, Alicia seamlessly integrates her creative capacity to drive important site design through human-centric goals. She is passionate about bringing together diverse experiences and disciplines to find unconventional and innovative solutions to the challenges we face in our changing urban environments. She is a 2013 graduate from Iowa State University.

## Distinguished Member of the Year



**LINDSAY FERCHO**

Serving as our VP of Marketing for several years, Lindsay has defined the role. In addition to updating the chapter website with a new, modernized look, Lindsay has a strong passion for Public Awareness. This is shown through her development of the Library Poster program which has exposed our profession to many people of all ages.

Lindsay graduated from U of M with a Master's degree in landscape architecture, and now serves as a lecturer. She works at SmithGroup in Ann Arbor where she has a passion for projects at all different scales, but her favorite projects include tight sites that are tough grading problems.

## Honor Award



**AMBER MILLER**

Amber is the Capital Projects Manager at the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority where she plays a pivotal role in redefining the streets and rights-of-way of the downtown area in a manner that reflects community values and the desire for a safer, more resilient, and more equitable future.

As a graduate of the U of M urban planning program and life-long Michigander, Amber is an exemplar for advocating the value of the downtown streets, and encouraging design, planning, and engineering professionals to perform at their best, so that we all can see our values reflected in the health and quality of our communities.



## Firm of the Year



LAP+Creative is a consulting firm dedicated to creating places and environments with rich experiences and enduring character. Based in Lansing, Michigan, their team of professionals includes a unique blend of design perspectives and talent with landscape architects, land planners, park planners, nationally certified playground safety inspectors, surface mine reclamation specialists, a real estate developer, and a nationally recognized golf course designer.

LAP+Creative has also been greatly involved in ASLA. Co-founder Bob Ford was a previous Trustee, and during that time he founded the LA Ride. This experience allows attendees to bicycle through a city stopping at various works of Landscape Architecture where an expert discusses the project with them. To date rides have been held in East Lansing, Grand Rapids, Detroit, and Kalamazoo, as well as rides in Los Angeles and Philadelphia. Bob and LAP have spent numerous hours of time to organize and brand these events.

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### WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

We are currently looking to fill all subcommittees for 2020!  
Please feel free to reach out to the Executive Committee or staff  
members: [manager@michiganasla.org](mailto:manager@michiganasla.org).

Michigan Chapter of the  
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